

LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS:

- 1) **Context:** Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has approved a statutory resolution seeking the abolition of Legislative Council.
- 2) **Councils in other states:** Besides Andhra Pradesh, five other states have Vidhan Parishads — Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, UP.
- 3) **What are the Legislative Councils, and why are they important?**

India has a **bicameral system i.e.**, two Houses of Parliament. At the state level, the equivalent of the Lok Sabha is the Vidhan Sabha or Legislative Assembly; that of the Rajya Sabha is the Vidhan Parishad or Legislative Council.
- 4) **How is a legislative council created?**

Under **Article 169** of the constitution, **Parliament may by law create or abolish the second chamber in a state if the Legislative Assembly of that state passes a resolution to that effect by a special majority.**
- 5) **Strength of the house:**

As per **article 171 clause (1)** of the Indian Constitution, the total number of members in the legislative council of a state **shall not exceed one third of the total number of the members in the legislative Assembly** of that state and the total number of members in the legislative council of a state **shall in no case be less than 40.**
- 6) **How are members of the Council elected?**
 - i) 1/3rd of members are elected by members of the Assembly.
 - ii) 1/3rd by electorates consisting of members of municipalities, district boards and other local authorities in the state.
 - iii) Out of remaining 1/3rd:
 - 1/6th are nominated by the Governor from amongst those who have distinguished themselves in literature, science, art, cooperative movement and social service.
 - 1/12th by an electorate consisting of teachers.
 - 1/12th by registered graduates.

ELECTIONS

- 1) **Electronically transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS)** is developed by Election Commission of India with the help of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), for the use of the Service Voters. It is a fully secured system, having two layers of security. Secrecy is maintained through the use of OTP and PIN and no duplication of casted Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot (ETPB) is possible due to the unique QR Code
 - i) This system enables the entitled service voters to cast their vote using an electronically received postal ballot from anywhere outside their constituency. The voters who make such a choice will be entitled for Postal Ballot delivered through Electronic Media for a particular election.
- 2) India does **not** support e-voting.

- 3) Voters can exercise their franchise by
 - i) personally visiting the polling booth.
 - ii) Postal Ballots- Postal ballots, in which a voter exercises his/her franchise through post is available only for people on election duty, armed forces personnel, and electors subject to preventive detention.
 - iii) The option of proxy voting is available only for armed forces, police, and government officials posted outside India. The person can authorise another residing in the same polling booth area to cast a vote on his/her behalf.
- 4) A non-resident Indian, who holds an Indian passport, can vote in his/her hometown after registering as an Overseas Voter.
 - i) Till the year 2010, NRIs were not allowed to vote in the elections. However, post 2010 an amendment permitted NRIs to vote at their particular constituency in India but the voting required the direct presence of the NRI in India at the particular polling booth where the name was registered.
 - ii) The Bill allowing for Proxy voting of NRI has lapsed as of 2019. Hence, at present, NRI's **cannot** vote via proxy.

Service Voters: Voters having service qualification are known as Service Voters i.e. they are

- i. member of the Armed Forces of the Union
- ii. member of a force to which provision of the Army Act 1950 have been made applicable
- iii. member of an Armed Police Force of a State, and serving outside that state; or
- iv. a person employed under the Government of India, serving outside India

Overseas/NRI Electors: A citizen of India, who is absent from the country owing to employment, education etc, and has not acquired citizenship of any other country are known as Overseas Voters and are eligible to be registered as a voter in the address mentioned in their Indian passport.

