



# PLUTUS IAS

## Weekly Current Affairs

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# POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## HOLISTIC SUCCESS CARD' LAUNCHED BY NCERT

### Why in the News?

The National Council for Educational and Research Training (NCERT) is launching a new 'Holistic Success Card' (HPC) to assess a child's success in interpersonal connections, self-reflection, creativity, emotional application in the classroom, and academic performance.

### ABOUT HOLISTIC PROGRESS CARD

The Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH), an organisation associated with the NCERT, has developed High-Quality Progress Cards (HPCs). These cards are intended for use in the foundational stage (Classes 1 and 2), preparatory stage (Classes 3 to 5), and middle stage (Classes 6 to 8), in accordance with the guidelines of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

### EMPOWERING STUDENTS: ACTIVE LEARNING AND SELF-REFLECTION

The HPC prioritises learner-centric evaluation, which is consistent with the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE). Students are no longer passive recipients of information; they are active participants in their learning journey. Through engaging classroom activities, the HPC **assesses their ability to apply diverse skills and grasp complex concepts**. These activities go beyond rote memorisation, prompting students to analyse, problem-solve, and think critically.

### MOVING BEYOND GRADES: A 360-DEGREE EVALUATION

Unlike report cards that solely rely on marks or grades, the HPC adopts a **comprehensive approach**. It **gathers feedback from various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and, most importantly, the students themselves**. This 360-degree evalu-

ation provides a nuanced understanding of a student's academic performance, cognitive abilities, socio-emotional skills, and creativity. It paints a richer picture, **revealing not just a student's content knowledge but also their interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and capacity for creative expression**.

### FOSTERING COLLABORATION AND GROWTH: PEER AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

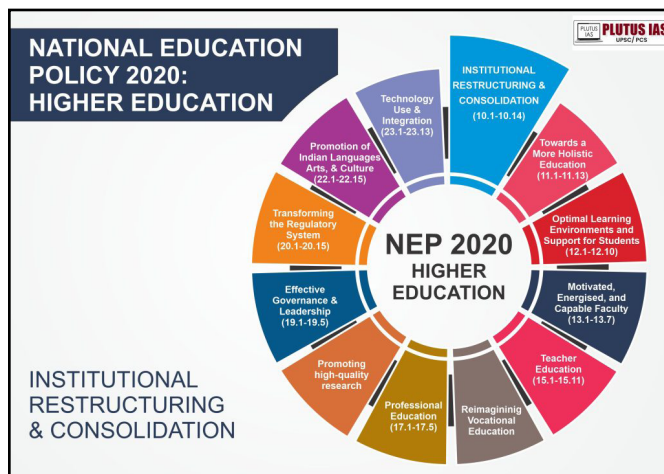
The HPC fosters a sense of ownership in students by encouraging them to reflect on their learning journey. **Students engage in self-evaluations, considering aspects like acquiring new knowledge or expressing their creativity**. This introspective process allows them to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Peer evaluation is another key element, encouraging students to assess their classmates' contributions to group activities. **This fosters a sense of teamwork, collaboration, and mutual respect within the classroom**. By incorporating feedback from parents and peers, the HPC creates a well-rounded picture of a student's strengths and weaknesses, allowing educators to tailor their teaching strategies to cater to individual needs.

### KEY FEATURES OF THE HPC

- **Applicability:** The HPC caters to students from the **foundational stage (Classes 1-2) to the middle stage (Classes 6-8)**, with ongoing efforts to develop a similar framework for the secondary stage.
- **Evaluation Parameters:** Beyond academics, the HPC assesses self-awareness, relationships, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and creativity.
- **Evaluation Methods:**
  - **Self-Assessment:** Self-assessment is a component integrated into the **High-Quality Progress Cards (HPC) for students across Class 1 to Class 8**. In the middle school

phase (**Classes 6 to 8**), students establish both academic and personal objectives, outlining specific timelines at the beginning of the academic year. Additionally, the middle stage HPC incorporates an “**ambition card**” where students outline their goals for the year, areas requiring improvement, and the requisite skills and habits for attainment.

- **Parental Involvement:** Parents become active participants by providing feedback on homework completion, classroom engagement, and the child’s ability to balance screen time with extracurricular activities at home, thus connecting home and school.
- **Peer Evaluation:** Students evaluate their classmates’ participation and learning engagement after each classroom activity.



## WHAT IS THE RATIONALE BEHIND HOLISTIC PROGRESS CARDS?

The introduction of the Holistic Progress Card (HPC) in India signifies a significant move away from traditional assessment methods. Let’s explore the driving forces behind this change:

- **Aligning with NEP 2020:** The HPC directly aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020’s vision. NEP 2020 emphasises **fostering self-awareness and self-esteem** in students by providing clear communication of both strengths and areas for improvement. It also **underscores the importance of evaluating higher-order skills like analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity**. The HPC directly addresses these points by incorporat-

ing diverse assessment methods that go beyond rote memorisation.

- **Embracing National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE):** The NCF SE advocates for a systematic approach **to progress evaluation, including methods like peer and self-assessment**. It also recommends classroom activities as a means to assess core competencies. The HPC effectively adopts these suggestions by incorporating self and peer evaluations alongside engaging classroom activities that assess diverse skills and knowledge application.

## ADVANTAGES OF THE HOLISTIC PROGRESS CARD

The HPC offers a multitude of benefits compared to traditional report cards:

- **Moving Beyond Numbers:** The HPC transcends the limitations of numerical grades. It delves deeper, providing descriptive and analytical evaluations that encompass a student’s academic achievements alongside the development of crucial life skills. This broader picture allows for a more nuanced understanding of a student’s progress.
- **Shifting the Focus:** From Summative to Formative Assessment The HPC fosters a shift from summative assessments (focusing on a single point in time) to formative assessments (providing ongoing feedback throughout the learning process). This allows for continuous improvement and promotes competency-based evaluation, focusing on mastery of skills rather than just memorisation of facts.
- **Empowering Educators and Parents:** The HPC equips both teachers and parents with valuable insights into each student’s learning journey. This comprehensive information allows them to provide more targeted support, fostering a collaborative environment that fosters overall student development.

## ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

### Why in the News ?

- Recently Election Commissioner of India Arun



Goyal had resigned from the post of Election Commissioner even before the announcement of the dates of Lok Sabha elections to be held in India in the year 2024, The President of India Draupadi Murmu has also accepted his resignation on 09 March 2024 and the Law Ministry of India has announced this by issuing a notification.

- Anoop Chandra Pandey, the second Election Commissioner of India, retired from his post on 14 February 2024.
- The Election Commission of India is likely to appoint two Election Commissioners by March 15, 2024, to fill the vacancies arising from the retirement of Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey and resignation of Arun Goyal.
- At present Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar holds this post as the only member of the Election Commission of India.
- The appointments of the two Election Commissioners are likely to be made by March 15 after a high-level meeting is held on March 13 or 14, depending on the convenience of the Election Commission of India selection committee members.

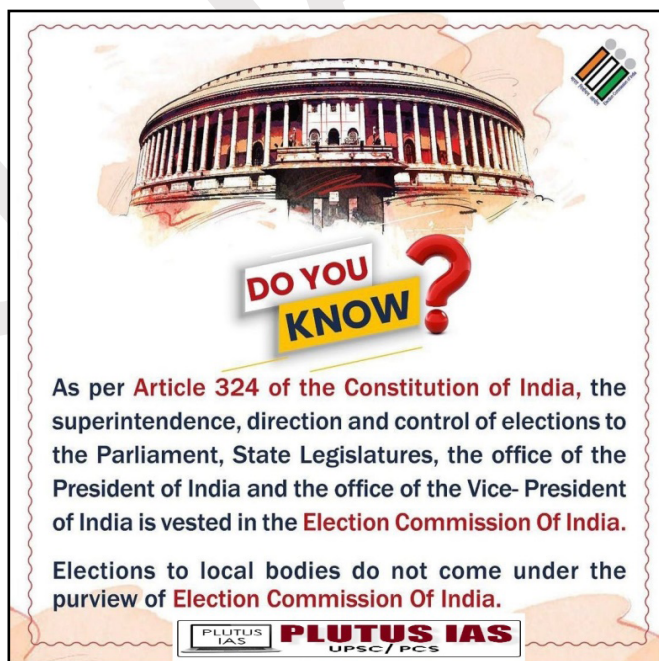


### INTRODUCTION OF ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA :

- The Election Commission of India was established on 25 January 1950.
- That's why in India on 25th January is celebrated as National voters day .
- The Election Commission of India is an autonomous constitutional authority/institution empowered under Article 324 of the Constitution

of India to superintend, direct and prepare electoral rolls for elections to the Parliament of India, State Legislatures as well as to the offices of President and Vice-President of India. Provision has been made for the Election Commission in India to control and exercise control over it. Therefore, the Election Commission is the apex body responsible for the elections held at both the central and state levels.

- To conduct the election processes of Panchayat and Municipality or Municipal Corporation in the states of India. The Constitution of India provides for a separate State Election Commission. Therefore, in the elections of Panchayats and Municipalities in the states. The State Election Commission of the concerned state is the responsible institution.



### STRUCTURE OF ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA :

- In the Election Commission of India formed in 1950 Originally there was only one Election Commissioner but Election Commissioner Amendment Act 1989 As a result, it has been made a multi-member organization.
- Election commission In main Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners, who are selected by the President from time to time, are also included in it.

- Presently in the Election Commission of India there is a Chief Election Commissioner and Two Election Commissioners..
- The Election Commission at the state level is assisted by the Chief Electoral Officer who is an IAS rank officer.

#### TENURE OF ELECTION COMMISSIONER :



- The Constitution of India does not have any clear instructions regarding the tenure of Election Commissioners, but as per the Election Commission Act of 1991 amending the Constitution of India, the tenure of the Chief Election Commissioner of Election Commissioner in India is for a maximum of six years or till the age of 65 years. Whichever happens earlier, he can continue in this post only till then. This tenure is counted from the date of assuming charge.
- They have the same status as the judges of the Supreme Court of India and they get the same salary and allowances as them.
- The Chief Election Commissioner in India is generally a member of the Indian Civil Service, often from the Indian Administrative Service. Those who get rights and are protected by Article 324 of the Constitution of India.
- The Election Commission of India is one of the few constitutional authorities/institutions in India that function autonomously. Other such institutions include the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), the High Court and the Supreme Court and the Union Public Service Commission.

#### PROCESS FOR REMOVAL OF THE CHIEF ELECTION

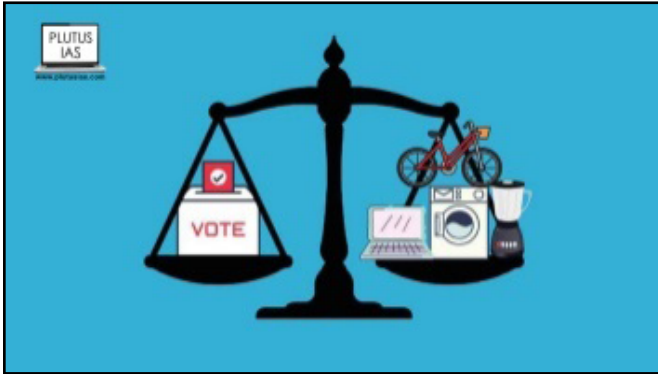
#### COMMISSIONER OF INDIA AND THE ELECTION COMMISSIONER :

- The Chief Election Commissioner of India can be removed from his post in the same way as a judge of the Supreme Court.
- Removal of the Chief Election Commissioner of India from his office by impeachment requires a resolution passed by the Parliament of India with a two-thirds majority in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.
- Their removal can be done only on the basis of misbehavior, favoritism towards any political party or if they are proved incapable of completing their work.
- It is important to note that no Chief Election Commissioner has ever been impeached in India.
- Other Election Commissioners appointed as members of the Election Commission of India may be removed by the President of India on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.
- However, this provision has never been implemented in India yet.
- Before the Lok Sabha elections in 2009, Chief Election Commissioner N Gopalaswami had recommended the removal of Election Commissioner Naveen Chawla. The reason behind this recommendation was the potential conflict of interest due to Chawla's upcoming appointment as Chief Election Commissioner and his alleged biased political party dealings. However, President of India Pratibha Patil opined that such a recommendation was not binding on the President and she rejected it. Following Gopalaswami's retirement the following month, Chawla took over as Chief Election Commissioner and supervised and conducted the 2009 Lok Sabha general elections.

#### POWERS OF ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA :

The powers of the Election Commission of India can be mainly classified into three categories –

- Administrative powers
- Advisory powers
- Quasi – judicial powers



### ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS OF ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA :

- The Election Commission of India is empowered to function in accordance with the Delimitation Commission Act and determine the territorial boundaries of electoral constituencies for various elections.
- It has the power to register and deregister any political party or entity.
- It is authorized to promulgate 'Model Code of Conduct' for election campaigns in India and ensure its implementation.
- This commission has the power to monitor election expenses of political parties, thereby ensuring a level playing field for all parties, irrespective of their size and spending capacity.
- It may appoint officers from various departments of the Civil Service of India as election observers and expenditure observers.

### ADVISORY POWERS OF ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA :

- The Election Commission of India has the power to advise the President of India in the matter of determining the qualifications and disqualifications of Members of Parliament and the conditions for elections thereto.
- This Commission also advises the Governors of the concerned State on the disqualification of

members of the State Legislatures.

- It advises the High Courts and the Supreme Court on matters relating to post-election disputes between candidates and political parties in general elections in India.
- Post-election disputes related to the election of the President and Vice President are referred to the Supreme Court. Disputes relating to Parliament and State Legislatures are referred to the High Courts.

