

GOVERNANCE**SOP on adoption of Integrity Pact Amended : CVC**

Recently, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has amended the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on adoption of "Integrity Pact" in government organisations for procurement activities.

The latest order revises the SOP issued in January 2017.

The CVC also restricted the maximum tenure of Integrity External Monitors (IEMs) to three years in an organisation.

Integrity Pact

Integrity Pact is a vigilance tool that envisages an agreement between the prospective vendors/bidders and the buyer, committing both the parties not to exercise any corrupt influence on any aspect of the contract.

The pact also ensures transparency, equity and competitiveness in public procurement.

Integrity External Monitors

The IEMs independently and objectively review the documents to determine if the parties have complied with their obligations under the pact.

They may submit a report to the chief executive of the organisation concerned or directly to the Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) and the CVC, if they find serious irregularities attracting the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 provisions.

Key Points**Choice of IEM:**

- Amended Provision: It states that the choice of IEM should be restricted to officials from the government and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) who have retired from positions of the level of Secretary to the Central government or of equivalent pay scale.
- The officials who retired as Chairman and Managing Directors (CMDs) of PSUs — Schedule 'A' companies and CMD/Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer levels in the Public Sector Banks (PSBs), insurance companies and financial institutions — should be at least of the level of Additional Secretary or its equivalent.
- Officers of the Armed Forces who have retired from the rank equivalent of General may also be considered for appointment.
- Preference would be given to persons who have worked in any other sector, other than their own, or have worked as Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) in any organisation.
- Earlier Provision: Under the 2017 order, the officials who had retired from positions of the level of Additional Secretary to the Central government and above, or equivalent pay scale, were eligible for the PSUs, board level officers in Schedule 'A' companies, PSBs, insurance companies and financial institutions.
- Officers of the Armed Forces who had retired from the rank equivalent to Lieutenant-General and above were considered for appointment.

Appointment as IEM:

- Amended Provision: It states that for appointment as IEM, the Ministry, department or organisation concerned has to forward a panel of suitable persons to the CVC, of those persons who are in the panel maintained by the CVC.
- Earlier Provision: Under the 2017 order, the panel could include those already in the panel maintained by the CVC, or they could propose names of other suitable persons.

Tenure:

- Amended Provision: It states that the IEM will be appointed for a period of three years in an organisation.
- Earlier Provision: The 2017 order stated that the initial tenure of IEM would be three years which could be extended for another term of two years on a request received by the CVC from the organisation concerned.

Central Vigilance Commission

- CVC is the apex vigilance institution, free of control from any executive authority, monitoring all vigilance activity under the Central Government and advising various authorities in Central Government organizations in planning, executing, reviewing and reforming their vigilance work.
- It is an independent body and is only responsible to the Parliament.
- It was set up by the Government in February, 1964 on the recommendations of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption, headed by K. Santhanam.
- The Parliament enacted Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003 (CVC Act) conferring statutory status on the CVC.

INDIAN ECONOMY

World Economic Outlook 2020 : IMF

According to the October update of the World Economic Outlook 2020, India's gross domestic product (GDP) will witness a contraction of over 10%.

- This is more than the double of 4.5% contraction projected in the April edition.
- World Economic Outlook is a survey by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which is usually published twice a year in the months of April and October.

Key Points

- Global growth would contract by 4.4% in 2020 and bounce back to 5.2% in 2021.
- Indian economy, severely hit by the pandemic, is projected to contract by 10.3% in 2020.
- The spread of the Covid-19 and containment measures have severely disrupted supply and demand conditions in India.
- However, India is likely to bounce back with an 8.8% growth rate in 2021, thus regaining the position of the fastest-growing emerging economy, surpassing China's projected growth rate of 8.2%.
- Among the major economies, China is the only country to show a positive growth rate of 1.9% in 2020.

