

## GS II

SYLLABUS: GOVERNMENT POLICIES & ISSUES ARISING OUT OF THEIR DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION.

### SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 6.

**News:** "Union Cabinet approves Bills on simultaneous polls."

#### Simultaneous Elections:

- Idea to **synchronise elections** to Lok Sabha, State legislative assembly, Municipalities & Panchayats **on the same day**.
- **This practice continued till 1967** or 4th General election.
- Currently, **Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Sikkim, Telangana** elections to Lok Sabha and Assemblies held together.

#### Need: Based on Ram Nath Kovind Committee 2023

- Frequent elections **create an atmosphere of uncertainty**.
- **Minimising disruptions & policy paralysis:** by ensuring stability and predictability.
- Helps in **reduction of election costs** and increase in **voter participation**. Eg. In 2019, the **General Election (Lok Sabha) costed Rs. 4500 crore**. If State elections added to this, expenses further multiply.
- **Simultaneous elections lead to** increase in economic growth, a lower inflation, increased investments, and improved quality of government expenditure.
- **Political parties behaviour:** keeps **politicians always in campaign mode** due to elections at different times (Local, State, National) rather than their work towards policy making.

#### Implementation:

- **Requirement of Constitutional amendments:**
  - In relation to terms of Parliament and State assemblies and local bodies (**Art. 83, 172**)
  - For adoption of single electoral roll.
- **Dissolution of Lok Sabha and all State Assemblies at once**, irrespective of their remaining term as a onetime measure.
- **Municipal and Panchayat polls within 100 days of general election.**
- **Single electoral roll:** Currently some State laws allow State Election Commission to prepare separate electoral rolls. Committee recommended that **empowering Election Commission of India to prepare single electoral roll** in consultation with SECs.
- **Logistics requirement:** ECI & SECs to plan and estimate logistical requirements ahead of the rollout.

#### Note:

- **Constitutional Amendment nature for above:**
  - In case of amending 'term' of Parliament and **State Assemblies, there is no requirement of ratification by States**.
  - However, ratification by States becomes **necessary in case of amending 'local bodies term'**.

#### Challenges:

- **Premature dissolution of some State's Assemblies or Lok Sabha:** can undermine the federal spirit & concerns of delay in conducting new election.
- **Case Hung Assembly:** if no party secures majority to form govt., a fresh election to the remaining period of 5 year cycle should be conducted—**Ram Nath Kovind Committee 2023**.

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- **Case of No-confidence Motion:** if passed, it may curtail the term of Lok Sabha/ State Assembly. **Law commission recommended** replacement of no-confidence motion with 'constructive vote of no-confidence (govt. will only be removed if there is confidence in an alternate govt.).
- **Cases of bye-elections:** due to Death, resignation or disqualification of members can be clubbed together and conducted once in a year—**Standing Committee 2015**.
- **India is a Multiparty system** where coalition and collapses are common, new system will be a challenge.
- **Logistics challenges:** in 2019 general elections about **4 million EVMs and 2 million VVPATs were used**. Simultaneous election can double the demand.
- **Local issues may get overshadowed by National needs:** ultimately diminishing democratic representation at grassroot-level—**NITI Aayog report 2017**.

13 Dec 2024

## SPORTS

PRE-CONTEXT

### WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 1.

**News:** "Gukesh is youngest world chess champ".

#### About World Chess Championship:

- World Championship is a **pinnacle event** in the game of chess.
- **Notable champions:**
  - Garry Kasparov (longest reigning champion).
  - Bobby Fischer (broke soviet dominance).
  - **V. Anand** (defended 5 times).
  - Magnus Carlsen (successfully defended it multiple times).
  - **D. Gukesh** (youngest world champion).
- **Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE):** Est. in 1924, it oversees international chess competitions and **sets the rules for the World Championship**.
  - **Grandmaster (GM):** The highest title awarded to chess players by FIDE.

#### About Grandmaster Title:

- Awarded by FIDE.
- **Criteria (among others):**
  - Must reach or exceed a **FIDE rating of 2500** at any point, either in standard (classical) chess or in rapid/blitz formats.
  - Achieve three favorable results, called norms, in tournaments.
- **India has over 80 Grandmasters.**
  - **V. Anand:** First Indian Grandmaster.
  - **R. Praggnanandhaa:** one of the youngest Grandmasters.
- **Russia** holds highest number of Grandmasters over **270 GMs**.

