



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

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CONTEXT: The article highlights the ways to attain energy security.

WHAT IS ENERGY SECURITY?



DEFINITION

Energy security refers to the **uninterrupted availability of energy sources** at an affordable price.



KEY ASPECTS

It involves ensuring a **reliable supply of energy** to meet the growing demands of a nation, while managing risks such as **geopolitical conflicts, supply chain disruptions, and environmental challenges**.



OBJECTIVE

To ensure a **reliable, affordable, and sustainable** energy supply that supports economic growth, national security, and environmental sustainability.



WHY IT MATTERS FOR INDIA

Energy security is crucial for sustaining **economic growth, reducing dependency on imports, and achieving long-term sustainability**.



Need for Energy security

- **Economic Stability & Growth:**
- **Strategic Autonomy:**
 - India currently meets about **88 % of its crude oil and 51 % of its gas** needs through imports.
 - US is exerting pressure on India to reduce Russian oil imports by framing them as requiring "permission".
- **Technological Advancement:**
 - Stable energy supply encourages investment in advanced manufacturing, digital infrastructure, and innovation in sectors like AI, data centers, and green tech.
- **Sustainable & Inclusive Development: SDG 7 - Affordable & clean energy**
 - Universal, reliable access clean cooking fuels enhances health, reduces indoor pollution.
- **Balance growth with sustainability:** world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases.
 - **IEA** - India requires \$160 billion per year to meet its energy transition goals by 2070.



Pathways for energy Diversification



CONTEXT: The article highlights the ways to attain energy security.

Challenges to India's energy security

- **Import Dependency:** puts pressure on rupee, inflates the trade deficit.
- **Inadequate Strategic Storage Buffers:** India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve currently provides **only a 9.5 day of net import cover**, vastly trailing the **International Energy Agency's recommended 90-day benchmark**.
- **"Critical Mineral Trap":** Despite domestic discoveries like the lithium reserves in **Jammu and Kashmir**, commercial extraction remains years away, necessitating urgent overseas mine acquisitions.
- **Grid Intermittency and Storage Deficits:** Battery Energy Storage System deployment remains highly nascent, adding only 547 MWh recently.
- **"Green-on-Green" Land Acquisition Conflict:** solar and wind parks is increasingly clashing with agricultural productivity and local biodiversity, leading to significant project delays and legal hurdles.

India's energy security - Steps Taken

- **Diversifying energy sources:** India signed a **\$3 billion deal** to buy **liquefied natural gas** from the UAE.
- **Strategic Petroleum Reserves:**
 - 3 locations - *Vishakhapatnam, Mangaluru & Padur (Karnataka)*
 - With expansion plans at Padur, and Chandikhol (Odisha)
- **Clean & Renewable Energy:** India Ranks third globally in Renewable Energy Installed Capacity.
 - India targets 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030 with expansion of solar, wind, and hydro projects to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- **Solar Parks Scheme & PM-KUSUM:** Boosts grid-connected and decentralized solar power, with 50 solar parks sanctioned and solar pumps for farmers.
- **National Green Hydrogen Mission:** Aims for 5 million metric tonnes annual production of green hydrogen by 2030.
- **National Bioenergy Mission & SATAT Scheme:** Promotion of biogas, CBG, waste-to-energy plants to diversify energy sources and utilize agricultural waste.



Pathways for energy Diversification



CONTEXT: The article highlights the ways to attain energy security.

India's energy security - Way ahead

- **Further Diversify the Energy Sources**
- **Invest in Energy Storage Solutions**
- **Adopting energy-efficient technologies and practices** - smart grids
- **Invest in infrastructure for alternative fuels:** Biomethane and biofuels.
- **Strengthen Nuclear energy Roadmap:**
 - Revive thorium roadmap, secure uranium partnerships, and localize Small Modular Reactor (SMR) technologies.

Mains Practise Question :

“India’s energy security is challenged by import dependence, geopolitical risks, and energy transition pressures.” Examine.”

