

**GOVERNANCE****Withdrawal of General Consent to CBI by Maharashtra**

Recently, the Maharashtra government withdrew its general consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe cases in the State.

**Key Points**

- The move comes a day after the CBI registered an FIR in the TRP scam after taking over the probe based on an FIR filed in Uttar Pradesh.
- The Maharashtra government had an apprehension that the CBI would take over the TRP scam case that the Mumbai Police is already investigating.
- Earlier this year (2020), the CBI had also taken over the investigation into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, which was being probed by the Mumbai Police.
- The Maharashtra government suspects the CBI of acting at the behest of the Centre.
- The Supreme Court in the past has called the CBI a "caged parrot" that sings the Centre's tune.
- Maharashtra is the third State after West Bengal and Rajasthan to take such an action. The current confrontation also strengthens the perception that states in opposition see the Centre as weaponizing the CBI to control on Opposition-led governments in states.

**General Consent**

- Unlike the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which is governed by its own NIA Act, 2008 and has jurisdiction across the country, the CBI is governed by the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (DSPE Act, 1946) that makes consent of a state government mandatory for conducting investigation in that state.
- There are two kinds of consent- case-specific and general. Given that the CBI has jurisdiction only over central government departments and employees, it can investigate a case involving state government employees or a violent crime in a given state only after that state government gives its consent.
- Section 6 of the DSPE Act, 1946 empowers the state government to give or deny consent to CBI officers to investigate the matter within the state.
- "General consent" is normally given to help the CBI seamlessly conduct its investigation into cases of corruption against central government employees in the concerned state. Almost all states have given such consent.

**Impact of Withdrawal of General Consent**

- It means the CBI will not be able to register any fresh case involving a central government official or a private person stationed in Maharashtra without getting case-specific consent.
- Withdrawal of consent will only bar the CBI from registering a case within the jurisdiction of concerned states. The CBI could still file cases in Delhi and continue to probe people inside Maharashtra.
- In simple terms withdrawal of consent means that CBI officers will lose all powers of a police officer as soon as they enter the state unless the state government has allowed them.
- It will have no impact on investigation of cases already registered with CBI as old cases were registered when general consent existed.
- However, the CBI has recently started taking recourse in a Calcutta High Court judgment.
- The HC, in its order in the Ramesh Chandra Singh and another vs CBI, 2020 observed that CBI's power to investigate and prosecute its own officials cannot be in any way impeded or interfered by the state even if the offenses were committed within the territory of the state.

**Central Bureau of Investigation**

- The CBI is the premier investigating police agency in India. It functions under Deptt. of Personnel, Ministry of Personnel, Pension & Public Grievances, Government of India.
- The origins of CBI can be traced back to the Special Police Establishment (SPE) set up in 1941 in order to investigate cases of bribery and corruption in the War & Supply Department of India during World War II (1939-45).
- The need for a Central Government agency to investigate cases of bribery and corruption was felt after the end of World War II. So, DSPE (Delhi Special Police Establishment) Act, 1946 was brought that gave the legal power of investigating cases to CBI.
- It is also the nodal police agency in India which coordinates investigation on behalf of Interpol Member countries.

**Cases Handled by the CBI**

- **Anti-Corruption Crimes** - for investigation of cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 against Public officials and the employees of Central Government, Public Sector Undertakings, Corporations or Bodies owned or controlled by the Government of India.
- **Economic Crimes** - for investigation of financial crimes, bank frauds, money laundering, illegal money market operations, graft in PSUs and banks.
- **Special Crimes** - for investigation of serious cases of conventional nature such as offences relating to internal security, espionage, sabotage, narcotics and psychotropic substances, antiquities, murders, dacoities/robberies, and cheating among others.
- **Suo Moto Cases** - CBI can suo-moto take up investigation of offences only in the Union Territories.
- The Central Government can authorize CBI to investigate a crime in a State but only with the consent of the concerned State Government.
- The Supreme Court and High Courts, however, can order CBI to investigate a crime anywhere in the country without the consent of the State.

**Way Forward**

To ensure due process, the courts, of course, can and should ignore the state government's reservation and order the agency to investigate a case. However, when the Centre and the state play tug-of-war with the investigation, it diminishes the credibility and authority of the CBI.

The onus of ensuring the CBI's reputation is primarily on the CBI — helped by an independent judiciary — since there will be no incentive for the political executive to ensure that.