### QUASI – JUDICIAL POWERS OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA :

- The Election Commission of India has the authority to settle disputes related to the recognition given to political parties and candidates in India.
- It has powers to act as a court for cases relating to disputes arising out of allocation of election symbols to political parties and candidates.
- Elections related to the elections of Panchayats and Municipalities held in the states are conducted under the supervision of the State Election Commission. State election commissions are advised by and accountable to the Election Commission of India.

### The powers of the Election Commission are enshrined in various articles of the Indian Constitution, including –

- **Article 324** : It gives the ECI the responsibility to directly monitor, control and direct national and state-level elections.
- **Article 325** : This article stipulates that the inclusion and exclusion of names in the electoral roll should be on the basis of Indian citizenship. It states that no citizen of India above voting age should be excluded from the rolls or included in the special electoral roll on the basis of race, caste, religion or sex.
- **Article 326** : This article establishes universal adult suffrage as the basis for election to all levels of elected government.
- **Article 327** : It outlines the responsibilities of



the ECI and the Parliament with respect to the conduct of national elections.

- **Article 328** : It defines the roles and responsibilities of state legislatures in relation to state-level elections.
- **Article 329** : It prohibits the court's intervention in election-related matters unless specifically asked to provide its views.

### MAJOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA :



The Election Commission of India plays an important role in the democratic processes of the country.. **Following are some of the major roles and responsibilities of the Election Commission of India –**

- **To ensure a fair electoral process** : The Election Commission of India It is entrusted with the responsibility of conducting elections at various levels including national, state and local elections. It is responsible for monitoring the entire election process from announcement of election dates to declaration of results.
- **Voter Registration** : To ensure that eligible citizens in India can exercise their right to vote, Election Commission of India Facilitates the voter registration process. It conducts voter registration drives and updates voter lists and issues voter identity cards to eligible persons.
- **Ensuring independence and impartiality** : With the aim of ensuring fair and balanced representation, the ECI delimits electoral boundaries. It periodically reviews and revises constituency boundaries based on population changes, at-

tempting to maintain approximately the same number of voters in each constituency.

- **Announcing election schedule** : The Election Commission of India In India determines the schedule of elections, which includes announcement of dates for filing of nominations, voting and counting of votes. It ensures that the entire electoral process is conducted within a reasonable time frame.
- **Implementing Model Code of Conduct** : To maintain ethical standards and fair practices during elections in India, Election Commission of India Enforces an ideal code of conduct. This code regulates the conduct of political parties and candidates, preventing abuse of power or unfair advantage.
- **Ensuring electoral laws and rules** : The Election Commission of India Makes and enforces electoral laws and rules that govern the conduct of elections. It strives to ensure transparency, fairness and adherence to the Constitution and relevant law throughout the electoral process.
- **Deploying election observers** : To monitor the conduct of elections in India Election Commission of India Deploys election observers. These observers oversee polling stations, observe the vote counting process and report any irregularities or violations to the ECI.
- **Scheduling voter education and awareness programs** : In India recognizing the importance of a democratic and active citizenry, The Election Commission of India Organizes voter education and awareness programs. These programs aim to increase awareness among citizens about the importance of voting and their rights as voters, with the aim of ultimately increasing voting percentage and promoting informed decision making.
- **Granting recognition to political parties** : The Election Commission of India Provides recognition to political parties in India based on specific criteria. It ensures that recognized parties comply with financial disclosure requirements, adhere to the code of conduct and meet other eligibility criteria to participate in elections.



- **To provide election monitoring and enforcement and election security :** The Election Commission of India Prioritizes the security of the electoral process, cooperating with law enforcement agencies. It takes measures to prevent electoral malpractices, maintain law and order during elections and provide a safe environment for voters.
- **Protecting democratic values :** The Election Commission of India It is entrusted with the important responsibility of conducting elections at various levels including State Assemblies, Parliament, President, Vice President and local governing bodies. Therefore, its primary objective is to maintain democratic values by ensuring that the electoral process is conducted in a fair, transparent and democratic manner.
- **Technological advancements :** The Election Commission of India has adopted technological advancements to streamline the electoral process and ensure accuracy and efficiency. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) have revolutionized voting, providing a secure and reliable way to cast and count votes during elections in India.
- India was an early adopter of electronic voting, implementing it nationwide during parliamentary elections in 2014. This was a significant achievement given India's large and diverse population, which also includes many rural areas with illiterate citizens.
- The importance of the office of the Chief Election Commissioner in the Indian political process became widely recognized during the tenure of T. N Seshan from 1990 to 1996. Seshan is famous for his determined efforts to tackle corruption and manipulation in Indian elections.

#### IMPORTANCE OF ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA :

- The Election Commission of India has played a vital role in successfully conducting national and state elections since 1952. Today, it actively works towards promoting greater participation of people in the electoral process. The Commission has effectively established discipline among political parties by threatening to revoke

recognition if they fail to maintain internal party democracy. It upholds the constitutional values of equality, equity, fairness, independence and rule of law in its monitoring, direction and control over electoral governance.

- The Election Commission ensures that elections are conducted with the highest standards of credibility, fairness, transparency, integrity, accountability, autonomy and professionalism. It strives to create an inclusive and voter-centric environment while ensuring participation of all eligible citizens. The Commission engages with political parties and all stakeholders to serve the best interests of the electoral process. It also plays an important role in raising awareness about the electoral process and governance among stakeholders including political parties, voters, election officials, candidates and the general public. These efforts are aimed at increasing trust and confidence in India's electoral system.



#### CURRENT CHALLENGES BEFORE THE ELECTION COMMISSION IN INDIA :

- The Election Commission of India is struggling to stem the rise in violence and electoral malpractices fueled by monetary influence, resulting in the criminalization of politics.
- The Commission lacks sufficient authority and resources to effectively regulate political parties, including enforcing intra-party democracy and regulating party finances.
- There are concerns about the Election Commission's declining independence from the executive, which has negatively impacted its reputation.

- Allegations of electronic voting machines (EVMs) malfunctioning, hacking or failing to register votes have significantly eroded public confidence in the Election Commission.

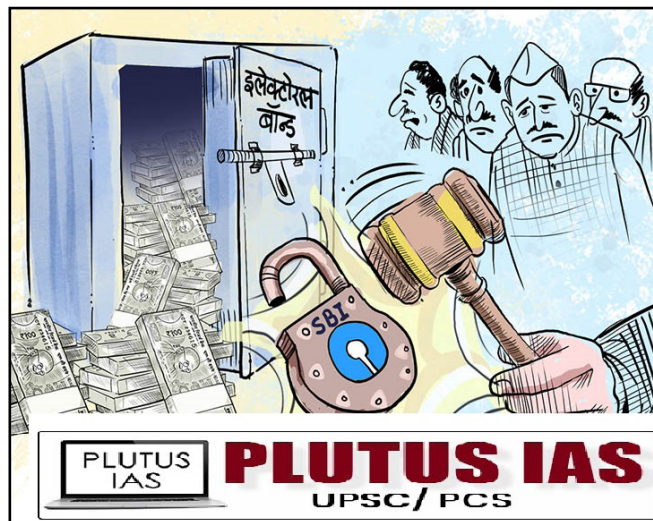
### CONCLUSION / WAY FORWARD :



- The Election Commission of India is instrumental in ensuring the integrity of elections and maintaining democratic principles. Through its efforts to conduct fair elections, promote voter awareness and education of the importance of their vote, and implement anti-corruption measures, it plays an important role in empowering Indian citizens and strengthening the country's democratic structure. . Therefore, to fulfill its underlying objectives, it should make the public aware and educated about the democratic electoral processes of India.
- The Election Commission of India is an important constitutional body entrusted with the responsibility of supervising, managing and controlling the electoral process in India. Therefore, it should ensure that India's electoral process is conducted in a fair and neutral manner.
- The Election Commission should remain alert and closely monitor any collusion within the lower levels of the civil and police bureaucracy that may favor the ruling party. This will help in maintaining the integrity and fairness of the electoral process.
- To regain public confidence amid the ongoing controversies over electronic voting machines (EVMs), the Commission should increase deployment of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail System (VVPAT) in more constituencies.
- The mandate of the Commission and the procedures facilitating its functioning need to be provided with strong legal backing. This will increase its effectiveness and ensure smooth conduct of elections.
- It is important to put in place safeguards that ensure that ethical and competent individuals hold leadership positions in public institutions, including the Election Commission. This will help in maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of the Commission.
- The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) report recommended the establishment of a collegium headed by the Prime Minister, which would include the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the Law Minister and the State Deputy Speaker. As a member of the assembly. This collegium will make recommendations to the President for the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners. This proposal should be considered to enhance the selection process for these posts and ensure competent leadership within the Commission.

## ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA AND ELECTORAL BOND

### Why in the News ?



- Recently, following strict directions from the Su-

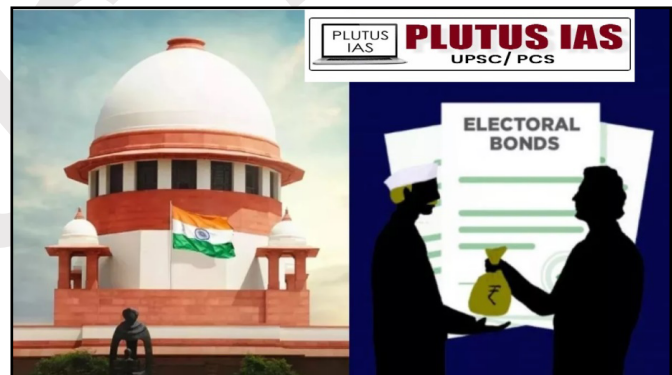
preme Court of India, State Bank of India had shared electoral bond data with the Election Commission of India on March 12.

- The Supreme Court of India had given time till 5 pm on March 15 to the Election Commission to upload the data on its website.
- The Election Commission has put out the details on 'Disclosure of Electoral Bonds offered by SBI' in two parts.
- According to data uploaded by the poll panel, buyers of electoral bonds included Grasim Industries, Megha Engineering, Piramal Enterprises, Torrent Power, Bharti Airtel, DLF Commercial Developers, Vedanta Ltd, Apollo Tyres, Sula Wines, Welspun, and Sun Pharma, Lakshmi Mittal, Edelweiss, PVR, Keventer.
- According to the data, the parties that have encashed electoral bonds include BJP, Congress, AIADMK, BRS, Shiv Sena, TDP, YSR Congress, DMK, JDS, NCP, Trinamool Congress, JDU, RJD, AAP and Samajwadi Party.
- In a landmark judgment delivered on February 15 by the Supreme Court of India, a five-judge Constitution bench had struck down the Centre's electoral bond scheme that allowed secret political funding, calling it "unconstitutional" and The Election Commission was ordered to make public the names of donors, the amount donated by them and the recipients. ,
- According to electoral bond data released by the State Bank, Future Gaming and Hotel Services PR, whose managing director is well-known lottery magnate Santiago Martin, was the biggest donor to political parties between April 12, 2019, and January 24, 2024. Published by the Election Commission of India on 14 March on the orders of the Supreme Court of India.
- The firm donated a cumulative amount of ₹1,368 crore through electoral bonds during this period. Incidentally, the Enforcement Directorate had seized ₹411 crore in the bank accounts of this firm and other companies in March 2022 and later filed a prosecution complaint against it under the Prevention of Money

Laundering Act, 2002, before the PMLA Court, Kolkata on September 9, 2023. Did..

- Bharatiya Janata Party has received electoral bonds worth ₹6060.5 crore between April 12, 2019 and January 24, 2024, which is the highest amount raised through electoral bonds by all political parties in India. During this period, BJP's share in the total bonds redeemed was more than 47.5%.
- Indian Trinamool Congress received an amount of ₹1,609.50 crore (12.6%) through electoral bonds followed by Congress with ₹1,421.9 crore (11.1%), are making them the second and third largest parties in terms of encashment during this period.

#### GRADUAL DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO THE VALIDITY OF THE ELECTORAL BOND SCHEME IN INDIA :



**Electoral bond scheme in India is a way of funding various political parties. In the case related to the validity of the electoral bond scheme, a five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court has given a historic verdict on 15 February 2024, canceling it.**

- The Electoral Bond Scheme was introduced in the Parliament through the Finance Bill in the year 2017 in India.
- On September 14, 2017, an NGO called 'Association for Democratic Reforms' (ADR) filed a challenge in the Supreme Court against this scheme as the lead petitioner.
- On October 03, 2017, the Supreme Court issued notice to the Central Government and the Elec-



tion Commission of India on the PIL filed by that NGO.

- On January 2, 2018, the Central Government notified the Electoral Bond Scheme in India.
- On November 7, 2022, the electoral bond scheme was amended to increase the number of sale days in a year from 70 to 85, where any assembly election can be scheduled.
- On October 6, 2023, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India D.Y. The Supreme Court bench headed by Chandrachud referred the petitions against the scheme to a five-judge constitution bench.
- On October 31, 2023, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India D.Y. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chandrachud began hearing petitions against the plan.
- On November 2, 2023, the Supreme Court reserved its decision on this scheme.
- On February 15, 2024, the Supreme Court of India gave a unanimous verdict striking down the electoral bond scheme, saying that it violates the constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression as well as the right to information granted to Indian citizens by the Indian Constitution.

