

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

15 JULY 2024

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Farmers, officials in Andhra Pradesh hopeful as water storage rises in Almatti Dam

GS Paper I: Geography

Rainfall in the catchment areas of the Krishna river has kindled the hopes of Water Resources Department (WRD) officials and farmers alike.

The water levels at the Almatti Dam in Karnataka are rising with considerable inflows of 23,678 cusecs as of July 13.

The water stored in the dam is 92.17 tmcft as against its total capacity of 129.72 tmcft. The full reservoir level is 1,705 ft.

The Narayanapur reservoir’s storage was 25.5 tmcft. The two major reservoirs have 117.67 tmcft of water currently, as against 40.21 tmcft during the corresponding period last year. The Andhra Pradesh government has re-



Full flow: A view of the Lal Bahadur Shastri reservoir in Almatti over the Krishna river. FILE PHOTO

leased 1,500 cusecs of Krishna water from the eastern delta regulator on the Prakasam barrage last Wednesday.

To meet different needs
First, the water will be utilised to meet the drinking water needs in 11 Assembly constituencies and then will be used to cater to the Kharif crops. The farmers

have taken up seedbeds as part of their Kharif operations. Now, with heavy rain lashing upstream of Srisaillam, they are pinning hopes on the release of water from the Almatti Dam, which would fill up the reservoirs downstream.

According to WRD officials, as much as 92 tmcft of water is stored in Almatti Dam.

The Lal Bahadur Shastri Reservoir

- It is commonly known as the Almatti Dam, is a significant hydroelectric project situated on the Krishna River in North Karnataka.
- Completed in July 2005, it serves as the main reservoir for the Upper Krishna Irrigation Project.

Key Features

- **River:** Krishna River
- **Location:** Almatti, Nidgundi, Bijapur district, Karnataka
- **Height:** 160 meters (originally), raised to 524 meters MSL
- **Length:** 1565.15 feet
- **Catchment Area:** 33,375 square kilometers
- **Storage Capacity:** 200 TMC (after raising the height)
- **Power Generation:** 290 MW (55 MW x 5 generators + 15 MW generator)
- **Annual Electric Output:** 560 MU (or GWh)
- **Operator:** Karnataka Power Corporation Limited

Purpose

The primary objectives of the Almatti Dam are:

- **Irrigation:** To provide water for irrigation to drought-prone areas in Bagalkot, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, and Raichur districts of Karnataka.
- **Hydroelectric Power Generation:** To produce electricity for the region.

Significance

- The Almatti Dam is crucial for the development of the region. It has transformed the lives of rural communities by providing irrigation facilities and generating electricity.
- The reservoir also supports biodiversity and attracts migratory birds during the summer.

Challenges

- The construction of the Almatti Dam was a subject of inter-state disputes between Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh over water sharing.
- The project faced delays and legal challenges due to these disputes.

Additional Information

- The dam was named after former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.
- The reservoir is known for its scenic beauty and attracts tourists.
- The backwaters of the dam host several migratory birds during summer.



There is only some good electoral news (15 July)

- Recent elections in India and the UK had contrasting outcomes.
- The Labour Party in the UK achieved a significant victory over the Conservatives.
- In India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost its majority and now relies on allies to govern.
- Voters in both countries curtailed the ambitions of the ruling parties.
- By the end of 2023, over 60 countries will have held national elections.
- Analysts struggle to find common patterns among these elections.
- The trend in 2023 has been towards "democratic deconsolidation" with more authoritarian governments.
- Freedom House reported a decline in global freedom for the 17th consecutive year.
- Voters in India and the UK showed that democracy remains strong.
- France's two-phase electoral system produced a mixed result, with a far-right party gaining in the first phase and a hung Parliament in the second.
- Tactical voting by left and centrist parties prevented a right-wing government in France.
- The French electoral system ensures representation by someone with majority support but has led to uncertainty about the next government.

The spotlight on America

- The US is heading into a presidential election with a troubling choice between an elderly felon and an octogenarian with potential mental decline.
- A new poll shows that many Republican voters sympathize with the Capitol rioters and question Joe Biden's 2020 election win.
- Concerns arise about the health of US democracy and the potential for violence if election results are disputed.
- Newer democracies like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Senegal, South Korea, India, South Africa, and Mexico have held peaceful elections with mostly smooth transitions.
- Bangladesh is an exception, with Sheikh Hasina returning to office after an election boycotted by the main opposition.
- Pakistan's election was undemocratic, with the main contender jailed, ballot-rigging allegations, and military influence.
- A Pew poll in 24 countries found declining support for representative democracy, with many dissatisfied with their democracies and favoring strong leaders without parliamentary or judicial interference.
- Illiberal values and politicians are gaining ground in many societies, threatening the core tenets of democracy.
- The future of democracy is uncertain.

The problem with the Karnataka gig workers Bill

Last month, Karnataka introduced a new Bill, called the draft **Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024**, seeking to provide social security and welfare measures for platform-based gig workers in the State. The government shared the draft on July 9. In the recent past, a similar law was also enacted by Rajasthan called the **Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023**.

The Karnataka Bill has a distinct similarity with the Rajasthan legislation in the sense that both are based on a welfare board model. This model does not address employment relations as such and is more appropriate for **self-employed informal workers**. In the case of gig work, addressing employment relations is the need of the hour.

The rise of gig work versus work issues

The number of gig and platform workers is on the rise, more so in the last decade with **developments in the app-cab and retail delivery sectors**. In its working policy paper on the gig economy, **NITI Aayog has made projections of the gig workforce expanding to 23.5 million workers by 2030**. Given the **overall depressed employment generation scenario**, **gig work** is one sector that is providing a livelihood to an increasingly large number of job-seekers. Such trends are also visible in other countries.

In the recent past, **India has seen protests and agitations by gig workers on the issue of revenue sharing, working hours and various other working conditions and terms of employment**. It is difficult to solve these issues within the existing legal framework as employment relations in the gig economy are non-existent at worst or complicated at best. The legal framework in labour laws is inherently based on employer-employee relation.

However, **in the gig economy, employment relations are subject to demystification as well as complication**. Those who run the platform prefer to call themselves as aggregators and consider gig



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It does not address employment relations in gig work, thereby affecting the application of crucial and protective labour laws

workers as independent contractors/workers. **Aggregators believe that they are providing the technology and bringing together independent workers and consumers**. Independent workers are masters of their own work, according to aggregators.

On the other hand, workers in the gig economy consider aggregators as their employers as the **conditions of service and terms of employment are set by the aggregators**. For example, **in an app-cab operation, the price of the ride is determined by the app/aggregator and the entire ecosystem of working conditions and terms for the ride are decided by the app company only**. In this context, gig workers seek fair treatment, improved working conditions, and access to social security as legal entitlement.

U.K. ruling

In a similar kind of a situation, in Britain, the United Kingdom Supreme Court ruled that Uber is an employer and that the existing labour laws of the U.K. do apply to Uber drivers. In India, gig and platform workers are included in Code on Social Security 2020 as a kind of informal self-employed workers but no mention of such workers has been made in the other three new labour codes, namely Code on Wages, Industrial Relations Code and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code. The Rajasthan and Karnataka pieces of legislation are recent additions to this legal landscape.

