



Global Report on Assistive Technology

For Prelims: Global Report on Assistive Technology, WHO, UNICEF, World Health Assembly, SDGS, UHC

For Mains: Global Report on Assistive Technology, Assistive Technology and the status of Technology in India, Health, Issues related to Disability

Why in News?

Recently, the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) and [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#) jointly launched the **first Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT)**.

What is the purpose of the Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT)?

- This report is the **culmination of the 71st World Health Assembly resolution in 2018** to prepare a global report on effective access to assistive technology.
- The report assumes significance as **90% of those who need assistive technology do not have access to it globally**, and including assistive technology into health systems is critical for progress towards the targets in the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#) relating to [Universal Health Coverage \(UHC\)](#).

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **People Need Assistive Products:**
 - More than **2.5 billion people need one or more assistive products**, such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, or apps that support communication and cognition.
- **People Denied Assistive Products:**
 - A **billion of them are denied access**, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where access can be **as low as 3% of the need** for these life-changing products.
- **Number of People in Need of Assistive Products in Future:**
 - The number of people in **need of one or more assistive products is likely to rise to 3.5 billion by 2050**, due to populations aging and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases rising across the world.
 - Also, **affordability is a major barrier** to access.
- **Large Gaps in Service Provision and Trained Workforce:**
 - A survey of **70 countries featured in the report found large gaps in service provision and trained workforce** for assistive technology, especially in the domains of cognition, communication and self-care.

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

- AT is any **item, piece of equipment, software program or product system** that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

- **Examples:**
 - **Technologies and devices** such as prosthetics, braces, walkers, special switches, special-purpose computers, screen readers and specialised curricular software.
- **Universal assistive technology coverage implies** that everyone, everywhere receives the AT that they need without financial or other hardships.
 - **Priority Assistive Products List** launched by WHO in 2018 include hearing aids, wheelchairs, communication aids, spectacles, artificial limbs, pill organisers, memory aids and other essential items for the elderly and person with disabilities.

What is the Magnitude of the Problem in India?

- **2011 Census:**
 - The [2011 Census](#) puts the **national estimate of the number of people with disabilities at 2.21% of the total population** including persons with visual, hearing, speech, locomotor and mental disabilities with the majority in the 19-59 age group.
 - The **country's disabled population increased by 22.4%** between 2001 and 2011 census periods, the total population increased by 17.6%, however.
- **NSS Survey:**
 - Subsequent to the notification of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act in 2016**, the **76th round (July- December 2018)** of the [National Sample Survey \(NSS\)](#) reported that among persons with disabilities, **21.8% reported receiving aid/help from the government and another 1.8% from other organisations.**
 - The **rapid Assistive Technology Assessment (rATA)** is a tool developed by the WHO for national representative survey to measure unmet need for assistive technology, this shall provide granular evidence of the demand-side as and when it is available for India.

What is the Need for a Health-Industry Interface?

- **Ensure Universal Assistive Technology Coverage:**
 - Upholding the UHC approach is **necessary to ensure universal assistive technology coverage** that will entail every citizen access to assistive technology they need without financial hardship.
 - **The tasks include:**
 - (i) production and provision of the entire spectrum of AT,
 - (ii) integrating rehabilitative services as an essential strategy in long-term care,
 - (iii) including rehabilitation at the primary health-care level, and,
 - (iv) promoting community-based rehabilitation.
- **Necessary to Meet the Needs of a Diversity of Users:**
 - Manufacturing and provision of components of the AT system is **necessary to meet the needs of a diversity of users** and provide a broader range of products that match their needs.
 - **Collaboration across academia, industry and the government will help in analysing manufacturing capacity**, ascertaining immediate need of specific AT and products and create a regulatory framework to provide users with products that are safe, secure and effective as per approved norms.
- **Related Initiatives:**
 - Ongoing initiatives such as [Make in India](#), [Digital India](#) along with the health insurance schemes such as [Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana \(PM-JAY\)](#) can cater to the AT demands of the most vulnerable 40% of the population to address their rehabilitation needs.
 - [Assistance to Disabled Persons Scheme](#)
 - [Accessible India Campaign: Creation of Accessible Environment for PwDs](#)
 - [DeenDayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme](#)
 - [National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities](#)
 - [Unique Disability Identification Project](#)
 - [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)

What are the Recommendations?

