



## Electoral Trusts Scheme, 2013

**For Prelims:** [Electoral Trusts Scheme](#), [Electoral Bonds](#), Political Parties, [Representation of the People Act 1951](#)

**For Mains:** Effects of Electoral Bonds on the election process, Issues Arising Out of Design & Implementation of Policies

**Source:** [IE](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, [Supreme Court](#) has reserved its judgment on the challenge to the central government's Electoral Bonds Scheme.

- Before the introduction of the [Electoral Bonds \(EB\) Scheme](#) in 2018, another scheme for Electoral funding called [Electoral Trusts \(ET\) Scheme](#), was introduced in 2013.

### What is Electoral Trusts Scheme?

#### ▪ About:

- Electoral Trusts Scheme, 2013 was notified by the [Central Board of Direct Taxes \(CBDT\)](#).
- An Electoral Trust is a Trust set up by companies with the **sole objective to distribute the contributions received** by it from other Companies and individuals **to the political parties**.
- Only the **companies registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956** are eligible to make an application for approval as an Electoral Trust. The electoral trusts have to **apply for renewal every three financial years**.
- The scheme lays down a procedure for grant of approval to an electoral trust which will receive voluntary contributions and distribute the same to the political parties.
- The provisions related to the electoral trust are under **Income-tax Act, 1961** and **Income tax rules-1962**.

#### ▪ Contributions to Electoral Trusts:

- They may receive contributions from:
  - An individual who is a citizen of India
  - A company registered in India
  - A firm or Hindu undivided family or an Association of persons or a body of individuals, resident in India.
- They shall not accept contributions from:
  - An individual who is not a citizen of India or from any foreign entity whether incorporated or not;
  - Any other electoral trust registered under the scheme.

#### ▪ Mechanism for Distribution of Funds:

- For administrative expenses, the Electoral Trusts are permitted to set aside a maximum of 5% of the total funds collected during a financial year.

- The remaining 95% of total income of the Trusts is required to be distributed to eligible political parties.
  - Parties registered under the [Representation of the People Act, 1951](#) are eligible to receive the contributions.
- Electoral trust are required to keep and **maintain books of account including details of receipts, distribution and list of donors and receivers.**
- **Audit of Accounts of Electoral Trusts:**
  - Every electoral trust is required to get its accounts audited by an accountant and furnish the **audit report to the Commissioner of Income-tax** or the Director of Income-tax.

## What are Electoral Bonds?

- **Electoral Bond** is a financial instrument for making donations to political parties.
- The bonds are issued in **multiples of Rs. 1,000, Rs. 10,000, Rs. 1 lakh, Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 1 crore** without any maximum limit.
- **State Bank of India is authorised** to issue and encash these bonds, which are valid for fifteen days from the date of issuance.
- These bonds are redeemable in the designated account of a registered political party.
- The bonds are **available for purchase** by any person (who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India) **for a period of ten days each in the months of January, April, July and October** as may be specified by the Central Government.
- A person being an individual can buy bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.
- **Donor's name is not mentioned** on the bond.

## How is Electoral Trust Scheme different from Electoral Bonds Scheme?

- **Transparency and Accountability:**
  - The functioning of **ETs is marked by transparency.** Contributors and beneficiaries are disclosed.
    - Electoral Trusts adhere to a robust reporting system, submitting detailed annual **contribution reports to the Election Commission of India (ECI).** This ensures a comprehensive record of donations and their allocation.
  - On the other hand, the **EB Scheme** introduces a significant **lack of transparency.**
    - The **anonymity of donors** creates an opaque environment in the funding process, making it challenging to trace the origins of contributions.
- **Funding Trends (2013-14 to 2021-22):**
  - Data from nine financial years (2013-14 to 2021-22) show that political funding through the two government schemes shot up after the introduction of EBs, with the **bulk of donations coming through the EB scheme.**
    - Between 2017-18 and 2021-22, political parties got a total Rs 1,631 crore through ETs, while Rs 9,208 crore was donated through EBs.
- **Political Party Receipts:**
  - As per a [report by the Association for Democratic Reforms \(ADR\)](#), a **single political party has secured 72% of the total donations** facilitated by ETs in the year 2021-22 and **57% of the funding through EBs** from 2013-14 to 2021-22.
  - The report also found that more than **55% of the funding** for political parties came through EBs.