Like the Rajasthan Act, the Karnataka Bill has also skirted the issue of defining employment relations in gig work. It has preferred the term 'aggregator' for app companies rather than employer. Without the recognition of employment relations, protective labour laws that ensure a minimum wage, occupational safety and health, working hours and leave entitlements, and the right to collective bargaining cannot be applied. These important issues remain unresolved in gig work.

There is no guarantee on minimum earnings from gig work even when a worker is available for

the greater part of the day. There is no regulation on working hours also. There are regular incidents of overworked app cab drivers being involved in accidents late in the night or early in the morning, jeopardising their own lives along with that of passenger.

Employment relations do exist in gig work, and regulations should acknowledge this. Aggregators are the de-facto employers as they set the terms and conditions of employment. While they may present the platform as a tool connecting workers and consumers, they are responsible for designing it and establishing its terms. The platform is merely a tool, and is not an independent entity, making the aggregators the actual employers.

Core issues

The welfare board model adopted by Rajasthan and Karnataka provides some welfare schemes for gig workers, but it does not replace institutional social security benefits such as provident fund, gratuity, or maternity benefits, which regular workers are legally entitled to. Historically, welfare board models have been poorly implemented, as evidenced by the Construction Workers Welfare Act of 1996 and the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, where funds were available but inadequately used.

The Karnataka Bill does not address the issue of minimum wages or working hours for gig workers. Section 16 discusses income security regarding payment deductions but does not guarantee a minimum income, wage entitlements, or revenue sharing between aggregators and gig workers. Section 16(2) only requires weekly payments, without specifying a minimum amount.

The proposed Karnataka Bill, like the Code on Social Security, 2020 and the Rajasthan Act 2023, fails to address the employment relationship in the gig economy. This oversight confuses employment relations and absolves employers of legal obligations, making it difficult to fully protect workers' rights.

The problem with the Karnataka gig workers Bill (15 July)

- Karnataka introduced the draft Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024, to provide social security and welfare for gig workers.
- The draft was shared on July 9.
- Rajasthan enacted a similar law, the Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023.
- Both laws use a welfare board model, which is suitable for self-employed informal workers but does not address employment relations, which is crucial for gig workers.
- The gig workforce is growing, especially in the app-cab and retail delivery sectors, with projections by NITI Aayog suggesting it will reach 23.5 million by 2030.
- Gig work provides livelihoods amid a generally depressed employment generation scenario.
- Gig workers in India have protested over revenue sharing, working hours, and other conditions.
- Existing labour laws are based on employer-employee relationships, which are complicated or absent in the gig economy.
- Aggregators see themselves as technology providers and gig workers as independent contractors.
- Gig workers view aggregators as employers since the conditions of service are set by the aggregators.
- Gig workers seek fair treatment, improved working conditions, and access to social security as legal entitlements.

U.K. ruling

- The UK Supreme Court ruled that Uber is an employer, applying labour laws to Uber drivers.
- In India, gig workers are included in the Code on Social Security 2020 as informal self-employed workers, but not in other labour codes.
- The Rajasthan and Karnataka laws do not define employment relations in gig work, using the term 'aggregator' instead of 'employer'.
- Without recognizing employment relations, labour laws for minimum wage, safety, working hours, leave, and collective bargaining cannot apply.
- Gig workers lack guaranteed minimum earnings and regulated working hours.
- Aggregators are the de-facto employers as they set terms and conditions.
- The welfare board model provides some schemes but not full social security benefits like provident fund, gratuity, or maternity benefits.
- Historical welfare board models have been poorly implemented.
- The Karnataka Bill does not address minimum wages or working hours.
- Section 16 discusses payment deductions but not minimum income or revenue sharing.
- The Karnataka Bill, like other legislation, fails to address employment relationships, making it hard to protect workers' rights.

Restoring a verdict (15 July)

Opportunistic defections will likely be punished by the voters

- INDIA bloc parties won 10 of 13 Assembly seats in by-polls across seven States on July 10.
- The results, announced on July 13, reflect a fatigue with the BJP, showing resistance to BJP's politics.
- In Himachal Pradesh, Congress won two of three seats after independents who joined BJP resigned.
- The Congress's victories in Dehra and Nalagarh restored its strength to 40 MLAs in the 68-member House.
- Congress also retained the Badrinath seat in Uttarakhand despite a defector joining BJP.
- In Madhya Pradesh, a defector to BJP won, indicating Congress's decline in the State.
- Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam won in Tamil Nadu's Vikravandi seat.
- Trinamool Congress won three seats from BJP in West Bengal and retained Maniktala.
- Aam Aadmi Party defeated a BJP defector in Jalandhar West, Punjab.
- The results suggest the electorate rejected opportunistic defections and BJP's overreach.

Unprincipled alliances (15 July)

There seems to be no end to the instability of coalitions in Nepal

- Nepali politics is characterized by shifting alliances, driven by interests rather than permanent friends or enemies.
- Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal lost a trust vote, receiving only 63 votes out of 275, with 194 against him.
- The loss was expected after the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), led by Khadka Prasad Oli, withdrew support and joined the opposition Nepali Congress led by Sher Bahadur Deuba.
- Dahal's government was initially formed after the November 2022 elections despite his party finishing third, by exploiting differences between NC and UML.
- NC and UML, with 89 and 78 seats respectively, have now formed a coalition with Oli and Deuba sharing the Prime Minister post for the remaining term.
- Since transitioning from monarchy to a republic, Nepal has faced political instability and poor governance.
- Despite constitutional reforms, leadership focuses on power retention rather than governance, leading to disillusionment among the people.
- A presidential system with a directly elected head of state might be a better alternative for stability.

On the jurisdiction of the CBI

Is the Central Bureau of Investigation an independent agency or does it come under the control of the Union government? Does the CBI need the permission of the State to carry out investigation in its territory? Which are the States that have withdrawn general consent to the central agency?

GS Paper II: CBI

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

The Supreme Court on July 10 upheld the maintainability of the West Bengal government's suit accusing the Union government of "constitutional overreach" by employing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to register and investigate cases in the State despite its withdrawal of general consent on November 16, 2018. A Bench comprising Justices B.R. Gawai and Sandeep Mehta rejected the Centre's preliminary objections that it was wrongly made a defendant in the suit as it did not control the CBI, which was an "independent agency." Perusing various provisions of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, under which the CBI functions, the Bench concluded "the very establishment, exercise of powers, extension of jurisdiction, the superintendence of the DSPE [Act], all vest with the Government of India." Accordingly, the Court ruled that the suit discloses a valid cause of action and must be heard on merits. It posted the next hearing on August 13.

What is general consent?

Under Section 6 of the DSPE Act, the CBI is required to obtain consent from the concerned State government before initiating an investigation within its jurisdiction.

This permission is crucial since "police" and "public order" are subjects that fall within the State List under the seventh schedule of the Constitution. However, no such prior consent is necessary in Union territories or railway areas. General consent is given by States to facilitate the agency's seamless investigation into corruption charges against Central government employees in their territories. However, since 2015, several States such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Meghalaya and West Bengal have revoked their general consent alleging that the Centre is misusing the federal agency to unfairly target the Opposition. "In the absence of such an omnibus consent, the CBI will be unable to register any fresh cases in these States without the explicit permission of the respective State governments," P.D.T. Achary, former Secretary General, Lok Sabha told *The Hindu*.