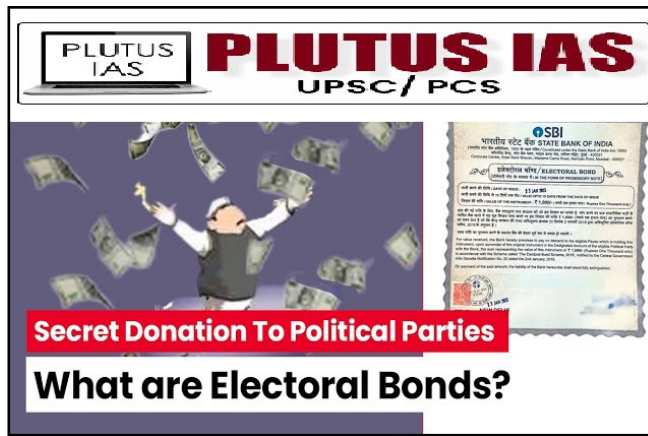
**The Supreme Court of India had agreed to focus mainly on two important issues during the hearing related to the electoral bond scheme. Those two important issues are the following—**

- Violations of citizens' right to information about the legality of secret donations to political parties and the financing of political parties, potentially fueling corruption.
- These issues relate to violation of Constitutional Articles 19, 14 and 21.

#### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF ELECTORAL BOND SCHEME :**

- The electoral bond system in India was introduced in the Parliament through a Finance Bill in the year 2017 and was also implemented in the year 2018.

- Electoral bonds in India serve as a vehicle for individuals and institutions to make donations to registered political parties under the scheme without keeping the names of the donors secret or making public.



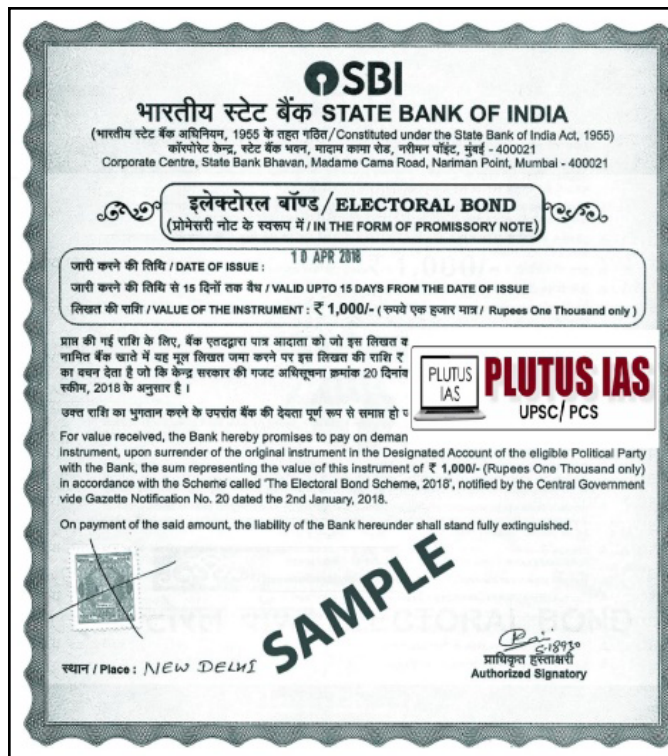
#### **FEATURES OF ELECTORAL BOND SCHEME :**

- Under the electoral bond scheme in India, State Bank of India issues bonds of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore.
- This bond issued by State Bank of India is interest free and is payable on demand by the holder.
- This bond can be purchased by any Indian citizen or any institutions established in India.
- Electoral bonds in India can also be purchased individually or jointly.
- This electoral bond issued by State Bank of India is valid only for 15 days from the date of issue.

#### **AUTHORIZED ISSUING BANKS FOR ELECTORAL BONDS IN INDIA :**

- The authorized issuing bank for electoral bonds in India is the State Bank of India.
- The Electoral bonds are issued only through designated State Bank of India branches in India.





### ELIGIBILITY OF POLITICAL PARTIES TO BUY ELECTORAL BONDS IN INDIA :

- Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 Under this, only those registered political parties in India, which have secured at

least 1% of the votes cast for the Lok Sabha or Assembly in the last general election, are eligible to purchase this electoral bond.

- The Electoral bonds can be purchased only through digital medium or cheque in India .
- In India, encashment of electoral bonds can be done only through the authorized bank account of the political party.

### TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY TOWARDS ELECTORAL BONDS :

- Political parties in India are required to disclose their bank account details to the Election Commission of India.
- To ensure transparency in electoral bonds, donations are made through banking channels.
- In India, it is mandatory for various political parties to give details of the use of money received from electoral bonds.

### BENEFITS OF ELECTORAL BOND SCHEME IN INDIA :

- The money received under the Electoral Bond Scheme in India increases the transparency of

## Electoral Bonds Scheme Notified

To help cleanse the political funding system in the country

#### Nature

- Bearer instrument in the nature of a Promissory Note
- Interest free banking instrument

#### Eligibility

- A citizen of India or a body incorporated in India
- On fulfillment of all the extant KYC norms
- By making payment from a bank account

#### Lifespan

- Shelf life of only 15 days
- Can be used for making donation only to the political parties registered u/s 29A of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951

#### Period of Purchase

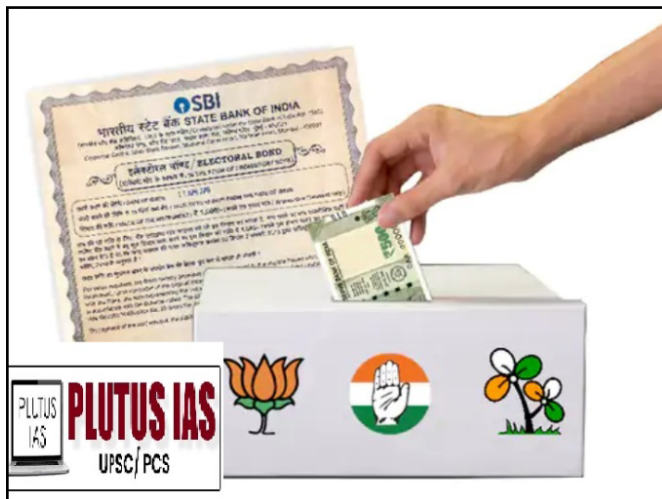
- Available for purchase for a period of 10 days each in the months of January, April, July and October, as may be specified by the Government

#### Value

- Issued/ Purchased in multiples of Rs.1,000, Rs.10,000, Rs.1,00,000, Rs.10,00,000 and Rs.1,00,00,000
- Available from the Specified Branches of the State Bank of India (SBI)

the election funding expenses of various political parties in India.

- Political parties are liable to disclose the use of funds received under the Electoral Bond Scheme or as donations.
- Under the Electoral Bond Scheme there is a reduction in cash in kind or cash transactions.
- Donors' names are kept secret or the confidentiality of the donor's identity is protected.



### MAIN CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO ELECTORAL BOND SCHEME IN INDIA :

#### ELECTORAL BOND SCHEME BEING CONTRARY TO ITS BASIC IDEA :

- The main reason for criticism of the electoral bond scheme in India is that it works completely contrary to its basic idea or objective, which is to bring transparency in electoral funding.
- A section of critics regarding the electoral bond scheme in India argue that the secrecy of electoral bonds is applicable only to the public and opposition parties and does not apply to political parties receiving donations.

#### STRONG POSSIBILITY OF EXTORTION UNDER ELECTORAL BOND SCHEME :

- The Electoral bonds are sold through the state-owned bank (SBI), which allows the ruling government to know who is funding its opponents' parties in India.

- Under the Electoral Bond Scheme it provides the facility to the ruling party or the current government to recover money especially from the big companies or sometimes it facilitates the ruling party to harass that person or that company for not giving money to the ruling party. It also shows the strong possibility of. It somehow provides an unfair advantage to the ruling party.

#### STRONG POSSIBILITY OF THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION BEING COMPROMISED :

- The Supreme Court of India has long held that the right to information is an integral part of the right to freedom of expression (Article 19) under the Indian Constitution, especially in the context of elections.
- In India, the Central Government had made several amendments to the Electoral Bond Scheme through two Finance Acts, Finance Act, 2017 and Finance Act, 2016, both Finance Acts. **'Money Bill'** As it was passed in the Lok Sabha.
- The petitioners challenged these amendments in the Supreme Court of India. **'Unconstitutional', 'Principles of Separation of Powers' and 'Fundamental Rights'** The electoral bond scheme was challenged on the ground of violation of a series of provisions.

#### AGAINST FAIR AND FREE ELECTION PROCESS :

- The Electoral bonds in India do not provide any details of the source of funds received by Indian citizens.
- Keeping the names of donors given in the form of electoral bonds secret or not making their names public, the effect of the said anonymity does not apply to the then ruling political parties or the government, which always demands data from the State Bank of India (SBI). By doing this you can access the details of the donor.
- This means that the government in power can take advantage of this information and disrupt free and fair elections.

#### AGAINST THE BASIC CONCEPT OF INDIAN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM :

- In India, the Central Government, through an amendment in the Finance Act 2017, has given exemption to political parties to declare the name of donations received through electoral bonds.
- No citizen or voter of India ever knows which person, which company or which organization has provided how much funds to which party through electoral bonds.
- In a representative democracy of any country with a democratic system, citizens cast their votes for those who represent them in the Parliament. Therefore, the citizens of India should have the right to know how much money any political party has received through electoral bonds.

#### **FOCUSING ON THE PROFITS OF BIG CORPORATE HOUSES AND BIG BUSINESS HOUSES :**

- The electoral bond scheme in India has opened the door to unlimited corporate donations and secret financing by Indian and foreign companies to various political parties in India, which can have serious implications for Indian democracy.
- Big business houses benefit from 100% tax exemption on donations made by corporate and even foreign entities in India under the electoral bond scheme.

#### **PROMOTION OF CRONY CAPITALISM :**

- The Electoral bond scheme in India removes all previously existing limits on political donations and allows corporations with effective resources to finance elections. As a result, the path to crony capitalism is paved.
- Crony capitalism is a capitalist economic system characterized by close, mutually beneficial collusion between businessmen and government officials. Due to which there may be a threat to India's democratic system.

#### **CONCLUSION / SOLUTION :**

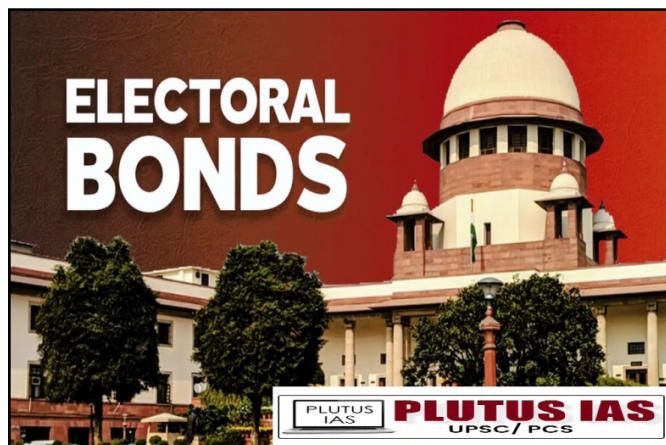
- There is an urgent need to implement measures to increase transparency in the electoral bond

scheme in India.

- There should be strict rules regarding disclosure to the Election Commission regarding receipt of donations by political parties in India and the Election Commission of India should be empowered to investigate any kind of donations and both electoral bonds and money spent on elections and elections. There should be a strict provision for clarification regarding
- There is an urgent need to identify and address the existing shortcomings in electoral bonds to prevent risks such as potential misuse, violation of donation limits and crony capitalism and flow of black money in respect of funds raised from the electoral bond scheme in India.
- Time bound implementation of the Electoral Bond Scheme through judicial scrutiny, periodic review and public participation to address emerging concerns about democracy in the current Indian democratic system, to adapt to changing political scenarios and to ensure a more inclusive decision making process in a democracy. There is an urgent need to ensure monitoring.
- There is an urgent need for bold reforms at the political level as well as effective regulation of political financing to stop the vicious cycle of corruption prevalent in India's democracy and bureaucracy and the decline in the quality of democratic politics.
- To make the entire governance system more accountable and transparent in India's democracy, it is extremely important to remove the loopholes in the existing laws regarding the Electoral Bond Scheme.
- In Indian democracy, significant changes can be brought about in the existing electoral bond scheme by starting voter awareness campaigns.
- In Indian democracy, if the voters become aware of the basic principles of democracy and reject those candidates and political parties who spend more money in elections or bribe the voters, then Indian democracy will move a step forward towards its basic objective. Will

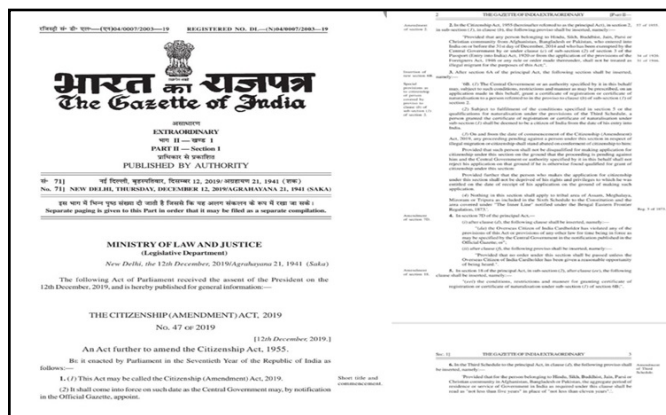


go. Which is a sign of a bright future for the democracy of the Indian democratic system.



## CITIZEN AMENDMENT ACT 2019

### Why in the News?

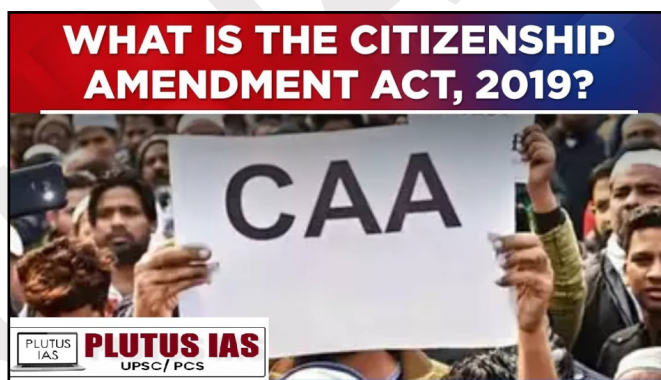


- Recently, on March 11, 2024, the Union Home Ministry of India has issued a notification regarding the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019.
- With the release of this notification, this Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 will now be implemented in the entire country.
- The Citizenship Amendment Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 9 December 2019 and the bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on 9 December 2019 itself. This bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 11 December 2019.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019 to amend the Citizenship Act 1955 was passed assent to the legislation on December 12, 2019 by

former President of India Ramnath Kovind, but the legislation was not notified yet.