(15 Marks, 250 words)



CONTEXT: Govt. Clears 30 billion withdrawal for Maldives.

CURRENCY SWAP AGREEMENTS HOW SWAPS WORK



A currency swap agreement is a deal between two central banks to exchange currencies and reverse the transaction on a future date, with interest.

1 INITIAL EXCHANGE

Central Bank 1 sells a specified amount of its currency (Currency A) to Central Bank 2 in exchange for Currency B at the prevailing exchange rate.

CENTRAL BANK 1
(e.g., ECB)



Sells Currency A



CENTRAL BANK 2
(e.g., FED)



Receives Currency B



Both banks exchange currencies at the prevailing exchange rate.

2 USE OF FOREIGN CURRENCY FOR LENDING

Central Bank 1 lends Currency B (received in the swap) to its domestic banks or corporations to alleviate foreign currency shortages.

CENTRAL BANK 1
(e.g., ECB)



Lends Currency B



Helps banks and companies get the foreign currency they need.

DOMESTIC BANKS / CORPORATIONS



3 REPAYMENT AND UNWINDING

On the agreed future date, Central Bank 1 repurchases its currency (Currency A) at the original exchange rate, paying interest to Central Bank 2 at the agreed rate.

CENTRAL BANK 1
(e.g., ECB)



Repurchases Currency A at original exchange rate + Interest



CENTRAL BANK 2
(e.g., FED)



Returns Currency B + Interest



KEY POINTS



Temporary exchange of currencies



Provides liquidity and stability in times of stress



Reversed on a future agreed date

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS

1965



In 1965, Maldives gained Independence from the British.



India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations.



Indian Mission was set up in Male in 1972.



In 1978, President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom took charge.



Gayoom made many visits to India which strengthened ties.

1988



In 1988, India sent its troops and ships to help President Gayoom overthrow a coup attempt by a Maldives businessman and Sri Lankan Tamil fighters.



This action deepened trust and strengthened India-Maldives relations.

2008-2012

MOHAMED NASHEED ERA
(GOOD RELATIONS)



In 2008, Mohamed Nasheed was elected President.



India began closer security cooperation with Maldives.



India provided 2 helicopters, Dornier aircraft & patrol boats.



Relations were strong and cooperation expanded.

2013-2018

ABDULLA YAMEEN ERA
(STRAINED RELATIONS)



In 2013, Abdulla Yameen (PPM) was elected President.



Ties faced major strains.



India raised objections to Yameen's imposition of emergency.



Yameen adopted pro-China policies; signed FTA with China.



Invited Chinese companies for major investments (Hulhumalé housing projects, Friendship Bridge, etc.).



Threatened to evict Indian pilots and personnel from Maldives.



Relations with India were strained during this period.

2018-2021



In 2018, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih won elections by defeating Yameen.



Adopted India-First Policy.



India invited to start key infrastructure projects, including \$500mn Greater Male Connectivity Project.



In 2021, India-Maldives signed the Uthuru Thilafalhu (UTF) project to develop a coastguard harbour base for India.



This sparked the "India Out" campaign.

IMPACT ON RELATIONS



1965-2012 (Nasheed Era): Strong and friendly relations built on trust, cooperation and mutual support.



2013-2018 (Yameen Era): Strained relations due to pro-China tilt, anti-India rhetoric and actions.



"INDIA OUT" CAMPAIGN - EXPLAINED

- Political movement to mobilise people in Maldives against India.
- Against the presence of Indian military on Maldivian soil.
- Gained momentum around key developments:
 - Signing of the Uthuru Thilafalhu (UTF) harbour development deal with India in February 2021.
 - India's announcement of the opening of a consulate in the southern Addu Atoll.



India Maldives Relations

CONTEXT: Govt. Clears 30 billion withdrawal for Maldives.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MALDIVES FOR INDIA



1. STRATEGIC LOCATION

- Positioned along key International Shipping Lanes (ISLs) in the Indian Ocean.
- Crucial for global trade and energy flow.
- **50%** of India's external trade and **80%** of its energy imports transit through these waters.



