

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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Important News Articles

GS II

1. SC refuses to stay law on selection of CEC, EC - The Hindu/ SC declines to stay new law on picking CEC, ECs - Indian Express

Relevance: Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies

News:

- The Supreme Court declined a request for an **interim stay of the new law excluding the Chief Justice of India from the panel** to select the chief election commissioner (CEC) and election commissioners (ECs).

Key Highlights

- **Article 324(2)** of the Constitution says that the CEC and ECs shall be appointed by the President, with aid and advice of the Council of Ministers
 - till Parliament enacts a law fixing the criteria for selection and conditions of service and tenure.
- Subsequently, the government enacted a new law — The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023
 - **excluding the CJI from the selection panel.**

The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023

- It replaces the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.
- It provides for the appointment, salary, and removal of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs).
- The CEC and ECs will be appointed by the President **upon the recommendation of a Selection Committee.**

Selection committee

- The Selection Committee will consist of the **Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister, and Leader of Opposition/leader of the largest opposition party in Lok Sabha.**
- Recommendations of the Selection Committee will be valid even when there is a vacancy in this Committee.
- A Search Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary will propose a panel of names to the Selection Committee.
- Eligibility for the posts includes holding (or having held) a post equivalent to the Secretary to the central government.
- The salary and conditions of service of the CEC and ECs will be **equivalent to that of Cabinet Secretary.**
- Under the 1991 Act, it was equivalent to the salary of a Supreme Court Judge.

Prelims Takeaway

- Search Committee
- Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023

Points of contention

A look at what the Sections 7 and 8 of the CEC and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023 say



- Section 7 mandates the selection committee to consist of the Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition or the leader of the largest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha

- Section 8 allows the selection committee to regulate its own procedure in a transparent manner and consider persons other than those suggested by the search committee

2. Supreme Court issues summons to Centre on Kerala's suit alleging financial curbs - The Hindu

Relevance: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

News:

- The Supreme Court has agreed to examine an original suit filed by Kerala, **alleging that the Centre's interference with the state's finances is violating the federal structure of governance**

Prelims Takeaway

- Fiscal deficit
- Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003

Key Highlights

Legal Summons and Interim Reliefs:

- Kerala seeks interim reliefs, including an injunction against the Centre from restricting the state's borrowing of ₹26,226 crore.
- Kerala argues that, in a federal system, a **state has exclusive power to regulate its finances through budget** preparation and management.
- Recent actions, amendments, and executive orders by the Centre are seen as attempts to reduce Kerala to financial distress.

Allegations of Arbitrary Borrowing Restrictions:

- The state contends that the **Centre imposed a net borrowing ceiling arbitrarily**, limiting borrowings from all sources, including the open market.
- Deductions from state-owned enterprises' borrowings and imposed conditions on foreign loans are cited as measures causing financial strain.
- Kerala claims that amendments to the **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003**, infringe upon the state's legislative domain.
- These changes allegedly violate fiscal federalism by imposing unconstitutional limits on the state's ability to borrow and regulate its finances.

3. Rajnath's visit to UK: Progress in talks to get key tech for warships - Indian Express

Relevance: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Prelims Takeaway

- Electric Propulsion Technology

News:

- Discussions on acquiring **electric propulsion technology for Indian warships** from the United Kingdom progressed during the Defence Minister's recent two-day visit to the country.

Key Highlights

Government-to-Government Agreement:

- Exploration of a potential government-to-government agreement for securing electric propulsion technology from the UK, specifically for powering larger Indian Navy warships, was a focal point.

Current Propulsion Systems:

- **Indian warships currently use diesel engines, gas, or steam turbines**, lacking electric propulsion systems.
- In contrast, the UK's Royal Navy utilizes integrated full electric propulsion vessels in their Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

Joint Working Group:

- A joint electric propulsion working group between India and the UK was established, meeting in the UK in February and on the Royal Navy frigate HMS Lancaster in Kochi in March of the previous year.

Testing and Implementation:

- The proposed **electric propulsion technology is anticipated to apply to larger Indian warships** with a displacement of over 6,000 tonnes.
- Initial testing is expected on Landing Platform Docks and next-generation destroyers.

4. Railway Ministry includes Udupi station under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme for redevelopment - The Hindu

Relevance: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims Takeaway

- Amrit Bharat Station Scheme
- Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd.

