

18 Dec 2019: Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

B. GS 2 Related

HEALTH

1. [Packaged foods 'breach' salt, fat limits](#)
2. [Advisory for Gujarat model kicks up a row](#)

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Govt. aims to provide broadband access to all villages by 2022](#)

C. GS 3 Related

INTERNAL SECURITY

1. [Limit deputation of IPS officers in paramilitary at 25%: RS panel](#)

D. GS 4 Related

E. Editorials

ECONOMY

1. [Bearing the brunt of slack laws](#)

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. [Fish in troubled waters](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Justice for the Rohingya](#)

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Left to the whims of the executive](#)

F. Tidbits

1. [Market rally may get additional \\$2.5 billion fuel](#)
2. [No State-wise minority classification, says Supreme Court](#)

G. Prelims Facts

1. [BrahMos missiles successfully test-fired](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: HEALTH

1. Packaged foods 'breach' salt, fat limits

Context:

An analysis conducted by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) says that several packaged snacks and fast foods breached safe limits for salt and fat content. The CSE found that per 100 g, one packet of packaged nuts, soup or noodles had salt and fat well over the limit.

Details:

- The agency tested salt, fat, trans-fat and carbohydrates in 33 popular “junk foods”: 14 samples of chips, salted snacks, instant noodles and instant soup, and 19 samples of burgers, fries, fried chicken, pizzas, sandwiches and wraps.
- The samples were collected from grocery and fast food outlets in Delhi.
- The CSE relied on the **Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)** — **the daily ceiling for salt, fat, carbohydrates and trans-fat**. The RDA is based on scientific consensus and has been agreed upon by the **World Health Organisation and the National Institute of Nutrition** in India.

What are the limits as per the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)?

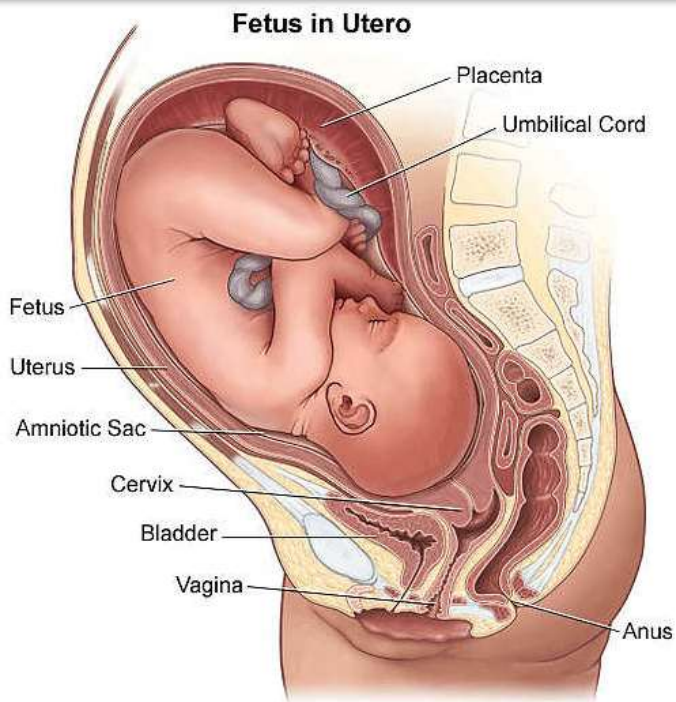
- It says that ideally, no more than 5 g of salt, 60 g of fat, 300 g of carbohydrate and 2.2 g of trans-fat should be consumed by an adult every day.
- The RDA from breakfast, lunch and dinner should be no more than 25% each, and from snacks, no more than 10%.

Conclusion:

- The proposed draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations say companies must declare nutritional information such as calories (energy), saturated fat, trans-fat, added sugar and sodium per serve on the front of the pack.
- Labels must show the per serve share of the RDA on the pack.
- Though discussed since 2015 in many drafts — the latest in July 2019 — the rules have yet to become law.

2. Advisory for Gujarat model kicks up a row**Context:**

At a time when obstetricians are fighting to bring down the incidence of post-partum haemorrhage (PPH), the leading cause of maternal mortality in India, a recent advisory issued by the Union Health Ministry to States to adopt the Gujarat model of “non-interventional approach during the final stages of labour” as the best obstetric practice has kicked up a storm.