- **Improve access within education**, health and social care systems
- **Ensure availability, safety, effectiveness** and affordability of assistive products
- **Enlarge, diversify** and improve workforce capacity
- **Actively involve users of assistive technology** and their families
- **Increase public awareness** and combat stigma
- **Invest in data** and evidence-based policy
- **Invest in research, innovation**, and an enabling ecosystem
- Develop and invest in enabling environments
- **Include assistive technology** in humanitarian responses
- Provide technical and economic assistance through international cooperation to support national efforts.

[Source: TH](#)

Fortification of Rice

For Prelims: Sickle-cell anaemia, Thalassemia, FSSAI

For Mains: Issues with Fortification of Food and way ahead

Why in News?

According to the recent findings, the Union government's plan to **distribute subsidised iron-fortified rice may do more harm than good to Adivasis, or indigenous populations**, who suffer from [sickle-cell anaemia](#) and [thalassemia](#) and are genetically prone to these ailments.

What is Food Fortification?

- **Fortification:**
 - Fortification is the **addition of key vitamins and minerals** such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.
 - These nutrients may or may not have been originally present in the food before processing.
- **Fortification of Rice:**
 - According to the Food Ministry, **fortification of rice is a cost-effective and complementary strategy** to increase vitamin and mineral content in diets.
 - **According to FSSAI norms**, 1 kg fortified rice will contain iron (28 mg-42.5 mg), folic acid (75-125 microgram) and Vitamin B-12 (0.75-1.25 microgram).
 - In addition, **rice may also be fortified with micronutrients**, singly or in combination, with zinc, Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3 and Vitamin B6.

What is the Need of Food Fortification?

- **India has very high levels of malnutrition** among women and children. According to the Food Ministry, every second woman in the country is anemic and every third child is stunted.
- India has slipped to **101st position in the [Global Hunger Index \(GHI\) 2021](#)** of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th.
- The deficiency of micronutrients or micronutrient malnutrition, also known as "hidden hunger", is a

serious health risk.

- **Rice is one of India's staple foods**, consumed by about two-thirds of the population. Per capita rice consumption in India is 6.8 kg per month. Therefore, fortifying rice with micronutrients is an option to supplement the diet of the poor.

What are the Issues with the Fortification of Rice?

- **Inconclusive Evidence:**
 - Evidence supporting fortification is **inconclusive and certainly not adequate** before major national policies are rolled out.
 - Many of the studies which FSSAI relies on to promote fortification are **sponsored by food companies** who would benefit from it, leading to conflicts of interest.
- **Hypervitaminosis:**
 - According to some studies published in the medical journal Lancet and in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition which show that both anaemia and Vitamin A deficiencies are overdiagnosed, meaning that mandatory fortification could lead to hypervitaminosis.
 - Hypervitaminosis is a condition of abnormally high storage levels of vitamins, which can lead to various symptoms such as over excitement, irritability, or even toxicity.
- **Toxicity:**
 - One major problem with chemical fortification of foods is that **nutrients don't work in isolation but need each other for optimal absorption**.
 - Undernourishment in India is caused by monotonous cereal-based diets with low consumption of vegetables and animal protein.
 - **Adding one or two synthetic chemical vitamins and minerals will not solve the larger problem**, and in undernourished populations can lead to toxicity.
 - A **2010 study that showed iron fortification causing gut inflammation** and pathogenic gut microbiota profile in undernourished children.
- **Cartelisation:**
 - Mandatory fortification **would harm the vast informal economy of Indian farmers and food processors** including local oil and rice mills, and instead benefit a small group of multinational corporations who will have sway over a Rs.3,000 crore market.
- **Decrease Value of Natural Food:**
 - Dietary diversity was a **healthier and more cost-effective way to fight malnutrition**.
 - **Once iron-fortified rice is sold as the remedy to anaemia**, the value and the choice of naturally iron-rich foods like millets, varieties of green leafy vegetables, flesh foods, liver, to name a few, will have been suppressed by a policy of silence.

Way Forward

- The **right to informed choices about one's food is a basic right**. The right to know what one is consuming is also a basic right. In the case of rice fortification, it is seen that no prior informed consent was ever sought from the recipients.
- There is a **need for precision because no nutrient taken in excess will do you good**.
 - Universal fortification is not the answer for nutrition deficiencies.