Electoral Bonds

1. What are they? –
 - i) Promissory notes
 - ii) Does bear names of the donor (Bearer instrument)
 - iii) Interest free
2. When introduced? –
 - i) Union budget (2017-18)
3. Who can purchase?
 - i) Citizen or a body incorporated in India
4. Features:
 - i) 15 days of shelf life.
 - ii) Denominations – Rs 1000 to 1 crore.
 - iii) They cannot be purchased with cash.
5. Which parties can receive funds via these instruments?
 - i) Political parties who have secured at least 1% votes in last Lok Sabha or State Assembly elections and are registered under section 29A of RPA, 1951.
6. Issues with the scheme:

- i) Parties do not have to submit records of Electoral Bonds to Election Commission.
 - ii) Limitless donations can be done through it.
 - iii) Foreign funds can be routed through them.
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National People's Party(NPP) is a national party.

1. The Election Commission of India has declared the National People's Party as a national party. This made the NPP, formed in 2013, the first from the north-eastern region to earn the tag.
 - i) The NPP is recognised as a State party in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland.
 - ii) Registration of Political parties is governed by the provisions of Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951
 - iii) To be eligible for a 'National Political Party of India,' the Election Commission has set the following criteria:
 - i. It secures at least six percent of the valid votes polled in any four or more states, at a general election to the House of the People or, to the State Legislative Assembly; and
 - ii. In addition, it wins at least four seats in the House of the People from any State or States. OR
 - iii. It wins at least two percent seats in the House of the People (i.e., 11 seats in the existing House having 543 members), and these members are elected from at least three different States.
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15th Finance Commission:

1. The Commission may consider proposing measurable performance-based incentives for States, at the appropriate level of government, in following areas:
 - (i) Efforts made by the States in expansion and deepening of tax net under GST;
 - (ii) Efforts and Progress made in moving towards replacement rate of population growth;
 - (iii) Achievements in implementation of flagship schemes of Government of India, disaster resilient infrastructure, sustainable development goals, and quality of expenditure;
 - (iv) Progress made in increasing capital expenditure, eliminating losses of power sector, and improving the quality of such expenditure in generating future income streams;
 - (v) Progress made in increasing tax/non-tax revenues, promoting savings by adoption of Direct Benefit Transfers and Public Finance Management System, promoting digital economy and removing layers between the government and the beneficiaries;

- (vi) Progress made in promoting ease of doing business by effecting related policy and regulatory changes and promoting labour intensive growth;
 - (vii) Provision of grants in aid to local bodies for basic services, including quality human resources, and implementation of performance grant system in improving delivery of services;
 - (viii) Control or lack of it in incurring expenditure on populist measures; and
 - (ix) Progress made in sanitation, solid waste management and bringing in behavioural changes to end open defecation.
2. The Commission shall use the population data of 2011 while making its recommendations.

Table 1: Criteria for devolution (2020-21)

Criteria	14 th FC 2015-20	15 th FC 2020-21
Income Distance	50.0	45.0
Population (1971)	17.5	-
Population (2011)	10.0	15.0
Area	15.0	15.0
Forest Cover	7.5	-
Forest and Ecology	-	10.0
Demographic Performance	-	12.5
Tax Effort	-	2.5
Total	100	100

The 15th Finance Commission (Chair: Mr N. K. Singh) was required to submit two reports:

- i) The first report, consisting of recommendations for the financial year 2020-21, was tabled in Parliament on February 1, 2020.
- ii) The final report with recommendations for the 2021-26 period will be submitted by October 30, 2020.

Recommendation of first report:

Devolution of taxes to states: The share of states in the centre's taxes is recommended to be decreased from 42% during the 2015-20 period to 41% for 2020-21. The 1% decrease is to

provide for the newly formed union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh from the resources of the central government.

Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019

- 1) an independent body called the **Arbitration Council of India (ACI)** will be set up for promotion of alternative dispute redressal mechanisms,
- 2) **Appointment of arbitrators** will now be done by the Supreme Court designated arbitral institutions, which was earlier used to be done by parties themselves.

The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2019

	Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.	The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2019
Composition	Chairperson: Retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.	Chairperson: Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or a Judge of the Supreme Court.
Tenure	Chairperson and members of the NHRC and SHRC will hold office for five years or till the age of seventy years	Reduces the term of office to three years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier.