What does the case filed by the West Bengal government allege?

In August 2021, the West Bengal government filed an original suit under Article 131 of the Constitution arguing that the actions of the Union government and the involvement of the CBI in the State infringed upon its sovereignty. The suit highlighted that despite the withdrawal of general consent for CBI investigations by the Trinamool Congress government on November 16, 2018, the agency proceeded to register 12 new cases. Deeming this to be a "constitutional overreach," the State sought the annulment of these 12 cases and a restraint on the agency from lodging any further cases.

The framers of the Constitution envisioned such conflicts between the Centre and the States owing to the existing quasi-federal structure and dual polity. As a result, they conferred original and exclusive jurisdiction upon the Supreme Court to address such disputes, under Article 131. For a suit to be maintainable under this provision, two conditions have to be satisfied – it should



GETTY IMAGES

relate to a dispute between the Government of India and one or more State Governments (or) between one or more State Governments, and it must involve a question of law or fact crucial to the determination of legal rights.

In *State Of Karnataka vs Union Of India (1977)*, the Supreme Court observed that Article 131 is a feature of federalism and should be "widely and generously interpreted" to advance the intended remedy. Similarly, in *State Of Rajasthan & Ors. vs Union Of India (1977)*, the top Court cautioned against taking a very "restrictive or a hyper-technical view of the State's rights."

What was the Union government's argument?

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union government, pressed the Court to dismiss West Bengal's suit by raising preliminary objections to its maintainability. He pointed out that original suits under Article 131 of the Constitution exclusively involve the Union and States as parties. "It is the CBI which has registered the cases in question. But the CBI is not a defendant in this suit, and it cannot be made one, as the CBI is not a 'State' under Article 131," Mr. Mehta contended.

He further argued that the CBI was an "independent agency" since it did not function under the direct control of the Union government. "The Union does not supervise the registration of offences or investigation or closure or filing of chargesheet or conviction or acquittal of cases by the CBI," he reasoned. However, later in the proceedings, Mr. Mehta finally conceded that the agency cannot initiate

any investigation without the express authorisation of the Union government under Section 5 of the DSPE Act.

On the contrary, senior advocate Kapil Sibal highlighted that the case extended beyond the Centre's control over the CBI to the fundamental question of whether the agency could disregard a specific notification issued by the West Bengal government in 2018, withdrawing its consent. Mr. Sibal asserted that once a State grants and then withdraws its consent, the CBI lacks jurisdiction to exercise its powers within that State.

What did the verdict state?

The Court observed that a bare perusal of the provisions of the DSPE Act reveals that right from the constitution of the CBI, the classes of offences which are to be investigated by it, to its administration and powers, it is the "Central government that it is vitally concerned with."

"Under Section 4 of the DSPE Act, except the offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, in which the superintendence will be with the Central Vigilance Commission, the superintendence of the DSPE in all other matters would vest with the Central government," Justice Gawai, who authored the verdict, noted. The judge also reminded the Centre that Section 6 of the DSPE Act mandates the prior consent of the State government to a CBI probe within its jurisdiction.

While the Court recognised that the CBI would always be entitled to investigate offences independently, it underscored that this autonomy "would not water down" its administrative control and superintendence that vests

with the Centre. It thus proceeded to conclude that the Solicitor General's argument that the CBI is an "independent agency" holds no water.

The verdict, however, clarified that these observations were only made to meet the preliminary objections raised by the Union government and would not have any bearing on the merits of the suit.

What are the implications?

According to Mr. Achary, if the CBI is permitted to initiate investigations in States that have revoked their general consent, it would be an affront to federalism. "This could strain Centre-State relations, particularly since the police is a State subject under the Constitution. Allowing the CBI to register cases would effectively confer upon it the same powers as the State police forces," he adds. While the Supreme Court has so far only addressed the preliminary objections to the maintainability of West Bengal's suit, the constitutional expert pointed out that the final ruling on its merits will have a significant bearing on other similar pending cases.

Another Bench of the top Court is tackling a similar question of law related to the State of Tamil Nadu in the case of Ankit Tiwari, an Enforcement Directorate (ED) officer against whom the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption had launched a criminal prosecution for bribery. A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and K.V. Viswanathan had recommended judicial oversight over the cross-fire of criminal cases filed between Central agencies like the ED and the police in Opposition-ruled States to protect innocents from prosecution.

THE GIST

▼ The Supreme Court on July 10 upheld the maintainability of the West Bengal government's suit accusing the Union government of "constitutional overreach" by employing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to register and investigate cases in the State despite its withdrawal of general consent on November 16, 2018.

▼ Under Section 6 of the DSPE Act, the CBI is required to obtain consent from the concerned State government before initiating an investigation within its jurisdiction.

▼ Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union government, pressed the Court to dismiss West Bengal's suit by raising preliminary objections to its maintainability. He argued that the CBI was an "independent agency" since it did not function under the direct control of the Union government.

On the jurisdiction of the CBI (15 July)

Is the Central Bureau of Investigation an independent agency or does it come under the control of the Union government? Does the CBI need the permission of the State to carry out investigation in its territory? Which are the States that have withdrawn general consent to the central agency?

- **Supreme Court Ruling:** On July 10, the Supreme Court upheld the West Bengal government's right to file a suit against the Union government for using the CBI to investigate cases in the state despite its withdrawal of general consent on November 16, 2018.

- **Preliminary Objections:** The Centre argued that it should not be made a defendant in the suit as it does not control the CBI, claiming it is an independent agency. However, the Supreme Court rejected these objections.
- **DSPE Act, 1946:** The Court examined provisions of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, which governs the CBI, and concluded that powers, jurisdiction, and superintendence over the CBI vest with the Government of India.
- **Cause of Action:** The Court found that West Bengal's suit raised valid concerns about constitutional overreach and decided that the case should proceed to a full hearing on its merits, scheduling the next hearing for August 13.
- **General Consent:** Under Section 6 of the DSPE Act, States must grant consent for the CBI to initiate investigations within their jurisdiction, especially in matters related to police and public order, which are State subjects.
- **Revocation of General Consent:** Since 2015, several states including Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Meghalaya, and West Bengal have revoked their general consent. This action restricts the CBI from initiating new investigations without specific permission from the respective State governments.
- **Controversy:** States allege that the Centre misuses the CBI to target political opponents, leading to the withdrawal of general consent to prevent unwarranted interference in State affairs.
- **Impact:** Without general consent, the CBI's ability to investigate new cases in these states is severely restricted, requiring explicit permission from the State governments for each case.

What does the case filed by the West Bengal government allege?

