

POLITY

❖ **How are disputes between states resolved in India?**

➤ **CONTEXT:** The border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka is intensifying, with both states hardening their stance. On December 27 2022, both Houses of the Maharashtra Assembly passed a unanimous resolution to support a legal battle to resolve the dispute. This came just days after the Karnataka Assembly passed a resolution reiterating Karnataka's position on the issue.

➤ **What is the Maharashtra-Karnataka border dispute?**

- The border dispute over Belagavi, Karwar and Nipani in North Karnataka is long-standing. When state boundaries were redrawn on linguistic lines as per the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, Belagavi became part of the erstwhile Mysore state. Maharashtra claims that parts of Belagavi, where Marathi is the dominant language, should remain in Maharashtra.
- In October 1966, the Centre set up the Mahajan Commission, led by former Chief Justice of India Mehr Chand Mahajan, to resolve the border dispute in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. The Commission recommended that Belgaum and 247 villages remain with Karnataka. Maharashtra rejected the report, and in 2004, moved the Supreme Court.

➤ **How is the issue being resolved?**

- Attempts are often made to resolve inter-state disputes with the cooperation of both sides, with the Centre working as a facilitator or a neutral mediator. If issues are resolved amicably, Parliament can bring a law to alter state boundaries, such as the Bihar-Uttar Pradesh (Alteration of Boundaries) Act of 1968 and the Haryana-Uttar Pradesh (Alteration of Boundaries) Act of 1979.

• In the Belagavi issue, Union Home Minister Amit Shah met Chief Ministers Basavaraj Bommai and Eknath Shinde and asked them to form a six-member team, comprising three ministers from each side, to address all boundary issues.

➤ **What are the other methods available?**

- There are other formal methods in the Constitution to resolve inter-state disputes.

➤ **Judicial redressal:** The Supreme Court in its original jurisdiction decides imputes between states. Article 131 of the Constitution reads: "Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Supreme Court shall, to the exclusion of any other court, have original jurisdiction in any dispute

✓ between the Government of India and one or more States; or

✓ between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; or

✓ between two or more States, if and in so far as the dispute involves any question (whether of law or fact) on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends: Provided that the said jurisdiction shall not extend to a dispute arising out of any treaty, agreement, covenant, engagements, and or other similar instrument which, having been entered into or executed before the commencement of this Constitution, continues in operation after such commencement, or which provides that the said jurisdiction shall not extend to such a dispute.

➤ **Inter-state Council:** Article 263 of the Constitution gives powers to the President to set up an Inter-state Council for resolution of disputes between states. The Council is envisaged as a forum for discussion between the states and the Centre. In 1988, the Sarkaria Commission suggested that the Council should exist as a permanent body, and in 1990 it came into existence through a Presidential Order.

- The provision reads: "provisions with respect to an inter State Council If any time it appears to the President that the public interests would be served by the establishment of a Council charged with the duty of

✓ inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between States;

✓ investigating and discussing subjects in which some or all of the States, or the Union and one or more of the States, have a common interest; or

✓ making recommendations upon any such subject and, in particular, recommendations for the better ordination of policy and action with respect to that subject, it shall be lawful for the President by order to establish such a Council, and to define the nature of the duties to be performed by it and its organisation and procedure.

- In 2021, the Centre reconstituted the Inter-state Council and the body now has 10 Union Ministers as permanent invitees. The standing committee of the Council has been reconstituted with Home Minister Amit Shah as Chairman. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, UP, and Gujarat are some of the other standing committee members.

➤ **What are some of the other inter-state disputes in India?**

- There are border disputes mostly arising out of claims and counter-claims over territories between Assam-Meghalaya; Assam-Nagaland; Assam-Mizoram; Assam-Arunachal Pradesh and Maharashtra- Karnataka.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTION

❖ **What is the proposal to ban the sale of single cigarettes?**

➤ **CONTEXT:** The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare, in its latest report about cancer management, prevention and diagnosis, recommended that the government institute a ban on the sale of single sticks of cigarettes. It also recommended that the government increase taxes on all tobacco products and utilise the acquired revenue for cancer prevention and awareness.

➤ **What are the proposals?**

- The measures aim to curb consumption as well as the accessibility of tobacco products. The report cites the National Health Policy's (2017) endeavour for a relative reduction in current tobacco use by 30% by 2025 and says it is imperative that the government take effective measures to contain the sale of tobacco products. To this effect, it recommends that the government prohibit the sale of single sticks of cigarettes and suggests the abolition of all designated smoking areas in airports, hotels, and restaurants in addition to encouraging a smoke-free policy in organisations.
- The Committee also found that India has the lowest prices for tobacco products and thus, it must look to increase taxes on them.
- These measures flow from the observation that oral cancer accounts for the highest proportion of cancer cases in the country.
- Additionally, the committee also sought a ban on gutka and pan masala alongside a prohibition on their direct and indirect advertisement. This is based on the observation that, in India, more than 80% of tobacco consumption is in the form of chewing tobacco, aggressively marketed as a mouth freshener.

