

Budget Session begins and suspension of Opposition MPs revoked**Why in news?**

- On the eve of Parliament's Budget Session, the suspension of 14 Opposition MPs — 11 from Rajya Sabha and three from Lok Sabha — was revoked.
- This was done to enable them to attend the customary President's address to both Houses of Parliament.

Parliamentary Sessions

- Constitutional provisions with respect to Parliamentary Sessions
 - Article 85 of the Indian Constitution states that the President can summon each House of Parliament to meet at a time and place of their choosing.
 - The President can also prorogue, or end, a parliamentary session, or dissolve the Lok Sabha.
- Power to convene a session of Parliament
 - The Central government has the authority to call for a session.
 - The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs (CCPA), which includes several Cabinet ministers, determines the date and number of sittings.
 - After finalising the session schedule, the President calls upon the Members of Parliament to convene for the upcoming session.
 - The MPs are informed about the number of sittings and other details about the tentative business of the House through the summons sent by the President.
- Timetable
 - The Constitution doesn't provide for a fixed number of sessions or days of sitting.
 - However, three sessions are typically held each calendar year — the Budget, Monsoon, and Winter sessions.
- Current status
 - The longest, the Budget Session, starts towards the end of January, and concludes by the end of April or first week of May.
 - This session has a recess so that Parliamentary Committees can discuss the budgetary proposals.
 - The second session is the three-week Monsoon Session, which usually begins in July and finishes in August.
 - The parliamentary year ends with a three week-long Winter Session, which is held from November to December.

Suspension of MPs

- It is the role and duty of the Presiding Officer — Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairman of Rajya Sabha — to maintain order so that the House can function smoothly.
- In order to ensure that proceedings are conducted in the proper manner, the Speaker/ Chairman is empowered to force a Member to withdraw from the House.

Rules under which the Presiding Officer/Chairman acts

- For Lok Sabha
 - Rule Number 373 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business
 - It empowers presiding officers to direct an MP to withdraw from the House for any disorderly conduct.
 - This rule says that any Member so ordered to withdraw shall remain absent during the remainder of the day's sitting.
 - Rules 374 and 374A- To deal with more recalcitrant Members.
 - Rule 374 empowers the Presiding officers to name the legislators if the MP continues disrupting the House even after repeated warnings.
 - After that, the House can move a motion to suspend the MP for a period not exceeding the remainder of the session
 - Rule 374A was incorporated in the Rule Book in December 2001. The intention was to circumvent the necessity of adopting a motion for suspension.
 - Under this rule, the Speaker can name an MP, who shall then automatically stand suspended for five days or the remaining part of the session.
- For Rajya Sabha
 - Rule 255 of the Rule Book of Rajya Sabha
 - It empowers the Chairman of Rajya Sabha to direct any Member to withdraw immediately from the House for any disorderly conduct.
 - Rule 256
 - This rule empowers the Chairman to name the members who persistently disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the Council.
 - After that, the House may adopt a motion suspending the Member for a period not exceeding the remainder of the session.
 - It should be noted that, unlike Lok Sabha (under rule 374A), Rajya Sabha cannot suspend its members without passing a motion for the same.

News Summary: Budget Session begins and suspension of Opposition MPs revoked

- The Budget session of Parliament, the last of the 17th Lok Sabha (LS), will begin with the President's address to a joint sitting of both Houses on January 31.
- 14 Opposition MPs, suspended during the last session and their cases referred to the Privileges Committees, will return to attend the Budget session.
 - A record 146 Opposition MPs, from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, were suspended during the Winter Session.
 - They were suspended for disrupting proceedings to press their demand for a statement from Home Minister on the Parliament security breach on December 13.
 - While the other MPs were suspended for the remainder of the Winter Session, the suspension of 14 MPs was referred to the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha privileges committees.
- The Chairs in the two Houses have agreed to the government's request to revoke their suspensions.

DEFENCE & SECURITY**National Cybersecurity Reference Framework (NCRF)****Why in news?**

- As per the media reports, the government has drawn up a guiding policy called the National Cybersecurity Reference Framework (NCRF) to help manage cybersecurity better.
- The framework is based on existing legislations, policies and guidelines. It outlines implementable measure with clear articulation of roles and responsibilities for cybersecurity.

