

HOW ARE RAJYA SABHA MEMBERS ELECTED?

The Election Commission of India recently announced the schedule for the election on 10 Rajya Sabha seats in Goa, Gujarat and West Bengal.



About Rajya Sabha:

- **Origin:** India follows the British parliamentary system, so the Rajya Sabha, or the Upper House of Parliament, is **equivalent to the House of Lords in the United Kingdom.**

Present strength: The Rajya Sabha currently has **245 members**, including **233 elected members and 12 nominated**. As per the constitutional limit, the Upper House strength cannot exceed 250.

Membership: While **233 members** are elected from states and Union Territories (UTs), the **President of India** nominates the remaining **12** from the fields of art, literature, science and social services.

Tenure: Every Rajya Sabha MP has a **tenure of six years**, and **elections to one-third of seats** are held every two years.

Vacancy: According to Section 154 of the Representation of the People Act 1951, a **member chosen to fill a casual vacancy will serve for the remainder** of his predecessor's term of office.

Chair: The **Indian vice-president** is the chairperson of the Upper House, which also has a deputy chair.

Election Process to Rajya Sabha:

- While Lok Sabha members are elected directly by the voters, Rajya Sabha members are elected indirectly by the people, that is, by the elected Members of a state's Legislative Assembly (MLAs).
- How many Rajya Sabha members a state can send depends on its population.
- MLAs vote in the Rajya Sabha elections in what is called **proportional representation with the single transferable vote (STV) system**. Each MLA's vote is counted only once.
- In this system, **MLAs don't vote for each seat**.
- Instead, the MLAs are **given a paper with the names of all candidates**. They have to give **their order of preference for each candidate**, marking 1,2,3... against their names.
- The **ballot is open, but MLAs have to show their ballots to an authorised agent from their party** to prevent practices such as cross-voting. A vote cannot be counted if the ballot is not shown to the agent. **Independent MLAs cannot show their ballot to anyone**.
- **If a qualifying number of voters choose a candidate as their first choice, he or she is elected**.
- The **remaining votes go to the next candidates but with a lesser value**. So, MLAs also vote for candidates from other parties.
- The **candidate that gets rank 1 from an MLA secures a first preference vote**. In order to win, a candidate needs a specific number of such first-preference votes. This number depends on the strength of the state Assembly and the number of MPs it sends to Rajya Sabha.
- **To win, a candidate should get a required number of votes which is known as a quota or preference vote**. The formula is = $[\text{Total number of votes}/(\text{Number of Rajya Sabha seats} + 1)] + 1$.
- However, the formula is **changed in case more than one seat needs to be filled**. The total number of votes required for a candidate in the case is = $[(\text{Number of votes} \times 100) / (\text{Vacancies} + 1)] + 1$.

WHAT ARE AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCILS (ADC)?

The Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC) recently flagged the “mass migration” of people from ethnic strife-torn Manipur to the State’s capital Shillong and adjoining areas.



About Autonomous District Councils (ADC):

- The Sixth Schedule provides a list of ten tribal areas in Assam (3), Meghalaya (3), Tripura (1) and Mizoram (3).
- Each of these tribal areas constitutes an autonomous district. Each autonomous district has an Autonomous District Council (ADC).
- **Membership:** ADCs have up to 30 members with a term of five years, of whom four are nominated by the governor and the remaining 26 are elected on the basis of adult franchise.
- **Tenure:** The term of the District Councils is for five years from the date of their constitution.

Functions: The functions of ADCs as defined in schedule 6 of the constitution included –

- making laws on land,
- management of forests, except reserved forests,
- appointment of traditional chiefs and headmen,
- making rules regulating the inheritance of property, marriage, divorce, the constitution of village courts,
- It can establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, ferries, fisheries, roads and so on in the district.
- It can also make regulations for the control of money lending and trading by non-tribals. But such regulations require the assent of the governor.
- **Revenue source:** The main Revenue Sources of ADCs, as specified in the Sixth Schedule, were:
 - taxes on professions, trades, callings and employment;
 - taxes on animals, vehicles and boats;
 - taxes on the entry of goods into a market and sale therein, and tolls on passenger and goods carried on ferries; and
 - taxes for the maintenance of schools, dispensaries or roads.

WHAT IS THE INDUS WATERS TREATY?

India recently made a proposal to Pakistan to hold a meeting to discuss the potential renegotiation of the Indus Waters Treaty.



About Indus Waters Treaty:

- It was signed in September 1960 between India and Pakistan.
- The treaty was brokered by the World Bank, which, too, is a signatory to the treaty.

Provisions:

- The treaty fixed and delimited the rights and obligations of both countries concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system.
- It gives control over the waters of the three "eastern rivers" -- the Beas, Ravi, and Sutlej -- to India while control over the waters of the three "western rivers" -- the Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum -- to Pakistan.
- The Treaty allows India to use the western river waters for limited irrigation use and unlimited non-consumptive use for such applications as power generation, navigation, floating of property, fish culture, etc.
- It lays down detailed regulations for India in building projects over the western rivers.
- The Treaty sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two countries regarding their use of the rivers. It is known as the Permanent Indus Commission, which has a Commissioner from each country.

WHAT IS A UNICORN STARTUP?

According to a recent report, new additions to the unicorn list declined sharply in 2023, indicating a slowdown in the Indian startup ecosystem.



About Unicorn Startup:

- The term unicorn refers to a privately held startup company with a value

of over \$1 billion.