- Through the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, religious minorities belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Parsi and Christian communities from India's neighboring countries Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan will now find it easier to obtain Indian citizenship.
- Due to the global pandemic Corona, there was a delay in implementing the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 in India, but now it has been notified and implemented by the Central Government.

### MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT 2019 :



- This Act makes illegal foreign immigrants from six religious communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, namely Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, eligible for Indian citizenship.
- This law applies to those people who have taken refuge in India due to religious persecution in these countries neighboring India or who came to India as refugees due to persecution on religious grounds.
- Under the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, only those refugees who entered India on or before 31 December 2014 are eligible for Indian citizenship.
- After acquiring citizenship, such migrants will be deemed to be Indian citizens from the date of their entry into India and all legal proceedings in respect of their status as illegal migrants



or their citizenship will be discontinued.

- These illegal immigrants will get Indian citizenship through the naturalization process. The naturalization process requires a certain category of foreign national to reside in India for at least 11 years before applying for Indian citizenship.
- Under the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, the required period of residence in India has been reduced from 11 years to only 5 years.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah had mentioned the Nehru-Liaquat Pact on a few occasions in Parliament to justify the Citizenship Act.

#### WHERE WILL THE CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT 2019 NOT BE APPLICABLE?

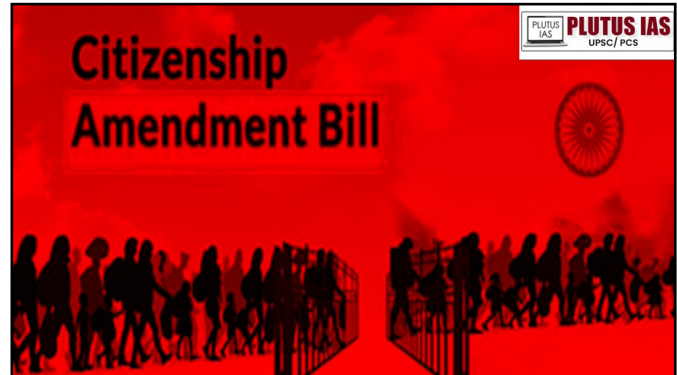
- This Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 will not be applicable in the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, the states included in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
- The Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 is also not applicable in areas where 'Inner Line Permit' is in place which includes the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur.

#### THE MAIN REASONS FOR THE CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT 2019 BEING CONTROVERSIAL :

- One of the most important reasons why the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 is a controversial law in India is that under this law, for the first time in India, citizenship is being or will be given on the basis of religion.
- One of the arguments against this law by legal experts in India is that this law goes against the secular character of India as a state as described in the Preamble/Preamble of the Constitution of India and it discriminates against Muslims. .
- Some legal experts also believe that implementing it across the country just before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections is being seen as BJP's agenda to polarize votes in the country.

#### ARGUMENTS GIVEN BY THE HOME MINISTRY OF

#### INDIA IN FAVOR OF THE CITIZENSHIP LAW :



- **Not applicable to Indian citizens :** CAA does not apply to Indian citizens. Therefore it does not in any way abrogate or reduce the rights of any Indian citizen.
- The legal process for obtaining Indian citizenship remains unchanged
- Further, the existing legal process for acquiring Indian citizenship by a foreigner of any category as provided in the Citizenship Act, 1955 is in operation and the CAA does not amend or alter this legal position in any way.
- Therefore, Indian citizenship can be obtained only after fulfilling the eligibility conditions already provided in the law for registration or naturalization of legal immigrants of any religion from any country.
- **Resolving issues related to North-East India :** The annual report once again attempts to allay apprehensions regarding the law in the North-East, stating that **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution** areas under an **Inner line permit** Including the areas under governance will ensure the protection of the indigenous and tribal population of the region.

#### CITIZENSHIP LAWS IN INDIA :

- Three types of lists are described in the Indian Constitution for making law on any subject, These lists are as follows – Union List, State List and Concurrent List.
- According to the Constitution of India, the right to make any kind of constitutional amendment or make any kind of law in the context of citi-

zenship comes under the Union List.

- Therefore, according to Article 11 of the Indian Constitution, the Parliament of India has the power to make laws on citizenship. Using this power, the Parliament of India passed the Citizenship Act 1955.
- Therefore, this law makes provisions regarding the acquisition and termination of Indian citizenship. The Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 has amended the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian illegal immigrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan eligible for citizenship.

#### **NEW PROVISION ADDED IN THE CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT 2019 RELATED TO INDIAN CITIZENSHIP :**



- The Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 has a provision for granting Indian citizenship by naturalization.
- Under this law, it is mandatory for the applicant to have resided in India during the last 12 months and for the last 11 months out of the last 14 years. This law extends the period from 11 years to 5 years for persons belonging to six religions (Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Parsi and Christian) and three countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan).
- There is also a provision in this law that if any rule is violated then the registration of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders can be canceled.

#### **METHOD OF OBTAINING INDIAN CITIZENSHIP :**

In Part II of the Indian Constitution, provisions re-

lated to citizenship of India are made from Article 5 to Article 11. The Citizenship Act 1955 was enacted in India regarding citizenship of India. In which the Constitution has been amended from time to time.

Citizenship of India is acquired by the Citizenship Act, 1955 by the following methods and conditions:—

- On the basis of birth,
- On the basis of lineage,
- Based on registration,
- On the basis of naturalization,
- On the basis of area covered,

#### **GROUND FOR TERMINATION OF INDIAN CITIZENSHIP :**

According to the Indian Citizenship Act, 1955, any person can be deprived of Indian citizenship on the basis of the following three situations –

- By voluntary sacrifice,
- by dismissal,
- on the basis of deprivation

#### **NATURE OF CITIZENSHIP IN INDIA :**

- According to the Indian Constitution, the form of governance in India is federal but under the Centre-State relations in India, a dual governance system has been adopted.
- In India, there is a provision of only single citizenship i.e. Indian citizenship. Therefore, No separate citizenship system has been made for the states in India.
- Outside India, the system of dual citizenship has been adopted in other federal states, such as America and Switzerland.
- The system of dual citizenship can create problems of discrimination. This discrimination can be regarding voting rights, appointment to public posts, business etc.
- Dual citizenship is currently being sought for Tamil refugees, but since the concept of dual

citizenship has no constitutional basis in India. That is why, on the recommendation of the L.M. Singhvi Committee constituted in the year 2000, a provision was made to provide dual citizenship to persons of Indian origin to deal with emergency situations.

- Considering the recommendations of the L.M. Singhvi Committee, the then Government of India made the provision of 'Overseas Citizens of India (OCI)' in the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2003. It has also been seen as a limited version of dual citizenship.
- Illegal immigrants can be imprisoned or deported under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920. The 1946 and 1920 Acts empower the Central Government to regulate the entry, exit and residence of foreigners within India. In 2015 and 2016, the Central Government had issued two notifications exempting certain groups of illegal immigrants from the provisions of the 1946 and 1920 Acts. These groups are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who came to India on or before December 31, 2014. This means that these groups of illegal immigrants will not be deported.

#### MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CITIZEN :

- Refugees are forced to flee their country due to persecution or fear of being persecuted. While migration of a migrant from his country may be due to various reasons like employment, family, education etc. but it does not include persecution. Apart from this, the migrant (whether in his own country or in another country) continues to get the benefit of various types of protection from his own country.
- Exclusion of Sri Lankan refugees from the Citizenship Amendment Act passed in the year 2019 and the demand by some political parties to give them dual citizenship has once again brought this issue to the center of discussion, hence in such a situation it is very important to discuss the provisions related to Indian citizenship. becomes necessary.

#### NEHRU – LIAQUAT PACT :

- It was an agreement between the governments of India and Pakistan regarding the protection and rights of minorities which was signed in Delhi in 1950 between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan.
- The need for such an agreement was felt by minorities in both countries after partition, which was accompanied by large-scale communal riots.
- In 1950, according to some estimates, more than one million Hindus and Muslims migrated from East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) amid communal tensions and riots such as the East Pakistan riots of 1950 and the Noakhali riots.

#### MAJOR PROVISIONS OF NEHRU – LIAQUAT PACT :

- Refugees were allowed to return without molestation to dispose of their property.
- Abducted women and looted property were to be returned.
- Forced conversion was not recognised.
- Minority rights were confirmed.

#### BASIS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN :

- "The Governments of India and Pakistan solemnly agree that to the minorities in each of their territories, full equality of citizenship, regardless of religion, full sense of security with respect to life, culture, property and personal dignity, freedom of movement, Will ensure freedom. within each country and freedom of occupation, speech and worship, subject to law and morality," the treaty states.
- "Members of minorities shall have equal opportunities with members of the majority community to participate in the public life of their country, to hold political or other office and to serve in the civil and armed forces of their country. Both governments declare these rights as fundamental and work to implement them



effectively.

## CONCLUSION / PATH TO SOLUTION :



- An attempt has been made to allay apprehensions regarding law and order on the basis of the annual report issued regarding law and order in the North-Eastern states of India, in which it has been said that the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution It is important to ensure the protection of the indigenous and tribal population of the area by including areas under IPC and Inner Line Permit regime.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 is a law to give the right to Indian citizenship to refugees who came to India after being persecuted on religious grounds from three neighboring countries of India.
- The Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 is a law to grant citizenship of India.
- The Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 will not result in the loss of citizenship of any Indian citizen, irrespective of his/her religion. This law is only for those people who had to endure oppression for years and who have no other place in the world except India.
- At present, India is an emerging global economic power, which has to keep pace with global aspirations as well as strategically and globally. Therefore, India has faced the problem of refugees many times before. In such a situation, the Government of India needs to adopt a liberal approach so that India's concept of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" can be successful.
- India may currently be in a better position to

shape regional and global efforts on other emerging issues affecting the world, including the problem of refugees.

- Apart from this, more constructive efforts should be made to convince the people of the North-East that the linguistic, cultural and social identity of the people of this region will be protected.
- To solve this problem of refugees, the Government of India should work together with other countries affected by this problem and the international community so that the people can be helped by developing policies in accordance with human dignity, human rights and international cooperation.
- India should try to enter into effective repatriation agreements with neighboring countries to send refugees and illegal immigrants back to their countries of origin.
- The Indian government should consider granting limited citizenship to refugees arriving with valid travel documents.
- The fundamental duties of Indian citizenship include protection of persecuted people in our neighboring countries but the protection function should be in accordance with the Constitution.

## ONE NATION ONE ELECTION

### Why in the News?

The High-level Committee (HLC) on the concept of One Nation, One Election presented its findings to President Droupadi Murmu. The report highlighted that synchronised elections could bring about significant changes in the electoral system and governance as a whole. This committee, commonly referred to as the Kovind panel due to its chairmanship by former President Ram Nath Kovind, was established in September 2023.

### HLC'S MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

#### One Unified Election by 2029



The committee suggests amending the Constitution to hold simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and local bodies by 2029.

### Constitutional Amendments

The committee proposes 18 amendments to the Constitution and other related statutes. The first step involves synchronising Lok Sabha and state assembly elections. This requires setting a specific date after a Lok Sabha election, upon which the terms of state assemblies with elections will end alongside Parliament's term. No state ratification is needed for these constitutional changes. The second step involves synchronising municipal and panchayat elections with Lok Sabha and state assembly elections within 100 days. This step necessitates ratification by at least half of the states.

### Rejection of the German Model

The committee rejects the German model of a constructive vote of no-confidence. It upholds the prevailing parliamentary practice, stating that MPs' right to bring a no-confidence motion without prerequisites is integral to the Indian parliamentary system and should remain unchanged.

### Single Electoral Roll and ID

To create a single electoral roll and ID for all tiers of government, the committee suggests amending Article 325 of the Constitution. This requires ratification by at least half of the states.

### Resolution for Hung House

In case of a hung House or no-confidence motion, fresh elections should be conducted to form the new Lok Sabha or state assembly for the remaining term.

### Introduction of Article 324A

A new Article 324A is recommended to allow Parliament to enact laws for synchronised elections to municipalities and panchayats with General Elections.

### Meeting Logistical Needs

The committee recommends that the Election Commission of India collaborate with State Election

Commissions to plan ahead for logistical requirements like manpower, security, and voting machines.

### WHAT IS ONE NATION ONE ELECTION?

"One Nation One Election," also referred to as synchronised elections or simultaneous elections, entails the process of conducting multiple elections for different tiers of government (such as national and state levels) concurrently or on a coordinated timetable. This approach involves voters casting their ballots to elect members of both the Lok Sabha and state assemblies on a single day, simultaneously (or possibly in phases, depending on the circumstances).



## POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF ONOE

**Enhanced Governance Efficiency:** Frequent elections can disrupt government operations as officials become preoccupied with campaigning. ONOE could minimise these disruptions, allowing for more focused attention on policy implementation and development initiatives.

**Streamlined Implementation of Policies:** The Model Code of Conduct, which restricts policy decisions during elections, can create delays and hinder progress. With fewer elections, the code's impact could be minimised, facilitating smoother policy execution.

**Curbing Political Corruption:** Simultaneous elections could potentially decrease campaign expenses, a major source of political corruption in India. Reduced fundraising pressure might lead to cleaner elections and more ethical governance.

