

WHAT IS A LEGAL TENDER?

The Reserve Bank of India recently decided to withdraw the ₹2000 denomination banknotes from circulation even as it reiterated that these notes will continue to be legal tender.



About Legal Tender:

- It is a type of currency or medium of exchange.
 - It is money that is valid and acceptable for the settlement of debts which must be recognized when issued.
 - Almost every country uses its national currency as legal tender.
 - Creditors are lawfully responsible for accepting legal tender for the repayment of debt that they have availed.
 - Legal tender is constituted by a law that specifies the object to be utilised as legal tender and the organisation that is commissioned to create and issue the same to the public such as the Reserve Bank of India.
 - In India, the authentic legal tender of the Reserve Bank of India consists of coins and notes. The creditors are supposed to accept them as a payment towards the debt.
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RBI TO WITHDRAW RS 2,000 NOTES FROM CIRCULATION

Why in news?

- The Reserve Bank of India has decided to withdraw Rs 2,000 denomination banknotes from circulation.
- Banknotes of ₹2,000 denomination were introduced after ₹1000 and ₹500 banknotes were demonetised on November 8, 2016.

Demonetisation

- It is the process through which a nation's economic unit of exchange loses its legally enforceable validity.
- It is a drastic intervention into the economy that involves removing the legal tender status of a currency.

Why countries opt for demonetisation?

- To address issues like hyperinflation and to stabilize the currency
- To eliminate negative situations or actions like counterfeit currency, terror, and tax fraud
- To introduce a new monetary system in some circumstances
- To facilitate trade and access to markets,
- To push informal economic activity into more transparency

What are the advantages and disadvantages of Demonetization?

Advantages	Disadvantages
Control criminal activities	Illegal activity will not be stopped entirely
Forbids tax avoidance and other financial crimes	Expenses issuing new currency and coinage minting can be high
Fosters innovation by converting currency to digital currency and promoting digital transactions	Introduces new types of currency risk such as cybercrime
Often results in higher long-term GDP due to higher tax revenue being reinvested in the nation	Likely stalls a nation's GDP during the conversion process
Enhances transparency and discourages the circulation of black money	Imposes a burden on citizens, especially those who must convert one currency to another

Demonetisation in India

Previous demonetisation -
Demonetisation has been implemented twice:

- In 1946, RBI demonetized 1000- and 10000-rupee notes.
- In 1978, the government demonetized 1000-, 5000-, and 10000-rupee notes in order to curb the menace of black money.
- **2016 demonetisation**
- On November 8, 2016, PM Modi announced the decision of the government to demonetise currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 in a bid to tackle corruption.

CENTRE PASSES ORDINANCE TO NULLIFY SC DECISION FAVOURING DELHI GOVT

- The Union government brought an ordinance designating the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) as the administrator of Delhi who will have the final say on the postings and transfer of all bureaucrats serving the Delhi government.

- The ordinance seeks to amend the Government of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi Act, 1991 and effectively negates the May 11 Supreme Court judgment.
- The SC judgement had given the Delhi government the power to make laws and wield control over bureaucrats deputed to the Delhi government.

Background of the Case:

- A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court was hearing the dispute between the Delhi government and the Central government.
- The dispute was over matters pertaining to **control over the transfers and the overall functioning of administrative services in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.**
- The administrative services include appointments and transfers, in the national capital.
- On May 11, 2023 a five-judge bench of the SC held that the Delhi Govt will have legislative and executive control over administrative services in the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD) except with regard to public order, police and land.
- The apex court also ruled that the decision on which IAS officer gets posted to the national capital — and for how long — will continue to be the Centre’s prerogative.
- Now, the Centre has brought an ordinance which nullifies the SC order.

The Issue of Control over Administrative Services:

- **Union Home Ministry notification of 2015**
- In 2015, a Union Home Ministry notification said that the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi shall exercise control over “services”.
- The Delhi government challenged this before the Delhi High Court, which in 2017 upheld the notification.
- Delhi Govt challenged this order and the matter was referred to a larger constitution Bench.
- **2018 Judgement**
- In 2018, a five-judge Constitution Bench, in a unanimous verdict, laid down the law that governs the relationship between Delhi and the Centre.
- The ruling was in favour of the Delhi government.
- **On the specific issue of services**

- While 2018 Judgement decided the larger questions, this specific issue was to be decided by a two-judge Bench.
- In 2019, a two-judge bench of the SC delivered a split verdict on the aspect of who controls administrative services in Delhi.
- The split verdict then went to a three-judge Bench and eventually a five-judge Constitution Bench, which delivered its verdict on May 11.

Central & State Government's Arguments on the issue of Control over Administrative Services:

- The Central Government has consistently maintained that because Delhi is the national capital and the face of the country, it must have control over administrative services, which include appointments and transfers.
- On the other hand, the Delhi government has argued that in the interest of federalism, the elected representatives must have power over transfers and postings.
- The Delhi government had also contended that the recent amendments to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021, **violate the doctrine of basic structure of the Constitution.**

PASHMINA CERTIFICATION CENTRE

Recently, Union Minister inaugurated the Pashmina Certification Centre (PCC) at the Wildlife Institute of India in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.