What is National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)?

- NCIIPC is a government organization that protects critical information infrastructure for the public. It was established in 2014 and is based in New Delhi.
- The NCIIPC's mission is to protect critical information infrastructure from unauthorized access, modification, use, disclosure, disruption, incapacitation, or destruction.
- It also provides advice to reduce the vulnerabilities of critical information infrastructure from cyber terrorism, cyber warfare, and other threats.
- The NCIIPC defines critical information infrastructure (CII) as computer resources whose incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating impact on national security, economy, public health, or safety.

What is National Cybersecurity Coordinator (NCSC)?

- The NCSC provides guidance and support to state governments and private industry to help formulate policies.
- They also provide guidance on internet governance, network management, and response strategies for cyberattacks.
- It works under National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and coordinates with different agencies at the national level for cyber security matters.

News Summary: Overhaul of Cybersecurity Framework

- The government has drawn up the National Cybersecurity Reference Framework (NCRF), with clear articulation of roles and responsibilities for cybersecurity.

What is National Cybersecurity Reference Framework (NCRF)?

- **Background**
 - The NCRF was shared privately with companies and other government departments for consultation in May 2023, but is yet to be made public.
 - Apart from the main policy document, at least three supporting compendiums detailing global cybersecurity standards, products and solutions have also been formulated.
 - In June 2023, former National Cyber-Security Coordinator Lt. General Rajesh Pant had said that the NCRF will be released for the public soon.
- **About**
 - NCRF is a framework that sets the standard for cybersecurity in India.
 - It focuses on critical sectors and provides guidelines to help organizations develop strong cybersecurity systems.
 - The NCRF can serve as a template for critical sector entities to develop their own governance and management systems.
 - The government has identified telecom, power, transportation, finance, strategic entities, government entities and health as critical sectors.
- **Institutions involved in framing the framework**
 - The framework has been drawn up by the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) with support from the National Cybersecurity Coordinator (NCSC).
- **Key highlights**
 - Non-binding in nature
 - The NCRF is a guideline, meaning that its recommendations will not be binding.
 - Separate budget allocation
 - It recommends that enterprises allocate at least 10 per cent of their total IT budget towards cybersecurity.

- Such allocation is to be mentioned under a separate budget head for monitoring by the top-level management / board of directors.
 - Evolution of ways to use machines to analyse data from different sources
 - The framework might suggest that national nodal agencies evolve platforms and processes for machine-processing of data from different entities.
 - This would help check if audits are done properly and rate auditors based on their performance.
 - Greater powers to the regulators
- The NCRF might suggest that regulators overseeing critical sectors can:
 - set rules for information security;
 - define information security requirements to ensure proper audit.
- Effective Information Security Management System (ISMS)
 - The regulators may also need to access sensitive data and deficiencies related to the operations in the critical sector.
 - Hence, they also would need to have an effective Information Security Management System (ISMS) instance.
- Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR)
 - The policy is based on a CBDR approach, recognising that different organisations have varying levels of cybersecurity needs and responsibilities.

Need for National Cybersecurity Reference Framework (NCRF)

- Growing cyberattacks and lack of an overarching framework on cybersecurity
- India faces a barrage of cybersecurity-related incidents which pose a major challenge to New Delhi's national security imperatives.
 - E.g., A high-profile attack on the systems of AIIMS Delhi in 2022.
- Many ministries feel hamstrung by the lack of an overarching framework on cybersecurity when they are formulating sector-specific legislations.
- Emergence of threat actors backed by nation-states and organised cyber-criminal groups
- In recent years many threat actors backed by nation-states and organised cyber-criminal groups have attempted to target Critical Information Infrastructure (CII) of the government and enterprises.
- In addition, availability of cyber-attacks-as-service has reduced the entry threshold for new cyber criminals, thus increasing the exposure to individuals and organisations.
- National Cybersecurity Policy of 2013 is still guiding the cybersecurity of the nation
- The current guiding framework on cybersecurity for critical infrastructure in India comes from the National Cybersecurity Policy of 2013.
- From 2013 till 2023, the world has changed as new threats and new cyber organisations have emerged calling for new strategies.

PRELIM FACTS

1. All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-2022

- The Ministry of Education, Government of India, released the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-2022 recently.