Details:

- Kerala managed to bring down the PPH numbers drastically when in 2013 it developed and implemented the Quality Standards in Obstetric Care, in association with the NICE International. One of the key principles adopted is the WHO-recommended strategy of “active management of third stage of labour” (AMTSL).
 - The third stage is the time between the delivery of the baby and the expulsion of the placenta and its duration could be approximately six to 30 minutes.
 - The volume of blood loss during this time depends on how long it takes the placenta to separate from the uterine wall and how effectively the uterine muscle contracts in the immediate post-partum period. So in 2012, the WHO reaffirmed AMTSL, with the use of uterotonics (drugs to contract uterus and reduce bleeding) as the best critical measure.

Issues:

- The new advisory, however, advocates the physiological management or the “hands-off” approach during the third stage of labour.
- The major concern is about the delayed administration of oxytocin. According to experts, uterine atony (failure of uterus to contract), followed by massive haemorrhage, occurs in the third and fourth stage. Immediate administration of oxytocin as soon as foetus is delivered contracts the uterus and helps the expulsion of placenta without blood loss.
- The WHO-recommended protocol of delaying cord clamping after birth is enough to allow the foetus more blood from placenta.
- The Ministry says its advisory is meant to make childbirth a “natural and positive experience” for women.

Conclusion:

- Obstetricians say the advisory runs contrary to WHO recommendations and the best of proven international advisories and this can undo all their efforts to reduce PPH and prevent mothers bleeding to death.

- The Indian Medical Association (IMA) leadership demands that the Centre leave clinical decision-making to doctors and that the advisory be withdrawn as it sends out contradictory messages to nurses and birthing assistants.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Govt. aims to provide broadband access to all villages by 2022

Context:

The government has announced a new 'mission' aimed at providing broadband access to all villages by 2022, entailing an investment of around Rs. 7 lakh crore from various stakeholders.

National Broadband Mission:

- The Mission has been launched with the key objective to provide broadband to all villages by 2022.
- The vision of the NBM is to fast-track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion and provide affordable and universal access to broadband for all.

This topic has been covered in 17th December PIB Summary and Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY

1. Limit deputation of IPS officers in paramilitary at 25%: RS panel

Context:

- A report of the 15-member committee, on the action taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in respect of the functioning of the Border Guarding Forces, was submitted in the Rajya Sabha.
- The Rajya Sabha committee has objected to the overuse of the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) for rigorous internal security and election-related duties to the extent that even the reserved battalions are deployed not giving them enough time for rest and recuperation.

Central Armed Police Force (CAPF):

The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) refer to the uniform nomenclature of security forces in India under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The seven security forces under CAPF are as follows:

- Assam Rifles
- Border Security Force (BSF)
- Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)
- Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)
- Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

- National Security Guard (NSG)
- Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

Recommendations:

- To boost the morale of the CAPFs, the committee insisted on limiting the deputation of officers from the IPS and the armed forces to CAPFs at 25% and the CAPFs cadres should be given the opportunity to become the Director-General of respective forces.
- The committee insisted on paying paramilitary service pay to the CAPF on par with the defence forces personnel.
- The Department Related Standing Committee on Home Affairs has strongly reiterated its recommendations rejecting the government's explanation.
- The committee noted that the defence forces personnel are being paid Military Service Pay in view of the risk to life and social and family isolation and argued that the CAPF also deserves similar incentive in the form of Paramilitary Service Pay as they also face similar risks and isolation. Noting the response of the MHA that the 7th Pay Commission and the Committee on Allowance did not agree to such special pay, the committee insisted on doing the needful.
- Referring to suicides in the CAPFs, the committee urged the Ministry to put in place an institutional mechanism with representatives of the MHA, the Bureau of Police Research and Development, heads of various forces and experts in public health, mental health, psychology and psychiatry to address the issue.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. Bearing the brunt of slack laws

Context:

The tweaking of labour laws on safety and the minimum wage has left a large section of workers in India without rights.