India-Bangladesh Difference

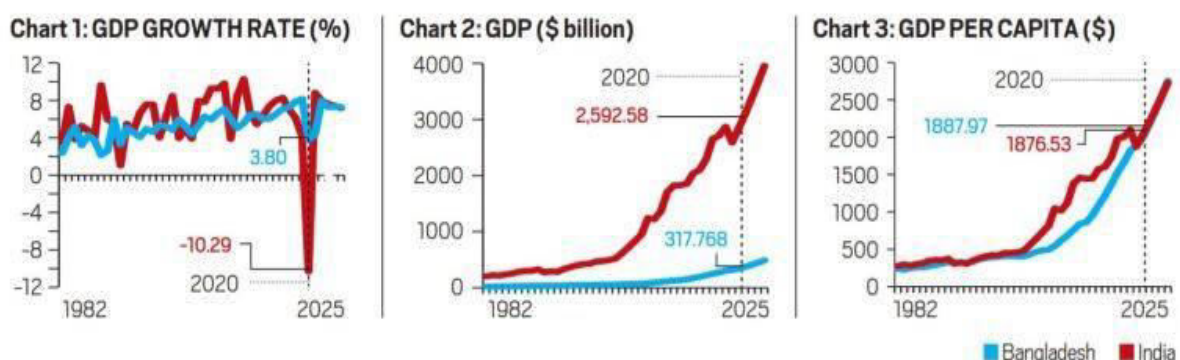
- GDP Comparison: According to the IMF's forecasts, Bangladesh's per capita GDP is expected to overtake India in 2020. India is likely to grow faster in 2021 and in all likelihood again surge ahead.
- Per Capita Income Comparison: However, over the five-year period ending in 2025, Bangladesh's per capita GDP is expected to grow at a slightly higher pace, implying that in 2025, its per capita income would be USD 2,756, marginally higher than that of India's at USD 2,729.
- Given Bangladesh's lower population growth and faster economic growth, India and Bangladesh are likely to be neck and neck for the foreseeable future in terms of per capita income.

Comparison Method:

- Typically, countries are compared on the basis of GDP growth rate, or on absolute GDP.
- However, per capita income also involves another variable like the overall population and is arrived at by dividing the total GDP by the total population.

Major Trends:

UPS AND DOWNS IN TWO ECONOMIES



- For the most part since Bangladesh's independence, on both these counts, India's economy has been better than Bangladesh's.
- India's economy has mostly been over 10 times the size of Bangladesh and grown faster every year.
- In 1991, when India was undergoing a severe financial crisis and grew by just above 1%, Bangladesh's per capita GDP surged ahead of India's. Since then, India again took the lead.

There are three reasons why India's per capita income has fallen below Bangladesh in 2020. These are as below:

- **Growth Rates:** Since 2017 onwards, India's growth rate has decelerated sharply while Bangladesh's has become even faster.

- Bangladesh's economy has been clocking rapid GDP growth rates since 2004. However, this pace did not alter the relative positions of the two economies between 2004 and 2016 because India grew even faster than Bangladesh.
- **Populations:** Over the same period, India's population grew faster (around 21%) than Bangladesh's population (just under 18%).
- The combined effect of these two factors can be seen in how the per capita GDP gap had closed considerably even before Covid-19.
- Bangladesh's per capita GDP was merely half of India's in 2007 but this was just before the global financial crisis. It was roughly 70% of India's in 2014 and this gap closed rapidly in the last few years.
- **Impact of Covid-19:** The most immediate factor was the relative impact of Covid-19 on the two economies in 2020.
- While India's GDP is set to reduce by 10%, Bangladesh's is expected to grow by almost 4%.