About All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE):

- The AISHE report has been published by the Ministry of Education since 2011.
- Aim: To portray the status of higher education in the country.
- The survey covers all the institutions in the country engaged in imparting higher education.
- Data is being collected on several parameters, such as teachers, student enrollment, programmes, examination results, education finance, and infrastructure.
- Indicators of educational development such as Institution Density, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Pupil-teacher ratio, Gender Parity Index, Per Student Expenditure will also be calculated from the data collected through AISHE.
- For the purpose of this survey, Higher Education is defined as education, that is obtained after completing 12 years of schooling or equivalent.

Highlights of AISHE 2021-22:

- In 2021-22, the overall gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education for the age group 18-23 years increased to 28.4%, from 27.3% in 2020-21 and 23.7% in 2014-15, the base year.
- Female GER increased to 28.5% (2.07 crore) in 2021-22 from 27.9 (2.01 crore) in 2020-21 and 22.9 percent in 2014-15.
- The GER of Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) students has also increased by around 2%. In 2020-21, the GER of SC students was 25.6% and ST was 23.4%, while in 2021-22 it increased to 27.2% and 25.8% respectively.
- The enrolment of OBC students has also increased to 1.63 crore in 2021-22 from 1.13 crore in 2014-15.
- About 78.9 per cent of the total students are enrolled in undergraduate level courses and 12.1 per cent are enrolled in postgraduate level courses.

- Among disciplines at the undergraduate-level in AISHE 2021-22, enrolment is highest in Arts (34.2%), followed by science (14.8%), Commerce (13.3%), and Engineering and Technology (11.8%).
- Among streams at postgraduate-level in AISHE 2021-22, maximum students are enrolled in Social Science (21.1%), followed by science (14.7%).
- Government Universities constituting 58.6% of total Universities, contribute 73.7% of total enrolment, and Private Universities account for 26.3% of total enrolment.
- The total number of Universities / University level institutions registered is 1,168, Colleges 45,473 and Standalone Institutions 12,002.
- As per the survey, the total number of faculty/teachers in 2021-22 is 15.98 lakh, of which about 56.6% are male and 43.4% are female.

2. Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia Dargah

- French President recently visited the Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia Dargah in south Delhi.

About Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia Dargah:

- It is located in Delhi's Nizamuddin West area.
- It is the mausoleum of the famous Sufi saint, Nizamuddin Auliya (1238-1325 CE).
- It was built in the 14th Century C.E.
- Features:
 - It consists of a square chamber surrounded by verandahs, which are pierced by arched openings, while its roof is surmounted by a dome prying from an octagonal drum.
 - The dome is ornamented by vertical stripes of black marble and is crowned by a lotus-cresting.
 - Inside the dargah complex, one can find the tombs of Nizamuddin Auliya's saints: Jahanara Begum, Shah Jahan's favorite daughter, and poet Amir Khusru.
 - Towards the north side of Dargah, there is a stepwell.
 - On the north-eastern side, there is a 16th-century tomb of Atgah Khan, who was a powerful minister in Emperor Akbar's court.
 - The site is also known for its evening qawwali devotional music sessions.

Who was Nizamuddin Auliya?

- Syed Muhammad Nizamuddin Auliya was one of the most famous Sufi saints from the Indian subcontinent region.
- Also known as Hazrat Nizamuddin and Mahbub-e-Ilahi (Beloved of God), he was a Sunni Muslim scholar and Sufi saint of the Chishti Order.
- Like most of the Chishti Sufi saints, Nizamuddin Auliya stressed love as a means of realising God. He believed the love of God implied a love of humanity.
- Some of the famous disciples of Nizamuddin include Shaikh Nasiruddin Chirag Delhavi, Amir Khusro, and the royal poet of the Delhi Sultanate.

3. Mitochondrial coxiella effector F (MceF)

- Researchers recently discovered a previously unidentified protein named mitochondrial coxiella effector F (MceF) with antioxidant properties produced by *Coxiella burnetii*, a Gram-negative intracellular bacterium.