**Legal Insights:** [Electoral Bonds Case](#)

<https://www.drishtijudiciary.com/>

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# QS World University Rankings: Asia 2024

[Source: IE](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, the global higher education think-tank **Quacquarelli Symonds** has released the QS Asia University Rankings: Asia 2024, including 148 universities from India in the comprehensive list of 856 universities across Asia.

## What is QS World University Rankings?

- [QS World University Rankings](#) are released annually by **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)**.
- The rankings evaluate the **performance and quality of universities worldwide**.
- The methodology considers indicators such as **academic reputation, faculty-student ratio, employer reputation**, sustainability, employment outcomes, international research network, citations per faculty, international faculty ratio, and international student ratio.
- They provide rankings by subject, region, student city, business school, and sustainability.

## What are the Key Highlights of the QS World University Rankings: Asia 2024?

- **Top Ranking Universities:**
  - **Peking University (China) topped the list**, followed by the University of Hong Kong (Hongkong) and National University of Singapore (NUS) (Singapore).
- **Indian Universities' Performance:**
  - IIT Bombay retains its **top ranking in India and is ranked 40<sup>th</sup> in Asia**.
  - Seven Indian institutions are **among the top 100 in Asia**, with five of them being **Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)**, along with the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, and Delhi University.
    - The increasing visibility of Indian universities in international rankings reflects the expansion of **India's higher education landscape and its contributions** to global research.

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Indian Universities in QS World University: Asia 2024 - Top 200

2024	2023	Change	QS WUR	Institution	Location
40	40	0	149	Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB)	Mumbai
46	46	0	197	Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD)	Delhi
53	53	0	285	Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM)	Chennai
58	52	6	225	Indian Institute of Science	Bangalore
59	61	2	271	Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT-KGP)	Kharagpur
63	66	3	278	Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)	Kanpur
=94	85=	9	407	University of Delhi	Delhi
111	124=	13	364	Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG)	Guwahati
116	114	2	369	Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IITR)	Roorkee
117	119	2	606	Jawaharlal Nehru University	Delhi
149	185=	36	777	Chandigarh University	Chandigarh
163	173	10	888	Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT)	Vellore
=171	205=	34		Bharathiar University	Coimbatore
=179	185=	6	427	Anna University	Chennai
186	200=	14	1100	Amity University	Noida
=187	181	6	847	University of Calcutta	Kolkata
=199	207=	8	1084	Banaras Hindu University	Varanasi

▪ **India Surpasses China:**

- India has surpassed China in the **number of universities featured in the QS World University Rankings: Asia 2024**, indicating a significant increase compared to the previous year, with 37 new entries from India, while China had only seven new entries.

▪ **India's Strengths and Challenges:**

- While India performs well in terms of research output and highly qualified faculty members with PhDs, it falls **below the regional average in academic and employer reputation**.
- India's research output has **increased significantly**, showing a 60% increase from 2018 to 2022, more than double the global average.
- However, the growth **gap with China is narrowing**, with India catching up in terms of research output.

**What are the Indian Initiatives Related to Education and Research?**

▪ **Institutions of Eminence (IoE) Scheme:**

- It is a government's scheme to provide the regulatory architecture for setting up or upgrading of 20 Institutions (10 from public sector and 10 from the private sector) as world-class teaching and research institutions called 'Institutions of Eminence'.

▪ **National Education Policy, 2020:**

- It aims to introduce several changes in the Indian education system - from the school to college level and make India a global knowledge superpower.

▪ **Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT):**

- It is a first-of-its-kind Pan-IIT and IISc joint initiative to develop a new education policy and a roadmap for research to solve major engineering and technology challenges that India must address and champion to enable, empower and embolden the nation for inclusive growth and self-reliance.

