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Category: POLITY

1. [Rajnath to chair meet on Centre-State relations](#)

In news:

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh will chair a meeting of the **Standing Committee of the Inter State Council (ISC)** to discuss the recommendations made by the **Puncchi Commission on Centre-State relations**.

About Puncchi Commission :

- The Punchhi Commission, which was notified in 2005, submitted its report in 2010.
- Its recommendations pertaining to national security, communal harmony, Centre-State financial relations and planning are expected to be discussed.

Commission observations:

- The Commission in its report had said that **“National Security”** as a subject was not specifically listed in any of the three Lists, i.e. the Union, the State or the Concurrent List.
- The subject of Security under the **Article 352** and under the Emergency Provisions in Part XVIII of the Constitution has been assigned to the Union Government. Though it is an overriding executive power of the Union, in Constitutional practice, however, **“Security”** is a subject in which the States and the Union have a common interest and are expected to act in a co-ordinated manner.
- The Commission also said that in case of communal riots, which has a potential of causing widespread violence within a territory, the use of **Article 355** may be in order. A clarificatory line in this regard, if required, may be inserted making the provision explicitly clear that the Centre can depute Paramilitary Forces to such trouble spots in exceptional circumstances even if a request from the State Government is not received. The aim has to be to ensure quick control of the situation, bring it back to normal, hand over the area to the local administration as quickly as possible and then withdraw the Central forces.

Basic Information:

Article 352. Proclamation of Emergency

(1) If the President is satisfied that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India or of any part of the territory thereof is threatened, whether by war or external aggression or armed rebellion, he may, by Proclamation, made a declaration to that effect in respect of the whole of India or of such part of the territory thereof as may be specified in the Proclamation. A Proclamation of Emergency declaring that the security of India or any part of the territory thereof is threatened by war or by external aggression or by armed rebellion may be made before the actual occurrence of war or of any such aggression or rebellion, if the President is satisfied that there is imminent danger thereof.

(2) A Proclamation issued under clause (1) may be or revoked by a subsequent proclamation.

(3) The President shall not issue a Proclamation under clause (1) or a Proclamation varying such Proclamation unless the decision of the Union Cabinet (that is to say, the Council consisting of the Prime Minister and other Ministers of Cabinet).

rank under Article 75) that such a Proclamation may be issued has been communicated to him in writing

(4) Every Proclamation issued under this article shall be laid before each House of Parliament and shall, except where it is a Proclamation revoking a previous Proclamation, cease to operate at the expiration of one month unless before the expiration of that period it has been approved by resolutions of both Houses of Parliament Provided that if any such Proclamation (not being a Proclamation revoking a previous Proclamation) is issued at a time when the House of the People has been dissolved, or place during the period of one month referred to in this clause, and if a resolution approving the Proclamation has been passed by the Council of States, but no resolution with respect to such Proclamation has been passed by the House of the People before the expiration of that period, the Proclamation shall cease to operate at the expiration of thirty days from the date on which the House of the People first sits after its reconstitution, unless before the expiration of the said period of thirty days a resolution approving the Proclamation has been also passed by the House of the People

(5) A Proclamation so approved shall, unless revoked, cease to operate on the expiration of a period of six months from the date of the passing of the second of the resolutions approving the proclamation under clause (4); Provided that if and so often as a resolution approving the continuance in force of such a Proclamation is passed by both Houses of Parliament the Proclamation shall, unless revoked, continue in force for a further period of six months from the date on which it would otherwise have ceased of operate under this clause Provided further that if the dissolution of the House of the People takes place during any such period of six months an a resolution approving the continuance in force of such Proclamation has been passed by the House of the People during the said period, the Proclamation shall cease to operate at the expiration of thirty days from the date on which the House of the People first sits after its reconstitution unless before the expiration of the said period of thirty days, a resolution approving the continuance in force of the proclamation has been also passed by the House of the People

(6) For the purpose of clause (4) and (5), a resolution may be passed by either House of Parliament only by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two thirds of the members of that House present and voting

(7) Notwithstanding anything contained in the foregoing clauses, the President shall revoke a Proclamation issued under clause (1) or a Proclamation varying such Proclamation if the House of the People passes a resolution disapproving, or, as the case may be, disapproving the continuance in force of, such Proclamation

(8) Where a notice in writing signed by not less than one tenth of the total number of members of the House of the People has been given of, their intention to move a resolution for disapproving, or, as the case may be, for disapproving the continuance in force of, a Proclamation issued under clause (1) or a Proclamation varying such Proclamation,