About Mitochondrial coxiella effector F (MceF):

- It is a bacterial protein capable of keeping human cells healthy even when the cells have a heavy bacterial burden.
- It is produced by *Coxiella burnetii*, a Gram-negative intracellular bacterium.
- After invading host cells, *Coxiella burnetii* releases MceF into cells.
- MceF interacts with glutathione peroxidase 4 (GPX4), an anti-oxidant enzyme located in the mitochondria, to improve mitochondrial function by promoting an anti-oxidizing effect that averts cell damage and death, which may occur when pathogens replicate inside mammalian cells.

Key Facts about *Coxiella burnetii*:

- It is a Gram-negative intracellular bacterium.
- It is the causative agent of a serious infection called Q fever, a zoonotic disease that can affect humans and animals.
- The bacterium is primarily transmitted to humans through the inhalation of contaminated aerosols from infected animals, particularly through the air-borne particles from placental tissues, urine, feces, and milk of infected domestic animals like cattle, sheep, and goats.
- It causes atypical pneumonia in humans and coxiellosis in some animals, such as cattle, sheep, and goats.
- It is highly adapted to invade and control macrophages and monocytes—white blood cells that are part of the organism's front-line immune defense—inhibiting the host's responses to the infection.
- Unlike other bacteria, which cause disease only when they multiply to reach large numbers, a single *C. burnetii* is enough to make a healthy person sick.

4. Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS)

- Recently, the military regimes in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger announced their immediate withdrawal from the West African bloc ECOWAS.

About Economic Community of West African States:

- It is also known as CEDEAO in French.

- It is the regional group which was established in 1975 through the Lagos Treaty.
- Mandate: Promoting economic integration among its members.
- The vision of ECOWAS is the creation of a “borderless region” that is well-integrated and governed in accordance with the principles of democracy, rule of law and good governance.
- Members: Benin, Cape Verde, Cote d’ Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo.
- ECOWAS’ larger aims are to have a single common currency and create a single, large trading bloc in areas of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, financial issues, and social and cultural matters.
- Along with the goals of economic cooperation, it has attempted to quell military conflicts in the region.
- It also operated a regional peacekeeping operation known as ECOMOG, led by Nigeria in the 1990s and early 2000s.
- Headquarter: Abuja, Nigeria.

5. Futala Lake

- The Supreme Court recently asked the Maharashtra government and its metro rail corporation not to carry out any construction activity at the famous Futala Lake in Nagpur.

About Futala Lake:

- Futala Lake, also known as Telankhedi Lake, is located in the western part of Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- It is believed to be more than 200 years old.
- It is spread over 60 acres.
- Built by the Bhonsle kings of Nagpur, this lake is known for its colourful fountains.
- The lake is surrounded on three sides by forest and a landscaped beach on the fourth side.

Key Facts about Bhonsle Dynasty:

- The Bhonsle or Bhonsale (pronounced Bhoslay) were a prominent Maratha clan who served as rulers of several states in India.
- Raghujji Bhonsle of Berar founded the dynasty in 1730.
- The most prominent member of the clan was Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire.
- His successors ruled as maharajas from their capital at Satara, although "de facto" rule of the empire passed to the Peshwas, the Marathas' hereditary chief ministers, during the reign of Shahu I.
- In addition to the Bhonsle Maharajas of Satara, rulers of the Bhonsle clan established themselves at Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu in the 17th century, and at Nagpur and Kolhapur in modern-day Maharashtra in the 18th century.
- The Bhonsle of Thanjavur were descendants of Sivaji's halfbrother Venkaji, while the Bhonsle of Nagpur and Kolhapur were descended from Sivaji's sons, Sambhaji and Rajara.
- After the British defeat of the Marathas in the Third Anglo-Maratha War in 1818, the Marathas were forced to accept British rule.
- The four Bhonsle dynasties continued as rulers of their princely states, acknowledging British sovereignty while retaining local autonomy.
- The states of Nagpur, Thanjavur, and Sataracame under direct British rule in the mid-nineteenth century when their rulers died without male heirs; Kolhapur continued as a princely state until India's independence in 1947, when the rulers acceded to the Indian government.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Discuss the key components of probity in governance and their significance in fostering ethical and transparent administration. (150 words)

Answer: Probity in governance refers to the adherence to principles of integrity, honesty, and ethical behaviour in the conduct of public affairs. It is a crucial aspect of ensuring transparent and accountable administration.