13 Dec 2024



## GS I

SYLLABUS: URBANISATION PROBLEMS AND THEIR REMEDIES.

### URBAN LOCAL BODIES ISSUES

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 12.

**News:** "The missing spotlight on urban local government polls."

"Urban population will increase from 400 million in the last decade to 800 million over the next three decades". India will require about ₹70 lakh crore by 2036 to meet its urban infrastructure needs— recent World Bank report estimates.

#### Urban Local Bodies functioning issues:

- **Non functional 74th CAA:**
  - Urban planning is often controlled by private entities.
  - **Non transfer of subjects:** less than three of the 18 functions outlined in the 12th Schedule have been universally transferred to urban govts.
  - **Limited municipal finance:** since 2002 to 2024, municipal finance has stayed at just 1% of GDP.
  - **Reduction in revenue generation capacity:** the share of municipalities' own revenue sources has declined from 50% to 40%—**study on ULBs 2010-20.**
  - **Inefficient Tax collection:** ULBs in Bengaluru and Jaipur collect only 5%-20% of their potential tax revenue.
  - **Elections were delayed** in over 60% of ULGs across India—**CAG 2024.**
  - Mostly, **Elected councils are not operationalised** by State govts.
  - **State Election Commissions are disempowered:** only four out of the 15 States assessed have empowered their SECs to carry out ward delimitation—**CAG 2024.**
- **About 23% of total municipal revenue (capital budget) remains unspent—15th Finance Commission report.**
- **Decline in PPP investments in urban infrastructure:** PPP saw ₹8,000 crore in 2012 but plummeted to just ₹400 crore by 2018.
- **Non-utilisation of central scheme funds: Smart Cities** Mission achieved 70% utilisation, **AMRUT** achieved 80%.
- **India lacks precise data on its urban population:** there was **no 2021 Census.**
- **Ineffective planning:** Eg. **Absence of project-specific revenue generation**, this projects further diminish commercial attractiveness.

#### Reforms to mobilise Rs.70 lakh crore:

- **Provide greater financial and administrative autonomy:** Eg. raising private capital via debt borrowing and municipal bonds.
- **Need for development financing framework to meet Rs.70 lakh crore** infrastructure investment requirement over next 20 years.
  - About 15% of this total investment could potentially come through **PPPs.**
- **Leverage Digital Public Infrastructure(DPI)** for improved operations particularly in public transport.
- **Ensuring urban projects' financial, social, and environmental sustainability** is crucial, given India's **climate change vulnerability.**
- **Capture land value in transport projects** Eg. metro rail projects, potential of raising half of the ₹70 lakh crore investment by 2036

The path forward will require collaboration across government levels, private sector participation, and a relentless focus on innovation and governance efficiency.

## POLITY

PRE-CONTEXT

### PARDON

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 13.

**News:** "Should the executive have the power to pardon?"

**Context:** President Joe Biden has granted an unconditional pardon to his son Hunter Biden who faced sentencing for federal tax and gun convictions.

#### System Pardoning Powers USA vs Indian:

##### • USA Constitution:

- U.S. President has **absolute power of pardon for federal criminal offences.** Such as:
  - Pardon may be **issued prior to the start of a legal case as well as prior to or after** a conviction for a crime.
  - Once accepted, the pardon grants relief from punishment and associated disqualifications but does not erase the conviction record.
- President can grant pardon **except** in cases of **impeachment.**

##### • Indian Constitution:

- **Art. 72:** empowers the **President to grant pardons** to persons who have been tried and convicted of any offence in cases where:
  - Punishment or sentence is for an offence against a **Union Law.**
  - Punishment or sentence is by a **Court Martial.**
  - A sentence is a sentence of **death.**
- **Art. 161:** pardoning powers of **Governor.**
  - Governor of a State shall have the power to grant pardons of any person convicted of any offence in cases where:
    - Punishment or sentence is for an offence against a **State Law.**
    - Against any law relating to a matter to which the **executive power of the State extends.**

#### Differences:

- Pardoning power of the President under Art. 72 is wider.
- **Governor cannot pardon** punishment or sentence is by a **Court Martial and death sentences**

#### Note:

- The pardoning power of the President of India and Governor of State **includes the power to grant a pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute.**
- Pardoning powers are exercised on the **advice of the their Council of Ministers.**
- Pardoning powers are subjected to **judicial review.**



## ENVIRONMENT

PRE-CONTEXT

### AIR POLLUTION IN DELHI NCR

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 14.