Reasons Behind Bangladesh's Fast Growth:

- **Independence from Pakistan:** It gave Bangladesh a chance to start afresh on its economic and political identity.
- **Less Stringent Labour Laws:** Labour laws were not as stringent and its economy increasingly involved women in its labour force, seen by the higher female participation.
- **Role of Garment Industry in Exports:** A key driver of growth was the garment industry where women workers gave Bangladesh the edge to corner the global export markets from which China retreated.
- **Industry and Services Led GDP:** Structure of Bangladesh's economy is such that its GDP is led by the industrial sector, followed by the services sector and both these sectors create a lot of jobs and are more remunerative than agriculture.
- India, on the other hand, has struggled to boost its industrial sector and has far too many people still dependent on agriculture.
- **Improved Social and Political Metrics:** Over the past two decades, Bangladesh has improved on several social and political metrics such as health, sanitation, financial inclusion, and women's political representation.
- For example, despite a lower proportion of the population having access to basic sanitation, the mortality rate attributed to unsafe water and sanitation in Bangladesh is much lower than in India.
- On financial inclusion, according to the World Bank Global Findex database, the proportion of dormant bank accounts is quite small when compared to India.
- Bangladesh is also far ahead of India in the latest gender parity rankings. Out of 154 countries mapped, Bangladesh is in the top 50 while India is at 112.
- Bangladesh with the 75th rank, is ahead of India, with 94th rank, in the Global Hunger Index 2020.

India's Better Performance:

- India's level of poverty is much lower than that of Bangladesh's.
- According to the World Bank, poverty in Bangladesh is expected to increase substantially in the short term, with the highest impact on daily and self-employed workers in the non-agricultural sector and salaried workers in the manufacturing sector.
- India is far ahead of Bangladesh in basic education parameters and that is what explains its higher rank in the Human Development Index.
- India stands at the 63rd rank while Bangladesh is at the 168th rank, out of total 190 countries in the Ease of Doing Business 2020.
- India is at the 48th position while Bangladesh ranked 116th among 131 economies in the Global Innovation Index 2020.

Way Forward

- Bangladesh's recent economic performance and its differences from India can be traced to the former's better export performance, especially in garments and apparel.
- India's exports have remained sluggish, which could provide the much-needed fillip to India's economy. However, this would require India to reverse its recent stance on trade, lower rather than raise tariffs, embrace free trade agreements, and seek greater integration with global supply chains.

- Wages in China are rising and countries like Bangladesh are all set to take advantage of this opportunity post-Covid-19. As companies try to hedge their supply chain risks, and shifts away from China intensify, this provides India yet another opportunity but it will require the government to pivot away from protectionism.

ENVIRONMENT AND DIVERSITY

Two New Ramsar sites

Recently, Kabartal Wetland (Bihar) and Asan Conservation Reserve (Uttarakhand) have been designated as Ramsar sites, making them 'Wetlands of International Importance'.

- Earlier in 2020, India designated 10 more wetlands as a Ramsar site, taking the total number from 27 to 37.
- With 2 more inclusions, the total number of Ramsar sites in India is 39, the highest in South Asia.

Key Points

Kabartal Wetland:

- Also known as Kanwar Jheel, it covers 2,620 hectares of the Indo-Gangetic plains in the Begusarai district of Bihar.
- It acts as a vital flood buffer for the region besides providing livelihood opportunities to local communities.
- Significant biodiversity is present, with 165 plant species and 394 animal species recorded, including 221 bird species. It is also a valuable site for fish biodiversity with over 50 species documented.
- It is an important stopover along the Central Asian Flyway, with 58 migratory waterbirds using it to rest and refuel.
- Five critically endangered species inhabit the site, including three vultures – the red-headed vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*), white-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) and Indian vulture (*Gyps indicus*) – and two waterbirds, the sociable lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*) and Baer's pochard (*Aythya baeri*).
- Major threats to the Site include water management activities such as drainage, water abstraction, damming and canalization.

Asan Conservation Reserve:

- ACR is a 444-hectare stretch of the Asan River running down to its confluence with the Yamuna River in Dehradun district of Uttarakhand. It is Uttarakhand's first Ramsar Site.
- The damming of the River by the Asan Barrage in 1967 resulted in siltation above the dam wall, which helped to create some of the Site's bird-friendly habitats.
- These habitats support 330 species of birds including the critically endangered red-headed vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*), white-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) and Baer's pochard (*Aythya baeri*).
- Other non-avian species present include 49 fish species, one of these being the endangered Putitora mahseer (*Tor putitora*). Fish use the site for feeding, migration and spawning.