(a) to the Speaker, if the House is in session; or

(b) to the President, if the House is not in session, a special sitting of the House shall be held within fourteen days from the date on which such notice is received by the Speaker, or as the case may be, by the President, for the purpose of considering such resolution

(9) The power conferred on the President by this article shall include the power to issue different Proclamations on different grounds, being war or external aggression or armed rebellion or imminent danger of war or external aggression or armed rebellion, whether or not here is a Proclamation already issued by the President under clause (1) and such Proclamation is in operation

Article 355. Duty of the Union to protect States against external aggression and internal disturbance: It shall be the duty of the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution

2. [â€œNo fresh polls if NOTA votes exceed candidatesâ€™](#)

In news:

Context:

- **Chief Justice of India** rejected a public interest litigation petition suggesting fresh elections whenever the public chose overwhelmingly the â€œNone of the Aboveâ€ (NOTA) option.

Chief Justice of India Dipak Misraâ€™s Observation:

- Holding elections in our country costs money.
- The court said a voter had the right to express his dissent by staying at home.

Supreme Court advocate Ashwini Upadhyay opinion :

- If NOTA got the highest number of votes, it would amount to an expression of public dissatisfaction with the candidates in the fray.
- If this happened, the result should have to be nullified by the Election Commission.
- His petition had even sought a ban on the parties and their candidates who failed to NOTA in the first election from contesting the fresh polls.

Basic Information:

NOTA option

- â€œNone Of The Aboveâ€, or NOTA for short, also known as â€œagainst allâ€ or a â€œscratchâ€ vote, is a ballot option in some jurisdictions or organizations, designed to allow the voter to indicate disapproval of all of the

- candidates in a voting system
- It is based on the principle that consent requires the ability to withhold consent in an election, just as they can by voting 'No' on ballot questions
- When 'None of the Above' is listed on a ballot, there is the possibility of NOTA receiving a majority or plurality of the vote, and so 'winning' the election
- In such a case, a variety of formal procedures may be invoked, including having the office remain vacant, having the office filled by appointment, re-opening nominations or holding another election (in a body operating under parliamentary procedure), or it may have no effect whatsoever, as in India

Category: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [India, Sri Lanka to expedite projects](#)

Context:

- Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe visit to India.

In News:

- **Area of focus** : Expediting decisions on joint projects and solving the problems that have emerged.
- Among the projects discussed in particular were the plans for India to develop the **Trincomalee harbour**, including the Oil Tank farms project, as well as the Indian bid to lease and manage the **Mattala airport in Hambantota**.

2. [Arrest Hafiz Saeed and charge him for his crimes, U.S. tells Pakistan](#)

In news:

Context:

- Hafiz Saeed, mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai terror attack was released from house arrest by Pakistani authorities.
- Saeed is a designated global terrorist and the U.S. has declared a bounty of \$10 million on his head.

In news:

- **the US reaction:** Pakistan should ensure that Hafiz Saeed is arrested and charged for his crimes, the U.S. said a day after he was released from house arrest.

Act against LeT

- The U.S. has repeatedly asked Pakistan to act against the LeT.
- In May 2008, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated Saeed as a specially designated global terrorist under Executive Order 13224.
- Saeed was also individually designated by the UN under UNSCR 1267 in December 2008 following the November 2008 Mumbai attack in which 166 people, including six American citizens, were killed.

Category: ECONOMY

1. [S&P stands pat on its rating](#)

In news:

- Standard & Poor's (S&P) retained its **BBB- rating for India's sovereign** with a 'stable' outlook.
- A BBB- rating denotes the lowest investment grade rating for India's sovereign debt.
- S&P expects India's economy to grow robustly over the two-year period from 2018-20 with foreign exchange reserves rising further.
- India's GDP growth rate is among the fastest of all investment-grade sovereigns, and we expect real GDP to average 7.6% over 2017-2020.
- The rating agency estimated public sector banks would need a capital infusion of about \$30 billion to make large haircuts on loans to viable stressed projects and meet the rising capital requirements under the Basel III norms.

Reasons:

- S&P cited India's **low per capita income**, **the sizeable fiscal deficit** and **high general government debt** as factors that continue to weigh down the country's credit profile and reiterated its stable outlook "indicating that the rating is unlikely to see a change in the near future."