➤ **Why focus on single-stick cigarettes?**

- Single sticks are more economical to acquire than a full pack of cigarettes. This may particularly appeal to adolescents and youth who may have limited money in hand. Single sticks are also preferred by people who may want to take them up for experimentation and have not started smoking on a regular basis.
- A ban on single-stick sales would compel a potential consumer to buy the entire pack which may not be particularly economical, thus curbing potential experimentation and the scope for regular intake. Moreover, a potential ban would also mean that the consumer would have to carry around the packet.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has observed that all forms of tobacco are harmful, and there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco. It also states that smoking cigarettes is the most common way of tobacco use worldwide. The Lancet noted June 2020, that by 2030, 7 million annual deaths from smoking are expected to be from low and middle-income countries.
- Single-stick sales, owing to their easier accessibility and affordability, can also work as a disincentive to quit smoking. Nicotine in tobacco products is highly addictive and without cessation support only 4% of users who attempt to quit tobacco consumption will succeed, according to the WHO.

➤ **How effective can the ban be?**

- According to Cyril Alexander, State Convenor of the Tamil Nadu People's Forum for Tobacco Control (TNPFTC) that notwithstanding that the proposed move would reduce consumption and sales, the government must also consider instituting vendor licensing.
- According to expert, in the absence of a vendor licensing regime, the ban on single sticks might not be very effective. If government allow lakhs and lakhs of shops to sell tobacco and then implement the ban on the sale of single sticks of cigarettes, how would government enforce the ban.

PRELIMS

1. **National Medical Commission (NMC)**

➤ **CONTEXT:** Union Health Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya selects part-time members of National Medical Commission (NMC), Autonomous Boards, and Search Committee through draw of lots as per Procedure mentioned in National Medical Commission Act, 2019

- The Medical Council of India (MCI) is a statutory organisation responsible for ensuring that medical education in India is standardised and of high quality. It was founded in 1934 as part of the Indian Medical Council Act of 1933.
- In 2019, the government implemented NITI Aayog's recommendation to replace MCI with the National Medical Commission (NMC)
- The National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 was passed by the Lok Sabha on July 29, 2019, and by Rajya Sabha on August 01, 2022.

➤ **About**

- NMC is an overarching body, which frames policies and co-ordinate the activities of four Autonomous Boards namely
 - ✓ Under-Graduate Medical Education Board (UGMEB)

- ✓ Post-Graduate Medical Education Board (PGMEB)
- ✓ Medical Assessment and Rating Board
- ✓ Ethics and Medical Registration Board.
- These Boards look after the work of UG and PG education, Medical Assessment and Rating; and Ethics and Medical Registration.
- The purpose of having these four independent Boards is to ensure separation of functions between them”, the Union Health Minister explained.
- One of the mandates of NMC is to look at the cost of medical education.
- It also provides for a common entrance examination for MBBS (NEET) along with common counseling for all medical institutions in the country.
- This provision prevents seat blocking in parallel counseling processes and will eliminate the need for students to approach multiple colleges and take part in multiple counseling processes for admission.
- This saves students and their families from unnecessary physical and financial trauma.
- **NEXT**
- Under the NMC Act, the final year examination has been converted into a nationwide exit test called NEXT.
- This single examination grants
 - ✓ A license to practice medicine
 - ✓ a MBBS degree
 - ✓ Entrance to postgraduate courses.
- With this students are able to concentrate on internships instead of spending all their time preparing for entry into PG courses and thus the burden on students will be greatly reduced.
- The same examination also serves as a licentiate exam for foreign graduates.
- There is a provision for common counseling for entrance to PG courses also. Students get admission to seats in all medical colleges and to Institutes of National Importance like AIIMS, PGI Chandigarh and JIPMER through a single counseling process.
- **Functions**
- The NMC Act provides for the regulation of fees and all other charges in 50% seats in private colleges as well as Deemed to be Universities. Earlier, there was no provision to regulate fees in the Indian Medical Council Act 1956.
- Nearly 50% of the total MBBS seats in the country are in government colleges, which have nominal fees. Of the remaining seats, 50% would be regulated by NMC.
- In addition, since the NMC Act has a provision for fees regulation, they have the authority to come up with state amendments regarding regulation of fees for the remaining 50% seats.
- The government is focusing at universal health coverage and more importantly, universal screening of our population for non-communicable diseases in the years to come. A provision has been made in the NMC Act to register some Community Health Providers (CHPs) who shall be modern medicine professionals; they shall not be dealing with any alternative system of medicine.
- **Members**
- There should be 10 Vice Chancellors of State Health Universities and 9 elected members of State Medical Councils in the NMC.
- Thus 19 out of 33 members, which is more than half of the total strength, should be from the States and only a minority of members should be appointed by the central government thereby ensuring that the NMC is representative, inclusive and respecting the federal structure of Indian polity.
- 2. **‘GNB1 Encephalopathy’ Disease**
- **CONTEXT: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras, Tel Aviv University and Columbia University are studying a rare genetic brain disease called "GNB1 Encephalopathy" and trying to develop a drug to treat it effectively.**
- GNB1 Encephalopathy is a kind of brain disease or neurological disorder which affects individuals in the foetus stage.
- A single nucleotide mutation in the GNB1 gene that makes one of the G-proteins, the "Gβ1 protein," causes this disease. This mutation affects the patient since they are a foetus.
- Early symptoms of the disease are delayed physical and mental development, intellectual disabilities, frequent epileptic seizures.
- Less than 100 cases of GNB1 Encephalopathy have been recorded worldwide. However, the actual number of affected children is probably higher since diagnosis for this genetic disorder is not widely available due to the requirement of sophisticated and expensive procedures.