2. COUNTERING CHINA'S INFLUENCE

- India sees Maldives as a key partner to counter China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean.
- Helps safeguard India's security interests.



3. INDIAN OCEAN AS INDIA'S STRATEGIC SPHERE

- India views the Indian Ocean as its backyard.
- A stable and cooperative maritime environment is vital to its strategic goals.
- Maldives is a key partner in ensuring regional maritime stability.



4. SECURITY SIGNIFICANCE

- First line of defence against terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, narcotics and other maritime crimes.
- Maldives acts as a 'toll gate' between key choke points:
West – Gulf of Aden & Strait of Hormuz
East – Strait of Malacca



5. INDIAN DIASPORA SIGNIFICANCE

- There is a sizeable Indian diaspora in Maldives.
- Numerous Indians are employed in education, medical care, tourism and hospitality sectors.

AREAS OF CO-OPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND MALDIVES

1 ECONOMIC COOPERATION

- India is Maldives' largest trading partner.
- Bilateral trade crossed USD 548.97 million (2023).
- Maldives is an important tourist destination for many Indians.
- Tourism is the backbone of Maldives economy.



2 INFRASTRUCTURE COOPERATION

- India is developing the Greater Male Connectivity Project– one the largest infrastructure project in Maldives.
- India is undertaking Airport Redevelopment Project at the Hanimaadhoo International Airport.



3 SECURITY COOPERATION

- Joint exercises include Ekuverin, Ekatha, etc.
- India has signed a Comprehensive Action Plan for Defence in April 2016 to consolidate India–Maldives defence partnership.



4 HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE COOPERATION

- India has provided Covishield vaccines to Maldives.
- Through Operation Sanjeevani, India supplied 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines to Maldives in the fight against COVID-19.
- India has handed over two sea ambulances to the Ministry of Defence of Maldives.
- India provided assistance to Maldives during recovery efforts after the 2004 Tsunami.
- India also helped address the shortage of drinking water in Maldives in 2014 through Operation Neer.



5 ECONOMIC AND MARITIME SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

- Both countries reviewed the progress of the 2024 Economic and Maritime Security Partnership.
- India reaffirmed its "Neighbourhood First" and MAHASAGAR policies.



6 ECONOMIC & DIGITAL PARTNERSHIP

- Agreement between NPCI International Payment Limited and Maldives Monetary Authority for launching UPI in Maldives.



CONTEXT: Govt. Clears 30 billion withdrawal for Maldives.

CHALLENGES IN INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS

1 STRATEGIC REALIGNMENT UNDER PRESIDENT MUIZZU

- Elected on a nationalist mandate of **"India out Campaign"**, it fuelled anti-India public sentiments.
- It led to **cancellation** of hydrographical surveys, **withdrawal** of Indian Military personnel, etc.
- Maldives changed its policy from "India first policy" to **"Maldives first"** policy to diversify its foreign policy.

HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY MoU

- Following the 2019 agreement, MNDF and Indian Navy carried out three joint hydrographic surveys:

- Feb-Mar 2021
- Apr-May 2022
- Jan-Feb 2023

Maldives Cabinet decided that the MoU, which is due to expire in 2023, **will not be renewed.**



CANCELLED



Hydrographical Surveys

WITHDRAWAL



Indian Military Personnel



2 CHINA FACTOR

- Maldives joined China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2014.
- China has made several large **infrastructure investments**.
- Example: China-Maldives **Friendship Bridge**.



3 ECONOMIC INSTABILITY

- Maldives faces high fiscal deficits and moderation in GDP growth.
- Public debt of Maldives is projected to rise to **135.7%** of GDP in 2027. (World Bank).