[Source: TH](#)

Food Inflation

For Prelims: Inflation, Food Inflation, CPI, RBI

For Mains: Food Inflation and issues, Growth & Development

Why in News?

Food prices around the world have soared to record levels this year as the [Russia-Ukraine war](#) slashes key exports of wheat and fertiliser from those countries, at the same time as droughts, floods and heat fuelled by climate change claim more harvests.

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TABLE 1
ALL-INDIA MODAL RETAIL PRICE OF EDIBLE OILS (Rs/kg)

	Palm	Vanaspati	Mustard	Groundnut	Soyabean	Sunflower
2014	68.5	70	91.5	116.5	77	90
2015	60	75	87	121.25	81	100
2016	67	71.33	90	135	80	92
2017	67	75	100	130	80	92.5
2018	75	70	100	115	85	91
2019	76	70	100	140	85	100
2020	90	100	120	142.5	90	110
2021	140	140	160	180	155	145
2022	160	170	187.5	188.5	170	190.75

All prices as on May 13 in that year.

What are the Causes of Food Inflation?

- **Russia-Ukraine Conflict:**
 - Russia and Ukraine supply about 30% of global wheat exports, but those have fallen as a result of the conflict.
- **High Stock of Wheat:**
 - National stocks of wheat - **mostly eaten in the countries where it is grown - remain relatively high.**
 - But the drop in exports from Russia and Ukraine has driven up competition for the remaining wheat on the global market, leading to higher costs that are particularly painful for poorer, debt-ridden countries that rely heavily on imports.
 - Almost 40% of Africa's wheat imports come from Ukraine and Russia, while rising global wheat prices have sent bread prices in Lebanon 70% higher.
- **Food Stock and Commodity Markets:**
 - Since the last food price crises of 2007-2008 and 2011-2012, **governments have failed to curb excessive speculation** and ensure transparency of food stocks and commodity markets.

What has been the Recent Trend in Inflation?

- The [Food and Agriculture Organisation's](#) food price index has shown a 29.8% year-on-year increase for April 2022.
- Moreover, all **commodity group price indices have posted huge jumps:** Cereals (34.3%), vegetable oils (46.5%), dairy (23.5%), sugar (21.8%) and meat (16.8%).

- Simply put, **food inflation is already rising across-the-board globally** — because of supply disruptions from the war, dry weather in South America, high crude prices inducing greater diversion of corn, sugar, palm and soyabean oil for bio-fuel, and so on.

How Global Prices of Food Affect Domestic Prices?

- The transmission of the above global inflation to domestic food prices **basically depends on how much of a country's consumption/production is imported/exported.**
- Such transmission is evident in **edible oils and cotton**, where up to two-thirds of India's consumption and a fifth of its production are imported and exported, respectively.
- In the case of wheat, **the heat wave from mid-March severely impacting yields**, both public stocks and overall domestic availability are under pressure, even as open market prices have risen to export parity levels.
- Not surprisingly, the Centre has decided to slash wheat allocations and offer more rice under its flagship free-grains scheme. Export demand is, likewise, helping maize trade well above its **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**. But that, alongside higher oil meal prices, will also push up livestock feed costs and, in turn, translate into inflation in milk, egg and meat.
- For now, though, the **consolation is that there is little to no inflation in pulses, sugar, onion, potato** and most summer vegetables.
- To that extent, food inflation isn't yet "generalised" in India.
- Sugar is one commodity where retail prices haven't gone up much, despite record exports by mills.
 - The reason for it is production also hitting a historic high.

How can food inflation be tackled?