News: "Beijing's war against air pollution"

#### Commission on Air Quality Management in NCR (CAQM):

- CAQM replaced the EPCA (Environmental Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority) and established under the **NCR & Adjoining Areas Act 2021**.
- **This body frames GRAP** (Graded Response Action Plan).
- CAQM is **constituted by Central Govt.** by notification in NCR and adjoining areas.
- Chairperson appointed by **Central govt.**
- **No powers to punish** violation activities related pollution.
- CAQM **can initiate stringent actions against officers** for not following its orders.

#### Multiple reasons for winter Air pollution in Delhi:

- Slow wind speed, **temperature inversion** (traps pollutants).
- Bursting of firecrackers, **Stubble burning**.
- **Emissions from vehicles (contribute 60%)**, coal-based power plants, brick kilns etc.
- Household sources, **dust (Roads, construction activities)**.
- Of all, **stubble burning** in Punjab and Haryana is **responsible for ~40% of the pollution** during **October and November**.
- In November 2024, **Air pollution in Delhi was 17 times WHO's limit**. Few areas in NCR **reached an AQI of 1700**.
- **Partially unburned exhaust of automobiles** with nitrogen oxides leading to ozone formation.

#### Case study: Beijing's approach to controlling air pollution.

- Beijing was once notorious for its **yellow and thick smog, especially during the winter months**.
- **Now in Beijing, its current AQI is around 60** standing well below global recommendations.
- **Approach:**
  - **First primary pollutants are targeted**, with the govt playing the main role.
  - **Later, the focus shifts to secondary pollutants**, or particulate matter leading to toxic smog, primarily PM2.5, which requires a regional mechanism.
  - **Beijing's techno-political management system**, which builds public awareness to deal with toxicity.
    - **Technology deployment:**
      - **Forecasting severe smog levels through warnings** issued at least 24 hours in advance with over 1000 PM 2.5 sensors throughout the city.
    - **Transportation:**
      - Beijing introduced over **30,000 low-floor buses**, five times more than Delhi Transport Corporation.
      - **Old vehicle scrapage policy.**
    - **Electricity generation:** Ban on coal fired power plants and subsidising solar roof tops with grid connectivity.
    - **Political management:**
      - **Regional cooperation**, five adjoining provinces around Beijing coming together to frame collective plan.
      - Pollution programme **implemented autonomously by the local government.**
    - **People participation:** Fight for **Right to clean air** and holding govt. accountable.

13 Dec 2024

## GOVERNANCE

PRE-CONTEXT

### REGULATORY BODIES

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 19.

News: "Samsung accuses CCI of detaining employees, seizing data unlawfully"

#### About Competition Commission of India:

- **Statutory body** under **Competition Act 2007**.
- It is **responsible to enforce Competition Act 2002**.
- Competition Act 2002 replaced **Monopolies and Restrictive trade Practices Act 1969**.
- **Chairperson and 6 members** are **appointed by Central Govt.**
- **Aim:** to regulate and **prevent anti-competitive practices** in markets.
- **Review and approve mergers and acquisitions** to ensure they don't violate anti-competitive laws.
- **Recent events:**
  - Eg. It **fined Rs.1300 crores on Google** for abusing its dominant position in Android mobile device Ecosystem.
  - Imposed fine of Rs.50 crore on BCCI for abusing its dominant position.

13 Dec 2024

## CONSERVATION

PRE-CONTEXT

### BOTTOM TRAWLING

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 20.

News: "Bottom trawling by Indian fishermen must stop: Sri Lanka's Fisheries Minister."

#### About Bottom Trawling:

- Bottom trawlers are fishing vessels that typically **drag large fishing nets** along the seabed, **scooping out everything** from eggs and baby fish to marine vegetation, in addition to the target catch of fish or shrimps.

#### Impacts of Bottom Trawling:

- **Habitat Destruction:** Coral reefs, sponge gardens, seagrass beds etc.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** Juvenile fish, sea turtles, corals etc.
- Long-term Fisheries decline.
- Slow recovery in impacted areas.

13 Dec 2024

**Thank you!**