News:

- The **Udupi station under Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd. (KRCL)** network that was in **dire need of attention**
- It has been **included in the Railway Ministry's Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS)** for redevelopment.

Key Highlights

- The Ministry informed KRCL about the inclusion of Udupi.
- **None of the KRCL stations were included under ABSS** when it was initially announced in February 2023 in the Union Budget, covering 1,275 stations of the Indian Railway network.
- It was because **KRCL continued to remain a public sector undertaking** under the Railway Ministry and was not an integral part of the Indian Railways.
- The non-inclusion caused much heartburn among railway patrons on the west coast — **Maharashtra, Goa, and Karnataka**

- Who chided the Ministry for leaving out the network from the scheme that was launched to mark 75 years of India's independence.
- The scheme involved creating master plans for redevelopment and executing them in a phased manner.
- The redevelopment broadly includes **platform improvement** with covered shelters, covered foot overbridge, improved circulating and vehicle parking areas

GS III

5. Focus on best practices as global meet on pulses returns to India - The Hindu

Relevance: Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

Prelims Takeaway

- NAFED
- Global Pulse Confederation

News:

- About 800 representatives of governments, as well as commercial and non-profit organisations will attend the Global Pulse Convention to be held here in February.
- It was **jointly organised by** the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) and the Global Pulse Confederation (GPC)

Key Highlights

- The conference will see experts in the field sharing their views and experiences with various stakeholders and policymakers.
- Union Consumer Affairs said that pulses production has increased in India and the government is keen to learn and share practices globally.
- It's a tricky task to keep the balance between the interest of the domestic farmers and the consumers.
- **Pulses are vital in the development of sustainable food systems** and key players when it comes to food security and nutrition in India.

Superfood

- **India was the biggest producer and consumer of pulses** worldwide, the GPC was bringing the global industry to India.
- This conference is being held in India after 18 years.
- Pulses contribute to the **reduction of greenhouse gas emissions**.
- Pulses help in diversifying the production, as they can be grown in arid conditions with less water.
- **It is a superfood** in a way, as it is nutritious and healthy.
- It gives **nitrogen to the soil**.

6. Science Ministry team visits Hawaii to take stock of telescope project - Indian Express

Relevance: Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

News:

- Recently, an official delegation from the Department of Science and Technology visited **Mauna Kea, Hawaii**, to discuss challenges facing the **Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Thirty Meter Telescope Project
- Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIAP)

Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) Project

- TMT is a 30-meter diameter **optical and infrared telescope designed for deep space observations.**
- It is a collaborative effort involving the **US, Japan, China, Canada and India.**
 - Indian participation in the project was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2014.
- It will allow **deeper exploration into space and observe cosmic objects with unprecedented sensitivity.**

Challenges Faced by TMT Project

- Mauna Kea, chosen as the original site, faced **local opposition due to religious and cultural concerns.**
- Permits for construction were **invalidated by the Supreme Court of Hawaii** in 2015, later restored in 2018.
- Continued local opposition has **delayed the project**, prompting considerations for an alternate site.
- **Observatorio del Roque de los Muchachos (ORM)** on La Palma in Spain's Canary Islands is considered as an alternative.

India's Contribution to TMT Project

- India is expected to be a major contributor, providing **hardware, instrumentation, and software** worth \$200 million.
- India will contribute **83 of the 492 precisely polished mirrors** needed for the telescope.
- **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIAP)** is leading the consortium of Indian institutions involved in the TMT project.

Progress and Future Decision

- The construction has not begun, but progress has been made in **developing necessary components.**
- Discussions are ongoing to **ensure consensus and support of local people**, with a decision on the site expected in the next two years.

7. Retail inflation rises to 5.7% in December - The Hindu

Relevance: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

News:

- India's **retail inflation** increased to a **four-month high of 5.7%** in December 2023, up from 5.55% in the previous month.
- The uptick in December's inflation was **driven by the food and beverages segment**, particularly vegetables.
- Food prices recorded a **national increase of 9.5%**, with urban consumers experiencing a rise of 10.42%.
- **Urban consumers faced a higher inflation rate of 6%**, while rural consumers experienced slightly lower food price hikes but a higher overall inflation rate of nearly 6%.