3. Lokayukta

➤ **CONTEXT: Recently the Maharashtra Assembly passed the Lokayukta Bill 2022, which brings the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers under the ambit of the anticorruption ombudsman.**

- The institution of lokayukta was established first in Maharashtra in 1971. Odisha had passed the Act in this regard in 1970 however it came into force only in 1983.
- The structure of the lokayukta is not same in all the states. Some States like Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have created the lokayukta as well as upalo-kayukta, while some others like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have created only the lokayukta. There are still other states like Punjab and Orissa that have designated officials as Lokpal.
- The lokayukta and upa-lokayukta are appointed by the governor of the state. While appointing, the governor in most of the states consults
 - ✓ The chief justice of the state high court, and
 - ✓ The leader of Opposition in the state legislative assembly.
- Judicial qualifications are prescribed for the lokayukta in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa, Karnataka and Assam. But no specific qualifications are prescribed in the states of Bihar, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.
- In most of the states, the term of office fixed for lokayukta is of 5 years duration or 65 years of age, whichever is earlier. He is not eligible for reappointment for a second term.
- The lokayukta presents, annually, to the governor of the state a consolidated report on his performance. The governor places this report along with an explanatory memorandum before the state legislature. The lokayukta is responsible to the state legislature.
- He takes the help of the state investigating agencies for conducting inquiries.
- The recommendations made by the lokayukta are only advisory and not binding on the state government.

4. Rapidly warming Arctic linked to extreme cold weather in the US: Study

➤ **CONTEXT: As a deadly blizzard grips the United States, leading to the death of more than 60 people and complete disruption of normal life, scientists have once again started to discuss if the rising temperatures of the Arctic are responsible for extreme cold conditions in the country and other areas of the Northern Hemisphere.**

- According to a report, the discussion gained momentum after a recent study, published, revealed how the rapid warming of the Arctic might be allowing frigid air in the region to move southward more frequently than ever before. However, scientists said they need more data to arrive at a consensus about the claim.
- **What are the findings of the study?**
 - The study largely focused on something called the polar vortex, which is a mass of cold, low-pressure air that consistently hovers over the Arctic region. It is denoted by the word “vortex” because it spins counter-clockwise, just like a hurricane does.
 - Usually, the polar vortex remains strong and compact, meaning the mass of frigid air stays at the North Pole. But sometimes it weakens, like a wobbling top, and expands to influence the jet stream — an area of fast-moving air high in the atmosphere that surrounds the polar vortex. Once the jet stream is impacted, the cold polar air finds its way towards the mid-latitude regions.
 - In the study, researchers found that the expansion of the polar vortex has been occurring more than twice as often in recent years and the reason for it is the rapidly warming Arctic.
 - With the help of observational analysis and numerical modelling, the study demonstrated that the melting sea ice in Barents and Kara seas north of Russia and Scandinavia and increasing Siberian snowfall create larger and more energetic atmospheric waves that ultimately stretch the polar vortex, causing extreme winter weather in the US and other places.
 - A similar chain of events took place back in 2021 when Texas witnessed a deadly cold storm that killed 246 people.
- **What are some other studies?**
 - This isn't the first time that the soaring temperatures of the Arctic region are being held responsible for bouts of deadly cold weather in the mid-latitude regions.
 - The debate started in 2012 a research showed that the warming of the Arctic was reducing the temperature difference between the polar and tropical regions, which is the weakening of the jet stream and, thus, allowing the southward movement of frigid air.