Some of the key components of probity in governance are:

- **Honesty:** It means being truthful and sincere in one’s actions and words and avoiding any form of deception or manipulation.
- **Accountability:** It means being answerable and responsible for one’s decisions and actions, and accepting the consequences of them.
- **Integrity:** It signifies adhering to a code of ethics and moral principles, and acting in a consistent and coherent manner.
- **Compassion:** It reflects being empathetic and caring towards people, especially the vulnerable and marginalized sections of society.

The significance of probity in governance for fostering ethical and transparent administration:

- It helps preserve the confidence and trust of the public in the government and its institutions and enhances the legitimacy and credibility of the governance system.
- It helps in preventing and combating corruption, fraud, and maladministration, and ensures that public resources are used efficiently and effectively for public good.
- It helps in promoting the values of democracy, human rights, and social justice, and ensures that the governance system is participatory, representative, and responsive to the people.

- It helps in achieving the goals of sustainable development and social welfare and ensures that the governance system is aligned with national and global interests and aspirations.

Conclusion

The key components of probity in governance work together to establish a framework for ethical, transparent, and accountable administration. By upholding these principles, governments can build public trust, promote good governance, and create a positive and sustainable relationship with their citizens.

MCQs

- Kudavolai System has been in the news recently, it is related to
 (a) **Ancient Village Administration**
 (b) Rainwater Harvesting Technology
 (c) A type of taxation system practiced in Ancient India.
 (d) Artificial lake in South India.
- Consider the following statements regarding Snow leopards:
 1. The SECURE Himalaya project was launched for its protection.
 2. Its IUCN conservation status is vulnerable.
 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
- Consider the following statements:
 1. Increased illegal immigration and border security issues
 2. Misuse of the regime for insurgent activities
 3. Inefficiency in healthcare facilities collaboration
 4. Military coup in Myanmar
 How many of the above concerns primarily led India to terminate the India-Myanmar Free Movement Regime (FMR)?
 (a) Only one
 (b) **Only two**
 (c) Only three
 (d) All four
- With reference to the Border Security Force (BSF), consider the following statements:
 1. One of its mandates is to counter-terrorism operations.
 2. It is responsible for guarding the borders of India with China and Nepal.
 3. It is one of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) of India.
 How many of the statements given above are correct?
 (a) Only one
 (b) **Only two**
 (c) All three
 (d) None
- Consider the following statements regarding Laughing gull.
 1. Laughing gull is a migratory bird from North America.
 2. Recently it was sighted for the first time in India in North-Eastern part of the country.
 3. It is known as Laughing gull due its unique laughter-like calls.
 How many of the above statements is/are correct?
 (a) Only one
 (b) **Only two**
 (c) All three
 (d) None
- The corruption perception index is released by:
 (a) Economist Intelligence Unit
 (b) Amnesty International
 (c) German Watch
 (d) **Transparency International**
- Consider the following statements regarding Electronic soil' (eSoil).
 1. eSoil is an electrically conductive growth substrate derived from cellulose and a conductive polymer (PEDOT).
 2. eSoil works by electrically stimulating plant roots.
 3. It is not compatible with hydroponics.
 How many of the above statements is/are correct?
 (a) Only one
 (b) **Only two**
 (c) All three
 (d) None
- Consider the following statements:
 1. India and France have established an Indo-Pacific Trilateral Development Cooperation Fund for sustainable solutions in the region.
 2. Recently, the first edition of the Maritime Partnership Exercise was carried out between India, France, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Gulf of Oman.
 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
- Consider the following statements:
 1. The Binturong also known as 'Bearcat' is native to South and Southeast Asia.
 2. The Binturong is an omnivorous animal.
 3. The Small-Clawed otter is listed in Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
 Which of the statements given above are correct?
 (a) **1 and 2 only**
 (b) 2 and 3 only
 (c) 1 and 3 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3
- Which of the following statements are correct about Dhimsa dance?
 1. It is associated with the state of Andhra Pradesh, India.
 2. It is performed by the indigenous Koya tribe.
 3. Only Women participate in Dhimsa dance.
 4. This dance is not accompanied by percussion instruments.
 Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
 (a) **1 and 2 only**
 (b) 2 and 3 only
 (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
 (d) 2, 3 and 4 only