Prelims Takeaway

- Inflation
- Inflation Targeting

Inflation

- A **long-term increase** in the **general price level** of goods and services in a given economy.
- It considers the **pricing of most everyday or standard products and services.**
 - These include food, clothes, housing, recreation, transportation, consumer staples, etc.
- It is **positive** when it helps **improve consumer demand and consumption**, and **operate economic growth.**
- Even inflation is meant to keep **deflation in check** and is a **drag on the economy.**

Inflation Targeting

- It is a **central banking policy** that focuses on **altering monetary policy to attain a set annual inflation rate**.
- **Assumption: Preserving price stability**, which is achieved by managing inflation, is the greatest way to **generate long-term economic growth**.
- Under the RBI Act, 1934, the **Central Government, in consultation with the RBI**, determines the **inflation target** in terms of the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, **once in five years**.
- It provides for the constitution of a **six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** to determine the **policy rate required to achieve the inflation target**.
- Currently, the RBI aims to **keep inflation at 4%** but will tolerate inflation between the **range of 2% to 6%**.

Retail Inflation

- Also known as **Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation**.
- It is the rate at which the **prices of goods and services that consumers buy for personal use increase over time**.
- It **measures the change in the cost of a basket of goods and services that are typically purchased by households**.
 - These include food, clothing, housing, transportation and medical care.

Core Inflation

- It is the **change in the costs of goods and services but does not include those from the food and energy sectors**.
- Food and energy prices are **exempt** from this calculation because their **prices can be too volatile or fluctuate wildly**.

8. Nov. factory output growth drops to 8-month low of 2.4% - The Hindu

Relevance: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

News:

- **India's industrial output growth** decelerated to an **eight-month low of 2.4%** in November.
- This follows a **16-month high growth of 11.6%** recorded in October.

Prelims Takeaway

- Index of Industrial Production
- Eight core sectors

Losing steam

November industrial output drops from a 16-month high of 11.6% in October led by a significant drop in manufacturing



■ **Electricity generation falls to its lowest level since February and computer and electronics output drops 25%**

■ **Base effects from Nov. 2022, when IIP rose 7.6%, play a role in moderating growth rate**

■ **Output of consumer durables collapse to lowest level since June 2021, which was marred by the pandemic**

Index of Industrial Production

- IIP is an indicator that measures the changes in the **volume of production of industrial products** during a given period.
- It is a **composite indicator** that measures the **growth rate of industry groups**.
- The industry groups that it measures are **classified** as
 - **Broad sectors** like manufacturing, mining, and electricity.
 - **Use-based sectors** like capital goods, basic goods, intermediate goods, infrastructure goods, consumer durables, and consumer non-durables.
- It is used by **government agencies** including the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank of India, etc. **for policy-making purposes**.
- It is compiled and published **monthly** by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Base Year for IIP is **2011-2012**.

Eight Core Sectors

- These comprise **40.27%** of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- The eight core sector industries in **decreasing** order of their weightage: **Refinery Products> Electricity> Steel> Coal> Crude Oil> Natural Gas> Cement> Fertilisers**.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers**9. A case diary for the Indian police - The Hindu**

Relevance: Role of civil services in a democracy.

Context:

- A recent **three-day conference of top police officers** in Jaipur focused on contemporary **Information Technology issues** and acted as a **stocktaking exercise**.
- The involvement of the Indian Prime Minister signals the growing importance of **efficient policing**.



Mentorship
India

Public Perception of Police

- Despite efforts, the police struggle to earn public trust, and citizens hesitate to seek help unless in extreme distress.
- Lack of a guardian organisation reaching out to the community hampers police reputation improvement.

Growing Complexity

- Tensions between the Centre and some Opposition-led States are growing, especially regarding the 'New Delhi-conceived and managed' Indian Police Service (IPS).
- The role of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) also raises concerns for federal governance, with attacks on ED officers posing risks to Center-State relations.

Technology Advancements in Policing

- Technology proficiency in police has increased which is attributed to a higher number of educated officers in lower echelons.
- High unemployment rates in India contribute to more individuals opting for a police career.

IPS Dominance and Restructuring Needs

- IPS officers have been criticised for monopolizing attention, limiting opportunities for lower ranks to prove themselves.
- A restructuring is crucial to bridge the gap between higher and lower ranks, focusing on knowledge, integrity, and empathy.

Leadership's Role in Education and Quality Improvement

- Senior officers should actively educate lower ranks, fostering knowledge expansion and its application for public benefit.
- A shift in the hierarchy is proposed to allocate time for teaching and mentorship, emphasizing the need for a proactive approach.