- **Original Suit by West Bengal Government:** In August 2021, West Bengal filed an original suit under Article 131 of the Constitution in the Supreme Court. The suit argued that the Union government's actions, including the CBI's involvement in the state despite withdrawal of general consent in 2018, infringed upon its sovereignty.
- **Grounds of Suit:** West Bengal highlighted that despite withdrawing general consent for CBI investigations, the agency continued to register new cases in the state, totaling 12. The state deemed this as a "constitutional overreach" and sought annulment of these cases and a restraint on the CBI from filing any new cases.
- **Article 131 Jurisdiction:** The Constitution provides the Supreme Court with original and exclusive jurisdiction to resolve disputes between the Union and State governments. For a suit under Article 131 to be maintainable, it must involve a dispute crucial to legal rights between the Union and one or more State governments.
- **Judicial Precedents:** In previous cases like *State Of Karnataka vs Union Of India (1977)* and *State Of Rajasthan & Ors. vs Union Of India (1977)*, the Supreme Court emphasized the broad interpretation of Article 131 to uphold federal principles and protect State rights against federal overreach.
- **Union Government's Defense:** Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta argued against the suit's maintainability, stating that the CBI, not being a 'State' under Article 131, cannot be made a defendant in such disputes. He initially claimed the CBI operates independently from the Union government's direct control.
- **CBI's Dependency on Union Authorization:** Despite initial arguments, Tushar Mehta acknowledged that the CBI cannot initiate investigations without explicit authorization from the Union government under Section 5 of the DSPE Act, indicating some level of control.
- **Argument for State Sovereignty:** Senior advocate Kapil Sibal argued that the case goes beyond CBI's operational independence, focusing on whether the agency can disregard a State's withdrawal of consent. Sibal asserted that once consent is withdrawn by a State, the CBI lacks jurisdiction to operate within that State.

What did the verdict state?

- **Court's Observations on DSPE Act:**
 - The Supreme Court noted that according to the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, the Central government holds significant authority over the CBI, including its constitution, the types of offenses it investigates, and its administration.
 - It emphasized that apart from cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act, where the Central Vigilance Commission has oversight, the superintendence of DSPE in all other matters remains with the Central government as per Section 4 of the DSPE Act.
 - Section 6 of the DSPE Act mandates prior consent from the State government for CBI investigations within its jurisdiction, reinforcing the State's role in regulating the agency's activities.
- **Independence vs. Administrative Control:**
 - While acknowledging the CBI's operational independence in conducting investigations, the Court asserted that this autonomy does not diminish the administrative control and superintendence vested in the Central government.
 - It rejected the argument presented by the Solicitor General that the CBI operates as an independent agency separate from direct Central government control.
- **Implications of the Verdict:**
 - Allowing the CBI to proceed with investigations in States that have withdrawn their general consent could strain Centre-State relations, particularly since policing is a State subject under the Constitution.
 - Granting the CBI such powers could equate its authority with that of State police forces, potentially compromising federal principles and State autonomy.
 - The Supreme Court clarified that its observations on the CBI's autonomy were made to address preliminary objections and do not influence the eventual decision on the merits of West Bengal's suit.
- **Broader Legal Context:**
 - The final ruling on West Bengal's suit will significantly impact similar pending cases involving disputes between Central agencies and State governments over jurisdiction and federalism.
 - Another case involving the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Tamil Nadu's Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption underscores the ongoing legal challenges regarding the jurisdiction of Central agencies in states governed by opposition parties.

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

- **Origin:** CBI originated from the Delhi Special Police Establishment set up in 1941 to investigate wartime procurement corruption.
- **Establishment:** Based on Santhanam Committee recommendations, the CBI was established by the Ministry of Home Affairs and later transferred to the Ministry of Personnel.
- **Status:** The CBI is not a statutory body; it derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
- **Role:** The CBI is the main investigating agency of the Central Government, focusing on preventing corruption and maintaining administrative integrity.
- **Supervision:** It operates under the Central Vigilance Commission in matters related to the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

Divisions (as of 2013):

1. Anti-Corruption Division
2. Economic Offences Division
3. Special Crimes Division
4. Policy and International Police Cooperation Division
5. Administration Division
6. Directorate of Prosecution
7. Central Forensic Science Laboratory

Functions:

1. Investigates corruption, bribery, and misconduct of Central Government employees.
 2. Investigates fiscal and economic law infringements.
 3. Investigates serious crimes with national/international implications.
 4. Coordinates activities of anti-corruption agencies and state police forces.
 5. Investigates public importance cases upon state government request.
 6. Maintains crime statistics and disseminates criminal information.
- **Scope:** CBI handles corruption-related cases, economic offences, and conventional crimes, mainly involving Central Government and Union Territory employees.
 - **Conventional Crimes:** Investigates crimes like murder, kidnapping, and rape upon state government references or Supreme Court/High Court directives.
 - **Interpol Role:** Acts as the "National Central Bureau" of Interpol in India, coordinating investigation-related requests from Indian law enforcement and Interpol member countries.

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

- CVC was established in 1964 by an executive resolution, based on the Santhanam Committee's recommendations on preventing corruption (1962-64).
 - In 2003, a law was enacted by Parliament giving the CVC statutory status.
 - In 2004, the CVC was authorized as the "Designated Agency" to receive written complaints about corruption or misuse of office and recommend appropriate action.
 - The CVC is the apex vigilance institution, independent of executive control, and oversees vigilance activities under the Central Government.
 - The CVC advises Central Government organizations on planning, executing, reviewing, and reforming their vigilance work.
 - The CVC is composed of a Chairperson (Central Vigilance Commissioner) and up to two members.
- **Appointments are made by the President based on the recommendations of a committee:**
 - The Prime Minister (head of the committee)
 - Union Minister of Home Affairs
 - Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha
 - Members hold office for a term of four years or until they turn 65, whichever is earlier.
 - Members are not eligible for further employment under the Central or State Government after their term ends.

The President can remove a member under the following circumstances:

1. If adjudged insolvent
2. If convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude (in the opinion of the Central Government)
3. If engaged in any paid employment outside the duties of their office during their term
4. If deemed unfit to continue in office due to infirmity of mind or body (in the opinion of the President)
5. If having financial or other interests likely to affect their official functions prejudicially

For removal due to proved misbehavior or incapacity:

- The President must refer the matter to the Supreme Court for an enquiry.
- If the Supreme Court upholds the cause of removal and advises so, the President can remove the member.

A member is deemed guilty of misbehavior if:

- Concerned or interested in any contract or agreement made by the Central Government.
- Participates in the profit of such a contract or agreement, or in any benefit or emolument arising from it, other than as a member of an incorporated company.

The Union government's rein on financial transfers to different States

One of the reasons for the States' share in gross revenue declining is that the net tax revenue is arrived at after deducting the revenue collections under cess and surcharge, revenue collections from Union Territories, and tax administration expenditure

**GS Paper II: Center
State Relations
R. Srinivasan**

On July 11, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin alleged that the Union government was withholding funds for the State's Metro rail completion and other vital projects. In this article, dated February 7, 2024, J. Jeyaranjan and R. Srinivasan explain how the government's tax policies reduce aggregate financial transfers to States, weakening cooperative federalism.

Ever since the start of the Fourteenth Finance Commission award period (2015-16), the Union government has been reducing financial transfers to States. This is particularly strange given that the Fourteenth Finance Commission recommended devolving 42% of Union tax revenues to States, which is a clean 10 percentage points increase over the 13th Finance Commission's recommendation. The Fifteenth Finance Commission retained this recommendation of 41%, excluding the devolution to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh, which were recategorised as Union Territories. If we include the shares of J&K and Ladakh, it should be 42%. The Union government not only reduced the financial transfers to States but also increased its own total revenue to increase its discretionary expenditure. The discretionary expenditures of the Union government are not being routed through the States' Budgets, and, therefore, can impact different States in different ways.