**INDIAN ECONOMY****Indian Forex Reserve**

According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the country's foreign exchange (forex) reserves touched a lifetime high of USD 555.12 billion after it surged by USD 3.615 billion in the week ended 16th October 2020.

**Key Points****Reason Behind the Increase:**

- The rise in total reserves was due to a sharp rise in Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves.
- FCA jumped by USD 3.539 billion to USD 512,322 billion.

**Foreign Exchange Reserves:**

- Foreign exchange reserves are assets held on reserve by a central bank in foreign currencies, which can include bonds, treasury bills and other government securities.
- It needs to be noted that most foreign exchange reserves are held in U.S. dollars.
- These assets serve many purposes but are most significantly held to ensure that the central bank has backup funds if the national currency rapidly devalues or becomes altogether insolvent.

**India's Forex Reserves include:**

- Foreign Currency Assets
- Gold
- Special Drawing Rights
- Reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

**Foreign Currency Assets**

- FCA are assets that are valued based on a currency other than the country's own currency.
- FCA is the largest component of the forex reserve. It is expressed in dollar terms.
- FCA includes the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.
- Currency appreciation refers to the increase in value of one currency relative to another in the forex markets.
- Currency depreciation is a fall in the value of a currency in a floating exchange rate system.
- In a floating exchange rate system, market forces (based on demand and supply of a currency) determine the value of a currency.

**Special Drawing Rights**

- The SDR is an international reserve asset, created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1969 to supplement its member countries' official reserves.

- The SDR is neither a currency nor a claim on the IMF. Rather, it is a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF members. SDRs can be exchanged for these currencies.
- The value of the SDR is calculated from a weighted basket of major currencies, including the U.S. dollar, the euro, Japanese yen, Chinese yuan, and British pound.
- The interest rate on SDRs or SDRi is the interest paid to members on their SDR holdings.

#### **Reserve Position in the International Monetary Fund**

- A reserve tranche position implies a portion of the required quota of currency each member country must provide to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that can be utilized for its own purposes.
- The reserve tranche is basically an emergency account that IMF members can access at any time without agreeing to conditions or paying a service fee.

### **ENVIRONMENT AND DIVERSITY**

#### **International Snow Leopard Day**

International Snow Leopard Day is observed on 23rd October.

#### **Key Points**

- **Aim:** To raise awareness on conservation and protection of snow leopards.
- **Background:** International Snow Leopard Day came into being on 23rd October, 2013, with the adoption of the Bishkek Declaration by 12 countries on the conservation of snow leopards.
- The 12 countries included, India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- The Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP) was also launched on the same day to address high-mountain development issues using conservation of the snow leopard as a flagship.

#### **Snow Leopard**

- **Top Predator:** The Snow Leopard (also known as Ghost of the mountains) acts as an indicator of the health of the mountain ecosystem in which they live, due to their position as the top predator in the food web.
- **Habitation:** The Snow Leopard lives at high altitudes in the steep mountains of Central and Southern Asia, and in an extremely cold climate.
- They inhabit the higher Himalayan and trans-Himalayan landscape in the states/union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- India is a unique country to have a good presence of 5 big cats, including Snow Leopard. The other 4 are, Lion, Tiger, Common Leopard, and Clouded Leopard.
- Snow Leopard capital of the world: Hemis, Ladakh.
- Hemis National Park is the biggest national park of India and also has a good presence of Snow Leopard.
- **Threat:** Factors that have contributed to the decline in the snow leopard populations include, reduction in prey populations, illegal poaching and increased human population infiltration into the species habitat and illegal trade of wildlife parts and products among others.

#### **Protection:**

- IUCN Red List- **Vulnerable**
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)- Appendix I
- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)- Appendix I
- Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction.
- Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972- Schedule I
- Schedule I provides absolute protection and offences under this have the highest penalties.

#### **Conservation Efforts Launched by India:**

- **HimalSanrakshak:** It is a community volunteer programme, to protect snow leopards, launched on 23rd October 2020.
- In 2019, First National Protocol was also launched on Snow Leopard Population Assessment which has been very useful for monitoring populations.
- **SECURE Himalaya:** Global Environment Facility (GEF)-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funded the project on conservation of high altitude biodiversity and reducing the dependency of local communities on the natural ecosystem.
- This project is now operational in four snow leopard range states, namely, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim.