Background:

- The huge fire that engulfed a residential-cum-production unit in Anaj Mandi of Delhi on 8 December 2019, killing over 40 people, has exposed the precarity of the every-day life of workers.
- Their unfortunate deaths apart from being viewed as a fire hazard must also be assessed as a **larger question of systemic labour rights violation**. The hapless victims of the recent fire were victims of the **lack of state regulation of several kinds of work relations and workplaces**.

Concerns:

High levels of informality:

- Some of the trends being observed in the Indian labour market points towards **reducing formal labour and increasing informal labour**. There has been a phenomenal growth of India's **informal sector and informal work relations**.
- There are high levels of employment of **contract labour** in all kinds of industrial and commercial establishments.
- There is a steady growth of the informal sector in India.
- **High labour turnover**.
- There is a pattern of **extended overtime** put in by a majority of workers.
- There is a growing presence of **apprentices and "fixed-term" workers** in industrial enterprises.
- The pattern of **deskilling** or high-skilled workers entering lower-skill segment jobs is observed (what is generally referred to as **under-employment**).
- Weakened trade union movement.

Lack of efforts to curb increasing informality:

- The episodic or literally, **non-existent regulation of labour conditions** in micro-, small- and medium-sized industrial and commercial establishments along with the **apathy of officials of civic agencies** have resulted in numerous industrial clusters mushrooming in the bylanes of residential localities and slums in the big cities.
- This informality in the units is mainly due to the **limited coverage of labour laws in India**.

Out of reach laws:

- It is mostly only a **small section of organised workers who have actually been granted rights under the labour rights framework in India**. The protection extended by the law mainly helps the organised workers of **mostly large industrial establishments**. It is only now that there has been a growing awareness and call to protect the interests and rights of even the unorganized workers as well.
- Key labour laws in India consistently elude a large section of workers who are denied rights and benefits on the pretext of less regular work contracts, length of employment, nature of establishment (seasonal or perennial), size of the workforce, etc.

Eyeing Ease of Business:

- A dominant discourse on the **"ease of business"** aggressively **projects India's labour laws as a restraint on the development of the free market**.
- Utilising the image of protection extended by the law to organised workers, some sections have successfully projected India's labour laws as cumbersome, a hindrance to employment generation, and, thus, intrinsically "anti-labour".
- The present government's intention to **increase India's Ease of doing business ranking** has resulted in a scenario where regulations or interventionist approaches to industrial relations have reduced.

The retreat of the state:

- There has been **deregulation of a large number of work relations**.
- **There has been a watering down of the provisions of labour inspection**.
- There is a growing paradigm of **self-certification by employers** of their compliance with labour laws.
- **Tweaking of statutory labour laws** on occupational safety standards, work hours, minimum wage, compensation, industrial disputes, etc. by successive governments is seen, both at the State and Central level.

- The exemptions provided to smaller industrial and commercial establishments from furnishing proof of their compliance with statutory labour laws, as well as labour law amendments aimed at diluting the authority of the labour inspectorate, have greatly **enhanced the power of employers across the board.**

Increasing power to the employers:

- The “private power” of employers to **unilaterally fix wages, extract overtime, manage leaves, determine compensation, etc.** has substantially increased with the steady withdrawal of the state from the regulation of labour-capital relations.
- There have been reports of **intense exploitation of labour by employers**, who to stay competitive, consistently push down labour costs by circumventing labour rights.
- The fact that employers, who often tend to **violate labour rights** themselves have been made law enforcers/certifiers in the new framework of deregulated industrial relations points towards the unviability of this setup.

Problems associated with the informal sector:

- In the scores of smaller establishments in the informal units, the workers are mostly migrants and tend to **work long hours for meagre wages.**
- Often, they are crowded into living quarters inside the production unit itself. Though the workers' contribution to the economy is immense, the labourers have very **limited bargaining rights** and often end up **being exploited.**

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Fish in troubled waters

Context:

Reports of increasing instances of invasive alien species.

Details:

- **Climate change and unprecedented floods** resulting from cloud bursts have facilitated the introduction of aquatic invasive alien species into new habitats in India.
- **Human actions** have also contributed towards the introduction of alien species.