Ramsar Site

- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea.
- It came into force for India on 1st February, 1982. Those wetlands which are of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites.
- The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".
- The Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. It is maintained as part of the Ramsar List.
- At present, two wetlands of India are in Montreux Record: Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur).
- Chilika Lake (Odisha) was placed in the record but later removed from it.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

CSIR-CMERI's Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Processing Facility

Recently, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research's Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-CMERI) has developed a Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Processing Facility (Decentralised Solid Waste Management Plant) to solve the problem of waste management in India.

Key Points

Challenges in Waste Management:

- With an ever-increasing population and rapid pace of urbanisation, India faces a huge challenge of waste management.
- The volume of waste is projected to rise from the present 62 million tonnes to about 150 million tonnes by 2030.
- Indiscriminate dumping of garbage at the current rate without appropriate scientific treatment would impose a huge requirement of landfill area per year.
- Studies suggest that the MSW generated in India mostly consists of a large fraction of organic wastes and their unscientific disposal produces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other air pollutants like methane (CH₄).
- The ineffective processing of MSW also is the root cause of many diseases as the dumped landfills transform into contamination hubs for pathogens, bacteria and viruses.
- The most commonly used process "composting" also does not yield impactful economic returns for the entrepreneurs.
- It requires more land space and labour, pasteurisation for effective disinfection and has restricted utilisation due to presence of heavy metals.
- During the rainy season, managing it becomes difficult due to the presence of excessive moisture.

MSW Processing Facility:

- It is developed following the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules 2016 prescribed by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- It has been developed with the potential to scientifically manage the solid waste including the Covid-19 wastes.
- The facility is equipped with special disinfection capabilities to help break the Covid-19 chain through UV-C lights and hot-air convection methods.
- The plant is self-sufficient in terms of energy requirement through the installation of roof-mounted solar panels, which can also feed the surplus energy supply onto a mini-grid.
- Objectives:
- To unburden the common households from the segregation responsibilities through advanced segregation techniques.
- To achieve decentralised decimation of solid wastes.
- To help create value-added end-products from abundantly available redundant stuff such as dry leaves, dry grass, etc.

Mechanism:

- The mechanised segregation system segregates solid waste into metallic waste (metal body, metal container, etc.), biodegradable waste (foods, vegetables, fruits, grass, etc.), non-biodegradable waste (plastics, packaging material, pouches, bottles etc.) and inert wastes (glass, stones etc.).

Significance:

- It opens up the opportunities to realise the dream of generating 100 GW Solar Power by 2022 and a city with a "Zero-Waste and Zero-Landfill Ecology".
- It may become a source of job creation through both process-engagement and manufacturing, which can help support the Micro Small Enterprises (MSEs) and various start-ups across the nation.

Various Waste Disposal Methods

Bio-degradable Waste Disposal:

- The bio-degradable component of the waste is decomposed in an anaerobic environment popularly known as bio-gasification.
- In this process, biogas is liberated through the conversion of organic matter and the biogas can be used as fuel for cooking or can also be utilised in a gas engine for the generation of electricity.
- The residual slurry from the biogas plant is converted to compost in a natural process known as vermicomposting by introducing earthworms. The vermicompost is utilised in organic farming.

Biomass Waste Disposal:

- Biomass waste such as dry leaves, dead branches, dry grass etc. are disposed of by first shredding it to suitable size followed by mixing with the slurry of the biogas digester.

- This mixture is the feedstock for briquette (compressed block of coal dust or other combustible material), which is utilised as fuel for cooking and in gasifier for production of syngas (or synthesis gas), utilised in a gas engine for electricity generation.
- Syngas is a fuel gas mixture consisting primarily of hydrogen, carbon monoxide, and very often some carbon dioxide.