4 RADICALISATION

- A large number of Maldives citizens have joined violent extremist organisations such as the **Islamic State (IS)**.
- There is now a greater risk that terrorist organisations based in **Pakistan** will use Maldives as a staging ground for attacks on India and Indian assets.



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6 ECONOMIC & DIGITAL PARTNERSHIP

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OVERALL IMPACT:

These challenges have created trust deficits, policy friction and strategic uncertainty, affecting the depth and momentum of India-Maldives relations.



India Maldives Relations - Way Ahead

- Constructive Engagement with New Regime:**
 - Fast-track projects like Hanimaadhoo Airport redevelopment.
 - Boost tourism capacity (key sector of Maldives economy).
- Increase the development assistance:** target projects that have larger impact on general population of Maldives.
- Timely completion of infrastructure projects:** like the **Greater Male Connectivity Project** will offer a credible and lucrative alternatives to Chinese projects.

- Target Youth Employment:**
 - India's **High Impact Community Development Projects** in Maldives - aim to improve employability and foster entrepreneurship among the youth.
 - Countering the threats of radicalisation.
- Deepen Maritime & Security Cooperation**
 - Enhance joint patrols, EEZ monitoring, and surveillance.
 - Support with patrol vessels, drones, intelligence-sharing.
 - Strengthen regional security via Colombo Security Conclave

Mains Practise Question.

"Discuss the evolution of India-Maldives relations. Highlight the key challenges in recent years and suggest measures to strengthen bilateral ties." (15 Marks, 250 words)



Goldilock period

SYLLABUS: Prelims : Economy

Newspaper : The Indian Express **Page Number** : 17

WHEN THE Union Budget was presented in February, the Indian economy was seemingly witnessing a “rare Goldilocks period”, as RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra put it. A cultural reference, Goldilocks refers to an economy being exactly where policymakers would like it to be — sustained growth, low inflation, and low unemployment.

Since then, the news has been negative.

First, India revised how it calculates its gross domestic product (GDP) — the measure used to assess the size of any economy — with a new base year (2022-23) and found that the old series (2011-12 as base year) was overestimating GDP.

Then came the US-Iran war, and the further fall in the rupee’s exchange rate with the US dollar. Last week, Japan and the UK overtook India in GDP terms.

With the hostilities in Iran still on, more observers are pencilling in a slower growth and high inflation for India, given its overwhelming reliance on energy imports via the Strait of Hormuz. So, was India really witnessing a Goldilocks moment? And was it growing fast enough before the war?

INDIA IS NOW THE WORLD’S SIXTH-LARGEST ECONOMY

BASED ON IMF’S APRIL 2026 WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK



India is now the world’s **sixth-largest economy** in nominal GDP terms.



The latest estimates place the United States at over \$30 trillion, followed by China at around \$19–20 trillion.



Germany is estimated at about \$5 trillion, while Japan and the United Kingdom are both in the \$4–4.5 trillion range.



India, at just over \$4 trillion, now sits just below this group.

WORLD’S LARGEST ECONOMIES (NOMINAL GDP)

Rank	Country	Nominal GDP (2026, IMF Estimate)
1	United States	\$30+ trillion
2	China	\$19–20 trillion
3	Germany	~\$5 trillion
4	Japan	\$4–4.5 trillion
5	United Kingdom	\$4–4.5 trillion
6	India	Just over \$4 trillion

i India ranks 6th, just below the group of advanced economies.



SYLLABUS: Prelims : Economy
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WHY DID INDIA SLIP ON GDP RANKINGS?



Global GDP rankings are calculated in **US dollar terms**, which makes exchange rates a critical factor.



When the **rupee weakens**, the dollar value of India's economic output declines, even if domestic production remains unchanged.



Over the past year, the rupee has **depreciated sharply** against the dollar, moving from the mid-80s range to around **90-plus levels**.



This has **reduced the dollar-denominated size** of the economy and contributed to the shift in rankings.

RUPEE DEPRECIATION AGAINST THE DOLLAR

Mid-80s
(Earlier)



90+
(Now)



A weaker rupee reduces the dollar value of India's economic output.