2. [Post note ban, big drop in cash deals](#)

In news:

- RBI study claims major drop in cash payments after note-ban.
- RBI study reveals: 'fundamental shift' in the payment habits in the economy-a move away from cash payments to and a wider adoption of retail electronic payments, card usage at merchant terminals and cheques.
- The demonetisation has impacted the inter-bank payments and settlement system significantly in moving cash transactions to non-cash modes of payments in three segments- retail electronic payments, card usage at PoS terminals and cheques.
- As per the study, cheque volumes and values contracted during the pre-demonetisation period but recorded positive growth during demonetisation as well as post-note-ban months.
- There was a sharp growth in card transactions at points of sale terminals for both demonetisation and post-demonetisation periods, it added.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. [Sagardhwani retraces historic Indian Ocean expedition routes](#)

In news:

- Marine acoustic research vessel **INS Sagardhwani** is riding a wave of history that charted the course of oceanographic research in the Indian Ocean.
- The Kochi-based ship, operated by the Navy and equipped with eight scientific laboratories, recently joined an international campaign to revisit the first major interdisciplinary **International Indian Ocean Exploration (IIOE)** undertaken by 13 countries with 46 vessels in the 1960s.

International Indian Ocean Exploration-2

- IIOE-2, as the ongoing commemorative expedition is known, is organised by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) under the UN.
- It hopes to furthering the scientific community's understanding of the Indian Ocean biophysical variability in response to monsoon and human activity. A total of 52 nations are taking part in IIOE-2, carrying out oceanographic research in designated areas in the Indian Ocean.

Nothing here for Today!!!

Nothing here for Today!!!

F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

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

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

(d)

Type : Intergovernmental Organisations

Level : Moderate

Explanation:

Budapest Convention on Cybercrime

- The Council of Europe helps protect societies worldwide from the threat of cybercrime through the **Budapest Convention on Cybercrime**, the Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) and the technical co-operation Programme on Cybercrime.
- First international treaty addressing crimes committed using or against network and information systems (computers).
- Developing countries including India have not signed it stating that the developed countries lead by the US drafted it without consulting them.

Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

- IGF is a multi- [stakeholder](#) forum for policy dialogue on issues of Internet governance.
- It brings together all stakeholders in the Internet governance debate, whether they represent governments, the private sector or civil society, including the technical and academic community, on an equal basis and through an open and inclusive process.
- The establishment of the IGF was formally announced by the United Nations Secretary-General in July 2006.

Meridian Process

- It aims to provide Governments worldwide with a means by which they can discuss how to work together at the policy level on Critical Information Infrastructure Protection (CIIP).
- Participation is open to all countries and targets senior level policymakers.
- An annual conference and interim activities are held each year to help build trust and establish international relations within the membership to facilitate sharing of.

[Tallinn Manual](#)

- It is an academic, non-binding study on how international law (in particular the jus ad bellum and international humanitarian law) applies to cyber conflicts and cyber warfare, a document that was put together by Western experts under the aegis of NATO.

United Nations (UN)

- The International Multilateral Partnership against Cyber Threats (IMPACT) is the first United Nations-backed cyber security alliance.
- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the specialized agency of the United Nations which is responsible for Information and Communication Technologies.
 - ITU deals also with adopting international standards to ensure seamless global communications and interoperability for next generation networks; building confidence and security in the use of ICTs; emergency

communications to develop early warning systems and to provide access to communications during and after disasters, etc.

(a)

Type : Current Affairs

Level : Moderate

Explanation:

New report published by World Bank

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

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

(c)

Type : Current Affairs

Level : Moderate

Explanation:

About the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya)

1. It claims to ensure **electrification** of all **willing households** in the country
2. It makes promises to provide a **free electricity connection** to all willing **BPL households**
3. And to **all others** on a **payment** of **Rs. 500** (which shall be recovered by the power distribution companies/power departments in 10 instalments along with electricity bills)

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper III

- “What are the reasons for poor acceptance of cost effective small processing unit? How the food processing unit will be helpful to uplift the socio-economic status of poor farmers?” (250 words)

GS Paper IV

- You are the manager of a spare parts company A and you have to negotiate a deal with the manager of a large manufacturing company B. The deal is highly competitive and sealing the deal is critical for your company. The deal is being worked out over a dinner. After dinner the manager of manufacturing company B offered to drop you to the hotel in his car. On the way to hotel he happens to hit motorcycle injuring the motorcyclist badly. You know the manager was driving fast and thus lost control. The law enforcement officer comes to investigate the issue and you are the sole eyewitness to it. Knowing the strict laws pertaining to road accidents you are aware that your honest account of the incident would lead to the prosecution of the manager and as a consequence the deal is likely to be jeopardized, which is of immense importance to your company.
- What are the dilemmas you face? What will be your response to the situation? (250 Words)