- **Consuming Less Meat and Dairy:**
 - Because a **large share of the world's grain goes to feeding livestock**, persuading people to eat less meat and dairy could boost grain supplies dramatically.
 - The **global shortage of cereals on export markets this year is expected to be 20-25 million tonnes** – but if Europeans alone cut their consumption of animal products by 10%, they could reduce demand by 18-19 million tonnes.
- **Improving Grain Storage:**
 - Improving **grain storage particularly in countries highly reliant on imports**, and helping those countries grow more staple food at home – not the cash crops for export that have often replaced staples – could also help.
- **Planting a Wider Variety of Crops:**
 - And globally, **planting a wider variety of crops in order to reduce dependence on just a few grains**, with markets dominated by a small number of exporters, could boost food security.
- **Policy Shifts:**
 - Policy Shifts in countries like **Africa's new continental free trade area** – could **eventually allow some poorer nations to reduce their dependence** on distant producers and fragile supply chains.
- **Investing in Climate-Smart Farming:**
 - In addition, **investing in climate-smart farming**, to protect harvests as the planet warms, **would help shore up global food supplies**, while providing debt relief could give the poorest countries more fiscal space to manage food price fluctuations.
- **Step-up Domestic Production:**
 - In short, while **global food inflation is a reality**, the only way to contain the effects of it getting "imported" is to step up domestic production.

Way Forward

- There should be **consistency in import policy** as that sends appropriate market signals in advance. Intervening through import tariffs is better than quotas which leads to greater welfare loss. This also **calls for more accurate crop forecasts** using satellite remote sensing and GIS techniques to indicate shortfall/surplus in a crop year much in advance.
- Moreover, a **decade old CPI base year of 2011-12 that gives nearly half of the weight to**

food items needs to be revised and updated to reflect the change in food habits and lifestyle of the population. With the rising middle-class, spending on non-food items has increased and this needs to be better reflected in the CPI, thereby enabling RBI to better target the non-volatile segment (core inflation).

[Source: IE](#)

Special Drawing Rights

For Prelims: Special Drawing Rights, International Monetary Fund

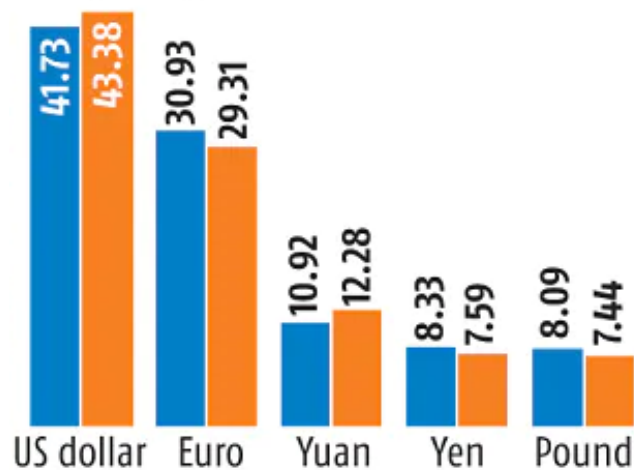
For Mains: Important International Institutions

Why in News?

Recently, the **International Monetary Fund lifted the yuan's weighting in the [Special Drawing Rights](#) currency basket**, prompting the Chinese central bank to pledge to push for a further opening of its financial markets.

CURRENCY BASKET

Weighting ■ Previous ■ Latest (%)



What are the Key Points?

- The IMF raised the **yuan's weighting to 12.28% from 10.92 %** in its first regular review of the SDR evaluation since the Chinese currency was included in the basket in 2016.
- The **weighting of the US dollar rose to 43.38 % from 41.73 %**, while those of **euro, Japanese yen and British pound declined**.
- The ranking of the currencies' weighting remains the same after the review, with the yuan continuing to be in third place.
- The change came amid a sharp depreciation of the yuan since late April, as **it faces a double whammy of slowing domestic growth because of Covid-induced lockdowns and capital outflows due to its widening monetary policy** divergence with the US.

What is Special Drawing Right?

▪ About:

- The SDR is **neither a currency nor a claim on the IMF**. Rather, **it is a potential claim on the freely usable currencies** of IMF members. SDRs can be exchanged for these currencies.
- The SDR **serves as the unit of account of the IMF** and some other international organizations.
- The currency value of the SDR is determined by **summing the values in US dollars, based on market exchange rates**, of a SDR basket of currencies.
- The SDR basket of currencies includes the **US dollar, Euro, Japanese yen, pound sterling and the Chinese renminbi (included in 2016)**.
- The SDR **currency value is calculated daily (except on IMF holidays or whenever the IMF is closed for business)** and the valuation basket is reviewed and adjusted every five years.

▪ Quota (the amount contributed to the IMF) of a country is denominated in SDRs.