A sobering truth

Data from the old GDP series (since it provides data for past years) shows that contrary to popular notion — that India's economy was doing very well — the truth is far more sobering. The chart below shows the nominal GDP (in current-day prices) and the real GDP (without the effect of inflation) of some key years.

Also, CAGR of nominal GDP over the past 12 years (April 2014-March 2026) has been just above 10% each year — it was only 9.5% in the past 7 years. For perspective, CAGR over the past 22 years has been around 12.3%. So, India's growth rate is decelerating over time — and it is getting worse.

In real GDP terms, India clocks a growth rate of just 6.2% per annum over the past 12 years — in the past 7 years, it was below 5.5%. Again, CAGR over the past 22 years is higher, suggesting that growth momentum has weakened. So, real GDP growth rate is nowhere near what India requires to become a developed country in the next two decades.

Need for reforms

One must not cherry-pick only the years after the Covid-19-led growth contraction in 2020, since the high rates then would overstate the growth without acknowledging the low base created by the contraction.

So, not considering slightly longer-term growth rates can mislead both the public and policymakers. For instance, the high growth rate of the past 2-3 years could present a Goldilocks scenario when perhaps none exists.

Also, declining real GDP growth rate should force policymakers to look closely at the domestic economy and reforms needed to boost growth. It is hardly surprising that corporate earnings have been modest and global investors have shied away. Also, lack of foreign capital flows is why the Indian rupee has weakened against the US dollar.



SYLLABUS: Prelims : Economy
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WHAT IS THE BASE EFFECT?



The base effect occurs when a small or unusually low **value in the base period** makes the growth rate in the current period appear **very high**, even if the actual increase is modest.



High growth % does not always mean high performance.

BASE EFFECT FORMULA

$$\text{Base Effect (Inflation Rate \%)} = \frac{\text{Prices (April 2026)} - \text{Prices (April 2025)}}{\text{Prices (April 2025)}} \times 100$$

SCENARIO 1: LOW BASE → HIGH INFLATION RATE



Calculation

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Base effect} &= \frac{300 - 150}{150} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{150}{150} \times 100 = 100\% \end{aligned}$$



Inflation Rate = 100%
(High, due to **low base** effect)

SCENARIO 2: HIGH BASE → MODERATE INFLATION RATE



Calculation

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Base effect} &= \frac{300 - 200}{200} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{100}{200} \times 100 = 50\% \end{aligned}$$



Inflation Rate = 50%
(Moderate, due to **high base** effect)



KEY TAKEAWAY:

When the base year value is very low, even a small increase can result in a very high growth rate.



Always analyze the **base** before interpreting growth or inflation numbers!



SYLLABUS: Prelims : Economy

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page Number** : 13

Under RBI scrutiny since 2018

Paytm Payments Bank has been under regulatory scrutiny from the Reserve Bank of India since 2018 due to multiple compliance concerns. The central bank's actions were triggered after it identified violations related to Know Your Customer (KYC) norms — rules designed to verify customer identities and prevent financial fraud.

One of the key issues flagged by the RBI was that the bank had linked a single Permanent Account Number (PAN) to multiple customer accounts. This raised serious red flags, as such practices can potentially be used to bypass regulatory safeguards.

Additionally, the RBI observed that the bank was allowing transactions beyond the prescribed limits for certain accounts, which heightened concerns around possible money laundering risks.

In June 2018, the RBI conducted an audit of the bank's onboarding processes and found significant gaps in how new customers were being verified. The audit revealed that proper KYC procedures were not consistently followed during customer acquisition.

As a result, Paytm Payments Bank was directed to halt the onboarding of new customers until it strengthened its compliance systems and addressed the identified deficiencies.

WHAT ARE PAYMENT BANKS?



1 What are Payment Banks?

- Dr Nachiket Mor committee suggested to introduce specialised banks or payments bank to cater to the lower income groups and small businesses.
- **Need:** To increase the penetration level of financial services to the remote areas of the country.
- Similar to other banks but operate on a smaller scale.