▪ **Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY):**

- It was announced with a view to promote innovation of a higher order that directly impacts the needs of the Industry and thereby improves the competitive edge of Indian manufacturing.



# One Year of Project Cheetah

**For Prelims:** [Cheetah Reintroduction Plan](#), [Kuno-Palpur National Park \(KNP\)](#), [CITES](#)

**For Mains:** Challenges Associated with the Translocation of Cheetah in India, Importance of Biodiversity, Genetic, Species, Ecosystem.

**Source:** IE

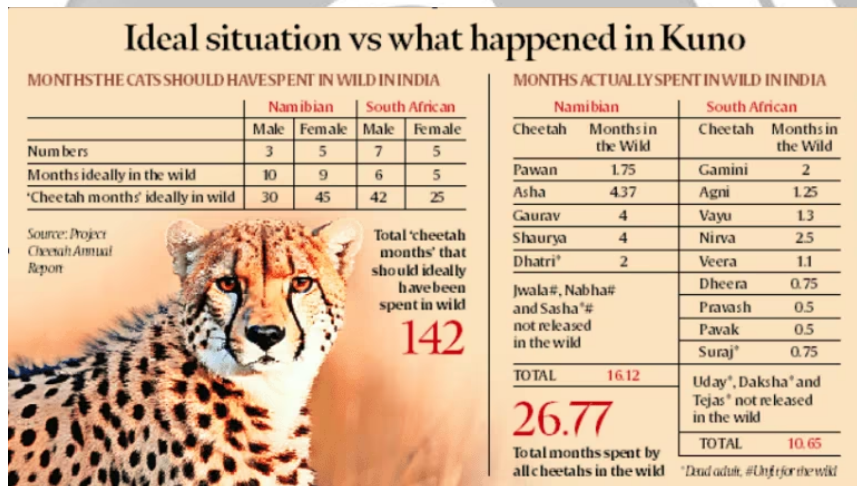
## Why in News?

Project **Cheetah**, India's ambitious attempt to introduce **African cheetahs** in the wild in the country, has been **completed a year** after its launch in **September 2022**.

- The project has claimed to have achieved **short-term success on four counts: “50% survival of introduced cheetahs from South Africa and Namibia, the establishment of home ranges, the birth of cubs in Kuno”**, and revenue generation for local communities.

## What Are the Comprehensive Outcomes of Project Cheetah's First Year?

- Survival in the Wild:**
  - According to [the Cheetah reintroduction project](#), Cheetahs, meant for a total of **142 months in the wild, spent less than 27 months combined**.
  - The project faced a **setback with a 40% loss in the functional adult population**, resulting in the **death of six out of 20 cheetahs**, including Dhatri, Sasha, Suraj, Uday, Daksha, and Tejas.
    - Additionally, four cubs were born in India, of which three died, and the fourth is being raised in captivity.



- Home Range Establishment:**
  - The goal was for cheetahs to establish home ranges in Kuno.
    - Only three cheetahs**, namely Namibian imports Asha, Gaurav, and Shaurya, spent more than three months continuously **in the wild**. However, they have been confined to bomas(enclosures) since July 2023.
  - There are doubts about the successful establishment of "home ranges" in Kuno.
- Reproduction Success:**
  - The Action Plan aimed at successful cheetah reproduction in the wild.

- **Siyaya aka Jwala, a Namibian female**, gave birth to four cubs in Kuno. However, she was captive-raised and considered unfit for the wild. Her cubs were born inside a hunting boma.
  - The reproduction goal faces challenges and compromises, raising questions about the project's long-term success.
- **Contribution to Local Livelihood:**
  - Project Cheetah positively contributed by generating jobs, and contracts, and **appreciating land prices around Kuno.**
    - **No reported human-cheetah conflicts** in the area, indicating a harmonious coexistence between the introduced cheetahs and local communities.