- Members' voting power is related directly to their quotas.
- IMF makes the general SDR allocation to its members in proportion to their existing quotas in the IMF.

▪ India's quota in IMF:

- In 2016, **IMF's quota and governance reforms took place**.
- According to which, **India's voting rights increased by 0.3% from then 2.3% to 2.6%** and China's voting rights increased by 2.2% from then 3.8% to 6%.
- Presently, **India holds 2.75% of SDR quota**, and 2.63% of votes in the IMF.
- [India's foreign exchange reserves](#) also incorporate SDR other than gold reserves, foreign currency assets and Reserve Tranche in the IMF.

What is the International Monetary Fund?

▪ About:

- The IMF was set up along with the [World Bank after the Second World War](#) to assist in the reconstruction of war-ravaged countries.
 - The two organizations were agreed to be set up at a conference in Bretton Woods in the US. Hence, they are known as the Bretton Woods twins.
- Created in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to the 190 countries that make up its near-global membership. India joined in December 1945.
- The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system — the system of exchange rates and international payments that enable countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other.
 - Its mandate was updated in 2012 to include all macroeconomic and financial sector issues that bear on global stability.

▪ Reports by IMF:

- [Global Financial Stability Report](#)
- [World Economic Outlook](#).

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Recently, which one of the following currencies has been proposed to be added to the basket of IMF's SDR? (2016)

- (a) Rouble
- (b) Rand
- (c) Indian Rupee
- (d) Renminbi

Ans: (d)

Q. Which one of the following groups of items is included in India's foreign-exchange reserves? (2013)

- (a) Foreign-currency assets, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and loans from foreign countries
- (b) Foreign-currency assets, gold holdings of the RBI and SDRs
- (c) Foreign-currency assets, loans from the World Bank and SDRs
- (d) Foreign-currency assets, gold holdings of the RBI and loans from the World Bank

Ans: (b)

[Source: BS](#)

Chief Election Commissioner

For Prelims: Chief Election Commissioner, Model Code of Conduct

For Mains: Constitutional Bodies

Why in News?

Recently, the President appointed **Rajiv Kumar as the Chief Election Commissioner (25th CEC)**.

- He **replaced Sushil Chandra**.

What are the Key Points?

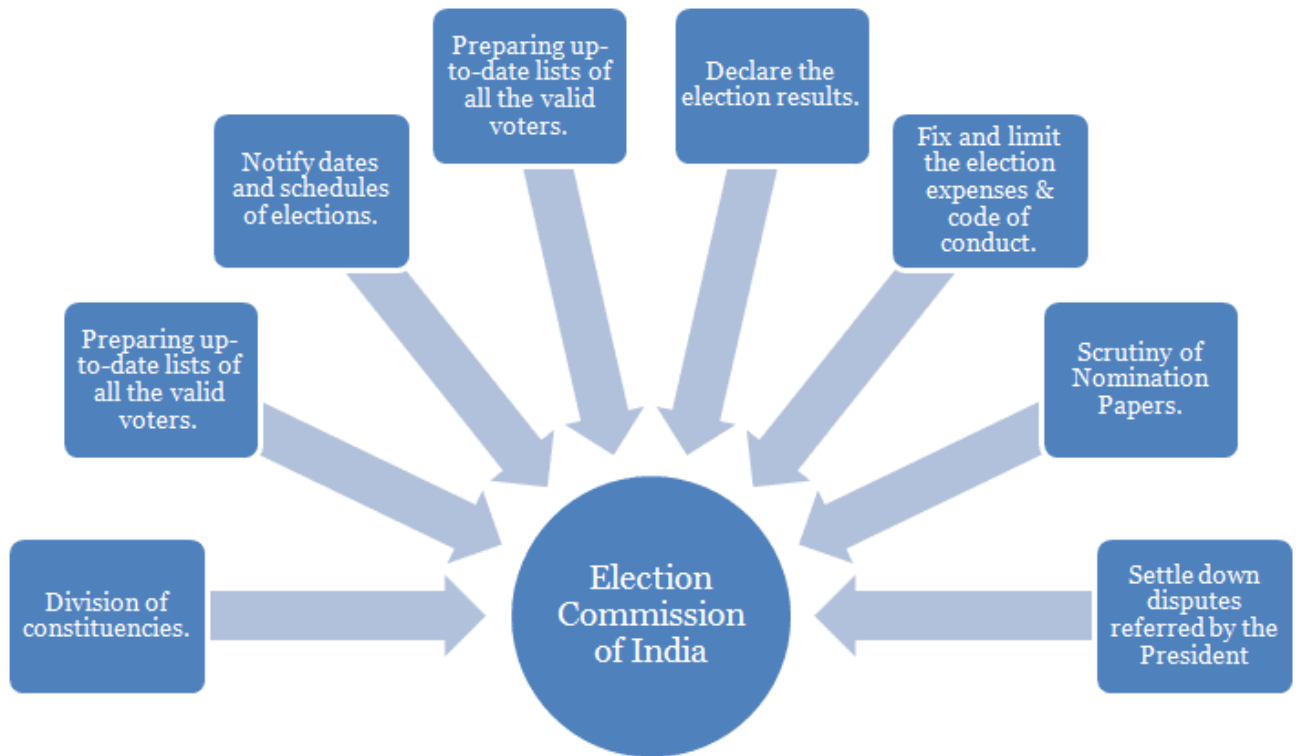
- **About the Election Commission of India:**
 - The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.
 - It was established in accordance with the Constitution on **25th January 1950** (celebrated as [national voters' day](#)). The secretariat of the commission is in New Delhi.
 - The body **administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Legislative Assemblies** in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country.
 - It is not concerned with the elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states. For this, the Constitution of India provides for a separate **State Election Commission**.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Part XV (Article 324-329) of the Indian Constitution:** It deals with elections and establishes a commission for these matters.
 - **Article 324:** Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission.
 - **Article 325:** No person to be ineligible for inclusion in, or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex.
 - **Article 326:** Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of