- **Project Snow Leopard (PSL)** : It was launched in 2009 to promote an inclusive and participatory approach to conserve snow leopards and their habitat.
- Snow Leopard is in the list of 21 critically endangered species for the recovery programme of the Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change.
- Snow Leopard conservation breeding programme is undertaken at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Darjeeling, West Bengal.

### **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

#### **Chair of ILO Governing Body: India**

After 35 years, India has assumed the Chairmanship of the Governing Body of International Labour Organization (ILO).

#### **Key Points**

- Labour & Employment Secretary Apurva Chandra has been elected as the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO for the period October 2020-June 2021.
- The Chairperson of the Governing Body of ILO is a position of international repute. The Governing Body (GB) is the apex executive body of the ILO.
- GB meets thrice a year, in March, June and November. It takes decisions on ILO policy, decides the agenda of the International Labour Conference, adopts the draft programme and budget of the organisation for submission to the conference, and elects the Director-General.
- The broad policies of the ILO are set by the International Labour Conference, which meets once a year in June, in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Chandra will be presiding over the upcoming Governing Body's meeting, to be held in November 2020.
- It will provide a platform to apprise participants of the transformational initiative taken by the government in removing the rigidities of the labour market, besides making intention clear about the universalisation of social security to all workers in the organised or unorganised sector.
- The four codes on wages, industrial relations, social security and occupational safety, health and working conditions are expected to improve ease of doing business and safeguard the interest of workers.

#### **International Labour Organization**

- The only tripartite United Nations (UN) agency, since 1919, the ILO brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
- The ILO became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946.
- The principal means of action in the ILO is the setting up the International Labour Standards in the form of Conventions and Recommendations.
- Conventions are international treaties and are instruments, which create legally binding obligations on the countries that ratify them.
- Recommendations are non-binding and set out guidelines orienting national policies and actions.
- It received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.
- It releases the annual World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO) Trends report.
- India and ILO:
  - India, a Founding Member of the ILO, has been a permanent member of the ILO Governing Body since 1922. The first ILO Office in India started in 1928.
  - India has ratified 41 Conventions of the ILO, which is much better than the position existing in many other countries.

India has ratified six out of the eight-core/fundamental ILO conventions. These conventions are:

- i. Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)
  - ii. Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No.105)
  - iii. Equal Remuneration Convention (No.100)
  - iv. Discrimination (Employment Occupation) Convention (No.111)
  - v. Minimum Age Convention (No.138)
  - vi. Worst forms of Child Labour Convention (No.182)
- ❖ India has not ratified the two core/fundamental conventions, namely Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

The ILO expressed deep concern at the changes that many Indian states made to labour laws to boost economic activities, which slowed down due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM****Sir Syed Day**

Sir Syed's Day is observed on 17th October to mark the birth anniversary of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

**Key Points**

- **Early Life:** Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was born in 1817 in a family that was close to the Mughal court, he was a man of many distinctions, a civil servant, journalist, educationist, social reformer and historian among others.
- He served the British administration before the revolt of 1857.
- He has also written a pamphlet titled "The Causes of the Indian Revolt" to explain the reasons for the revolt from a Indian perspective.
- **Educationist:** Sir Syed is, first and foremost, known for his pioneering role in transforming the educational opportunities for Muslims.
- Sir Syed realised that Muslims could only make progress if they took to modern education. For this he started the Aligarh movement.
- **Social Reformer:** He also pushed for social reforms and was a champion of democratic ideals and freedom of speech.
- He was against religious intolerance, ignorance and irrationalism. He denounced purdah, polygamy and easy divorce.
- **Tahzebul Akhlaq** (Social Reformer in English), a magazine founded by him, tried to awaken people's consciousness on social and religious issues in a very expressive prose.

**Critical of National Movement:**

- In his later years Sir Syed encouraged the Indian Muslims not to join the National Movement. He felt that education and not politics was needed by them.
- In a way he encouraged the forces of communalism and separatism at this stage.

**Aligarh Movement**

- It was a systemic movement aimed at reforming the social, political and educational aspects of the Muslim community.
- The movement undertook to modernise Muslim's education by adapting English as a medium of learning and western education rather than just focusing on traditional teachings.
- Sir Syed established the Scientific Society in 1864, in Aligarh to translate Western works into Indian languages to prepare the Muslims to accept Western education and to inculcate scientific temperament among the Muslims.
- The Aligarh Institute Gazette, a magazine published by Sir Syed was an organ of the Scientific Society.
- In 1877, he founded the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College on the pattern of Oxford and Cambridge universities. The college later grew into Aligarh Muslim University.

