

NEWS TODAY

THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER (CEC) AND OTHER ELECTION COMMISSIONERS(ECTS) (APPOINTMENT, CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, AND TERM OF OFFICE) BILL, 2023 TABLED IN RAJYA SABHA

Key highlights of the bill

- **Repeals:** Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.
- **Appointment:** Adds that **the President** will appoint the CEC and other ECTs on the **recommendation of a Selection Committee**.
- **Selection Committee:**
 - **Prime Minister:** Chairperson,
 - **Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha** or leader of single largest party in opposition
 - **Union Cabinet Minister** nominated by PM
- **Search Committee:** Headed by the Cabinet secretary will prepare a panel of 5 persons for consideration of Selection Committee.
- **Qualification of CEC and ECTs:** Persons holding or have held posts equivalent to the rank of Secretary to the central government.
- **Salary and allowances:** Same as that of the Cabinet Secretary.
- **Term of office:** 6 years or until they reach the age of 65 years (same as earlier) and will not be eligible for reappointment.
- **Conduct of business:** Should be conducted unanimously, however in case of a difference of opinion, it shall be decided **through the majority**.

Election commissioners and present process

- **As per Article 324**, the Election Commission consists of the CEC and such number of other ECTs, as the President may decide.
- Currently, **the Law Minister suggests a pool of suitable candidates** to the Prime Minister for consideration.
 - The **President** makes the **appointment on the advice of the PM**.
- **SC in Anoop Baranwal Vs Union of India judgment** declared that the President shall make the appointment on the basis of advice tendered by a Committee consisting:
 - Prime Minister,
 - Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha,
 - **Chief Justice of India**.

CLOUDBURST INCIDENTS OBSERVED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF INDIA OVER THE PAST 2 MONTHS

- Cloudburst is a rain event if **10 cm rainfall is received at a station in one hour**. (According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD))
 - **Extent:** It is a localized but intense rainfall activity and usually occurs **over a small geographical region of about 20 to 30 sq. km**.
 - **Cumulonimbus clouds** are mainly involved in its occurrence.
 - **Impacts:** triggers landslides and flash floods, leading to destruction of life and property.
 - **Vulnerable Regions:** Himalayas, the Western Ghats, and the northeastern hill States of India (due to terrain and elevation).
 - Cloud bursts do occur at plains; however, **mountainous regions are more prone to cloud bursts due to orography**.
- **Occurrence**
 - **Cloudbursts occur via orographic lift** which occurs when an air mass is forced from a low elevation to a higher elevation as it moves over rising terrain.
 - During this, the **rain fails to fall down in a steady shower**, which causes excessive condensation in the clouds as new drops form and old drops are pushed back into it by the updraft.

Prediction of Cloudbursts

- It is very difficult to predict the cloud bursts **due to its very small scale in space and time**.
- To monitor the cloud burst, there is **need to have dense radar network over the cloud burst prone areas**.

RBI LAUNCHES NEW FEATURES FOR UNIFIED PAYMENTS INTERFACE (UPI)

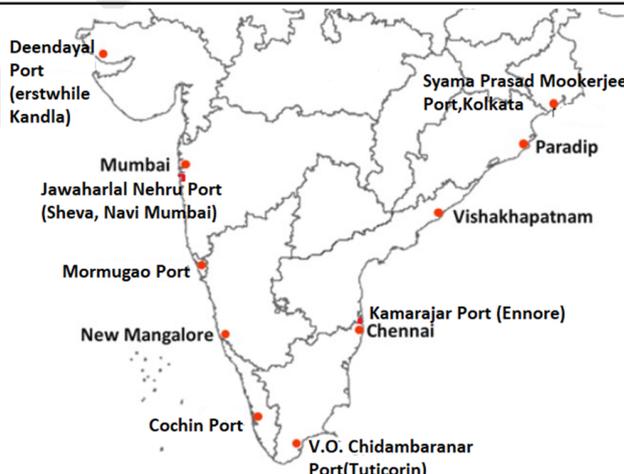
- UPI **powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application** (of any participating bank), merging several banking features.
 - **Developed by:** National Payments Corporation of India.
 - **Key Features of UPI:**
 - supports **both Person-to-Person (P2P) and Person-to-Merchant (P2M) payments.**
Facilitate Instant transfer of funds, bill-sharing facility, etc.
 - **News features:**
 - **Conversational payments:** enable users to engage in a conversation with an AI-powered system (like AI voice bots) to initiate and complete secure transactions.
 - **Promoting the use of UPI-Lite** by increasing the per transaction limit to ₹500 from ₹200 for small-value digital payments. It also introduces **Near Field Communication (NFC) technology for offline transactions using UPI-Lite.**
 - UPI-Lite is an on-device **wallet service that enables** low-value transactions without utilizing a Remitter bank's core banking systems in real-time.