States to be based on adult suffrage.

- **Article 327:** Power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to Legislatures.
- **Article 328:** Power of Legislature of a State to make provision with respect to elections to such Legislature.
- **Article 329:** Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters.
- **Structure of ECI:**
 - Originally the commission had only one election commissioner but after the Election Commissioner Amendment Act 1989, it was made a multi-member body.
 - The Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and such number of other election commissioners, if any, as the President may from time-to-time fix.
 - Presently, it consists of the CEC and two Election Commissioners.
 - At the state level, the election commission is helped by the Chief Electoral Officer who is an IAS rank Officer.
- **Appointment & Tenure of Commissioners:**
 - The President appoints CEC and Election Commissioners.
 - They have a fixed tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
 - They enjoy the same status and receive salary and perks as available to Judges of the [Supreme Court \(SC\) of India](#).
- **Removal:**
 - They can resign anytime or can also be removed before the expiry of their term.
 - The CEC can be removed from office only through a process of removal similar to that of a SC judge by Parliament.
- **Limitations:**
 - The Constitution has not prescribed the qualifications (legal, educational, administrative or judicial) of the members of the Election Commission.
 - The Constitution has not specified the term of the members of the Election Commission.
 - The Constitution has not debarred the retiring election commissioners from any further appointment by the government.

What are the Powers and Functions of ECI?

- **Administrative:**
 - To determine the territorial areas of the electoral constituencies throughout the country on the basis of the [Delimitation Commission Act of Parliament](#).
 - To prepare and periodically revise electoral rolls and to register all eligible voters.
 - To [grant recognition to political parties](#) and allot election symbols to them.
 - Election Commission ensures a level playing field for the political parties in election fray, through strict observance by them of a [Model Code of Conduct](#) evolved with the consensus of political parties.
- **Advisory Jurisdiction & Quasi-Judicial Functions:**
 - Under the Constitution, **the Commission has advisory jurisdiction in the matter of post election disqualification** of sitting members of Parliament and State Legislatures.
 - The opinion of the Commission in all such matters is binding on the President or, as the case may be, the Governor to whom such opinion is tendered.
 - Further, **the cases of persons found guilty of corrupt practices** at elections which come before the SC and High Courts are also referred to the Commission for its opinion on the question as to whether such person shall be disqualified and, if so, for what period.
 - The **Commission has the power to disqualify a candidate who has failed to lodge an account of his election expenses** within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

Ans: (d)

Source: PIB

The Places of Worship Act

For Prelims: The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991

Why in News?