Politicization of Police and Democratic Challenges

- The enduring problem of political influence in the police force underscores the ongoing challenge of shielding them from external political pressures.
- The complexity involved in resisting unlawful requests emphasize the need for comprehensive systemic changes that go beyond addressing issues solely within the realm of policing.

10. Numbers game - The Hindu

Relevance: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context:

- The Centre recently announced the **Swachh Survekshan Awards** for the eighth year, recognizing cities, towns and states for their **performance in public sanitation**.
- **Indore, Madhya Pradesh**, has been adjudged **India's cleanest city** for the seventh consecutive year, sharing honours with **Surat, Gujarat**.

Swachh Survekshan

- Swachh Survekshan is the **world's largest urban sanitation and cleanliness survey**.
- Started in 2016 with 73 cities, the annual ranking covers 4,416 urban local bodies, 61 cantonments, and 88 Ganga towns in 2023.
- It is conducted under the ambit of the **Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)**.
- It was launched by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** with **Quality Council of India (QCI)** as its implementation partner.

- **Objective:** To encourage large-scale citizen participation and create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together toward making towns and cities better places to reside in.
- The **methodology** for measuring cleanliness rests on two main criterias viz. **citizen feedback and field assessment.**

Stagnation and Predictability

- The **top-ranking cities**, including Bhopal, Indore, Surat and Visakhapatnam, have **remained consistent over the years**, indicating a degree of stagnation.
- While some cities in the top 10 exhibit volatility, there is a **lack of significant change** in the leading positions.

Multiple Sub-Categories

- The survey creates **multiple sub-categories, allowing more cities to score well** in specific areas, such as population size.
- However, some classifications are **criticised for their specificity**, such as awarding the cleanest 'cantonment' town, 'Cleanest Ganga town,' and the cleanest 'Best Safaimitra Surakshit Sheher.'

Need for a Rethink in Approach

- The **ranking system**, aimed at motivating improvements, may not **effectively address sanitation challenges** influenced by historical, economic and power-related factors.
- The **top-ranking cities should be excluded from future rankings** to shift focus to challenges faced by other cities and **encourage overall improvement.**

Conclusion

- **Government intervention is crucial** to prevent sanitation assessments from becoming a mere numbers game.
- A reevaluation of the survey approach is needed to ensure a **more meaningful assessment and sustained improvement in civic sanitation.**

11. A GREEN FISCAL BLUEPRINT - Indian Express

Relevance: Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

Context:

- In recent years, India has been a leading participant in global efforts to **improve forest cover and combat climate change.**
- These initiatives have contributed to **building resilience of communities and ecosystems.**

Role of Fiscal Federalism and Finance Commission (FC)

- Fiscal federalism, managed by the Finance Commission (FC), is crucial in balancing conservation costs with state revenue and expenditure needs.
- Past FCs allocated funds for forest conservation, with the 15th FC allocating 10% of the central tax pool to ecology and forests, making it a significant Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) system globally.
- The Commission also gave grants to combat air pollution.

Importance of the 16th Finance Commission

- The 16th FC, appointed recently, comes at a critical juncture as India commits to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build additional carbon sinks by 2030.
- The commission can play a pivotal role in shaping the National Carbon Market and Green Credit Market, aligning with the Paris Agreement.

Proposed Actions for the 16th FC

- Include climate vulnerability and emission intensity in the tax devolution formula to align with India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Pact.
- Consider performance-based grants for sectors crucial to achieving NDCs and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a focus on clean energy.

Addressing Specific Climate Challenges

- Allocate funds for innovative solutions to combat crop burning, mangrove restoration and forest fires exacerbated by climate change.
- Leverage scientific data on climate vulnerability and pollution inventories to design a performance-based fund allocation system.

Transforming the FC's Role

- The 16th FC should evolve from a conventional fiscal arbitrator to an orchestrator of India's climate readiness.
- A fiscal blueprint is crucial aligning economic growth with environmental imperatives, positioning the 16th FC as the ideal mechanism for this transformation.