## What Challenges Does Project Cheetah Face?

- **Integrity Challenges:**
  - Three Namibian cheetahs, Sasha (the project's first casualty), Jwala, and Savannah alias Nabha, were captive-raised as "**research subjects**," compromising the integrity of the project.
- **Shift in Stance:**
  - India's decision to abstain from the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\) vote against trade in elephant ivory](#) weeks after importing cheetahs raised ethical concerns about the project's commitments.
- **Paradigm Shift Ahead:**
  - Kuno's inability to support a **genetically self-sustaining population** necessitates a paradigm shift towards a **meta-population approach.**
    - A meta-population approach involves managing distinct populations of a species in fragmented habitats, acknowledging their interdependence for long-term viability and genetic diversity.
  - Unlike leopards, **cheetahs cannot travel long distances** between scattered populations on their own.
  - Borrowing from the South African model of periodic translocation for genetic viability is proposed, but concerns arise about the impact on forest connectivity for natural wildlife dispersal.
- **Kuno's Carrying Capacity:**
  - The Cheetah Action Plan estimated a high probability of long-term persistence with populations **exceeding 50 individuals.**
    - A feasibility report in 2010 estimated 347 sq km of Kuno could sustain 27 cheetahs, while the larger 3,000 sq km landscape could hold 70-100 animals.
    - Revised assessments in 2020 indicated Kuno's cheetal density at 38 per sq km, supporting 21 cheetahs, challenging the feasibility of a single population of 50 cheetahs.
- The project's only option now is a **meta-population scattered over central and western India**, posing challenges compared to the South African model of assisted dispersal.

## What is the Cheetah Reintroduction Project?

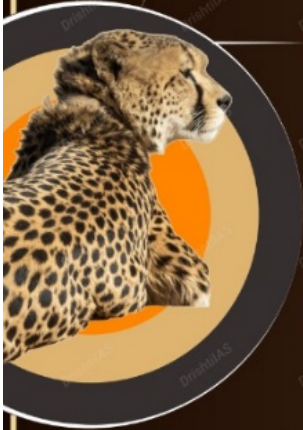
- The Cheetah Reintroduction Project in India formally commenced on September 17, 2022, to restore **the population of cheetahs**, which were declared **extinct in the country in 1952.**
- The project involves the translocation of cheetahs from South Africa and Namibia to **Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.**
- The project is implemented by the [National Tiger Conservation Authority \(NTCA\)](#) in collaboration with the **Madhya Pradesh Forest Department**, [Wildlife Institute of India \(WII\)](#), and cheetah experts from Namibia and South Africa.

# Cheetah

**Common Name** - Cheetah

**Scientific Name** - *Acinonyx jubatus*

- *Acinonyx jubatus jubatus* (African Cheetah)
- *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* (Asiatic Cheetah)



## Reintroduction of Cheetah to India:

- The "Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India" was released by MoEF&CC at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (January 2022).
  - Such a plan was first proposed in 2009.
- In September 2022, eight cheetahs landed in India from Namibia.
  - The 8 cheetahs have been relocated to the Kuno-Palpur National Park, Madhya Pradesh.
- The relocation of cheetahs to India from Namibia is the world's first inter-continental large wild carnivore translocation project.

Slightly brownish and golden skin; thicker than the Asiatic Cheetahs

More prominent spots and lines on the face

Found all over the African continent

**IUCN Red List Status - Vulnerable**



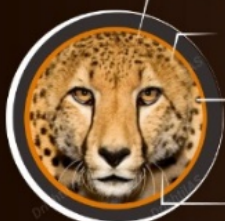
## African Cheetah

Slightly smaller than the African ones.

Pale yellowish fawn coloured skin - more fur under body, belly specifically.

Found only in Iran; the country claims there are only 12 of them left. Year 1952 - Asiatic Cheetah officially declared extinct from India.

**IUCN Red List Status - Critically Endangered**



## Asiatic Cheetah



## Note:

- Cheetahs, the **fastest land animals**, are considered "**crepuscular**" hunters, meaning they hunt at sunrise and sunset.
- Cheetah females have a **gestation period of 92-95 days**; and will give birth to a litter of approximately three or five cubs.