Some basic math on tax revenue

The Finance Commissions recommend the States' share in the net tax revenue of the Union government. The difference between the gross and the net tax revenue includes collection costs, tax revenue to be assigned to Union territories, and cess and surcharges. Though the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Finance Commissions recommended 42% and 41%, respectively, of the net tax revenue to be the shares of States, the share of the gross tax revenue was just

35% in 2015-16 and 30% in 2023-24 (Budget Estimate). While the gross tax revenue of the Union government increased from ₹14.6 lakh crore in 2015-16 to ₹33.6 lakh crore in 2023-24, the States' share in the Union tax revenue increased from ₹5.1 lakh crore to ₹10.2 lakh crore between these two years. In other words, the gross tax revenue of the Union government more than doubled while the share of States just doubled. Grants-in-aid to States is another statutory grant recommended by the Finance Commission. The grants-in-aid to States declined in absolute amount from ₹1.95 lakh crore in 2015-16 to ₹1.65 lakh crore in 2023-24. Thus, the combined share of the statutory financial transfers in the gross tax revenue of the Union government declined from 48.2% to 35.32%.

One of the reasons for the States' share in gross revenue declining during this period is that the net tax revenue is arrived at after deducting the revenue collections under cess and surcharge, revenue collections from Union Territories, and tax administration expenditure. Among the three factors, revenue collection through cess and surcharge is the highest and increasing. The cess and surcharge collection in 2015-16 was 5.9% (₹85,638 crore) of the gross tax revenue of the Union government, and this ratio increased to 10.8% (₹3.63 lakh crore) in 2023-24. This calculation is excluding the Goods and Services Tax (GST) cess that is collected to compensate for the revenue loss of the States due to implementation of GST till June 2022. The Union government is increasing tax collection under cess and surcharge categories mainly to implement its own schemes in specific sectors, and at the same time, the revenues so raised need not be shared with the States.

More centralisation of public expenditure

When the financial transfers to States either as tax devolution or grants-in-aid decline on the one hand, or do not increase at least proportionately to increase in gross revenue of the Union

government on the other, the resultant effect is the availability of larger discretionary funds for the Union government to spend. This could affect the equity in distribution of financial resources among States. The Union government has two other routes of direct financial transfers to States, that is, Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CSec Schemes). The Union government influences the priorities of the States through CSS wherein the Union government provides partial funding and another part is to be committed by States. In other words, the Union government proposes the schemes and States implement them, committing their financial resources as well. Between 2015-16 and 2023-24, the allocation for CSS increased from ₹2.04 lakh crore to ₹4.76 lakh crore through 59 CSS. Thus, the Union government compels the State to commit more or less an equivalent quantum of financial resources. Moreover, the actual financial transfers to States under CSS is only ₹3.64 lakh crore (2023-24), retaining nearly ₹1.12 lakh crore of CSS allocation for other expenses.

An important aspect of CSS shared schemes is that the States that can afford to commit matching finances from the State budgets alone can avail of the matching grants. This creates two different effects in terms of inter-State equity in public finances. Wealthy States can afford to commit equivalent finances and leverage Union finances inwards through the implementation of CSS. Less wealthy States will have to commit their borrowed finances in these CSS, thus increasing their own liabilities. These differential trajectories of the public finances of States accentuate inter-State inequality in public finances, the major reason being CSS.

The CSec Schemes are fully funded by the Union government in sectors where the Union government has exclusive legislative or institutional controls. The allocation for CSec Schemes increased from ₹5.21 lakh crore in 2015-16 to ₹14.68 lakh crore in 2023-24 to implement more than 700 schemes. Thus, it is clear the

Union government allocates a larger share of the finances to CSec Schemes. It is quite likely that the Union government can allocate financial resources with a motive to benefit specific States or constituencies through the CSec Schemes. Since the CSec Schemes are directly implemented by the Union government, only ₹60,942 crore is devolved to States under this scheme in 2023-24. The combined allocation for CSS and CSec Schemes in 2023-24 is ₹19.4 lakh crore and only ₹4.25 lakh crore is devolved to States.

Scope for anti-federal fiscal policies

The financial transfers through CSS and CSec Schemes are non-statutory transfers as they are based on neither any legal provisions nor any formula determined by the Finance Commission. This non-statutory grant forms 12.6% of gross tax revenue. Together with statutory grants, the total financial transfers as a proportion to gross tax revenue were only 47.9% in 2023-24. Further, the non-statutory grants are tied grants, that is, they have to be spent on specific schemes for which the grants are allocated. This reduces the freedom of States in conducting public expenditure. In addition to retaining more than 50% of gross tax revenue, the Union government incurs a fiscal deficit to the extent of 5.9% of GDP. Thus, the Union government wields enormous financial powers with limited expenditure responsibilities.

Further, the Fifteenth Finance Commission noted that the Union government had argued for the downward revision of States' share in Union tax revenue from 42% and the Commission retained the share at 41%. Citing higher expenditure commitments, the Union government may repeat the argument before the Sixteenth Finance Commission. So much for cooperative federalism!

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The Union government's rein on financial transfers to different States (15 July)

One of the reasons for the States' share in gross revenue declining is that the net tax revenue is arrived at after deducting the revenue collections under cess and surcharge, revenue collections from Union Territories, and tax administration expenditure

- Since 2015-16, the Union government has reduced financial transfers to States despite recommendations from the Fourteenth Finance Commission to increase the share of Union tax revenues to States to 42%.
- The Fifteenth Finance Commission continued with a recommendation of 41% (or 42% including Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh as Union Territories).
- Grants-in-aid to States decreased from ₹1.95 lakh crore in 2015-16 to ₹1.65 lakh crore in 2023-24.
- Gross tax revenue of the Union government more than doubled from ₹14.6 lakh crore to ₹33.6 lakh crore between 2015-16 and 2023-24.
- States' share in Union tax revenue also doubled but at a slower rate, increasing from ₹5.1 lakh crore to ₹10.2 lakh crore over the same period.
- The share of States in gross tax revenue declined from 48.2% to 35.32% due to deductions such as revenue from cess and surcharges.
- Revenue collection through cess and surcharge increased significantly, rising from 5.9% (₹85,638 crore) in 2015-16 to 10.8% (₹3.63 lakh crore) in 2023-24.
- These funds collected via cess and surcharge are utilized by the Union government for specific sectoral schemes, without being shared with the States.
- This reduction in financial transfers and increase in cess and surcharge collections affect States' financial autonomy and their ability to fund state-specific developmental projects.