Quick Look

1. Kala Ram Temple

- Recently, the Prime Minister visited the Kalaram Mandir in Nashik, Maharashtra.
- The Kalaram temple, built in 1792, features a black statue of Lord Ram, Sita, Lakshman, and a black idol of Hanuman.
- The temple is named after a black statue of Lord Ram, known as Kala Ram, and holds importance in Hindu religion.
- Sardar Rangarao Odhekar, who dreamt of a black statue of Lord Ram in the Godavari, played a key role in building the temple.
- The main temple has symbolic elements, including 14 steps representing Ram's 14-year exile and 84 pillars representing the cycle of 84 lakh species.
- The temple has significance in the Ramayana, with Lord Ram spending initial years of exile in this region.
- In 1930, B R Ambedkar and Pandurang Sadashiv Sane led an agitation demanding access for Dalits to Hindu temples.
- Ambedkar organised a protest outside Kalaram temple, demanding the right for Dalits to enter which continued until 1935.

2. Yuva Nidhi Scheme

- The Karnataka government recently launched the Yuva Nidhi scheme.
- Objective: To provide financial aid to graduates and diploma holders who are yet to secure employment, with training opportunities for skill development.
- Graduates and diploma holders need to register on the state government's skill connect portal.
- The scheme offers ₹3,000 per month to degree holders and ₹1,500 per month to diploma holders who have not secured a job in the past six months and are not pursuing higher studies.
- Financial aid will be provided for a maximum of two years or until the beneficiary secures employment, whichever comes first.
- Training will be provided to the registered individuals to enhance their skills and employability.

3. VIPER Rover

- VIPER is NASA's first mobile robotic mission to the Moon.
- It will directly analyse ice on the surface and subsurface of the Moon at varying depths and temperature conditions within four main soil environments.
- VIPER sends data back to Earth, aiding scientists in crafting resource maps that detail the location and concentration of lunar ice, distinguishing between various forms such as ice crystals or chemically bound molecules.
- Traversing the challenging terrain of the lunar South Pole, VIPER collects crucial data that enhances our comprehension of the Moon's history and the surroundings where NASA intends to dispatch Artemis astronauts.
- Mission duration: 100 Earth days, covering 3 cycles of lunar day and night.
- It will land at the South Pole of the Moon in late 2024.

4. Zero Defect Zero Effect (ZED) Scheme

- The Zero Defect Zero Effect (ZED) scheme by the MSME Ministry recently achieved the 1 lakh certification milestone.
- Launched in October 2016, the ZED scheme offers certification for environmentally conscious manufacturing.
- Objectives

- To create proper awareness in MSMEs about ZED manufacturing and motivate them for the assessment of their enterprise for a ZED rating.
- To drive manufacturing with the adoption of Zero-Defect production processes without impacting the environment (Zero Effect).
- To encourage MSMEs to constantly upgrade their quality standards in products and processes.
- To support the “Make in India” campaign.
- Currently, the scheme is applicable for manufacturing MSMEs only.
- MSME Sustainable (ZED) Certification can be attained in three levels after registering and taking the ZED Pledge
 - Certification Level 1: Bronze
 - Certification Level 2: Silver
 - Certification Level 3: Gold
- They are classified according to 20 performance-based parameters such as quality management, timely delivery, process control, waste management etc.

5. HD 63433d

- It is an Earth-like exoplanet that orbits a sun-like star called HD 63433 (also known as TOI 1726).
- The star is about 73 light years away from the sun and is part of the group of stars moving together that make up the constellation Ursa Major.
- The star HD 63433 shares similarities with our sun in size and type but is significantly younger, at roughly 400 million years old.
- It is the smallest confirmed exoplanet, younger than 500 million years old.
- It's also the closest Earth-sized planet discovered so far, and it's about 400 million years old.

6. AN-32 Aircraft

- The AN-32 (Antonov AN-32) is a Soviet-origin military transport aircraft.
- It is designed and manufactured by the Antonov Design Bureau of Ukraine for the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- It was purchased by India from the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1984. The IAF has a fleet of around 100 AN-32 planes.
- Its NATO reporting name is Cline.
- The aircraft is designed to manoeuvre day and night in tropical and mountainous regions, even in hot climatic conditions (up to 55°C).
- It is powered by two single-shaft turboprop engines.
- An-32 can fly at a maximum speed of 530 km/h, and its cruise speed is 470 km/h.
- The range and service ceiling of the aircraft are 2,500km and 9,500m, respectively.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023

1. The act governs the appointment, conditions of service, and term of office of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners in India.
2. As per the Act, the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners can hold office for a fixed term of six years or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier.
3. The Act empowers the President of India to remove the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners on grounds of proven misbehavior or incapacity
4. The removal process is similar to the impeachment of judges.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All four

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003

1. The FRBM Act aims to institutionalize financial discipline, reduce fiscal deficit, and promote macroeconomic stability in India.
2. Under the FRBM Act, the government is mandated to eliminate revenue deficit and bring down fiscal deficit to a specified target.
3. The FRBM Act provides for the constitution of a Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Committee to oversee the government's fiscal policies.
4. The FRBM Act includes provisions for automatic triggers that impose spending cuts in case of deviations from the prescribed fiscal targets.