**Cost Savings and Resource Optimization:** By consolidating resources across multiple elections, ONOE could lead to significant cost savings for the government. Sharing infrastructure, personnel, and technology for a single nationwide election cycle could be more economical than conducting numerous separate polls. Additionally, maintaining and updating voter lists would be streamlined, further reducing administrative burdens.

**Improved Voter Experience:** Consistent voter rolls across all elections would eliminate concerns about missing names or discrepancies. This would simplify the voting process and potentially increase voter turnout.

**Enhanced Security During Elections:** The extensive deployment of security forces for frequent elections can be a logistical challenge and divert resources from other critical areas. ONOE could optimise security arrangements by consolidating deployments for a single election cycle.

**Reduced Political Opportunism:** Fixed-term elections with ONOE might discourage politicians from switching parties based on short-term gains, potentially promoting greater political stability and focus on long-term objectives.

**Improved Financial Stability for States:** The pres-

sure on state governments to announce populist measures during frequent elections can strain their finances. ONOE could mitigate this pressure, allowing for more responsible fiscal management at the state level.

## CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH ONOE IMPLEMENTATION

**Constitutional Hurdles:** The Indian Constitution mandates five-year terms for both the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, with provisions for early dissolution. ONOE raises questions about how to handle situations where a government collapses mid-term. Amending the Constitution might be necessary to accommodate ONOE, which could be a complex and time-consuming process.

**Logistical Complexities:** Managing a massive nationwide election simultaneously would require meticulous planning and significant logistical resources. Ensuring the availability and security of electronic voting machines (EVMs), personnel, and other infrastructure across the country would be a major undertaking.

**Impact on Federalism:** Critics argue that ONOE could undermine the autonomy of state governments. Simultaneous national and state elections might lead to national issues overshadowing regional concerns, potentially weakening the federal structure of India.

**Potential for Weakened Accountability:** Some argue that the current system of frequent elections keeps politicians more accountable to voters. With ONOE, voters might have to wait longer to register their dissatisfaction with a government's performance through the ballot box.

**Risk of Biased Outcomes:** Studies suggest that simultaneous elections might favour national parties disproportionately. Regional issues and parties could be overshadowed by national narratives, potentially reducing voter choice and representation at the state level.

**Uncertain Cost Implications:** While cost savings are a potential benefit, there are conflicting estimates about the true financial impact of ONOE. Initial investments in infrastructure and logistics might be

necessary, and the long-term cost picture remains unclear.

**Legal Considerations:** Concerns exist about whether ONOE might violate the Constitution's principles of federalism, as highlighted in past Supreme Court rulings. Careful legal scrutiny would be required to ensure the constitutional viability of ONOE.

## PRELIMS QUESTIONS

### Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. HPCs are intended to be used from classes 8 to 12.
2. NCERT is responsible for creating the High-Quality Progress Cards (HPCs).
3. HPC contribute to a learner-centric evaluation by making students passive recipients of information

How many of the above statements are **NOT** correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

### Q2. What is the purpose of the Holistic Progress Card (HPC)?

- (a) Evaluate only academic performance
- (b) Assess interpersonal connections, self-reflection, creativity, and emotional application in addition to academic performance
- (c) Replace traditional report cards with a numerical grading system
- (d) Focus solely on rote memorisation

### Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Election Commission of India.

1. It is the responsible institution related to the elections of Panchayats and Municipalities in

the states.

2. The Chief Election Commissioner of India has equal status to the judges of the Supreme Court of India and receives the same salary and allowances.
3. The Election Commission of India was established on 25 May 1950.
4. Impeachment requires a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha of India to remove the Chief Election Commissioner of India from his office.

Which of the above statement / statements is/are correct?

- (a). Only 1 and 3
- (b). Only 1 and 4
- (c) Only 2 and 3
- (d) Only 2 and 4

### Q4. Consider the following statements regarding electoral bonds.

1. The Electoral Bond Scheme was introduced in the Parliament through the Finance Bill in the year 2017 in India.
2. The authorized issuing bank for electoral bonds in India is the Reserve Bank of India.
3. The Electoral bonds can be purchased through cash, digital medium, demand draft, ATM and cheque.
4. The Electoral bonds are interest free and payable on demand by the holder.

Which of the above statement/statements is / are correct?

- (a) Only 1 and 3
- (b) Only 2 and 3
- (c) Only 2 and 4
- (d) Only 1 and 4

### Q5. Consider the following statements:



1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

**How many of the statements above are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Q6. Consider the following statements:**

1. According to the Constitution of India a person who is eligible to vote can be made a minister in a State for six months even if he/she is not a member of the Legislature of that State.
2. According to the Representation of People Act, 1951, a person convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to imprisonment for five years is permanently disqualified from contesting an election even after his release from prison.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: D**

**Q7. Consider the following statements regarding the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019.**

1. This is a citizenship law given on the basis of religious identity in which people of all religions will be provided citizenship of India.
2. The Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 will not

apply to the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, a state included in the Sixth Schedule.

3. In India, the method of providing dual citizenship has been adopted under Centre – State relations.
4. The Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 is a law to grant Indian citizenship, not a law to take away Indian citizenship.

**Which of the above statement / statements is/are correct?**

- (a) Only 1 and 3
- (b) Only 1 and 4
- (c) Only 2 and 3
- (d) Only 2 and 4

## ANSWERS

S. No.	Answers
1.	C
2.	B
3.	D
4.	D
5.	D
6.	D
7.	D

## MAINS QUESTIONS

**Q1. Discuss the potential implications of ONOE on political corruption in India. How might simultaneous elections contribute to cleaner and more ethical governance?**

**Q2. What do you understand about electoral bonds? Discuss that in India How do electoral bonds affect the clean, fair, malpractice-free and transparent election process? Explain logically.**

**Q3. Underlining the various powers received by the Election Commission of India, discuss what are the challenges before the Election Commission of**

**India to conduct fair and transparent elections in India and what can be the solution? Present a logical explanation.**

**Q4. How does the HPC align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and what aspects of student development does it aim to emphasise?**

**Q5. Highlighting the main provisions/methods of granting citizenship in India, Discuss whether the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 violates Article 14 of the Constitution of India? Give a logical explanation.**

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## INDIA SIGNED FTA WITH EFTA

### Why in the News?

India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) have signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA). India is currently working on a TEPA with the EFTA countries of Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein.

### EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION (EFTA): A GATEWAY TO EUROPEAN MARKETS

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is a **four-member intergovernmental organisation** established in **1960** to promote economic integration among **Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland**. These nations operate alongside the European Union (EU), participating in the Single Market and Schengen Area but remaining outside the customs union.

### EFTA's primary functions include:

- Maintaining and developing the EFTA Convention, governing economic relations between member states.
- Overseeing the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, **creating a single market with three EFTA members (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) and the EU**.
- Expanding EFTA's network of free trade agreements globally.

### INDIA'S TRADE PACT WITH EFTA

India's historic Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with EFTA marks a significant step towards boosting trade and investment. Here's a breakdown of the agreement's key features and potential impacts:

### TEPA HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Investment Boost:** A first-of-its-kind commitment for **EFTA to invest \$100 billion in India**

**over 15 years, potentially creating 1 million jobs.** (Note: This excludes foreign portfolio investments)

- **Market Access:** EFTA offers **duty-free access for approximately 92.2% of its tariff lines**, which covers 99.6% of India's exports. **India offers similar access for 82.7% of its tariff lines**, accounting for 95.3% of EFTA's exports (with limitations on sensitive goods like gold and agricultural products).
- **Service Sector Expansion:** Improved access for Indian service providers through digital delivery, commercial presence, and streamlined processes for temporary stays of key personnel. TEPA also **paves the way for Mutual Recognition Agreements in specific professions**, allowing Indian professionals to work more easily in EFTA countries.
- **Strong IPR Framework:** The agreement acknowledges **India's robust intellectual property regime** while addressing its concerns regarding generic medicines and patent evergreening, striking a balance between innovation and access to affordable medicines.

India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), boosting trade and investment prospects. EFTA consists of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, operating alongside the EU but outside its customs union.



### SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIA:

- **Trade Opportunities:** TEPA facilitates access to specialised inputs for Indian manufacturers, like high-tech machinery from Switzerland, and **opens doors for the services sector in new markets**. This can lead to a wider range of high-quality goods being produced in India and greater opportunities for Indian IT, consulting, and other service providers. Beyond immediate benefits, TEPA can act as a **stepping stone**



**for Indian companies to integrate into global value chains.** By establishing a strong presence in EFTA markets, Indian firms can become more competitive suppliers on a global scale.

- **EU Market Integration:** Switzerland's strong service exports to the EU present an **opportunity for Indian companies to use it as a base for expanding into the European market.** Indian companies can **leverage Switzerland's expertise and established connections to gain a foothold** in the larger EU market. This can be particularly valuable for Indian companies aiming to enter the high-value services sector of the EU.
- **Supply Chain Diversification:** The agreement helps India **reduce dependence on China for imports**, potentially making its supply chains more resilient. This can be crucial in the face of geopolitical tensions or trade disruptions. Diversification can also **lead to greater bargaining power for India** when negotiating trade deals with other countries.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat Boost:** TEPA encourages **domestic manufacturing across various sectors, aligning with India's self-reliance initiative.** The increased inflow of investments can help upgrade India's manufacturing capabilities and infrastructure. However, to truly benefit from TEPA in the long term, **India will need to focus on technological advancements and innovation to ensure its domestically manufactured goods can compete effectively in the global market.**
- **Job Creation:** The pact has the potential to **generate a significant number of direct jobs supported by enhanced vocational and technical training.** This can improve employability and contribute to India's economic growth. The additional job opportunities created in the services sector can also empower women and young professionals, fostering inclusive growth.

#### CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER:

- **Trade Deficit Concerns:** India's history of trade deficits with major partners, including past FTAs, **raises concerns about a potential widen-**

**ing gap.** High average tariffs in India compared to the global average contribute to this trend. The **investment commitment from EFTA aims to mitigate this by generating economic activity in exchange for market access, but India may also need to review its own tariff structure to improve competitiveness.** Additionally, focusing on export promotion initiatives and streamlining trade procedures can help narrow the trade gap.

- **Competition in EFTA Markets:** Switzerland's recent **elimination of import duties on all industrial goods for all countries** poses a challenge for Indian exporters despite any tariff concessions under TEPA. **Indian manufacturers will need to focus on innovation, quality, and efficiency to compete effectively in the EFTA markets.** EFTA countries are known
- **Political instability:** The timing of agreement endorsement holds significant importance, given the imminent elections in various nations. This factor may potentially postpone the formulation of future trade pacts and geopolitical prospects.

### PRELIMS QUESTIONS

**Q1. Which countries are part of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)?**

- (a) France, Germany, Italy, and Spain
- (b) Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland
- (c) United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, and Sweden
- (d) Portugal, Greece, Austria, and Belgium

**Q2. What is the main purpose of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)?**

- (a) To establish a customs union
- (b) To promote economic integration among its member nations
- (c) To exclude Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland from the Single Market
- (d) To restrict trade agreements globally

**ANSWERS**

S. No.	Answers
1.	B
2.	B

**MAINS QUESTION**

**Q1. Discuss the potential impacts of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) on India's manufacturing capabilities and infrastructure.**

# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## AGNI-5 MISSILE TEST WITH MIRV TECHNOLOGY

### Why in the News?

The recent test of India's Agni-5 Missile, featuring Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle (MIRV) technology and boasting multiple warhead capabilities, signifies a significant advancement in the country's defense capabilities. This achievement, named Mission Divyastra, highlights a notable milestone in India's defence capabilities.

### MIRV TECHNOLOGY

MIRV, or Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle technology, is a game-changer in the world of missiles. It allows a single missile to carry a punch far greater than its traditional counterparts.

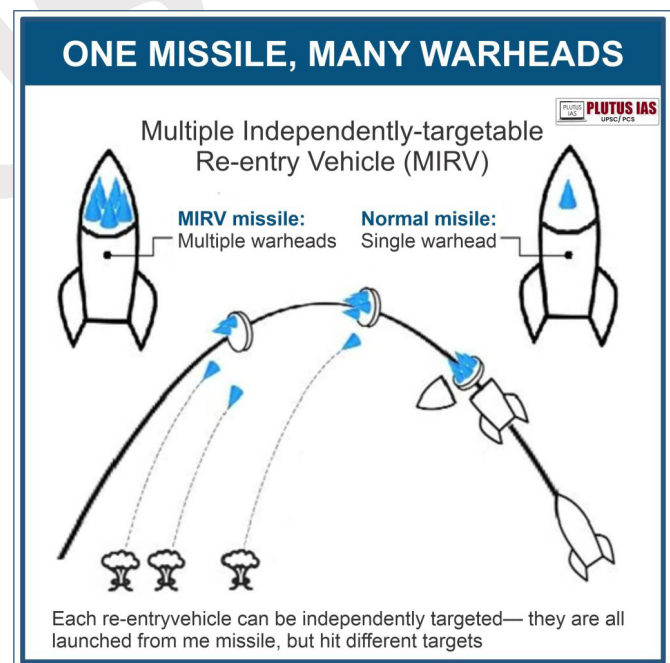
- **Multiple Warheads:** Unlike a standard missile with just one explosive payload, a MIRV-equipped missile **can carry several warheads**. A single missile acts like a multi-headed serpent, each head aimed at a different target.
- **Independent Targeting:** These warheads aren't simply passengers on the missile ride. **Each one is equipped with its own guidance system**, allowing it to be programmed to hit a specific location with pinpoint accuracy.
- **Enhanced Destruction:** This independent targeting capability unlocks a range of possibilities. The warheads can be **programmed to strike multiple targets simultaneously**, causing widespread devastation. Alternatively, they can be unleashed in a sequential attack on a single target, ensuring complete annihilation.