Concerns:

Increasing Instances of Invasive alien species:

- A study from the University of Kerala revealed the role of the 2018 floods in introducing the most **dangerous fish species into Kerala's wetlands.** The authors said that exotic fishes such as arapaima and alligator gar were reported or caught by the residents after the floods. These are **illegally imported fish** that are reared by ornamental and commercial fish traders across India.
- Researchers say that during heavy floods, invasive alien fishes which are illegally farmed in fragile systems, including domestic aquarium tanks, ponds, lakes and abandoned quarries, effortlessly escape from captivity and enter nearby wetlands.

- Apart from being commercially important exotic species, **ornamental fishes** such as guppy, piranha, suckermouth, blue perch, goldfish and platy have been **recorded in rivers, lakes, traditional village ponds and other inland freshwater bodies.**

Effects of Invasive alien species:

- The invasive alien species slowly begin to **wipe out local diversity and the economy by altering the functions of the ecosystem.** This phenomenon threatens ecosystems, habitats and native species.

A study from Tamil Nadu:

- A team of researchers from Madurai Kamaraj University found that the exotic ornamental Amazon sailfin catfish poses a serious threat to the native fish species of Vandiyur Lake, Madurai.
- They reported that the **biomass of the Amazon sailfin catfish is statistically significant compared to the indigenous varieties.** This clearly shows the negative impact of this exotic aquarium fish on inland aquaculture in terms of diminished production/catch of edible fish.
- Further, sailfin catfish species **do not hold any commercial value**; therefore, people discard the species on the banks of the lake where it is **not even scavenged by other animals and birds.** Thus more than 15 exotic ornamental species have successfully established a reproductive population in Tamil Nadu's freshwater bodies and the magnitude of the impact of this species on the native diversity of fish is still not known.

National scenario:

- India is endowed with 2,319 species of finfish. Studies from several parts of the country show that the **diversity of freshwater fish is depleting at an alarming pace due to the invasion of commercially important and ornamental exotic fish species.**
- Many native species of India, especially Indian major carps in various riverine systems, have been affected because of the invasion of exotic fish species such as Nile tilapia, African catfish, Thai pangus and common carp. This has accelerated the extinction of natural varieties from local water bodies.

Lack of regulation:

- Despite the increased instances of invasive alien species and the awareness of their detrimental impact, **no State or Union Territory has any strong policy or law on the illegal rearing, breeding and trading** of such invasive ornamental and commercially important fish species.
- In Tamil Nadu, for instance, stocking illegally imported ornamental and commercially important fish species is good business. Kolathur in north Chennai is known for its ornamental fish trade (with more than 80 shops) and most of the residents in the area are involved in breeding and selling 150-200 exotic ornamental fish species. People mostly use small cement cisterns, earthen ponds, plastic-lined pools, homestead ponds and the Retteri lake for breeding these species. And then the seasonal monsoon floods in the area wash away the exotic breeding stocks and adult fishes into freshwater bodies.

Non-recognition of the problem:

- During the monsoon, government officials release details about the amount of rainfall, the water level in reservoirs, and how the flood paralysed essential services including transport, communication and electricity. But there is **no information about biodiversity loss and the impact of the flood on freshwater diversity.**
- Governments have focused on strengthening the state disaster response forces, identifying vulnerable sites, but have **not focused on framing an aquatic biodiversity conservation policy.**
- Tamil Nadu which faces the risks of invasive alien species has not yet framed any policy to control and manage the escape of invasive alien fish species during the monsoon season.

Way forward:

- India needs studies on the **threat posed by invasive alien species to ecosystems and a policy to address the problem.**
- The affected states should draft **an aquatic biodiversity conservation policy** in consultation with experts. **A national policy** on the same would be a useful guiding tool for the states.
- Given the limited information and literature regarding the issue of invasive alien species, the governments should also establish a unique **research centre to address this issue.**

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Justice for the Rohingya

Context:

Hearings at the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** on the issue of **Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims.**

Details:

- The case brought by **Gambia, a West African state, on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation**, pertains to the alleged genocide in 2017 committed by the Myanmar military.
- The legal process at **the Hague Court** concerns the plight of thousands forcibly exiled in refugee camps in Bangladesh.