'FUNCTIONING OF MAJOR PORTS IN THE COUNTRY' REPORT PRESENTED BY PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, TOURISM AND CULTURE

- **Issues highlighted**
 - **Investments through PPP mode** in the last five years are a mere 8% of the total investments.
 - Average capacity utilisation of the Major Ports is 49%, and **many of the Major Ports are operating at much below this average.**
 - **Low capacity utilization of the Ports pertains to absence of road and rail connectivity** to the hinterland to cater to the emerging demands.
 - **Lack of deep drafts (depth of water in a port for accommodating large vessels) of Indian ports**, especially those on the Eastern Coast and Southern coast.
- **Recommendations:**
 - **Enhancing the capacity** of Major Ports by setting targets.
 - **Reduce Turnaround Time.**
 - Only the JNPA has achieved a world-class Turn Around time of **24 hours for Containers.**
 - **Training for Logistics Skills** under **National Skill Development Corporation.**
 - **Dual cycle cranes and Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs)** may be introduced in ports to ensure incremental productivity.
 - Implement the **digitization and automation programme** in a time bound manner without any further delay.
 - Implement the **Landlord Port Model** in the Major Ports.

Major Ports of India

There are **12 Major Ports** under the direct administrative control of the Central Government falling in the **Union List.**



STATE OF EDUCATION IN RURAL INDIA REPORT

- Report prepared by Development Intelligence Unit (DIU), under the **initiative of Transforming Rural India Foundation (TRIF)** and Sambodhi Pvt.
- **Key Highlights**
 - **Aspirations:** 78% of parents in rural India aspire to educate their girls to graduation and beyond.
 - **School dropout:** 35% of female children dropped out of school during primary schooling, as against 25% of their male counterparts.
 - **Reasons for Drop out**
 - **Non-availability of nearby schools** with higher classes – secondary and senior secondary.
 - **Lack of affordability** of schooling.
 - **For girl children: engagement in household chores and caregiving for siblings** at home.
 - **For male children: engagement in work to support family's earnings;** and lack of interest in studies.
 - **Access to Smart Phones:** Students belonging to Class 8th and above had more access to smartphones (58.32%), compared to students of Classes I-III (42.1%).
- **Recommendation: Bringing community ownership and community/parent engagement** to Schools may bridge the existing trust deficit in school education.
- **Government Initiatives for education:** Samagra Shiksha, Mid-Day Meal, RTE Act, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya and PM POSHAN Scheme etc.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS (DOCA) RELEASED ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS CELEBRITIES, AND INFLUENCERS

● **Aim:** to deal with **misleading advertisements, unsubstantiated claims** and ensure transparency in health and wellness endorsements.

● Extension to the **Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022.**

● **Key highlights**

➤ **Certification:** Certified medical practitioners and health & fitness experts must disclose their certificates.

➤ **Advisory Note: Celebrities/influencers** presenting themselves as **health experts** must **provide clear disclaimers**, ensuring the audience understands the nature of endorsements.

▪ **Disclaimers are necessary topics such as health advantages** from **food items & nutraceuticals**, disease prevention, **treatment or cure, recovery methodologies** or immunity boosting, etc.

➤ **Due Diligence:** Celebrities/influencers should **refrain from making specific health claims without substantiated facts.**

➤ **Professional advice:** encourage audiences to consult with healthcare professionals for seeking medical advice etc.

➤ **Exemption:** Pieces of advice – **drink water, stay hydrated, reduce sitting & screen time**, exercise regularly, etc.