About Pashmina Certification Centre:

- The Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Labour and Employment termed PCC as a boost for Atamnirbhar Bharat, adding that it will **provide certification for the purity of Pashmina products.**
- The **Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH)** collaborated with WII to establish a Pashmina Certification Center (PCC) for its associated members **involved in Pashmina Trade.**
- **Purpose of setting:**
- To streamline the Pashmina Trade.

- To provide a **one-stop testing facility** to certify genuine Pashmina Product **free from any prohibited fibres** to the associated manufacturers, exporters, and traders.
- All the tested products will be **labelled with a traceable unique id tag** with individual e-certificates, enabling a seamless trade of such products in national and international markets.

Wildlife Institute of India:

- It was established in **1982 in Dehradun**.
- It's an **autonomous institute** managed by the **Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change**.
- **Aims & Objectives:**
 - Build up scientific knowledge on wildlife resources.
 - Train personnel at various levels for conservation and management of wildlife.
 - Carry out research relevant to management including the development of techniques appropriate to Indian conditions.
 - Provide information and advice on specific wildlife management problems.
 - Collaborate with international organizations on wildlife research, management and training.
- It carries out wildlife **research in areas of study like:** Biodiversity, Endangered Species, Wildlife Policy, Wildlife Management, Wildlife Forensics, Eco-development, Climate Change etc.

STARS PROGRAM

Recently, Ministry of Education and World Bank organised a one of its kind workshop on School-to-Work Transition under the STARS Program in Mumbai.



Why in News?

- School-to-Work Transition workshop under the STARS Program was **co-chaired** by Secretaries of **School Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**.

STARS Program:

- **Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS)** Project was approved by the Cabinet in October 2020 and to be implemented as a **centrally sponsored scheme**.
- It became effective **since 2021 for a period of five years** up to FY: **2024-25**.
- STARS project would be implemented under Department of School Education and Literacy, **Ministry of Education** with the financial **support of World Bank**.
- It is being implemented in **six identified States** Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala. These states will be supported for various interventions for **improving the quality of education**.
- It is carved out of **Samagra Shiksha**, with a focus on those elements of the scheme that will most directly support school education enhancement.
- The **overall focus** and components of the STARS project are aligned with **the objectives of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of Quality Based Learning Outcomes**.
- The STARS project also aims to focus on **initiatives of PM e-Vidya**, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission and National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education as part of the **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.

WHAT IS ZORAWAR TANK?



Senior DRDO officials recently said that the light tank Zorawar is expected to be ready for trials in the high-altitude mountainous border with China by the end of the year.

About Zorawar Tank:

- It is an **indigenously designed and developed Light Tank**.
- Developed by **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** in collaboration with **Larsen & Toubro Limited**.
- **Features:**
 - It is designed to **operate in varying terrain** from high altitude areas and marginal terrains to island territories.
 - It will be **highly transportable for rapid deployment** to meet any operational situation.

- It will be **equipped with all the modern technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Drone Integration**, a high degree of situational awareness, and amphibious operation capability.
- It will weigh **less than 25 tonnes with a high power-to-weight ratios** as well as superior firepower and protection.

Who was Zorawar?

- He was a **military general — Zorawar Singh Kahluria**, and had served under Jammu's Raja Gulab Singh in the 19th Century.
- He is **honoured for his conquests in the Himalayas** including Ladakh, Tibet, Baltistan and Skardu.

GOVT PANEL RECOMMENDS OVERARCHING AGENCY TO GRADE VARSITIES, INCLUDING IITS

Why in News?

- A committee, formed by the Union government, has recommended that the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) be brought under the ambit of a proposed Accreditation agency.
- So far, IITs have never been accredited by the **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)**, which is the existing agency that grades India's colleges and universities.

About National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC):

- NAAC is an **autonomous body** established by the University Grants Commission (UGC).
- It was established in **1994** on the basis of recommendations made under the **National Education Policy (1986)**.
- It is registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act of 1960.
- **Vision:**
 - To make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives.

- **Headquarters:** Bengaluru

Objectives of NAAC:

- To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programmes or projects;
- To stimulate the academic environment for promotion of quality of teaching-learning and research in higher education institutions;
- To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education;
- To undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training programmes.

What is Assessment & Accreditation?

- **Assessment** is the performance evaluation of an institution or its units based on certain established criteria.
- **Accreditation** is the certification of quality for a fixed period, which in the case of NAAC is five years.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) through a gazette notification in January 2013, has made it **mandatory for Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to undergo accreditation.**

What are the Benefits of Being NAAC-Accredited?

- Through a multi-layered process steered by the NAAC, a higher education institution gets to know whether it meets certain standards of quality set by the evaluator in terms of curriculum, faculty, infrastructure, research and financial well-being among others.
- Based on these parameters, the **NAAC gives institutions grades ranging from A++ to C.** If an institution is graded D, it means it is not accredited.
- Apart from recognition, being accredited also helps institutions attract capital as funding agencies look for objective data for performance funding.
- It helps an institution know its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities through an informed review process.
- NAAC accreditation helps students going for higher education abroad as many global higher education authorities insist on recognition and accreditation of the institution where the student has studied.

News Summary:



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- In November 2022, Central government had constituted a High-Level Committee, under the Chairmanship of **K. Radhakrishnan**.
 - The committee was formed for strengthening the Assessment & Accreditation processes and preparing a road map for the National Accreditation Council envisioned in the National Education Policy, 2020.
 - The committee recently submitted its report to the government.
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