Support for the Case:

- The UN and several rights groups have documented orchestrated incidents of torched villages, mass rape and other atrocities by the military, forcing **over 700,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh.**
- The supporters of the case against Myanmar claim that the case at ICJ is key to forcing **accountability on the state of Myanmar.**

Myanmar's stand:

- Nobel Peace Laureate and Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi is arguing the defence of the junta's actions at the ICJ.
- The forces have insisted that their actions were **merely in response to the armed insurgency, notably by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army.**
- Myanmar has asserted that the Army had acted proportionately in countering the rebels and accused Gambia of misrepresenting the situation.
- Lawyers representing Myanmar insisted that while violent crimes were committed during the conflict, **motives of genocide against the community could not be imputed against the authorities.**

Concerns:

Limited Outcome of the Case:

- Preliminary hearings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) seeking guarantees of basic protection for Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims arguably **offer only symbolic hope** to this long-suffering community.

- The ICJ, which adjudicates disputes between countries, has handed down guilty verdicts in a few cases relating to crimes of genocide. But crucially, it has stopped short of pinning the blame directly upon states as in the 2007 ruling on the Bosnian war of the preceding decade, relying on **differentiation between ethnic cleansing and genocide**.
- The challenges of establishing conclusive proof of the intention to extirpate entire communities underlie this caution.
- In the current case too, a similar ICJ approach might let the **Myanmarese state escape responsibility for the atrocities on the Rohingyas**.

Failure to take up responsibility:

- Critics of Myanmar's actions point out that they have **repeatedly downplayed the extent of the violence and official failure to intervene**.
- Oddly enough, arguing the defence of the junta's actions at the ICJ was Nobel Peace Laureate and Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose National League for Democracy swept to power in 2015. She has even been accused of choosing to argue the defence in person with an eye on the 2020 general election.

Systemic discrimination:

- Rendering the lot of the Rohingya in Myanmar's Rakhine state particularly vulnerable is the **denial of citizenship** and the reference by nationalist sections to them as illegal Bengali immigrants.

Way forward:

- Given the fact that a decision regarding genocide relating to the atrocities against the Rohingya will take time the most urgent concern before the court is Gambia's petition seeking an injunction that the **violence against the community cease forthwith and the government guarantee immediate protection**. Myanmar must heed that call without reservations.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Left to the whims of the executive

Context:

The Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019.

Details:

- The government can grant citizenship to persons with certain religious identities (**Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Christians, Buddhists**) and from certain countries (**Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan**) who entered India after fleeing religious persecution — and are thus presumably “illegal migrants” — on or before **December 31, 2014**.

Background:

- The Act does not itself state that its beneficiaries must be fleeing religious persecution. Instead, it refers to persons from certain groups and from certain countries who were exempted under a **prior**

notification and order issued under the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, and Foreigners Act, 1946, respectively.

- The relevant notifications, the first issued in 2015 and the second in 2016 by the Ministry of Home Affairs, exempt Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan from provisions of the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, and the Foreigners Act, 1946, if they were **“compelled to seek shelter in India due to religious persecution or fear of religious persecution”**.
- All such persons were then allowed to **obtain five-year Long Term Visas under a 2011 Standard Operating Procedure** (in comparison with other refugees who could seek asylum by applying for a shorter Long Term Visa) on the treatment of refugees. Now, the 2019 Act will protect these very persons by offering a right to be considered for citizenship.

Concerns:

Notifications:

- There are doubts cast on whether the targeted exclusion of certain classes of migrants from the rigours of immigration law, based in part on their religious identity, can be done through **notifications and Standard Operating Procedures**.
- This can enable a **future notification which can altogether drop the religious persecution requirement** and offer a blanket exemption to everyone except Muslims. This could **go against the reasons and objectives stated in the Bill**.