2 Who can promote Payment Banks?

NBFCs, individuals, corporations, mobile phone companies, supermarket chains, and public sector entities.



3 How are they registered?

- Registered as a public limited company under the Companies Act, 2013.



4 Which laws govern Payment Banks?

- Governed by the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.



SYLLABUS: Prelims : Economy
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5 What are they NOT allowed to do?

- ✗ No credit risk involved.
(They can't advance loans or issue credit cards)
- ✗ They cannot accept NRI deposits & fixed deposits.



What are they allowed to do?

- ✓ Can accept demand deposits (up to ₹2 lakh).
- ✓ Offer remittance services.
- ✓ Enable mobile payments/transfers/purchases.
- ✓ Provide other services: ATM/debit cards, net banking and third-party fund transfers.



6 Is deposit insurance available?

- Yes, deposit insurance is available.



7 Are there PSL targets?

- No. Payment Banks cannot give loans, so no PSL targets.



8 Is CRR applicable?

- Yes, CRR is applicable.



9 Where do they invest their funds?

- Must invest minimum 75% of demand deposit balances in SLR-eligible Government securities/ treasury bills with maturity up to 1 year.



10 Limits on deposits with other banks?

- Need to hold a maximum of 25% in current and time/fixed deposits with other scheduled commercial banks for operational purposes and liquidity management.



11 What is the minimum paid-up capital?

- Minimum paid-up capital is ₹100 crore.



12 Is FDI allowed in Payment Banks?

- Yes, FDI is allowed up to 74%.



Key Takeaway: Payment Banks aim to provide simple, accessible and affordable banking services to underserved sections without taking credit risk.

PYQ (2016)

Q. The establishment of 'Payment Banks' is being allowed in India to promote financial inclusion.

Which of the following statements is/are correct in this context?

1. Mobile telephone companies and supermarket chains that are owned and controlled by residents are eligible to be promoters of Payment Banks.
2. Payment Banks can issue both credit cards and debit cards.
3. Payment Banks cannot undertake lending activities.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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



SYLLABUS: Prelims Constitutional Bodies **GS 3**

Newspaper: The Indian express **Page Number:** 05

Minister and Home Minister,” he added.

The first charge against Kumar is regarding the “partisan asymmetry” in the enforcement of the MCC. The Opposition has mentioned PM Narendra Modi’s address to the nation on April 18, which it said was in violation of the poll code. A complaint was submitted but the CEC took no action but he has shown “alacrity of action” in respect of BJP complaints against Opposition leaders, he said.

The second charge by the Opposition is “partisan and public denunciation of a recognised political party on the official social media handle of the ECI”. EC had posted on X: “ECI’s Straight-talk to Trinamool Congress... This time, the Elections in West Bengal would surely be: fear-free, violence-free, intimidation-free, inducement-free and without any raid, booth jamming and source jamming,”

The third charge is “administrative lapses evidencing institutional proximity to the ruling party — the Kerala seal incident”. The reference was to a letter by ECI to all political parties in Kerala that carried the BJP’s seal. The fourth

charge is that the CEC’s “conduct (being) unbecoming of a constitutional functionary”, which points to allegations of Kumar being rude to a TMC delegation on April 8.

The fifth charge is “mass disenfranchisement in West Bengal”, pointing out “deletion of approximately 91 lakh voters and judicial exclusion of approximately 34 lakh voters from the franchise”. The sixth charge in the notice alleges “wilful non-action upon specific and documented complaints of official partisanship”.

The seventh charge against Kumar is the “nationwide replication of the defective SIR framework”, while the eighth charge is “repeated causation of adverse judicial observations and extraordinary Article 142 interventions by the Supreme Court”.

The final charge by the Opposition is that Kumar has “illegally abused power to direct transfers and postings of bureaucrats in Tamil Nadu”.