More centralisation of public expenditure

- Reduced financial transfers or inadequate increases to States from Union tax revenues lead to larger discretionary funds for the Union government.
- Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CSec Schemes) are direct financial transfers from the Union to States.
- CSS involve partial funding by the Union government, with States committing their own financial resources.
- Between 2015-16 and 2023-24, CSS allocation increased from ₹2.04 lakh crore to ₹4.76 lakh crore, comprising 59 schemes.
- States must commit matching finances to avail of CSS grants, affecting inter-state equity in financial resources.
- Wealthier States can afford these commitments independently, while less wealthy States may increase liabilities by borrowing.
- CSec Schemes are fully funded by the Union government and increased from ₹5.21 lakh crore in 2015-16 to ₹14.68 lakh crore in 2023-24 for over 700 schemes.
- These schemes are implemented directly by the Union government, with only ₹60,942 crore devolved to States in 2023-24.
- Combined allocation for CSS and CSec Schemes in 2023-24 was ₹19.4 lakh crore, with only ₹4.25 lakh crore devolved to States, potentially skewing resource allocation towards specific states or constituencies.

Scope for anti-federal fiscal policies

- CSS and CSec Schemes are non-statutory transfers not mandated by legal provisions or Finance Commission formulas.
- These schemes constitute 12.6% of gross tax revenue and are tied grants, meaning they must be spent on specific allocated schemes.
- In 2023-24, total financial transfers, including statutory and non-statutory grants, amounted to 47.9% of gross tax revenue.
- Non-statutory grants restrict States' flexibility in public expenditure decisions.
- The Union government retains over 50% of gross tax revenue and incurs a fiscal deficit of 5.9% of GDP, concentrating significant financial power.
- The Fifteenth Finance Commission retained States' share in Union tax revenue at 41%, despite earlier recommendations for 42%.
- The Union government's arguments for reducing States' share may continue in future finance commission discussions, impacting cooperative federalism concerns.

Cess

- **Definition:** A tax levied on top of the existing tax liability for a specific purpose. The collected revenue must be used only for that stated purpose.
- **Purpose:** Introduced to raise funds for specific government programs or developments, often related to social welfare, infrastructure, or environmental protection.
- **Examples:**
 - Education Cess
 - Health Cess
 - Swachh Bharat Cess
 - Krishi Kalyan Cess

Surcharge

- **Definition:** An additional tax levied on top of the existing tax liability. Unlike cess, the collected revenue goes into the general government fund and can be used for any purpose.
- **Purpose:** Usually imposed to raise additional revenue or as a temporary measure to meet fiscal needs. Often targets higher-income groups.
- **Examples:**
 - Income Tax Surcharge (for high-income taxpayers)
 - Corporate Surcharge

Key Differences

Feature	Cess	Surcharge
Purpose	Specific, pre-defined purpose	General revenue purposes
Fund Allocation	Earmarked for the specific purpose it's collected for	Consolidated Fund of India (general government revenue)
Calculation	Levied on the total tax amount (including any existing surcharge)	Levied on the base tax amount only
Target	Applies to all taxpayers	May be applied selectively (such as on high-income earners)

15th July 2024

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

GS Paper III: Employment

Question: Critically assess the impact of reducing financial transfers to states and increasing the Union government's discretionary expenditure on the federal structure of India. How does this practice affect the principles of cooperative federalism? (250 Words/15 Marks)

प्रश्न: राज्यों को वित्तीय हस्तांतरण कम करने और केंद्र सरकार के विवेकाधीन व्यय को बढ़ाने के भारत के संघीय ढांचे पर पड़ने वाले प्रभाव का आलोचनात्मक मूल्यांकन करें। यह अभ्यास सहकारी संघवाद के सिद्धांतों को कैसे प्रभावित करता है? (250 शब्द/15 अंक)

Rwanda's Kagame looks unshakeable as influence beyond his borders grows (15 July)

President Paul Kagame has established a sphere of influence far outweighing Rwanda's size to develop the country and entrench his own power base; while the World Bank says almost half the population lives on less than \$2.15 a day, Kagame has sought to burnish Rwanda's image abroad

- Rwanda, led by President Paul Kagame since the 1994 genocide, has emerged as a significant player in Africa through military strength, image branding, and political influence.
- Kagame, known for his strong leadership, is seeking a fourth presidential term, having established substantial influence beyond Rwanda's small size.
- Rwanda's foreign policy strategy, described as "smart power" by experts, combines military and economic means (hard power) with soft power tactics.
- The Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) plays a central role in this strategy, despite its actions being viewed as contradictory by some observers.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has accused Rwanda of destabilizing its eastern region and supporting armed groups like the Tutsi-led M23 rebels.
- A UN report indicated that thousands of Rwandan soldiers were involved with M23, with Kigali allegedly exerting control over their operations.
- President Kagame has not directly denied Rwanda's military presence in the DRC but has cited the persecution of Rwanda's Tutsi minority and border instability as reasons for defensive actions.
- Rwanda's involvement in the DRC has led to reduced financial support from Western nations since 2012-2013, impacting development aid and investment.

'Africa's policeman'

- Under President Paul Kagame's leadership, Rwanda's Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) has been established as a key player in African peacekeeping efforts.
- Since 2024, RDF has participated actively in UN peacekeeping missions, deploying 5,894 troops as of March 31. Rwanda ranks as the fourth largest contributor, with troops stationed in South Sudan and the Central African Republic.
- Federico Donelli, an international relations professor, notes that Rwanda's involvement in these missions has significantly enhanced its global reputation and strategic importance, moving beyond its historical association with the 1994 genocide.
- Rwanda benefits financially from these missions, with the UN paying contributors \$1,428 per soldier per month, amounting to over \$100 million annually for Kigali.
- Apart from UN missions, RDF has engaged in bilateral deployments, such as agreements with countries like the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mozambique.
- These military commitments often come with economic agreements, offering development opportunities for Rwanda. Despite lacking natural resources or an industrial base, Rwanda secures privileged access to sectors like mining, agriculture, and construction in CAR, often facilitated by Crystal Ventures, an investment firm linked to Kagame's ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

Diplomatic lever

- Rwanda uses its involvement in peacekeeping missions as a diplomatic tool to fend off sanctions, particularly concerning accusations related to its support for groups like the M23 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- The threat of withdrawing from peacekeeping operations has effectively deterred sanctions against Rwanda in international forums.
- President Kagame understands global dynamics well, recognizing Western reluctance to intervene in African crises, which he leverages to mitigate criticism and redirect attention from domestic issues like governance and human rights.
- Despite criticism of authoritarian rule and suppression of media and opposition, Rwanda portrays itself internationally as a technological hub, a host for major events, and a leader in ecotourism.
- Rwanda's "Visit Rwanda" campaign, visible on European football team jerseys like Arsenal, PSG, and Bayern Munich, is part of its effort to enhance global visibility and branding.
- Rwanda has expanded its global influence by joining international organizations like the Commonwealth and hosting significant summits, while its officials hold key positions in organizations like the International Organisation of La Francophonie and the African Union Commission.
- The controversial deal with the UK to accept asylum seekers, despite being condemned by rights groups and blocked by UK courts, exemplifies Rwanda's use of "smart power" strategies to bolster its international standing.

Amid present political uncertainty, France celebrates its national day (15 July)

- France celebrated Bastille Day with a parade commemorating World War II's 80th anniversary and welcoming the Olympic flame ahead of the Summer Games.
- President Emmanuel Macron inspected French and allied military units, although the parade was scaled down due to Olympic preparations.
- Despite the pomp of the event, France is facing political uncertainty with no clear path forward for its government.
- Snap elections called by Macron to clarify the country's direction left France without a parliamentary majority.