Power to the Executive:

- As a democratic republic, India is committed to have elected legislators deliberate and collectively reason the necessity and soundness of the legislative policy. The **executive** government, when acting as a **delegate of the legislature**, can only execute the latter’s legislative policy.
- The delegated power to execute includes the power to decide whether to “apply the law to an area or to determine the time and manner of carrying it into effect” (in the words of a 1960 Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in **Hamdard Dawakhana v. Union of India**).
- In short, **the executive may make conditions as to the time, place, or manner of a law’s application**, even if the ultimate effect of such conditional legislation is that a class of migrants, defined by their falling within the conditions, end up becoming exempt.
- Similarly, the classes of beneficiaries of the 2019 Act who will pursue registration and not naturalisation is also left to the decision of the executive (through Rules yet to be notified). This crucial matter was expressly stipulated so far in the Citizenship Act itself — in Sections 5 and 6 — and thus clearly a matter of core legislative policy.
- Since the 2019 Act expressly states that the class of migrants earlier described shall no longer be considered “illegal migrants”, theoretically such migrants should be entitled to apply for **both registration and for naturalisation**, if they fulfil the conditions in Sections 5 and 6 of the Act, respectively. Yet, **the discretion to decide which of these beneficiaries can pursue each route has also been left to the executive**.

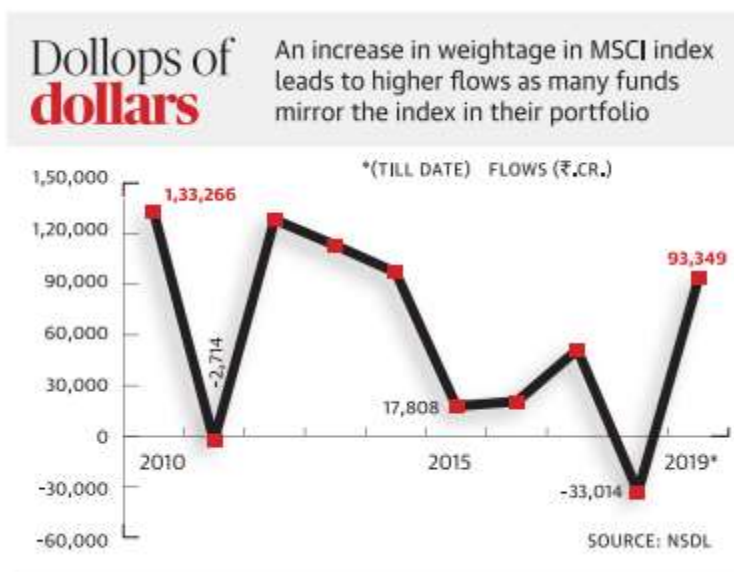
Lack of a defined authority:

- The bedrock of this Act is that persons from certain religious identities who are fleeing religious persecution in certain countries will not be considered “illegal migrants” under the citizenship law.
- Neither the Act nor the 2015 notifications tell us how, by whom, and under what guidelines people’s claims to a religious identity, and to fleeing certain religious persecution, will be determined.
- In the past, the law itself entrusted this task to an authority. In the **Assam context**, the Citizenship Act states that the **Foreigners’ Tribunals will “detect foreigners”** who entered India in a certain period between 1966 and 1971.

- Any proposed tribunal for the new act is unlikely to be empowered to determine claims under the 2019 Act, so long as the 2015 and 2016 notification and order exclude the Foreigners Act under which the Tribunal operates.
- Without legislative clarity on this, it appears that the task will fall to an executive body once again based on Standard Operating Procedure.

F. Tidbits

1. Market rally may get additional \$2.5 billion fuel



- The coming months could see incremental foreign flows amounting to around \$2.5 billion in Indian equities as the country's weightage has increased in the MSCI Emerging Markets (EM) index on account of the increase in foreign investment limit in listed entities.
- The government has confirmed its move to implement its Budget announcement relating to increasing the statutory limit for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in a company from 24% to the sectoral foreign investment limit with effect from April 1, 2020.
- According to Morgan Stanley, it would lead to India's weightage going up by 70 basis points in the MSCI EM index, translating to about \$2.5 billion of additional flows from foreign investors.
- Incidentally, while the government has given the option to companies to lower their FPI limit by March 31, 2020 through a board approval and a special resolution passed by the shareholders, such entities can always increase the limit at a later date after which it cannot be reduced again.
- Thus, unless companies pass board and shareholder resolutions, all companies in India will irreversibly have their FPI limit at the sector limit after March 31, 2020, states the report.