This notice against Kumar comes weeks after the notice for motion to impeach him was rejected by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan.



SYLLABUS: Prelims Constitutional Bodies **GS 3**
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HOW CAN THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE?



To ensure the independence of the ECI, the Constitution provides strict security of tenure for the CEC.



CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS AND PROVISIONS



Article 324(5) of the Constitution:

It provides that, subject to any law made by Parliament, the service conditions and tenure of Election Commissioners and Regional Commissioners are determined by the **President**.



The CEC can be removed only in the **same manner** and on the **same grounds** as a **Supreme Court judge**, and service conditions cannot be altered to his disadvantage after appointment.



Other Election Commissioners or Regional Commissioners can be removed only on the **recommendation of the CEC**.



Following that, Parliament passed the **Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023**, which provides for the resignation and removal process. It sticks to the same process as mentioned in the Constitution.

GROUND FOR REMOVAL



The Constitution limits the grounds for the removal of a Supreme Court Judge (and by extension, the CEC) to **only two specific charges**:

- 1 **Proved Misbehaviour**
- 2 **Incapacity**

TERMINOLOGY NOTE



While widely referred to as "**impeachment**" in political discourse, the Constitution technically reserves the term impeachment exclusively for the **President of India (Article 61)**.



For Judges and the CEC, the formal constitutional term is **removal**.



SYLLABUS: Prelims Constitutional Bodies **GS 3**

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REMOVAL PROCEDURE OF THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER



The removal of the CEC follows a **quasi-judicial procedure** similar to that for removing a **Supreme Court judge**, governed by the **Judges Inquiry Act, 1968**.

1 INITIATION OF THE REMOVAL MOTION



- A removal motion stating the **grounds for removal** can be introduced in either House of Parliament.
- It must be signed by **100 members in the Lok Sabha** or **50 members** in the Rajya Sabha.
- The signed motion is then submitted to the **Presiding Officer** of the respective House (the **Speaker** in the Lok Sabha or the **Chairman** in the Rajya Sabha).

2 ADMISSION & INVESTIGATION



- The **Speaker/Chairman** may admit or refuse the motion.
- If admitted, a **three-member committee** (SC judge, HC Chief Justice, distinguished jurist) is formed to investigate charges.

3 REPORT SUBMISSION



- The committee investigates, and the **CEC has the right to defend** themselves.
- If the committee concludes that the charges are **not proved**, the motion is dropped, and the process ends.
- If the committee finds the CEC **guilty of misbehaviour or suffering from an incapacity**, the report is submitted to the House where the motion was originally introduced.

4 VOTING IN PARLIAMENT



- To pass, the motion must be supported by a **Special Majority** in both Houses of Parliament during the **same session**.
- A Special Majority means a **majority of the total membership** of that House, and a majority of **not less than two-thirds** of the members present and voting.

5 PRESIDENTIAL ORDER FOR REMOVAL



- If the motion successfully **passes both Houses**, a formal address is presented to the **President of India**.
- Finally, the President issues the **official order** for the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner.



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Polity

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page Number :** 01



SECTIONS OF IT ACT

Section 69A

It empowers the centre to **block public access** to online content under specific circumstances to protect national security, sovereignty, and public order.

Section 79

It grants "**safe harbour**" protection to online intermediaries, **protecting them from liability** for third-party content if they act neutrally.

SAFE HARBOUR EXPLAINED (Section 79)



"**Safe Harbour**" means legal protection given to online intermediaries (like social media platforms, websites, ISPs, etc.) for third-party content.

- They are not liable for any illegal content posted by users, as long as they act as a **neutral platform**.
- However, under **Section 79(3)(b)**, if an intermediary, after receiving actual knowledge through a government notice (via Sahyog Portal), fails to remove or disable access to illegal content expeditiously, they **lose this safe harbour immunity** and can be held liable.