ANSWER WRITING

Q: Discuss the role of interest groups for agenda-setting in public policy, with the help of examples.

Interest groups are groups of individuals or organizations that attempt to influence public policy in its favour on the basis of one or more shared concerns through lobbying the members of the government. Agenda setting

describes the "ability to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda". E.g., often associations such as FICCI, ASSOCHAM helps setup agenda of reforms for public policy.

Role of Interest groups in Agenda Setting:

- **As an agent of citizen empowerment-** Interest groups help highlight lacunas, educate people about the laws, compile data and provide relevant insights into the public policies to the citizens. Thus, helping in progressive agenda setting. For instance, Narmada Bachao Andolan, a social movement led by Medha Patkar to fight for the rights of the displaced helped public policy come out with better rehabilitation and displacement related policies (Land acquisition Act 2013)
- **Machinery of the government-** associations like ASSOCHAM, FICCI, CII, etc. that consists of professionally employed people in their board try to exert their influence over public policies. They act as the machinery of the government to aid in formulating laws e.g. related to economic agenda for the country.
- **Interest articulation-** the main function of any interest group is to protect and promote the interest of its people. They play a key role in bringing the social evils of the society to the surface and demand for appropriate laws that assist in uprooting such menace. Thus helping in setting social agenda for policy makers. In August 2020, All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) led the Milk Farmers Struggle in Maharashtra to bring attention to the downturn in milk prices, and in 2019, AIKS was a part of Bhoomi Adhikaar Andolan which was working for the rights of Adivasis and forest dwellers.
- **Political Socialization-** it is a process in which people develop their political base and ideology, political socialization tends to develop a belief in the virtues of democracy in which interest groups play an important role. For E.g. Dalit group like Bhim Army helps set socio-political agendas for their development.

Democratic politics involves taking decisions through consultation, debate, discussions etc. Pressure groups can form good channel of communication between citizen and government but at the same time their vested interests if any needs to be checked so that true meaning of democracy can be fulfilled i.e. "participative democracy".

MCQs

1. Mahajan commission often mentioned in news recently, which was constituted by central government to resolve border dispute in which of the following state?
 - a) Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
 - b) Andhra Pradesh and odisha
 - c) Manipur and Mizoram
 - d) **Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala**
2. With reference to interstate councils, consider the following statements:
 1. Article 263 contemplates the establishment of an Inter-State Council to effect coordination between the states and between Centre and states.
 2. The Interstate Council's decision is binding in nature.
 3. Prime Minister acts as the chairman of the council.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

 - a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) **1 and 3 only**
 - c) 1 only
 - d) 2 and 3 only
3. Consider the following statements with respect to National Medical Commission Act, 2019
 1. The Act repeals the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and establishes four autonomous boards under the supervision of National Medical Commission (NMC).
 2. The Act proposes a common final year undergraduate examination to obtain license for practice and it also serve as the basis for admission into post-graduate courses.

Which of the statement/s given above is/are correct?

 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Consider the following statements with reference to Lokpal and Lokayukta Act 2013:
 1. The Act provides Lokpal with power of superintendence and direction over CBI
 2. Lokpal is final appellate authority on all decisions in matters of corruption in public services

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only

- c) **Both 1 and 2**
d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Recently Polar Vortex often mentioned in news due to extreme cold wave in USA, what reference to this consider the following
1. It is a low-pressure area surrounding both the poles of the Earth.
 2. Global warming is resulting in 'strengthening' of the vortex.
- 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
6. With reference to 'GNB1 Encephalopathy' Disease consider the following statements
1. GNB1 Encephalopathy is a kind of neurological disorder which affects individuals in later stage of life.
 2. Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras recently developed an drug to treat it effectively
- Which of the above statement/s is are not correct?
- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) **Both 1 and 2**
d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. With reference to National Gopal Ratna Award consider the following statements
1. National Gopal Ratna Award is one of the highest National Awards in the field of livestock and dairy sector.
 2. The award is given to districts which best perform in livestock management
- Which of the above statement/s is are correct?
- a) **1 only**
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Which of the following is issued by registered foreign portfolio investors to overseas investors who want to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly?
- a) Certificate of Deposit
 - b) Commercial Paper
 - c) Promissory Note
 - d) **Participatory Note**
9. Recently Vigilance Commissioner Praveen Kumar Srivastava has been appointed as the acting Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC), with reference to this consider the following
1. It is an investigating agency
 2. The commission members shall be appointed by the President of India on recommendation of a Committee consisting of the Prime Minister (Chairperson) and the Speaker of Lok Sabha.
- 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**
10. In recent context which of the following country is highest FDI sourcing nation to India?
- a) **Singapore**
 - b) USA
 - c) Australia
 - d) Norway