How many of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All four

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding electric propulsion technology

1. Electric propulsion technology involves the use of electric power to generate thrust for the propulsion of vehicles, such as spacecraft.
2. Ion thrusters, a type of electric propulsion, use electric fields to accelerate ions, providing higher efficiency and velocity compared to traditional chemical rockets.
3. Electric propulsion systems are primarily used for short-distance, Earth-bound transportation, such as electric cars and buses.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

1. The Scheme aims to establish fueling stations for electric vehicles across major highways in India.
2. Under the scheme, the emphasis is on promoting the use of clean and green energy, such as compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).
3. The Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to address air pollution caused by vehicular emissions.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED)

1. NAFED is a government organization responsible for the procurement and marketing of agricultural produce in India.
2. NAFED operates as a multi-state cooperative society with the primary objective of promoting cooperative marketing of agricultural produce.
3. Apart from agricultural marketing, NAFED is also involved in providing agricultural credit and insurance services to farmers.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q6. With reference to Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) Project, consider the following statements

1. It allows deeper exploration into space and observe cosmic objects with unprecedented sensitivity.
2. It is a collaborative effort involving the US, Japan, China, Canada and India.
3. IIT-Madras is leading the consortium of Indian institutions involved in the TMT project.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q7. Consider the following statements with reference to Inflation

1. Retail Inflation is changes in the prices of goods and services that consumers buy excluding those from the food and energy sectors.
2. RBI aims to keep inflation at 4% but tolerates inflation between the range of 2% to 6%.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q8. The Padmanabhaiah Committee, Ribeiro Committee are associated with which of the following ?

- A. Agricultural Reforms
- B. Police Reforms
- C. Economic Reforms
- D. Educational Reforms

Q9. With reference to Swachh Survekshan, consider the following statements

1. Swachh Survekshan is the world's largest urban sanitation and cleanliness survey conducted under the ambit of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).
2. The survey creates multiple sub-categories, allowing more cities to score well in specific areas.
3. In the Swachh Survekshan 2023, Maharashtra was recognized as the cleanest state.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q10. Consider the following statements about Finance Commission

1. It is a constitutional body established under Article 324 of the Indian Constitution.
2. Its primary function is to recommend the distribution of financial resources between the central government and the state governments.
3. It is constituted every five years consisting of a chairman and two other members.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, indeed governs the appointment, conditions of service, and term of office of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners in India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The term may be specified by the President, but it is not necessarily fixed. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- The Act does empower the President to remove the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners on grounds of proven misbehaviour or incapacity. The removal process is similar to the impeachment of judges. **Hence, statement 3 and 4 is correct**

Answer 2 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The primary objectives of the FRBM Act are to bring about fiscal discipline, reduce fiscal deficit, and contribute to the stability of the overall economy in India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The FRBM Act mandates the government to eliminate revenue deficit and bring down fiscal deficit to a specified target over a period of time.
- This is aimed at ensuring long-term sustainability of public finances. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The FRBM Act does not provide for the constitution of a separate committee. However, it mandates the government to set up a Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Review Committee every financial year to assess and review the targets. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**
- The FRBM Act includes provisions for automatic triggers, commonly known as "escape clauses," which allow temporary deviations from fiscal targets under specified circumstances.