- It is commonly used in the venture capital industry. The term was first popularised by venture capitalist Aileen Lee when she referred to the 39 startups that had a valuation of over \$1 billion as unicorns.
- The valuation of unicorns is not expressly linked to their current financial performance but is largely based on their growth potential, as perceived by investors and venture capitalists who have taken part in various funding rounds.
- There are more than 1,000 unicorn companies around the world as of March 2022.

What are Gazelles and Cheetahs in the Startup ecosystem?

- **Gazelles:**
 - They are those start-ups founded after the year 2000 and have the potential to go Unicorn in 2 years.
 - Their valuation ranges from US\$500mn to US\$1bn.
 - Once you exceed the \$1 bn valuation, you become a unicorn.
- **Cheetahs:**
 - They are those start-ups founded after the year 2000 and have the potential to become a Unicorn in the next four years.
 - Their estimated valuation ranges between US\$200mn to US\$500mn.

NATIONAL COMPANY LAW APPELLATE TRIBUNAL (NCLAT)

- **About**
 - NCLAT is a **quasi-judicial body** in India that was established under the Companies Act, 2013 to hear appeals against the orders passed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).
 - Established in 2016, it is headquartered in New Delhi.
 - It is the second-highest forum for company law cases in India after the Supreme Court.
 - The decisions of the NCLAT are **final and binding on the parties involved**.
 - The orders passed by the NCLAT can be challenged only in the Supreme Court of India.

Functions

- The NCLAT is empowered to hear appeals against orders passed by the NCLT related to insolvency and bankruptcy, merger and acquisition, and company law matters.
- It is also the **Appellate Tribunal** for order passed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) as well for orders of the National Financial Reporting Authority.

Composition

- The NCLAT is headed by a Chairperson and consists of judicial and technical members who are appointed by the Central Government.

Google Moves Supreme Court Against NCLAT Order

Why has Google appealed the NCLAT order?

- Google acknowledged that the NCLAT made a correct decision by stating that harm resulting from anti-competitive behavior must be proven.
- However, Google also pointed out that the NCLAT failed to apply this requirement to some of the directions given by the CCI that were upheld.
- Hence, Google decided to present its case before the Supreme Court demonstrating how Android has benefitted Indian users, developers, and OEMs, and powered India's digital transformation.

What did the NCLAT order entail?

- **No confirmation bias in CCI's order**
 - NCLAT held that the CCI's order does not suffer from any confirmation bias.
 - Hence, it upheld the penalty of ₹1,337 crore imposed on Google by the CCI for its anti-competitive conduct in the Android ecosystem.
- **Anti-competitive practices by google**
 - Furthermore, NCLAT has held that Google asking the OEMs to pre-install the entire Google Suite of 11 applications amounts to imposition of unfair conditions.
 - Google reduces the incentive of the OEMs to develop their own version of Android (Android forks).

- **Directions by NCLAT that were in Google's favour**

- Google was fair in sending warnings (Side loading) to users when they download applications directly from the website or from an unknown source.
- Google need not share its proprietary Application Program Interface (API) with third parties.
- Google was right in not permitting third party application stores on its play stores to avoid malware.
- Google can restrict uninstallation of Google suite apps on Android phones.

Could the order on Google shape India's internet regulations?

- The verdict opens the gate for the government to formulate substantive regulations to ensure that such an abuse of dominance can be curtailed in the future.
- As per the experts, this judgement sets the stage for dual regulators in the online space for various sectors.
- One will be a **nodal regulator** and one will be a **sectoral regulator**, who will both work together in framing rules for the respective sector and regulate it.

TECTONIC DEFORMATION

Recently, a study done by the researchers has found an expanding area of active tectonic deformation in the northern plains of Haryana.



About Tectonic deformation:

- It refers to the **changes and movements** that occur within the **Earth's crust** due to tectonic forces.
- The Earth's lithosphere, which is composed of the crust and the uppermost part of the mantle, is divided into several large and small tectonic plates.
- These plates are in constant motion and interact with each other at their boundaries.

Key Findings:

- Researchers suggested that tectonic activities may have played a role in the **extinction of the Vedic Saraswati River** that once flowed through the region.
- The Piedmont zone of Haryana is actively deforming and could become **a future seismic hazard zone**.
- The **Piedmont zone** (a transition zone between the rugged mountains and the relatively flat plains) between the Ghaggar and Yamuna River basins showed signs of active tectonic deformations.

WHAT IS UTPRERAK?

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Power inaugurated UTPRERAK, a dedicated Centre of Excellence, to accelerate industry adoption of clean technologies in New Delhi.



About UTPRERAK:

- The **Unnat Takniki Pradarshan Kendra (UTPRERAK)** is the Centre of Excellence to Accelerate **Adoption of Energy Efficient Technologies** and seeks to play a catalytic role in improving the energy efficiency of the Indian industry.
- It is also named as Advanced Industrial Technology Demonstration Centre (AITDC)
- It has been **set up by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**, Ministry of Power.

What are the mandates?

- The Centre is mandated to become the key reference and resource institution on **industrial energy-efficient technologies**.
- It will demonstrate and showcase energy-efficient technologies in key industry sectors.
- It will act as an exhibition cum information centre and **knowledge repository**.
- It will be a knowledge exchange platform where best practices from across various key sectors can be diffused among industry professionals through workshops and seminars.

Key facts about the Bureau of Energy efficiency

- It is a **statutory body** under the Union Ministry of Power.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- It was set up under the provisions of **the Energy Conservation Act of 2001.**
 - **Mission:** Develop policy and strategies with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles within the overall framework of the Energy Conservation Act (EC Act), 2001.
 - **Primary Objective:** To reduce energy intensity in the Indian economy.
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