- Prime Minister Gabriel Attal remains as caretaker leader, but tensions with Macron have strained their relationship.
- Various political figures are gearing up for the 2027 presidential race amidst the current political stalemate.
- Far-right leader Marine Le Pen is positioning herself for the 2027 campaign, capitalizing on the current political instability.
- A new left-wing alliance, the New Popular Front (NFP), holds the most seats in parliament but lacks a majority and consensus on a prime ministerial candidate.

Magical Alcaraz leaves Djokovic spellbound (15 July)

The 21-year-old Spaniard plays one of the matches of his life to cruise past the Serb and defend his title at SW19; the 37-year-old manages to win just 10 games in the summit clash

- Novak Djokovic faced Carlos Alcaraz in the Wimbledon final and suffered a comprehensive defeat.
- Alcaraz won in straight sets, 6-2, 6-2, 7-6(4), marking Djokovic's first straight sets loss in a completed match at Wimbledon since 2013.
- Djokovic, known for his resilience, struggled against Alcaraz's aggressive play and precision.
- Alcaraz's performance was dominant, characterized by powerful serves, sharp groundstrokes, and adept use of drop shots.
- Djokovic, recovering from a recent surgery, appeared short of breath at times but did not attribute his loss to his injury.
- Alcaraz's forehand was particularly impressive, dictating the pace and accuracy of the game.
- Despite the defeat, Djokovic acknowledged Alcaraz's exceptional performance, noting his opponent's ability to read serves and play with variety.
- Alcaraz, at 21 years old, secured his fourth Grand Slam title, achieving the French Open-Wimbledon double.
- Djokovic, with 24 Grand Slam titles, remains one of the most successful tennis players in history despite this loss.
- In the final set of the Wimbledon final, Carlos Alcaraz took control decisively in the ninth game.
- Novak Djokovic appeared to struggle under pressure, allowing crucial points to slip away without putting up a strong defense.
- Alcaraz initially had a chance to close out the match at 5-4, 40-0 but let three match points slip, which seemed to unsettle him.
- A distraction from a fan shouting during a rally caused Alcaraz to make an error, leading to Djokovic forcing a tie-breaker.
- Djokovic, known for his ability to come back from difficult situations, pushed the match into a tie-breaker.
- Despite the setback, Alcaraz quickly regained his focus and played exceptional tennis, including a zipping forehand winner and a stunning drop shot.
- Alcaraz won the tie-breaker, securing the match and his victory.
- Djokovic acknowledged Alcaraz's superior performance, admitting that his opponent played better in every aspect of the game.
- Djokovic reflected that he tried to pump himself up and involve the crowd to boost his morale during the match, especially in the third set.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

<p>Question 1: Consider the following statements regarding the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CVC was established based on the recommendations of the Santhanam Committee. 2. The CVC is a statutory body established under the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003. 3. The CVC can investigate corruption cases against government officials without any reference to the government. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>a) 1 and 2 only</p> <p>b) 2 and 3 only</p> <p>c) 1 and 3 only</p> <p>d) 1, 2, and 3</p>	<p>Answer: a) 1 and 2 only</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Statement 1: The CVC was indeed established based on the recommendations of the Santhanam Committee, which was set up to inquire into corruption in public life. This statement is correct.</p> <p>Statement 2: The CVC is a statutory body, established under the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003. This statement is also correct.</p> <p>Statement 3: While the CVC has the mandate to prevent corruption, it does not have the power to independently investigate corruption cases against government officials. It can only inquire or investigate based on a reference from the government or a complaint. Therefore, this statement is incorrect.</p> <p>Explanation of Incorrect Options:</p> <p>Option b) 2 and 3 only: Statement 3 is incorrect.</p> <p>Option c) 1 and 3 only: Statement 3 is incorrect.</p> <p>Option d) 1, 2, and 3: Statement 3 is incorrect.</p> <p>Therefore, only statements 1 and 2 are correct</p>
<p>Question 2: Which of the following statements is true about the appointment process of the Central Vigilance Commissioner?</p> <p>a) The Central Vigilance Commissioner is appointed by the President of India on the</p>	<p>Answer: a) The Central Vigilance Commissioner is appointed by the President of India on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.</p> <p>Explanation:</p>

<p>recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.</p> <p>b) The Central Vigilance Commissioner is appointed by the Prime Minister directly.</p> <p>c) The Central Vigilance Commissioner is appointed by the President of India based on the recommendation of the Supreme Court.</p> <p>d) The Central Vigilance Commissioner is appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India, and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) is a statutory body established by the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003. • The CVC is headed by the Central Vigilance Commissioner. • The appointment process: • The President appoints the CVC and Vigilance Commissioners. • The appointment is based on the recommendations of a high-powered committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Home Affairs, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. <p>Explanation of Incorrect Options: Option b) The Central Vigilance Commissioner is appointed by the Prime Minister directly: This is incorrect. The appointment is made by the President based on the recommendation of a committee. Option c) The Central Vigilance Commissioner is appointed by the President of India based on the recommendation of the Supreme Court: This is incorrect. The Supreme Court is not involved in the appointment process. Option d) The Central Vigilance Commissioner is appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India, and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha: This is incorrect. The composition of the committee is different.</p>
<p>Question 3: Which of the following statements regarding the tenure and removal of the Central Vigilance Commissioner is/are correct?</p> <p>1. The Central Vigilance Commissioner holds office for a term of four years or until attaining the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.</p> <p>2. The Central Vigilance Commissioner can be removed from office by the President on grounds of proven misbehavior or incapacity after an inquiry conducted by the Supreme Court.</p> <p>Select the correct answer using the code given below:</p> <p>a) 1 only b) 2 only c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2</p>	<p>Answer: a) 1 only</p> <p>Explanation: Statement 1: The Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) indeed holds office for a term of four years or until attaining the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. This statement is correct. Statement 2: While the CVC can be removed from office by the President on grounds of proven misbehavior or incapacity, the inquiry is conducted by a Parliamentary Committee and not the Supreme Court. Therefore, this statement is incorrect. Explanation of Incorrect Options: Option b) 2 only: Statement 2 is incorrect. Option c) Both 1 and 2: Statement 2 is incorrect. Option d) Neither 1 nor 2: Statement 1 is correct. Therefore, only statement 1 is correct.</p>
<p>Question 4: Consider the following statements about the Lal Bahadur Shastri Reservoir (Almatti Dam):</p> <p>1. The reservoir is located on the Krishna River.</p> <p>2. The Almatti Dam is situated in the state of Maharashtra.</p> <p>3. The primary purpose of the Almatti Dam is to provide hydroelectric power.</p> <p>Which of the above statements is/are correct?</p> <p>A) 1 and 2 only B) 1 and 3 only C) 2 and 3 only D) 1, 2 and 3</p>	<p>Answer: A) 1 and 2 only</p> <p>Explanation: Statement 1: The Lal Bahadur Shastri Reservoir (Almatti Dam) is indeed located on the Krishna River. This statement is correct. Statement 2: The Almatti Dam is situated in the state of Maharashtra. This statement is incorrect. The dam is actually located in the state of Karnataka. Statement 3: While the Almatti Dam does generate hydroelectric power, its primary purpose is irrigation. This statement is incorrect. Explanation of Incorrect Options: Option B) 1 and 3 only: Statement 3 is incorrect. Option C) 2 and 3 only: Both statements are incorrect. Option D) 1, 2 and 3: Statements 2 and 3 are incorrect. Therefore, only statements 1 and 2 are correct.</p>
<p>Question 5: Which of the following statements regarding the Lal Bahadur Shastri Reservoir (Almatti Dam) is/are correct?</p> <p>1. The reservoir plays a crucial role in irrigation for the states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.</p>	<p>Answer: B) 1 and 2 only</p> <p>Explanation: Statement 1: The Lal Bahadur Shastri Reservoir (Almatti Dam) indeed plays a crucial role in irrigation for the states of Karnataka and Maharashtra (not Andhra Pradesh). This statement is correct. Statement 2: The Almatti Dam is a part of the Upper Krishna Project. This statement is correct.</p>