➤ **Enforcement:** DoCA under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, will monitor and enforce these guidelines and **violations may lead to penalties** under the Consumer Protection Act 2019.

Ethical issues in health and wellness endorsements

● **Violates the Right to Choose**, and the Right to be safeguarded against harmful products and services.

● **Informational asymmetries** limit the audience's abilities to independently evaluate health products.

● **Deceptive marketing:** posting an advertisement without mentioning that it is an advertisement.

ALSO IN NEWS



Post Office Bill, 2023 introduced in Rajya Sabha

● The Bill seeks to repeal **the Indian Post Office Act, of 1898.**

● **Provisions of the Bill**

➤ **Post Office** will have exclusive privilege of issuing postage stamps.

➤ **Central Government** will have the power to give effect to the arrangements made with any foreign country.

➤ Central Government may, by notification, **empower any officer to intercept or detain any item** for security of the State.



No-confidence motion

● A **no-confidence motion is a parliamentary process** that signifies that the present government is **no longer deemed fit to hold positions of responsibility.**

➤ First no confidence was moved during the third Lok Sabha in 1963 against the government

● No **prior reason needs to be stated** for its adoption, and if passed, the government must resign.

● A no-confidence motion **can only be moved** in the Lok Sabha.

● It is **not specifically mentioned in the Constitution** and it **can be admitted** when a minimum of 50 members supports the motion in the House.



Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

● **Highlights of recent MPC**

➤ Repo rate left unchanged at 6.50% for the third consecutive time

➤ FY24 real GDP growth projection unchanged at 6.5%

➤ Existing cash reserve ratio remains unchanged at 4.5%

➤ Imposes an **incremental cash reserve ratio (ICRR) of 10% on increase in deposits, to absorb liquidity.**

● **About MPC**

➤ MPC is a **statutory body** constituted under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934(Amendment).

➤ **Composition:** MPC is a 6-member body, 3 Members from the RBI and the other 3 Members appointed by the Central Government.

➤ **Decision** is taken based on voting.

 <p>Deflation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● China slips into deflation as post-Covid recovery weakens.● Deflation is a general decline in prices for goods and services, typically associated with a contraction in the supply of money and credit in the economy.
 <p>Exercise Malabar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Joint naval exercise between 4 Indo-Pacific partner nations: Australia, India, Japan and the United States.
 <p>Community Reserves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It denotes protected areas that typically act as buffer zones and other protected areas such as national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, etc.● They were first introduced in the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act (WPLA) 2002.● State Government may designate any community land or private land as a Community Reserve if the members of that community or individuals involved agreed.● Chief Wildlife Warden of the State becomes the governing authority of such forest.● After a forest has been made into a community reserve, people cannot hunt there, nor can they use it for agricultural practices.
 <p>Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ministry of Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the 2nd phase of the Mass Drug Administration (MDA) initiative to eliminate LF by 2027.● LF (commonly known as elephantiasis) is a neglected tropical disease (NTD).<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ A parasitic disease caused by microscopic, nematodes (roundworms) of the family Filarioididea.➢ Spread from person to person by mosquitoes.➢ Impairs the lymphatic system and can lead to the abnormal enlargement of body parts (lymphedema and elephantiasis).
 <p>HeLa cells</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● HeLa cells were the first human cells to be successfully cloned in 1953.● These cells never reached the point of senescence, since due to mutations, it has achieved the ability to keep on dividing.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Normally, human cell cultures die within a few days after a set number of cell divisions via a process called senescence.● Significance: test the effects of radiation, cosmetics, gene mapping and studying human diseases, etc.● Cell culture is the process by which cells are grown in a Petri dish, in a lab in controlled conditions.
 <p>Places in news</p>	<p>Ecuador (Capital: Quito)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Emergency has been imposed due to the assassination of a political leader.● Political Boundaries:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Located in northwestern South America.➢ It shares borders with Colombia to the north, Peru to the east and the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west.➢ Galapagos Islands come under its jurisdiction.● Geographical Features:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Mainland is divided into three main physical regions: the Costa (coastal region), the Sierra (highland region), and the Oriente (eastern region).➢ Occupies part of the Amazon basin and is situated on the Equator.➢ Rivers: Guayas and Napo➢ Highest Peak: Chimborazo, part of Andes. 