The Supreme Court will hear a challenge to the order of a civil court in Varanasi directing a videographic survey of the Maa Shringar Gauri Sthal in the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque complex.

- The principal contention is that the order of the Varanasi court which was upheld by Allahabad High Court is “clearly interdicted” by [The Places of Worship \(Special Provisions\) Act, 1991](#).

What is the Places of Worship Act?

- **About:** It is described as “**An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship** and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”
- **Exemption:**
 - The **disputed site at Ayodhya** was exempted from the Act. Due to this exemption, the trial in the Ayodhya case proceeded even after the enforcement of this law.
 - Besides the Ayodhya dispute, **the Act also exempted:**
 - Any place of worship which is an ancient and historical monument, or an archaeological site covered by the [Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958](#).
 - A suit that has been finally settled or disposed of.
 - Any dispute that has been settled by the parties or conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence **before the Act commenced**.
- **Penalty:**
 - **Section 6** of the Act prescribes a punishment of a maximum of three years imprisonment along with a fine for contravening the provisions of the Act.
- **Criticism:**
 - The law has been **challenged on the ground that it bars judicial review**, which is a basic feature of the Constitution, imposes an “**arbitrary irrational retrospective cutoff date**,” and abridges the right to religion of Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs.

What Are its Provisions?

- **Section 3:** This section of the Act bars the conversion, in full or part, of a place of worship of any **religious denomination into a place of worship** of a different religious denomination or even a different segment of the same religious denomination.
- **Section 4(1):** It declares that the religious character of a place of worship “**shall continue to be the same as it existed**” on 15th August 1947.
- **Section 4(2):** It says any suit or legal proceeding with respect to the conversion of the religious character of any place of worship existing on 15th August, 1947, pending before any court, **shall abate and no fresh suit or legal proceedings shall be instituted**.
 - The proviso to this subsection saves suits, appeals, and legal proceedings that are **pending on the date of commencement of the Act** if they pertain to the conversion of the religious character of a place of worship after the cut-off date.
- **Section 5:** It stipulates that the Act shall not apply to the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, and to any suit, appeal, or proceeding relating to it.

What was the Supreme Court’s view during Ayodhya Judgement?

- In the 2019 Ayodhya verdict, the Constitution Bench referred to the law and said **it manifests the secular values of the Constitution** and prohibits retrogression.
- The law is hence a legislative instrument designed to **protect the secular features of the Indian polity**, which is one of the basic features of the Constitution.

Thomas Cup

Why in News?

Recently, India's men's badminton team won the Thomas Cup title for the **first time ever**.

- India have **defeated the 14-time champions Indonesia**. The tournament was **held in Bangkok (Thailand)**.

What is Thomas Cup?

- **Related Field:** Thomas Cup, trophy signifies the **world supremacy in the sport of badminton**.
 - It is a **16-nation** team event.
- **Background & Managed By:** The cup was donated in 1939 by Sir George Thomas for a series of men's international team competitions to be managed by the **International Badminton Federation (IBF)**, of which Thomas was then president.
- **First Tournament:** The first tournament was held in **1948-49 and won by Malaya**.
 - **Thomas and Uber Cup is the biennial international badminton** championship contested by the men and women's national teams.
- **India's Win:** In the tournament's seven-decade-long history, the championship title has changed hands only among five nations - China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and Denmark.
 - With its win, India became only the sixth country ever to break into this elite club.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following statements in respect of the ICC World Test Championship:

1. The finalists were decided by the number of matches they won.
2. New Zealand was ranked ahead of England because it won more matches than England.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans : (d)

- The 2021-2023 ICC World Test Championship is the second edition of the ICC World Test Championship. It started on 4 August 2021 and is scheduled to finish on 31 March 2023.
- Revamped Point System
 - The ICC announced in 2020, that the finalists would be decided by percentage of points earned. The amount of points available per Test has been made uniform. This system allows the relative performance of teams to be compared at any point in time, meaning the cancellation of any matches or series for any reason does not directly impact the points table. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- New Zealand was the first team to qualify for the inaugural final. It was ahead of England due to its ratings, i.e., points (126) after playing 22 matches. On the other hand, England after playing 35

matches has got a 107 rating. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
▪ **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

[Source: TH](#)

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