



Eastern Zonal Council Meeting

Why in News?

Union Home and Cooperation Minister presided over the **25th Eastern Zonal Council meeting in Kolkata.**

What are Zonal Councils?

▪ About:

- Zonal Councils are the **statutory (and not the constitutional) bodies**.
- They are established by an Act of the Parliament, that is, [**States Reorganisation Act of 1956.**](#)
- The act divided the country into **five zones- Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern** and provided a zonal council for each zone.
- While forming these zones, **several factors have been taken into account** which include:
 - The natural divisions of the country.
 - The river systems and means of communication.
 - The cultural and linguistic affinity.
 - The requirements of economic development, security and law and order.
- In addition to the above-mentioned Zonal Councils, a North-Eastern Council was created by a separate Act of Parliament, the **North-Eastern Council Act of 1971**.
 - Its members include Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim.

▪ Composition:

- **Northern Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi, Union Territory of Chandigarh and Ladakh.
 - **Headquarter:** New Delhi
- **Central Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
 - **Headquarter:** Allahabad
- **Eastern Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal.
 - **Headquarter:** Kolkata
- **Western Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.
 - **Headquarter:** Mumbai
- **Southern Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.
 - **Headquarter:** Chennai

▪ Organizational Structure:

- **Chairman:** The union home minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
- **Vice Chairman:** The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
- **Members:** Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each

- of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
- **Advisers:** One person nominated by the Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog) for each of the Zonal Councils, Chief Secretaries and another officer/Development Commissioner nominated by each of the States included in the Zone.

What are the Objectives and Functions of the Council?

▪ Objectives:

- Bringing out national integration.
- Arresting the growth of acute State consciousness, regionalism, linguism and particularistic tendencies.
- Enabling the Centre and the States to co-operate and exchange ideas and experiences.
- Establishing a climate of co-operation amongst the States for successful and speedy execution of development projects.

▪ Functions of the Councils:

- Any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning,
- Any matter concerning border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport,
- Any matter connected with or arising out of, the reorganization of the States under the States Reorganisation Act.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Which of the following bodies does not/do not find mention in the Constitution? (2013)

1. National Development Council
2. Planning Commission
3. Zonal Councils

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Ans: (d)

- National Development Council is an executive body (neither constitutional nor statutory body) set up in 1952 to strengthen and mobilize the effort and resources of the nation in support of the plan, to promote common economic policies in all vital spheres, and to ensure the balanced and rapid development of all parts of the country. **Hence, 1 is correct.**
- Planning Commission was set up by an executive order of the Government of India in 1950. The Commission was responsible to formulate India's five years plans for social and economic development in India. Prime minister of India acted as the ex-officio Chairman of the planning commission. Planning Commission was dissolved in 2014 and NITI Aayog was formed to replace the earlier think tank of GoI. **Hence, 2 is correct.**
- Zonal Councils are not Constitutional Bodies. These are statutory bodies set up under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 and the North-Eastern Council Act, 1972 and each zonal councils is chaired by the Union Home Minister. **Hence, 3 is correct.**
- The main objectives of the Zonal Councils are:
 - Bringing out national integration.
 - Arresting the growth of acute State consciousness, regionalism, linguism and particularistic tendencies.
 - Enabling the Centre and the States to cooperate and exchange ideas and experiences.
 - Establishing a climate of cooperation amongst the States for successful and speedy execution of development projects. Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.

Source: PIB

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