The Aligarh Movement helped in the Muslim revival. It gave them a common language— Urdu.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns. Discuss the significance of National Infrastructure Pipeline for India. Also examine the associated challenges.** (250 words)

Ans. Recently, the Government has released a report of the task force on the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) for 2019-2025. Accordingly, total project capital expenditure in infrastructure sectors in India during the fiscals 2020 to 2025 is projected at over Rs 102 lakh crore.

NIP includes economic and social infrastructure projects in sectors such as Energy (24%), Roads (19%), Urban (16%), and Railways (13%) amount to around 70% of the projected capital expenditure in infrastructure in India.

**Significance of the National Infrastructure Pipeline:**

- NIP will enable a forward outlook on infrastructure projects which will create jobs, improve ease of living, and provide equitable access to infrastructure for all, thereby making growth more inclusive.
- It is estimated that India should invest \$4.5 trillion in infrastructure by 2030 to support faster growth. The National Infrastructure Pipeline is a part of that attempt to invest \$4.5 trillion.
- The National Infrastructure Pipeline will ensure that infrastructure projects are adequately prepared and launched.
- It will help in stepping-up annual infrastructure investment to achieve the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$5 trillion by 2024-25.
- It will boost the agrarian economy by strengthening agricultural and rural infrastructure.

- It will further increase the connectivity in India, especially in rural areas, through the expansion of roads and railways.
- It will ensure credit availability from the government sources to boost the economic growth, in a time when there is a lack of private investment.
- Well-developed infrastructure enhances the level of economic activity, creates additional fiscal space by improving the revenue base of the government, and ensures the quality of expenditure focused in productive areas.
- **Overcoming slowdown:** The policy of high government spending in infrastructure energises demand in other sectors and led to more fund flows to various sectors besides creating valuable assets.

**Challenges**

- **Credit availability** is the biggest challenge in the backdrop of the NPA crisis. Envisaged Private sector participation in capital expenditure (22%) may largely suffer due to this.
- **State governments' financial commitment** may not be realised because of fiscal concerns. Presently, more than 20 states already have a debt-GSDP ratio of above 25 per cent.
- **Land acquisition** is a big challenge for the completion of infrastructure projects.

**Conclusion**

Availability of quality infrastructure is a prerequisite to achieve broad-based and inclusive growth on a sustainable basis. If the concerns regarding fiscal availability are addressed properly, National Infrastructure Pipeline would be a massive exercise to realise the vision of becoming a 5 trillion \$ economy by 2024.

**DAILY QUIZ**

1. With reference to new series of Consumer Price Index for Industrial Worker, Consider the following statements:
  1. The new series with base year 2020 covers the latest consumption pattern of the target population.
  2. It is compiled and maintained by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 

a) 1 only                      b) 2 only                      c) Both 1 and 2                      **d) Neither 1 nor 2**
2. Consider the following statements:
  1. The G-20 membership comprises the world's largest advanced economies only.
  2. The permanent secretariat of G-20 grouping is located in Paris.
  3. The G-20 agreed on the Anti-Corruption Action Plan, 2019-2021 in Buenos Aires.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 

a) 1 only                      **b) 3 only**                      c) 1 and 2 only                      d) 1, 2 and 3
3. With reference to 'monoclonal Antibodies (mAbs)', consider the following statements:
  1. These are man-made proteins, made by cloning a unique sample of plasma.
  2. It is recently invented and can be used for the treatment of cancer.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 

a) 1 only                      b) 2 only                      c) Both 1 and 2                      **d) Neither 1 nor 2**
4. Which of following institutions releases Global Wealth Report:
  - a) World Economic Forum
  - b) International Monetary Fund
  - c) Credit Suisse Group**
  - d) World Bank
5. Which of the following missiles are included in IGMDP (Integrated Guided Missile Development Program)?
  1. Prithvi
  2. Agni
  3. Trisul
 Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 

a) 1 and 3 only                      b) 2 and 3 only                      c) 1 and 2 only                      **d) 1, 2 and 3**