### HISTORY OF MIRV: FROM COLD WAR INNOVATION TO MODERN DETERRENCE

While the recent headlines might suggest MIRV technology is a cutting-edge innovation, its roots lie deeper in history. This technology emerged during

the intense competition of the Cold War.

- **Cold War Genesis (1960s):** The 1960s witnessed the development of MIRV by the superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union. This technology presented a significant leap forward in missile capabilities. The key challenge involved miniaturising warheads, equipping them with independent guidance systems, and ensuring their sequential release from the missile.
- **Proliferation Throughout the Decades:** Over time, MIRV technology wasn't confined to the Cold War giants. Countries like France, the United Kingdom, and China successfully developed this capability. Even Pakistan claims to have tested a MIRV-equipped missile called Ababeel in recent years.



### ADVANTAGES OF MIRV

The allure of MIRV extends beyond its ability to inflict widespread damage in a single attack. It offers several strategic benefits:

- **Bypassing Missile Defenses:** Modern missile defence systems rely on complex networks of radars and interceptor missiles to neutralise in-



coming threats. However, MIRV missiles, with their multiple warheads and independent trajectories, present a significant challenge. Decoy warheads can further confuse these systems, potentially rendering them ineffective against a MIRV attack.

- **Deterrence Through Overwhelming Force:** The sheer destructive power of a single MIRV-equipped missile, capable of unleashing a multi-pronged attack, serves as a strong deterrent against potential adversaries. The potential consequences of a MIRV strike compel nations to think twice before initiating conflict.

### MISSION DIVYASTRA

- “Mission Divyastra” successfully test-launched the indigenously **developed Agni-5 missile equipped with MIRV technology**. This achievement marks a major leap for DRDO and India’s strategic arsenal.
- MIRV allows a single **Agni-5 to carry multiple warheads**, each programmable to strike separate targets, significantly multiplying its destructive potential. This bolsters India’s deterrence against potential threats, particularly with Agni-5’s 5,000+ km range.
- **Developing MIRV is complex**, requiring expertise in building large missiles, **miniaturised warheads**, and **precise guidance systems**. India’s success places it among a select group of nations with this advanced capability.

### AGNI MISSILES

- The **Agni series is India’s workhorse in the realm of long-range ballistic missiles**. These missiles, capable of carrying nuclear warheads and striking targets hundreds to thousands of kilometres away, form a critical part of India’s strategic deterrence arsenal.
- The journey of Agni missiles began in 1989 with the successful test launch of Agni-I, developed under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP).
- Recognising its immense strategic significance, the Agni program was soon elevated to a ded-

icated initiative within India’s defence budget, ensuring dedicated funding for further development.

The Agni series encompasses a range of missiles, each tailored for specific strategic needs:

- **Agni-I and Agni-II:** Classified as **Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs)**, these missiles possess a range of **700-800 km** and over **2,000 km**, respectively, providing a potent deterrent against regional threats.
- **Agni-III and Agni-IV:** Stepping into the **Inter-Medium Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM)** category, Agni-III and Agni-IV boast extended ranges exceeding **2,500 km** and **3,500 km**, respectively. Notably, Agni-IV is equipped with a road-mobile launcher, enhancing its operational flexibility.
- **Agni-V:** The current crown jewel of the Agni series, Agni-V is classified as an **Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)** with a range exceeding **5,000 km**. This allows India to potentially engage targets at long distances.
- **Agni-VI:** The future of the Agni lineage lies with Agni-VI, which is currently under development. This missile is envisioned as an even more advanced ICBM with a projected range of **11,000-12,000 km**, significantly bolstering India’s long-range strike capabilities.

### MAIN QUESTION

**Q1. While MIRV offers deterrence, are there any potential drawbacks to India possessing this technology? Consider factors like regional stability and arms control efforts.**

**Q2. Developing advanced weaponry like MIRV missiles requires significant resources. How might this impact India’s spending on other national security priorities or social programs?**

# ECONOMY

## STUDY ON THE WORKING CONDITION OF GIG WORKERS

### Why in the News?

A recent study carried out by the People's Association in Grassroots Action and Movements sheds light on the working conditions and obstacles faced by individuals working as app-based cab and delivery drivers in India. The results emphasise the crucial requirement for improved social security measures and regulatory supervision to ensure the well-being of gig workers in the nation.

### WORKING CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES OF INDIA'S APP-BASED GIG WORKFORCE

This analysis unveils the realities of working in India's app-based transportation and delivery sector, highlighting the demanding nature of these jobs and the challenges faced by gig workers.

- **Long Hours and Strenuous Work:** The report paints a concerning picture of extended working hours. A substantial **majority (over 83%) of these workers clock in more than 10 hours daily, with a significant number, particularly cab drivers (around one-third), exceeding 14 hours.** This gruelling schedule underscores the physically and mentally demanding nature of their work.
- **Financial Precariousness:** A worrisome finding is the financial vulnerability of these workers. **Over 43% of participants barely make ends meet, earning less than ₹15,000 per month after factoring in expenses.** This meagre income highlights the precarious financial situation of many gig workers and raises concerns about their ability to afford basic necessities.
- **Economic Strain in the Gig Economy:** The economic hardship faced by delivery personnel is stark. A **significant majority (76%) struggle to meet their financial needs.** This finding suggests that the gig economy while offering flexi-

bility, might not always translate to sustainable income.

- **Unequal Impact by Caste:** The study reveals a troubling disparity in working hours based on caste. **Drivers belonging to Scheduled Castes and Tribes face a significantly harsher reality, with over 60% working beyond 14 hours compared to a mere 16% from the unreserved category.** This suggests potential exploitation and unequal opportunities within the gig economy.
- **Compounding Challenges:** Beyond long hours and financial strain, gig workers face additional hurdles. The report identifies issues such as **account deactivation by platforms, which can lead to sudden loss of income.** They may also **encounter rude customer behaviour,** adding further stress to their work experience.

### UNDERSTANDING THE GIG ECONOMY

- The traditional work landscape is undergoing a significant shift with the emergence of the gig economy. This new model disrupts the idea of a fixed, long-term job and instead offers a work environment **characterised by short-term contracts, freelance projects, and independent contractorship.** Often referred to by terms like the **"freelancer economy," "agile workforce,"** or **"sharing economy,"** the gig economy provides flexibility and autonomy for workers, appealing to those seeking an alternative to the nine-to-five routine.
- **The Power of Platforms:** The gig economy thrives on the concept of the **"platform economy."** Businesses are increasingly **leveraging digital platforms to connect with and manage a flexible workforce.** These **platforms act as intermediaries,** facilitating connections between clients with specific tasks and independent workers with the necessary skills to complete them. Familiar examples include **food delivery services like Zomato and Swiggy** or e-commerce giants like Amazon and Flipkart, all of which rely heavily on gig workers to provide

core services like delivery or customer support.

## WHO ARE GIG WORKERS?

India's recently implemented **Labour Codes (2019)** provide a legal definition for gig workers. They are classified as **individuals who perform work and earn income "outside of a traditional employer-employee relationship."** This encompasses a broad range of workers, including freelancers offering their expertise on a project basis, contract-based workers employed for specific tasks, and those engaged in short-term assignments to meet temporary needs.

## A FLOURISHING TREND IN INDIA:

- The gig economy is experiencing rapid growth in India. Estimates suggest that **in 2020-21, around 7.7 million workers** participated in this new work model, representing a significant portion of the workforce – **2.6% of the non-agricultural workforce and 1.5% of the total workforce in India.**
- This trend is expected to continue, with projections indicating the gig workforce could reach a staggering **23.5 million workers by 2029-30.** The rise of the gig economy presents both opportunities and challenges for India's evolving labour market. Understanding its dynamics will be crucial for shaping effective policies and ensuring fair treatment and social security for this growing segment of the workforce.

## ADVANTAGES FOR WORKERS:

- **Flexibility and Control:** The gig economy empowers individuals, particularly women and retirees, by offering flexible work arrangements. This allows them to tailor their work schedules to fit personal needs and responsibilities, achieving a better work-life balance.
- **Earning Power through Variety:** Gig workers can take on multiple projects concurrently, increasing their earning potential and diversifying their income streams.
- **Reduced Costs and Convenience:** Working remotely eliminates commuting costs and provides the convenience of working from a pre-

ferred location, enhancing overall well-being.

## ADVANTAGES FOR BUSINESSES:

- **Enhanced Efficiency and Output:** Gig workers often demonstrate higher levels of efficiency and productivity compared to traditional employees. This can lead to faster project completion times and improved business growth.
- **Reduced Expenses:** Businesses save on costs associated with full-time employees, such as benefits packages, office space maintenance, and training programs. This allows for more efficient resource allocation.



## CHALLENGES OF THE GIG ECONOMY:

- **Limited Benefits and Security:** Gig workers typically lack access to traditional employee benefits like pensions and gratuities, leading to financial insecurity in the long term.
- **Unequal Protection under the Law:** Gig workers often lack the bargaining power and legal protections afforded to traditional employees. This makes it difficult to negotiate fair work terms and advocate for their rights.
- **Job Instability and Unfair Practices:** The gig economy can be precarious, with workers facing sudden termination and potentially unfair wages. This contributes to a sense of job insecurity.
- **Digital Divide:** Limited access to the internet and infrastructure in rural areas can hinder participation in the gig economy, potentially widening the digital divide.



## RETAIL INFLATION AND CONSUMER PRICE INDEX 2024

### Why in the News ?

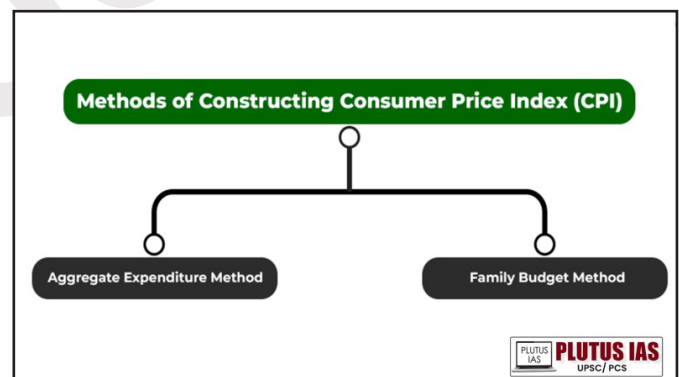


- According to the official data recently released by the Government of India, retail inflation in India has increased to 5.09 percent in February 2024.
- It has been within the range of two to six per cent set by the Reserve Bank of India for six consecutive months.
- Despite the recent rise in retail food prices in India, consumer price index (CPI)-based inflation stood at about 5.1 percent in January.
- In February 2024, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) remained almost unchanged at 5.09 percent as compared to the previous month, while the pace of food price increase in the Consumer Food Price Index has increased by 36 basis points to 8.66 percent.
- Vegetable prices have recorded inflation of 30.3 per cent, an increase of 315 basis points from January.
- While potato prices rose from nearly 2 percent deflation to 12.4 percent inflation on a year-on-year basis in January, onion prices recorded 22.1 percent inflation and tomato prices rose by nearly 400 basis points. The increase reached its highest level in six months at 42 percent.
- According to the daily price monitoring of the Consumer Affairs Department, the average retail prices of potato, onion and tomato are 21.3

per cent, 41.4 percent and 35.2 percent higher respectively as of March 14 from the year-ago level.

- According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare released on March 7, 2024, onion production in the horticulture crop year 2023-24 has decreased by 15.6 percent this year and potato production has also decreased by about two percent.
- The Central Water Commission's water storage data released on March 14, 2024 also shows that the live storage capacity in 150 reservoirs across the country for summer crops is 40 percent of the total capacity and this is the 10-year average and The ratio of last year is less in both respects.
- Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor Michael Patra told the Monetary Policy Committee that persistently high food inflation could increase instability in the economy.

### WAYS TO MEASURE INFLATION IN INDIA :



### WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX (WPI) :

- It is the most commonly used inflation indicator in India.
- In India, it is published by the Office of Economic Advisor of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It includes all transactions from the first point of bulk sale of goods available for wholesale sale in the domestic market of India.
- The problem with the wholesale price index is that the general public does not buy products

at wholesale prices.

### CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI) :

- The consumer price index measures changes in the prices of goods according to retail buyers.
- This index measures changes over time in the level of retail prices of selected goods and services at the rate at which consumers spend their income purchasing the goods.
- **Retail inflation**, whom **CPI inflation** Also known as inflation, defines the rate at which the prices of goods and services purchased by consumers for personal use increase over time.
- It measures changes in the costs of purchasing commonly used household goods and services, including food, clothing, housing, transportation, and medical care.

### TYPES OF CONSUMER PRICE INDEX :

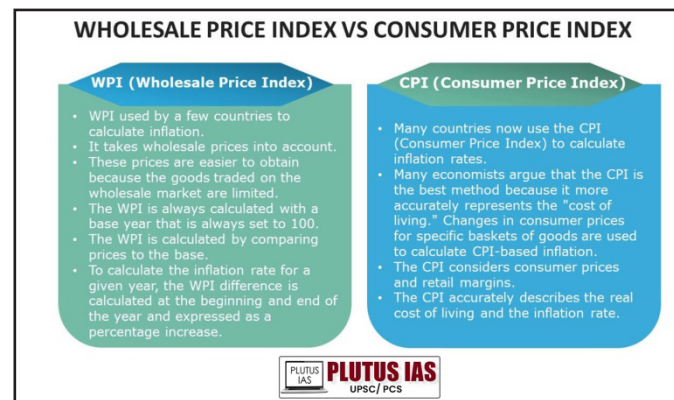


There are four types of Consumer Price Index (CPI), which are as follows –

- CPI for Industrial Workers (IW)
- CPI for Agricultural Laborer (AL)
- CPI for Rural Laborer (RL)
- CPI for Rural / Urban / Combined or Urban Non-Manual Employees (UNME).