<p>2. The Almatti Dam is a part of the Upper Krishna Project.</p> <p>3. The construction of the Almatti Dam was completed before the construction of the Narayanpur Dam.</p> <p>Select the correct answer using the code given below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A) 1 only • B) 1 and 2 only • C) 2 and 3 only • D) 1, 2 and 3 	<p>Statement 3: The Narayanpur Dam is actually downstream of the Almatti Dam. Therefore, the Almatti Dam was constructed before the Narayanpur Dam. This statement is incorrect.</p> <p>Explanation of Incorrect Options: Option A) 1 only: Statement 2 is also correct. Option C) 2 and 3 only: Statement 3 is incorrect. Option D) 1, 2 and 3: Statement 3 is incorrect. Therefore, only statements 1 and 2 are correct.</p>
<p>Question 6: Consider the following statements about UNESCO World Heritage Sites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A site must be of outstanding universal value to be included in the World Heritage List. 2. The World Heritage List includes both cultural and natural heritage sites. 3. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee is responsible for adding and removing sites from the World Heritage List. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only c) 2 and 3 only d) 1, 2, and 3</p>	<p>Answer: d) 1, 2, and 3</p> <p>Explanation: Statement 1: This is correct. A site must be of "outstanding universal value" to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. This means it must possess exceptional cultural or natural significance that transcends national boundaries. Statement 2: This is also correct. The World Heritage List encompasses a diverse range of sites, including cultural properties (like historical monuments, cities, or archaeological sites) and natural properties (like forests, mountains, or lakes). Statement 3: This is correct. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of representatives from 21 States Parties, is responsible for inscribing new properties on the World Heritage List and removing properties from it in exceptional circumstances. Explanation of Incorrect Options: Option a) 1 only: Statements 2 and 3 are also correct. Option b) 1 and 2 only: Statement 3 is also correct. Option c) 2 and 3 only: Statement 1 is also correct.</p>
<p>Question 7: Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the process of inscription of a site in the UNESCO World Heritage List?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The nomination of a site is made by the local community. 2. A tentative list must be submitted to UNESCO before the nomination of a site. 3. The nominated site must meet at least one of the ten selection criteria set by UNESCO. <p>Select the correct answer using the code given below:</p> <p>a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only c) 1 and 3 only d) 1, 2, and 3</p>	<p>Answer: b) 2 and 3 only</p> <p>Explanation: Statement 1: The nomination of a site is not made by the local community directly. It is initiated by the country in which the site is located. Hence, this statement is incorrect. Statement 2: Before a site can be nominated, it must be included on a tentative list maintained by the country. This is a correct statement. Statement 3: A nominated site must indeed meet at least one of the ten selection criteria established by UNESCO to be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. This statement is also correct. Explanation of Incorrect Options: Option a) 1 and 2 only: Statement 1 is incorrect. Option c) 1 and 3 only: Statement 1 is incorrect. Option d) 1, 2, and 3: Statement 1 is incorrect.</p>
<p>Question 8: Consider the following statements regarding the 'World Heritage in Danger' list:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sites on this list are at risk due to factors like armed conflict, natural disasters, or urbanization. 2. The 'World Heritage in Danger' list is managed by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. 3. Once a site is on the 'World Heritage in Danger' list, it is automatically removed from the World Heritage List. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only c) 2 and 3 only</p>	<p>Answer: b) 1 and 2 only</p> <p>Explanation: Statement 1: This is correct. Sites on the 'World Heritage in Danger' list are facing threats from various factors, including armed conflict, natural disasters, and rapid urbanization, which put their outstanding universal value at risk. Statement 2: This is also correct. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee is responsible for managing the 'World Heritage in Danger' list. It identifies sites in peril and monitors their condition. Statement 3: This is incorrect. Being placed on the 'World Heritage in Danger' list is a warning signal, not a permanent removal from the World Heritage List. The aim is to mobilize international support and resources to address the threats and safeguard the site. Explanation of Incorrect Options:</p>

d) 1, 2, and 3	Option a) 1 only: Statement 2 is also correct. Option c) 2 and 3 only: Statement 3 is incorrect. Option d) 1, 2, and 3: Statement 3 is incorrect.
<p>Question 9: Consider the following statements about UNESCO World Heritage Sites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A site must be of outstanding universal value to be included in the World Heritage List. 2. The World Heritage List includes both cultural and natural heritage sites. 3. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee is responsible for adding and removing sites from the World Heritage List. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only c) 2 and 3 only d) 1, 2, and 3</p>	<p>Answer: d) 1, 2, and 3</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Statement 1: This is correct. A site must be of "outstanding universal value" to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. This means it must possess exceptional cultural or natural significance that transcends national boundaries.</p> <p>Statement 2: This is also correct. The World Heritage List encompasses a diverse range of sites, including cultural properties (like historical monuments, cities, or archaeological sites) and natural properties (like forests, mountains, or lakes).</p> <p>Statement 3: This is correct. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of representatives from 21 States Parties, is responsible for inscribing new properties on the World Heritage List and removing properties from it in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Explanation of Incorrect Options:</p> <p>Option a) 1 only: Statements 2 and 3 are also correct.</p> <p>Option b) 1 and 2 only: Statement 3 is also correct.</p> <p>Option c) 2 and 3 only: Statement 1 is also correct.</p>
<p>Question 10: Consider the following statements about Wimbledon:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is held at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. 2. It is the only Grand Slam tournament still played on grass. 3. The tournament is known for its strict dress code requiring players to wear white. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only c) 1, 2, and 3 d) 2 and 3 only</p>	<p>Answer: c) 1, 2, and 3</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Statement 1: Wimbledon is indeed held at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, located in London, England. This statement is correct.</p> <p>Statement 2: Wimbledon is renowned for being the only Grand Slam tournament played on grass courts. This distinct surface provides unique challenges for players and adds to the tournament's tradition. This statement is correct.</p> <p>Statement 3: Wimbledon is famous for its strict all-white dress code, which players must adhere to. This traditional dress code contributes to the tournament's elegant and prestigious image. This statement is also correct.</p> <p>Explanation of Incorrect Options:</p> <p>Option a) 1 only: Statements 2 and 3 are also correct.</p> <p>Option b) 1 and 2 only: Statement 3 is also correct.</p> <p>Option d) 2 and 3 only: Statement 1 is also correct.</p>