- If triggered, these clauses may lead to corrective measures, including spending cuts. **Hence, statement 4 is correct**

Answer 3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Electric propulsion technology indeed involves the use of electric power to generate thrust for the propulsion of vehicles. It is commonly used in space exploration, satellite maneuvers, and other aerospace applications. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Ion thrusters are a type of electric propulsion that uses electric fields to accelerate ions, providing higher efficiency and velocity compared to traditional chemical rockets. This technology is commonly used in long-duration space missions. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- Electric propulsion systems are not primarily used for short-distance, Earth-bound transportation like electric cars and buses.
- They are more prevalent in space applications due to their efficiency and the absence of atmospheric drag, which is a significant advantage in the vacuum of space. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Answer 4 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme does not specifically focus on establishing fueling stations for electric vehicles.
- Instead, it primarily aims to set up retail outlets for providing clean and green fuels like compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The emphasis of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is on promoting the use of clean and green energy, including compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).
- These fuels are considered environmentally friendly alternatives to conventional fuels. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is not an initiative of the Ministry of Environment,

Forest and Climate Change. It falls under the purview of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Answer 5 Option B is correct

Explanation

- NAFED, the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd, is indeed involved in the marketing of agricultural produce, but it is not a government organization.
- It is a cooperative society registered under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- NAFED operates as a multi-state cooperative society with the primary objective of promoting cooperative marketing of agricultural produce.
- It plays a crucial role in ensuring fair prices to farmers and facilitating the marketing of their produce. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**
- NAFED is primarily focused on agricultural marketing activities and does not provide agricultural credit and insurance services.
- Its main functions revolve around procurement, marketing, and distribution of agricultural commodities. **Hence, statement 4 is incorrect**

Answer 6 Option B is correct

Explanation

- TMT is a 30-meter diameter optical and infrared telescope designed for deep space observations.
- It is a collaborative effort involving the US, Japan, China, Canada and India. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It will allow deeper exploration into space and observe cosmic objects with unprecedented sensitivity. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- India is expected to be a major contributor, providing hardware, instrumentation, and software worth \$200 million.
- India will contribute 83 of the 492 precisely polished mirrors needed for the telescope.
- Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIAP) is leading the consortium of Indian institutions involved in the TMT project. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

Answer 7 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Inflation is a long-term increase in the general price level of goods and services in a given economy.
- It considers the pricing of most everyday or standard products and services.
- Retail Inflation is the rate at which the prices of goods and services that consumers buy for personal use increase over time. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Core Inflation is the change in the costs of goods and services but does not include those from the food and energy sectors.
- Food and energy prices are exempt from this calculation because their prices can be too volatile or fluctuate wildly.
- Under the RBI Act, 1934, the Central Government, in consultation with the RBI, determines the inflation target in terms of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), once in five years.
- Currently, the RBI aims to keep inflation at 4% but will tolerate inflation between the range of 2% to 6%. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

Answer 8 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The Padmanabhaiah Committee (2000) was constituted to study recruitment procedures for the police force, training, duties and responsibilities, police investigations and prosecution.
- The Vohra Committee Report highlighted the nexus between the criminals, politicians and government functionaries.
- The Ribeiro Committee 1998 on police reforms recommended the setting up of Police Performance and Accountability commissions at the state level and also the constitution of a District complaints Authority, replacement of the Police Act, 1861 with a new act. **Hence, option B is correct.**

Answer 9 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Swachh Survekshan is the world's largest urban sanitation and cleanliness survey.
- It is conducted under the ambit of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- It was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) with Quality Council of India (QCI) as its implementation partner.
- Objective: To encourage large-scale citizen participation and create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together toward making towns and cities better places to reside in.
- The methodology for measuring cleanliness rests on two main criterias viz. citizen feedback and field assessment.
- The survey creates multiple sub-categories, allowing more cities to score well in specific areas, such as population size. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Swachh Survekshan 2023
 - Maharashtra was recognized as the cleanest state with 89.24% door-to-door waste collection and 67.76% source segregation. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
 - Indore, Madhya Pradesh, has been adjudged India's cleanest city for the seventh consecutive year, sharing honours with Surat, Gujarat.

Answer 10 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- Finance Commissions are constitutional bodies set up under Article 280 of the Constitution every five years to make recommendations on the distribution of financial resources between the Union and the states. **Hence, statements 1 and 2 are correct.**
- Recommendations cover three main aspects
 - Vertical Devolution: The share of states in the divisible pool of central taxes.
 - Horizontal Distribution: The allocation of resources among states based on a formula that reflects their fiscal needs, capacities and performance.
 - Grants-in-aid: The additional transfers to specific states or sectors that are in need of assistance or reform.
- The finance commission consists of the chairman and 4 other members. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- The Parliament determines legally the qualifications of the members of the Commission and their selection methods.



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