SAHYOG PORTAL

A Digital Platform for a Safer Internet



WHAT IT IS

- An online regulatory platform for issuing **content takedown notices** to internet intermediaries.
- Developed under **Section 79(3)(b)** of the IT Act, 2000, ensuring prompt removal of unlawful online content.



MINISTRY

- Launched in **October 2024** by the **Union Home Ministry**.
- Operated through the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**.



AIM

- To streamline takedown communication between government agencies and digital intermediaries.
- To preserve **safe harbour protections** while ensuring intermediaries act quickly against illegal content.
- To promote a **secure, accountable and lawful cyber ecosystem** in India.

KEY FEATURES



CENTRALISED CHANNEL

Connects 65 online intermediaries, state/UT nodal officers, and seven central agencies.



AUTOMATED NOTICES

Facilitates faster and documented communication of takedown orders.



LEGAL BACKING

Operates under **Section 79(3)(b)**, where non-compliance removes safe harbour immunity.



SEPARATE FROM SECTION 69A

Unlike blocking powers, it focuses on intermediaries' responsibility to disable unlawful content.



PUBLIC GOOD TOOL

Ensures immediate action against unlawful data and strengthens cyber law enforcement.



SYLLABUS: Prelims : Environment
Newspaper : The Indian Express **Page Number** : 14

POLAR BEARS



Polar bears are the **largest carnivorous land mammals on Earth**.



They are the only bear species to be considered marine mammals as they spend most of their lives on the sea ice of the Arctic Ocean for their food and habitat.



PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS



- The bear's outer layer of fur is **hollow** and reflects light, giving the fur a **white** colour that helps the bear remain camouflaged.
- Polar bears also have a thick layer of fat below the surface of the skin, which acts as **insulation** on the body to trap heat.



DISTRIBUTION



- Most polar bears occur north of the Arctic Circle to the North Pole.
- There are some populations south of the Arctic Circle in the Hudson Bay of Manitoba, Canada.
- Polar bears live in Alaska, Canada, Russia, Greenland, and some northern islands owned by Norway, such as Svalbard.
- They are not found in the Antarctica region.



DIET

They primarily feed on **ringed seals** and **bearded seals**.



RINGED SEAL



BEARDED SEAL



ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE



The polar bear is the **apex predator** within its range and is a **keystone species** for the Arctic.

They keep the population of **Seals** in check, thus maintaining the food chain and ecosystem health.



CONSERVATION STATUS

IUCN IUCN Red List:
Vulnerable (VU)

CITES CITES:
Appendix II



Q1. With reference to the Base Effect in inflation measurement, consider the following statements:

1. A very low base year value can make the current inflation rate appear artificially high.
2. The base effect impacts only the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and not the Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
3. Even a small increase in prices can show high inflation if the base period had unusually low prices.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q2. With reference to Payment Banks in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Nachiket Mor Committee recommended Payment Banks to enhance financial inclusion among low-income groups.
2. They are registered as public limited companies under the Companies Act, 2013.
3. They can issue credit cards and engage in lending activities.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India:

1. The CEC can be removed from office only in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court.
2. The removal process requires a simple majority in both Houses of Parliament.
3. The grounds for removal include proved misbehaviour and incapacity.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding provisions of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000:

1. Section 69A empowers the Central Government to block public access to online content in the interest of national security, sovereignty, or public order.
2. Section 79 provides online intermediaries with absolute immunity from liability for any third-party content hosted on their platforms.

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

Answer: a

Q5. With reference to the conservation status of Polar Bears, consider the following statements:

1. Polar bears are listed as "Endangered" under the IUCN Red List.
2. They are included in Appendix II of CITES.

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

Answer: b





VAJIRAM & RAVI

Institute for IAS Examination

A unit of Vajiram & Ravi IAS Study Centre LLP

9-B, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar,
New Delhi - 110060 • Ph.: 41007400, 41007500

New No. 62, P Block, 6th Avenue, Anna Nagar,
Chennai - 600040 • Ph.: 044-4330-2121

Visit us at : www.vajiramandravi.com