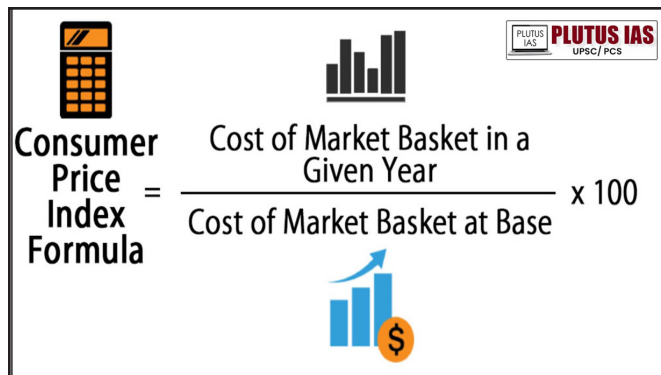
The first three of these are compiled by the Labor Bureau in the Ministry of Labor and Employment. Whereas the fourth type of CPI is compiled by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation.

### CONSUMER PRICE INDEX VS. WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX :



- Wholesale Price Index (WPI) is used to find out the prices of goods at the wholesale level. It is virtually impossible to measure or trace changes in the prices of all goods in the economy. Therefore, inflation is measured by taking a sample in the Wholesale Price Index. After this, a base year is decided against which the current inflation is measured.
- In India, inflation is calculated on the basis of Wholesale Price Index.
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures inflation at the retail level in which consumers are directly involved. This method better measures the impact of inflation on the common consumer.
- WPI based inflation is measured at the producer level while CPI measures changes in prices at the consumer level.
- Both baskets measure the inflationary trend (movement of price signals) within the broader economy, with the two indices differing in the way in which food, fuel and manufactured goods are weighted.
- WPI does not take into account changes in prices of services, whereas CPI takes into account changes in prices of services.

In India, the Reserve Bank of India adopted the CPI measure as the key measure of inflation in April 2014.



$$\text{Consumer Price Index Formula} = \frac{\text{Cost of Market Basket in a Given Year}}{\text{Cost of Market Basket at Base}} \times 100$$

### CURRENT SITUATION OF FOOD PRICE INFLATION AND DEFLATION :

#### INFLATION IN PULSES AND CEREALS :

- **'The Consumer Price Index of India'** The latest data shows that food inflation of two commodities: prices of cereals (11.9%) and pulses (13%) increased sharply in July and August respectively.
- The annual retail price growth of vegetables was even higher, at 37.4% and 26.1% respectively.
- According to this data, the best indicator was tomatoes, whose retail inflation during this period stood at 202.1% and 180.3% respectively.

#### DEFLATION IN ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES AND THE STRATEGY OF GOVERNMENTS :

- For political reasons, most governments naturally privilege consumers over producers. In the present scenario the government should give equal priority to both production and producers especially of the two agricultural/food commodities, apart from other problems.
- The areas given priority by the governments are –

#### NEED FOR GOVERNMENT PRIORITY IN THE FIELD OF VEGETABLE OIL PRODUCTION IN INDIA :

- The harvesting and marketing of soybean had started in the month of October, but the oilseed was already under the control of the government. **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** is trading at a lower level than.
- As oil and meal, there has been a recent decline

in demand for soybeans.

- One of the main reasons for the slowdown in Indian markets is India's import of edible oil from other countries. from India **vegetable oils** imports are estimated to reach a high of 17 million tonnes (mt) in 2022-23.

#### NEED FOR GOVERNMENT PRIORITY IN THE FIELD OF MILK PRODUCTION IN INDIA :

- There has been a decline in the purchase of milk powder, butter or ghee in recent times in India. There is a decline in the purchase of milk products even after festivals (Dussehra-Diwali), usually in winter when milk production is at its peak.
- The alleged increase in adulteration of vegetable fat in the sale of adulterated ghee has also increased the problems of this industry and made it a matter of concern. The fall in prices of imported oils, especially palm oils, has further increased the adulteration of butter and ghee with cheap fats, which has begun to raise health concerns for consumers in India.

#### GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO WHEAT AND RICE AS ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES :

- In India, excess supply in the absence of effective distribution by government mechanisms or through the Public Distribution System (PDS) may lead to decline in market prices.

#### HIGHER PRODUCTION OF A PARTICULAR CROP BY FARMERS IN INDIA :

- Generally, farmers in India often challenge the minimum support price (MSP) set by the government by increasing production of MSP-supported crops like wheat and rice. This overproduction could lead to a glut of these crops in the market, pushing their prices below the MSP.

#### INADEQUATE PROCUREMENT AND DISTRIBUTION AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL :

- In India, the government sets the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and purchases crops from farmers through its own mechanisms, however the procurement infrastructure and distribu-



tion system may be inefficient, leading to delays in procurement and inadequate distribution of grains to consumers. Is.

### CONSUMER FOOD PRICE INFLATION (CFPI) :



- a specific measure of inflation **Consumer Food Price Inflation (CFPI)**, which focuses specifically on the price transformation of food items into consumer goods and services.
- It measures the rate at which the prices of food products consumed by a typical household are increasing or showing signs of increasing over time.
- CFPI comprehensive **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** is a sub-component of, **Where the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** calculates the rate **CPI-Composite (CPI-C)** Uses up.
- The CFPI monitors price changes of specific food items that are commonly consumed by households. For example – grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, meat and other foods.

### REASONS FOR FOOD PRICE INFLATION :



### SITUATION OF IMBALANCE IN DEMAND AND SUP-

### PLY :

- When there is an imbalance between the demand and supply of food items in any country or its economy, then the prices of food items start increasing.
- Factors such as natural disasters or extreme weather events, low crop yields or pest infestation of crops by insects can reduce the supply of agricultural products, thereby increasing their prices.
- Sometimes, due to increase in demand, increase in population or change in consumer's food preferences, if the supply of food items is not maintained continuously, then in such a situation the prices may also increase.

### INCREASE IN COST OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION FOR FARMERS :

- Sometimes food prices may also increase due to increase in agricultural production costs for farmers. It also includes expenses like increase in price of fuel, fertilizers and labor costs.

### INCREASE IN ENERGY PRICES :

- Rising costs of energy used in agricultural operations, or sometimes especially fuel prices such as diesel or petrol, are a significant factor in the food supply chain. Increases in diesel, gasoline or oil prices may increase transportation costs to get food products from farms to stores, resulting in higher food prices for consumers.

### CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE :

- Sometimes fluctuations in currency exchange rates can affect food prices, especially for countries that rely heavily on imported foods. A weak domestic currency can make imported food or foodstuffs more expensive, leading to an increase in inflation.

### BUSINESS POLICIES :

- Trade policies and tariffs set at the national or international levels can affect the prices of imported and domestically produced food. Restrictions on the import of any food item may also limit the variety of food products available and potentially increase prices.

## GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE FORM OF PRICE CONTROLS OR REGULATIONS :

- Government intervention in the form of subsidies, price controls or regulations given to citizens in the case of food items can affect the prices of food items. On one hand, subsidies given by governments can reduce the cost/price of production of food items, on the other hand, price controls by governments can limit price rise.

## LONG – TERM CHANGES IN CLIMATE PATTERNS :

- Long-term changes in climate patterns may impact agricultural products or food production. More severe and extreme weather events, such as drought or floods, can damage crops and reduce agricultural yields, which can also increase food prices.

## NEED FOR INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY :

- In the agricultural sector, there is a need to invest in agricultural research and technology to increase the yield potential of crops and productivity of livestock, reduce production costs and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

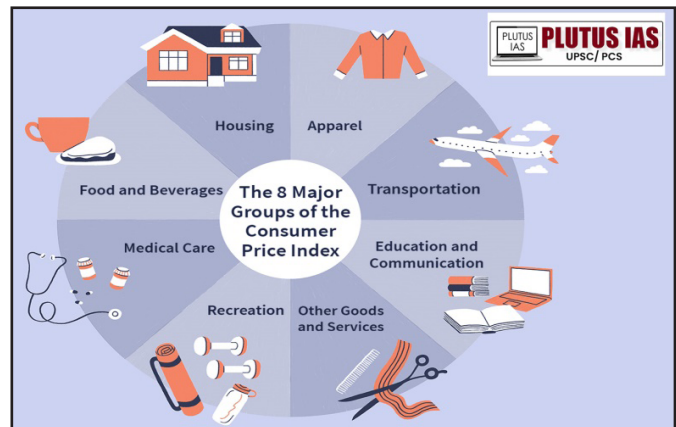
## NEED TO STRENGTHEN FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS :

- There is a pressing need to invest in transportation and storage infrastructure to reduce food spoilage and wastage.
- There is an urgent need to improve the distribution network to ensure that food reaches the intended consumers efficiently and prevent wastage of food items.

## TO PROMOTE COORDINATION BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND MARKETS :

- There is an urgent need to remove trade barriers and related tariffs on any essential food items.
- There is a need to greatly facilitate international trade to ensure continuous and stable supply of food items or food products, as well as to promote synergy between international trade and markets to ensure uninterrupted supply of food items or food products. There is a great need to give.

## TO REDUCE HOARDING OR BLACK MARKETING OR MONOPOLY POWER AND TO PROMOTE MUTUAL COMPETITION :



- In India, it is extremely important to implement anti-monopoly law to prevent the tendency of big agri-business establishments to establish monopoly rule in the market, hoarding or black marketing in the market and price manipulation.
- There is an urgent need to encourage competition in food sectors such as food items or food products to keep food prices competitive.
- Global natural and political events: Global events such as geopolitical conflicts, pandemics and trade disruptions can disrupt food supply chains and cause food prices to rise. For example – the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted food production and distribution in many parts of the world. Learning lessons from this pandemic, there is an urgent need to pave the way in this direction so that food supply chains are not disrupted in the future.

## CONCLUSION / PATH TO SOLUTION :



- For inclusive and sustainable development in India, Indian policy makers will have to keep inflation within its target.
- If the Indian economy is to be saved from instability due to the Lok Sabha elections to be held in the country in the year 2024, then the policy makers of India will have to strike a balance between inflation and instability of the Indian economy, so that the general public can be saved from the blow of inflation.
- Global natural and political events: Global events such as geopolitical conflicts, pandemics and trade disruptions can disrupt food supply chains and cause food prices to rise. Therefore, there is a great need to pave the way in this direction so that the food supply chains in India are not disrupted in the future.
- There is an urgent need to improve the distribution network to ensure that food reaches the intended consumers efficiently and prevent wastage of food items.
- Currency Exchange Rate May make imported food or foodstuffs more expensive, leading to an increase in inflation.

## INDIA – EFTA TRADE AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

### Why in the News ?



Recently on March 10, 2024, India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) have signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).

EFTA is an intergovernmental organization which

was established in 1960.

Its objective is to promote free trade and economic integration to benefit its four member countries.

India has been working on a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with EFTA countries, which include Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister of India has approved the signing of TEPA with the EFTA countries.

It is a balanced and free trade agreement that reflects the aspirations of emerging India and new global value chains with two-way trade in goods, services, investment, innovation.

This is the first trade agreement of its kind for India through which India has entered into a trade agreement with any group of western countries.

Work on this agreement was going on since 2008, but after the departure of the UPA government, it went out of the main agenda of the Government of India.

This agreement facilitates and facilitates access to the European market for Indian service companies with easier visa regulations.

**INDIA-EFTA TRADE & ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**  
UNDERLINES OUR COMMITMENT TO BOOSTING ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTH: PM

**PLUTUS IAS**  
UPSC/PCS

भारत-ईएफटीए व्यापार और आर्थिक साझेदारी समझौता आर्थिक प्रगति को बढ़ावा देने एवं हमारे देश के युवाओं के लिए अवसर सृजित करने की हमारी प्रतिबद्धता को रेखांकित करता है: प्रधानमंत्री

प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने आज 'भारत-ईएफटीए व्यापार और आर्थिक साझेदारी समझौते' पर हस्ताक्षर किए जाने की सराहना की।

### INTRODUCTION TO THE EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION :

- EFTA is an intergovernmental organization formed in 1960 to promote free trade and economic integration for the benefit of its four member countries, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.



- EFTA is an important regional grouping with ever-increasing opportunities to increase international trade in goods and services. EFTA is one of three important economic blocs in Europe (the other two being the EU and the UK). Among the EFTA countries, Switzerland is India's largest trading partner, followed by Norway, which is also a major trading partner of India.
- TEPA is a modern and ambitious bilateral trade agreement.
- India, for the first time, is signing an FTA with one of the four developed countries in Europe, an important economic bloc that offers significant economic opportunities and promotes free trade and economic integration.

### INTRODUCTION TO FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA) :

- A free trade agreement is an agreement made between two or more countries to reduce barriers to import and export.
- Under a free trade policy, any goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with little or no government customs duties or quotas or subsidies.
- The concept of free trade is the opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF INDIA AND EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION TRADE AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT :



The India and European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement mainly consists of 14 chapters. Therefore, the main features of India and European Free Trade Associ-

ation Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement are as follows –

### TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT WITH THE AIM OF CREATING DIRECT EMPLOYMENT :

- EFTA will bring 100 billion dollars of investment and 10 lakh direct investment in India in the next 15 years. The target has been set to create jobs or create direct employment.
- This historic commitment underpins a binding agreement to promote goal-oriented investment and job creation, a first in the history of the FTA. Which provides significant economic opportunities and promotes free trade and economic integration.
- This investment does not include foreign portfolio investment.