Polymer Waste Disposal:

- The polymer waste consisting of plastics is being disposed of through pyrolysis, in which the polymer waste is heated to a temperature of 400-600°C in an anaerobic environment in presence of a suitable catalyst.
- The volatile matter from the polymer waste comes out as a result of heating which on condensation gives pyrolysis oil.
- The non-condensed syngas and crude pyrolysis oil after purification are reused for heating purposes and it helps in obtaining self-sustainability.
- The solid residue known as char is mixed with the biogas slurry for production of briquette.

Sanitary Waste Disposal:

- The sanitary items including masks, sanitary napkins, diapers etc. are disposed-off utilising high-temperature plasma gasification.
- The plasma gasification process uses electricity to generate high-temperature plasma arc (above 3000°C) inside the plasma reactor which converts the waste into syngas and the residual ash can be mixed with cement for preparation of recycled bricks.
- However, this technology is not economically viable as energy requirements for waste treatment using this technology is very high.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

Kisan Suryodaya Yojana: Gujarat

Recently, the Prime Minister has launched the 'Kisan Suryodaya Yojana' aimed at providing day-time electricity to farmers in Gujarat for irrigation and farming purposes.

The Prime Minister also launched a 2.3 km-long ropeway project on Mount Girnar in Junagadh city, a major pilgrimage site.

Key Points

Kisan Suryodaya Yojana:

- Rs. 3,500 crore will be spent over the next three years for providing solar power to farmers for irrigation during daytime (5 AM to 9 PM).
- About 3,500 circuit kilometers (CKM) of new transmission lines will be laid.
- 10 districts including Dahod, Gir-Somnath and Tapi have been selected under the Scheme for 2020-21. The remaining districts will be covered in a phase-wise manner by 2022-23.

Significance:

- It would help in the expansion of micro irrigation in the state. Micro irrigation is defined as the frequent application of small quantities of water directly above and below the soil surface; usually as discrete drops, continuous drops or tiny streams through emitters placed along a water delivery line.
- It would complement irrigation projects of the State- Sujalam Sufalam and SAUNI (Saurashtra-Narmada Avtaran Irrigation) yojana.
- It would complement central government initiatives like neem coating urea, Soil Health Cards, KUSUM Yojana, etc.
- India has now reached 5th position in the world in the last few years in solar power and is advancing fast. Further, it has given the world the plan of 'One Sun, One World, One Grid'.

Note

- On the Kisan Suryodaya scheme, the PM emphasised that farmers should save water and adopt the mantra 'per drop, more crop'.
- With the objective of "per drop, more crop", Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) was also launched in 2015.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme being implemented to expand cultivated areas with assured irrigation, reduce wastage of water and improve water use efficiency and ensure "Har Khet Ko Paani".
- It was conceived by amalgamating ongoing schemes viz.
- Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (now Ministry of Jal Shakti),

- Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) of Ministry of Rural Development and
- On Farm Water Management (OFWM) of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC).
- The scheme is implemented by the Ministries of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Jal Shakti and Rural Development.

Ropeway Project on Mount Girnar:

- The 2.3 km- long ropeway project is being touted as the longest temple ropeway in Asia.
- Mount Girnar has Gorakhnath peak, Guru Dattatreya peak and a Jain temple.
- It is the fourth ropeway in Gujarat along with Banaskantha, Pavagadh and Satpura.
- It will give a boost to adventure activities as well as tourism in the state.
- Sites like Shivarajpur beach which has got blue flag certification and Statue of Unity, provides a lot of employment opportunities to the locals.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. . The 'Neighbourhood First' policy signals India's commitment to improve ties with its immediate neighbours but faces challenges of regional diplomacy. Discuss. (250 words)

Ans.