MSCI Index:

- The MSCI Emerging Markets Index stands for Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) and is an index used to measure equity market performance in global emerging markets.
- The MSCI Emerging Markets Index consists of 26 developing economies including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia,

Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

2. No State-wise minority classification, says Supreme Court

- Religion has no borders, Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde said, as the Supreme Court dismissed a petition to recognise Hindus as minorities in the States where they are low in population.
- The petition asked the court to frame guidelines to “identify and define” religious minorities in every State, especially where Hindus are in a minority, to protect their culture and interests.
- “The States have been carved language-wise. But religion is beyond all borders, especially political borders. It has to be taken on a pan-India basis,” the Chief Justice observed.
- The observation came on a petition that said the Hindus were not declared a minority community in several States, and they were deprived of the benefits of the status.
 - Attorney General, for the government, submitted that Hindus were a minority in eight States.
- For the purposes of Articles 29 (protection of the interests of minorities) and 30 (the right of minorities to administer educational institutions) of the Constitution, it was necessary that the religious and linguistic minorities be determined State-wise on the basis of the numeric proportions of various communities in each State, the advocate said.

G. Prelims Facts

1. BrahMos missiles successfully test-fired

What’s in News?

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted two BrahMos supersonic cruise missile tests, one each from land and air platforms.

Read more about [BrahMos](#).

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Solar Eclipse can only occur on a Full Moon day.
2. In case of a Solar Eclipse, the Moon passes between Earth and Sun and the Moon's shadow happens to fall upon Earth's surface.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

Explanation:

A solar eclipse occurs on a new moon day when the Moon comes in between the Earth and the Sun and when all the three celestial bodies are aligned. A solar eclipse is a phenomenon that happens when the moon comes in the way of the sun's light. The moon's shadow casts itself on Earth, blocking out the sun's light (as seen from Earth).

Q2. "Red Octagon" recently seen in news is:

- a. A warning symbol employed in packaged foods.
- b. A major area in the basin of the Pacific Ocean where many earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur.
- c. An autonomous territory in northwest China that is home to Turkic Uyghur people.
- d. None of the above.

Answer: a

Explanation:

Red Octagon is a warning symbol employed in packaged foods in Chile and Peru. It has a number and the name of the food component within that indicates how widely off the RDA a particular ingredient is. Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has concluded that, in India, all of the popular snacks and fast foods should display a 'Red Octagon' on the front of the pack.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Maternal Mortality:

- 1. Maternal mortality refers to deaths due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth.
- 2. Maternal mortality ratio is calculated per 10,000 live births.
- 3. India has seen a declining trend of Maternal Mortality Rate since the year 2007.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

- a. 3 only
- b. 2 only
- c. 1 and 2 only
- d. 2 and 3 only

Answer: b

Explanation:

Maternal mortality refers to deaths due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth. Maternal mortality ratio is calculated per 100,000 live births. India has seen a declining trend of Maternal Mortality Rate since the year 2007.

In India, the Sample Registration Survey (SRS) is used to get an estimate of the maternal mortality rate. Given below is the MMR in India as per the Sample Registration System:

Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in India

Year	MMR
2004-2006	254

2007-2009	212
2010-2012	178
2011-2013	167
2014-2016	130
2015-2017	122

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) :

1. It is a multilateral export control regime.
2. It seeks to encourage the proliferation of missiles and missile technology.
3. India is a member of MTCR.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: c

Explanation:

The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is a multilateral export control regime. It is an informal political understanding among 35 member states that seeks to limit the proliferation of missiles and missile technology. India has become the 35th member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in June 2016. The MTCR membership will enable India to buy high-end missile technology.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The proposed labour reforms in India should strike a balance between the need to increase the ease of doing business in India and the need to uphold the rights of the workers. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)
2. In the backdrop of increasing examples of Invasive alien species in India discuss the major reasons contributing to this phenomenon and the concerns associated with it. Suggest suitable actions to tackle this issue. (15 marks, 250 words)

Read previous [CNA](#).