### PROVIDING MARKET ACCESS AND TARIFF CONCESSIONS :

- EFTA is offering 92.2 percent of its tariff lines covering 99.6 percent of India's exports. IFTA's market access proposal includes 100 percent tariff concession on non-agricultural products and processed agricultural products (PAP).
- India is offering 82.7 percent of its tariff lines covering 95.3 per cent of EFTA exports of which over 80 per cent comprises gold imports. It has been considered not to impose import duty on gold.

### ENSURING REGIONAL COMMITMENTS :

- India provides access to 105 sub-regions to EFTA and ensures commitments in various sectors, including 128 from Switzerland, 114 from Norway, 107 from Liechtenstein and 110 from Iceland.
- This takes into account the sensitivities related to PLI in sectors like pharma, medical devices and processed food etc. Whereas proposals from some sectors like dairy, soya, coal and sensitive agricultural products have been kept out of it.

### ENCOURAGING EXPORT OF SERVICES AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR) :



- This trade agreement (TEPA) will encourage exports of key strengths or areas of interest such as IT services, business services, personal, cultural, sports and recreational services and other education services and audio-visual services.
- The commitments related to intellectual property rights in TEPA are at the TRIPS level. The IPR chapter with Switzerland, where there are high standards for IPR, reflects our strong IPR regime. India's interests in generic medicines and the concerns related to the specific aspects of patent law and international trade law involved in the process of evergreening of patents have been fully addressed.

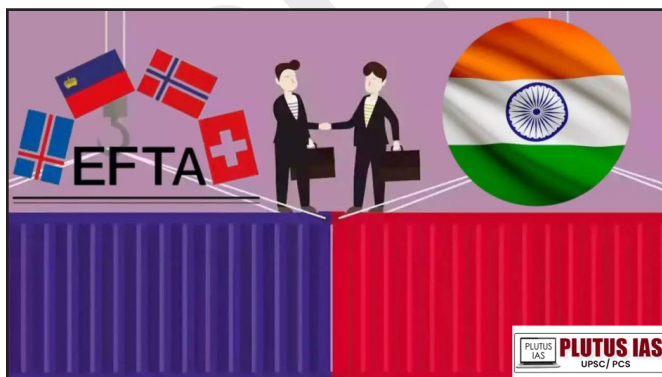
#### **ENCOURAGING DIGITAL DELIVERY OF SERVICES :**

- EFTA's service offering includes improved accessibility through digital delivery of services, commercial presence and improved commitments and certainty for the entry and temporary stay of key personnel.

#### **PROVISION FOR MUTUAL RECOGNITION IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES :**

- TEPA also includes provisions for mutual recognition agreements in professional services such as nursing, chartered accountants, architects etc.

#### **INDIA'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION :**



- Under TEPA, India is resolute in its commitment towards sustainable development, inclusive growth, social development and environmental protection.

#### **TO CREATE A BUSINESS FRIENDLY AND INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT FOR INDIAN EXPORTERS :**

- TEPA will empower Indian exporters to access specialized inputs and create a business friendly and investment environment. This will boost exports of manufactured goods in India and at the same time provide the service sector an opportunity to reach more markets.

#### **TO PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY, EFFICIENCY, SIMPLIFICATION, HARMONY AND CONSISTENCY OF BUSINESS PROCESSES :**

- TEPA promotes transparency, efficiency, trade simplification, coherence and consistency of trade processes between India and the European Free Trade Association.

#### **PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO INTEGRATE INTO EU MARKETS :**

- TEPA offers the opportunity to integrate into EU markets.
- More than 40 percent of Switzerland's global services exports go to the European Union.
- Indian companies can look to Switzerland as a base to expand their market access to the EU.
- This provides the opportunity to integrate into EU markets, particularly through Switzerland, which serves as a basis for access to EU markets.

#### **PROMOTING DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION :**

- TEPA promotes "Make in India" and self-reliant India by encouraging domestic manufacturing in various sectors such as infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and transportation.
- It will accelerate job creation for India's youth workforce over the next 15 years and facilitate technology collaboration and access to leading technologies.

#### **TO FACILITATE COLLABORATION AND ACCESS TO WORLD LEADING TECHNOLOGIES IN INNOVATION AND R&D :**



- TEPA will accelerate the creation of a large number of direct jobs for India's young aspiring workforce along with improved facilities for vocational and technical training over the next 15 years in India. TEPA also facilitates technology collaboration and access to world leading technologies in precision engineering, health sciences, renewable energy, innovation and R&D.

### CONCLUSION / PATH TO SOLUTION :



- Despite the limited benefits that India gets under this Free Trade Agreement, this Free Trade Agreement of India with these four European Union nations is very important for bilateral trade.
- This modern and ambitious agreement marks India's first free trade agreement (FTA) with four developed countries in Europe, providing significant economic opportunities and promoting free trade and economic integration.
- The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is an important regional organization that offers many possibilities for improving the global exchange of goods and services. India's bilateral free trade agreement with the European Union

(EU) and the United Kingdom (UK), a major economic unit within Europe, will prove to be a "milestone" for India's fast-growing economy, with EFTA.

- After the start of free trade, there will be a reduction in the prices of goods coming to India from these countries, because under this free trade agreement, these countries will reduce their import duties. There will also be a reduction in import duty on goods exported from India. For example – Swiss chocolate, watches and biscuits from Switzerland are sold more in the Indian market. In such a situation, this bilateral trade agreement will reduce their prices.
- This will facilitate negotiation and signing of trade agreements at regional and global levels.
- It provides access to the markets of its member countries. It facilitates trade and investment opportunities, and it implements tariff reductions and concessions to promote trade liberalization.
- The EFTA agreement also marks the first time that India has agreed to include non-trade issues such as labour, human rights, environment and gender in an economic agreement. It is debatable whether these issues are necessary to be included in trade agreements, but it is a positive sign for potential partners like the EU that see them as so important.

### PRELIMS QUESTION

**Q1. In India, which one of the following compiles information on industrial disputes, closures, re-trenchments and lay-offs in factories employing workers? (UPSC Prelims-2022)**

- Central Statistics Office
- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
- Labour Bureau
- National Technical Manpower Information System

**Q2. Consider the following statements with reference to retail inflation.**

1. Reasons for retail inflation In any economy, when there is an imbalance between the demand and supply of food items, the prices of food items also start increasing.
2. The CFPI monitors price changes of specific food items that are commonly consumed by households.
3. There are six types of CPI.
4. Long-term changes in climate patterns do not affect agricultural products or food production, but rather lead to higher yields in the agricultural sector.

**Which of the above statement / Statements is/ are correct?**

- (a) Only 1, 3 and 4
- (b) Only 2 and 4
- (c) Only 1 and 3
- (d) Only 1 and 2.

**Q3. Consider the following statements regarding India and European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement.**

1. EFTA is an intergovernmental organization which was established in 1990.
2. The concept of free trade is the opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism.
3. The President of India has approved the signing of TEPA with the EFTA countries.
4. EFTA countries include Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.

**Which of the above statement / statements is/are correct?**

- (a) Only 1 and 3
- (b) Only 2 and 4
- (c) Only 1 and 4

(d) Only 2 and 4

**ANSWERS**

S. No.	Answers
1.	C
2.	D
3.	D

**MAINS QUESTIONS**

**Q1. How can the gig economy empower individuals seeking more flexible work arrangements while also addressing concerns about job security and financial stability?**

**Q2. What do you understand about retail inflation and consumer price index? Underlining the main reasons for the stability of the economy of any country? Review the effects arising from retail inflation and consumer price index.**

**Q3. Highlighting the key provisions of the India and European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, Discuss how this Free Trade Agreement will strengthen bilateral trade and boost domestic manufacturing sector and employment generation? Give a logical explanation.**

# ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

## HUMAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT

### Why in the News?

Following repeated occurrences of fatalities in human habitats resulting from encounters with elephants, Kerala has introduced a series of both immediate and long-term strategies to mitigate the conflict between humans and animals. Furthermore, the Kerala cabinet has designated incidents of human-animal conflict as a disaster specific to the state. This classification grants district collectors increased authority to tackle the issue effectively.

### WAYS STATES HANDLE HUMAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT AS A DISASTER

States in India have the authority to declare human-animal conflict as a state-specific disaster under the **Disaster Management Act**. This empowers them to take quicker and more decisive actions to address the issue.

- **Disaster Management Act: Section 71 of this Act** restricts legal challenges against actions taken by authorities during a declared disaster. This allows for swifter responses without the burden of litigation.
- **Overriding Effect: Section 72** grants the **Disaster Management Act** precedence over other laws during a declared disaster. This enables authorities to bypass certain regulations that might otherwise hinder their efforts.

### PRECEDENTS FOR STATE-SPECIFIC DISASTER DECLARATIONS

Several Indian states have declared unique events as state-specific disasters to expedite response and resource allocation. Here are some examples:

- **Odisha (2015): Snakebites** were declared a state-specific disaster due to their high prevalence and impact.
- **Kerala (2020):** The **COVID-19** pandemic's sever-

ity prompted Kerala to declare it a state-specific disaster.

- **Other Examples:** Heatwaves, sunburn, sunstroke (2019), soil piping (2017), lightning, and coastal erosion (2015) have all been declared state-specific disasters in various regions.

By declaring human-animal conflict as a state-specific disaster, authorities gain greater flexibility to:

- **Mobilise resources:** Allocate additional funds for mitigation efforts, rapid response teams, and infrastructure development to minimise human-animal interactions.
- **Fast-track decision-making:** Bypass bureaucratic hurdles to implement effective solutions like building animal corridors or deploying deterrents.
- **Enhance coordination:** Foster collaboration between forest departments, wildlife agencies, and local communities to develop a unified approach.
- **Legal Immunity:** The Disaster Management Act serves as a **legal shield for relevant authorities during declared disasters**. This means that **lower courts cannot entertain lawsuits challenging actions taken under the Act**. Only the Supreme Court and High Courts have the jurisdiction to hear such cases. This legal immunity empowers authorities to take decisive actions without being hindered by the threat of litigation.

### UNDERSTANDING HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Human-wildlife conflict describes negative interactions between people and wild animals. These encounters have a detrimental impact on both humans and wildlife populations. It's a widespread issue affecting millions of people and numerous species across the globe.

### SEVERAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO THIS CONFLICT.

- **Habitat Loss and Fragmentation:** As human populations rise and development ex-



pands, **natural habitats shrink and become fragmented**. This **forces wildlife closer to human settlements** in search of sustenance, increasing the likelihood of encounters. Imagine a forest shrinking due to deforestation. Animals that once thrived within it may be forced towards the edges, potentially coming into contact with farms or villages.

- **Competition for Resources:** Humans and animals often **compete for the same resources, like water, food, and space**. When **resources become scarce**, this **competition can escalate** into conflict. During droughts, for example, elephants might raid crops for food as their natural sources dry up. Similarly, a decline in wild prey populations could lead lions or wolves to target livestock.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The construction of roads, railways, and other infrastructure projects can disrupt animal migration routes, **hindering their ability to move freely between habitats**. This can **trap animals in isolated areas with limited resources** or force them to travel through human settlements in search of food and water. Roads can also become deadly barriers, resulting in animal-vehicle collisions.
- **Climate Change:** Climate change **disrupts weather patterns and ecosystems**, impacting wildlife populations. Animals might be forced to **alter their migration patterns or seek new habitats**, increasing the potential for conflict with humans. Rising temperatures, for instance, may cause deserts to expand, pushing animals into previously unoccupied areas where they may compete with humans for resources or come into conflict with livestock.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Sometimes, human behaviour unintentionally provokes animal attacks due to a lack of awareness about animal behaviour or the presence of wildlife in certain areas. **Tourists getting too close to wild animals** for photographs or visitors entering nesting areas can be seen as threats by the animals, leading to defensive attacks.

## WHAT IS HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT?



Human-wildlife conflict is defined as struggles that emerge when the presence or behaviour of wildlife poses actual or perceived, direct and recurring threat to human interests or needs, leading to disagreements between groups of people and negative impacts on people and /or wildlife.

### DIRECT CAUSES



AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION



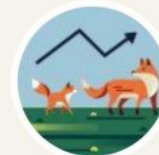
URBANIZATION



INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT



CLIMATE CHANGE



WILDLIFE POPULATIONS GROWTH AND RANGE EXPANSION

### MOVING TOWARDS COEXISTENCE

Several strategies can be implemented to reduce human-wildlife conflict and promote coexistence:

- **Habitat Conservation and Restoration:** Protecting and restoring wildlife habitats and corridors ensures adequate space and resources for wildlife populations.
- **Effective Land-Use Planning:** Implementing effective land-use planning and zoning minimises human-wildlife overlap and conflict.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Promoting sustainable

agriculture and livestock practices can reduce crop damage and predation by wildlife.

- **Mitigation Measures:** Developing and deploying appropriate mitigation measures such as fences, deterrents, compensation schemes, and insurance schemes can prevent or reduce wildlife damage or loss.
- **Education and Awareness:** Enhancing human-wildlife coexistence education and awareness programs foster positive attitudes and behaviours towards wildlife.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Strengthening human-wildlife conflict monitoring and reporting systems allows for collecting reliable data to inform decision-making.
- **Community-Based Conservation:** Supporting community-based conservation initiatives empowers local people to participate in managing or resolving human-wildlife conflict issues.

### PRELIMS QUESTION

**Q1. Consider the following statements in respect of Trade Related Analysis of Fauna and Flora in Commerce (TRAFFIC):**

1. TRAFFIC is a bureau under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
2. The mission of TRAFFIC is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

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

### ANSWERS

S. No.	Answers
1.	B

### MAINS QUESTION

**Q1. Evaluate the effectiveness of Kerala's approach in addressing human-animal conflict through both short-term and long-term measures. What are the potential challenges and limitations of these strategies?**