A nation's destiny is linked to its neighbourhood- this specifies the need of a peaceful and integrated neighbourhood. India's foreign policy that actively focuses on improving ties with India's immediate neighbours which is termed as Neighbourhood first policy.

Significance of the policy: Former PM A.B. Vajpayee once famously said 'You can change your friends but not neighbours'. For India to play a vital role in the emerging multipolar world politics, it is important to develop enduring linkages between its domestic priorities and its foreign policy objectives.

Political and socio-economic development of India is largely dependent on a stable, secure and peaceful neighbourhood.

Challenges to regional diplomacy and connectivity

- Divided Subcontinent: The problems generated by the partition of India divided the subcontinent on politico-religious lines.
- Further, challenges of settling boundaries, sharing river-waters, protecting the rights of minorities, and easing the flow of goods and people, affects regional diplomacy.
- Emergence of China: China annexed Tibet 1950-51, this marked the arrival of China at the Indo-Tibetan frontier. This profoundly transformed the geopolitical condition of India.
- Beyond the bilateral territorial dispute between India and China, the emergence of a powerful state on India's frontiers affected India's relationship with its neighbouring countries.
- Influence of Domestic Politics: India's domestic politics always had an impact on our regional policy. The same is true of our neighbours, whose domestic politics impact their engagement with India. For example:
- Issue of Tamils has been a dominant factor in India's Sri Lanka policy.
- West-Bengal's Chief Minister pulled out of the Teesta Waters agreement between India And Bangladesh.
- Lack of connectivity: This sorry state of connectivity today reflects decades of geostrategic divergence, political nationalism, and economic protectionism

Way Forward

- Policy Non-interference: The size of India is an important factor in the way our neighbors view India and its policies. India accounts for a major chunk of the land area, population, economic activity, resources, of South Asia.
- Therefore, India as well as other neighbours need to be conscious of its neighbors discomfort of having to deal with a big neighbor and must follow the policy of non-interference in domestic affairs.
- Establishing a Border Commission: Demarcation of India external boundaries is yet to be completed. Resolution of border disputes will pave way for stable regional integration. Thus, India must strive for resolution of border by establishing a border commission.
- Broader Lens of Foreign Policy Goals: Integrating India's regional economic and foreign policy remains a major challenge. Therefore, India should resist compromising bilateral relationships with neighbours for short economic interests.
- Improving Regional Connectivity: Regional connectivity must be pursued with greater vigour while security concerns are addressed through cost-effective, efficient and reliable technological measures which are in use in other parts of the world.

- Implementing Gujral's Doctrine: India's neighbourhood policy should be based on the principles of Gujral Doctrine. This would ensure India's stature and strength cannot be isolated from the quality of its relations with its neighbours and there can be regional growth as well.

Conclusion

Although there are complex challenges and situations, neighbourhood first policy must be anchored in the sustained engagement at all levels of the political and people to people levels, building upon the deep cultural affinities which are unique to India's relations with its neighbours.

DAILY QUIZ

1. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Snow Leopard?

1. In India, the Snow Leopard inhabits the higher Himalayan and trans-Himalayan landscape.
2. The Snow Leopard is listed as critically endangered in IUCN Red List.

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. With reference to the Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, consider the following statements:

1. He established the Scientific Society in 1864 to translate Western works into Indian languages.
2. He was one of the founders of Darul Uloom Deoband.

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

3. With reference to Financial Action Task Force (FATF), consider the following statements:

1. It is an inter-governmental body established under the United Nations Organisation.
2. Its Secretariat is located at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) headquarters.
3. At present no country is under the FATF's blacklist.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

4. With reference to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), consider the following statements:

1. It is a tripartite United Nations (UN) agency.
2. It releases the annual World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO) trends report.

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

5. With reference to Central Bureau Of Investigation (CBI), consider the following statements:

1. CBI can suo-moto take up investigation of offences only in the Union Territories.
2. The Supreme Court and High Courts can order CBI to investigate a crime only with the consent of the concerned State government.

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