[https://youtu.be/0sm\\_NIXrgTO](https://youtu.be/0sm_NIXrgTO)



## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. Consider the following: (2012)**

1. Black-necked crane
2. Cheetah
3. Flying squirrel
4. Snow leopard

**Which of the above are naturally found in India?**

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 1, 3 and 4 only  
(c) 2 and 4 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (b)**

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## India's Energy Conservation Building Code, 2017

**For Prelims:** India's Energy Conservation Building Code, 2017, [International Energy Agency \(IEA\)](#), World Energy Outlook 2023, [Strategic Partnership Agreement with the IEA](#), [IEA Clean Coal Centre](#).

**For Mains:** India's Energy Conservation Building Code, 2017, Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**Source: IE**

### Why in News?

Recently, the **International Energy Agency (IEA)**, in its **World Energy Outlook 2023**, report has highlighted that **India's Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), 2017** sets it apart from other developing economies.

- The IEA stated that India is unique among developing countries because its rules for energy efficiency in commercial buildings are strong, whereas in many other developing countries, energy efficiency **in buildings is not as advanced as India**.

### What is the International Energy Agency?

- The International Energy Agency is **an autonomous Intergovernmental Organisation** established in **1974 in Paris, France**.
- IEA mainly focuses on its energy policies which include economic development, energy security and environmental protection. These policies are also known as the 3 E's of IEA.
- India became an **Associate member of IEA in March 2017** but it was in engagement with IEA long before its association with the organization.



- Recently, India has inked a [Strategic Partnership Agreement with the IEA](#) to strengthen cooperation in global energy security, stability and sustainability.
- The World Energy Outlook Report is released by the IEA annually.
- [IEA Clean Coal Centre](#) is dedicated to providing independent information and analysis on how coal can become a cleaner source of energy, compatible with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## What is India's Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), 2017?

- **About:**
  - The ECBC was first released by the **Ministry of Power's Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in 2007**, followed by an update in 2017.
    - Currently, 23 states have notified **rules to enforce ECBC compliance**, while large states like Maharashtra and Gujarat **are still in the process of drafting rules**.
  - ECBC sets minimum energy standards for commercial buildings, with the objective of enabling energy savings of between 25 and 50% in compliant buildings.
  - The code is **applicable to commercial buildings like hospitals**, hotels, schools, shopping complexes, and multiplexes which have a connected load of 100 kW or more, or contract demand of 120 kVA or more.
- **Focus:**
  - The ECBC in India **focuses on six key components** of building design, including the envelope (walls, roofs, windows), lighting systems, HVAC (Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems, and electrical power systems.
  - These components **have both mandatory and prescriptive requirements**. The code applies to both new constructions and retrofitting existing buildings.
  - Compliant **buildings are assigned one of three tags in ascending order** of efficiency, namely ECBC, ECBC Plus, and Super ECBC.
- **Need for ECBC:**
  - Implementation of energy efficiency building codes like ECBC is important as **buildings in India account for 30% of total electricity consumption**, a figure that is expected to touch 50% by 2042.
  - Furthermore, BEE notes that 40% of buildings that will exist in the next twenty years are yet to be built, which gives **policymakers and builders a unique opportunity to ensure that they are built in a sustainable manner**.
- **Evolution from 2007 to 2017:**
  - The 2017 update of ECBC **introduces additional priorities**, such as renewable energy integration, ease of compliance, and the **inclusion of passive building design strategies**.
  - It also **emphasizes flexibility for designers**. This marks **a significant shift from the 2007 version** and aligns with **global trends towards sustainable and energy-efficient practices**.

## Where Do States Stand In ECBC Implementation?

- Out of 28 states, only 15, including Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Kerala, **have adopted the latest 2017 (ECBC) rules**.
- However, Gujarat, Maharashtra, J&K, Ladakh, and Manipur are **yet to implement these rules**, missing out on potential energy savings.
  - The National Research Development Corporation estimates that Gujarat alone could save 83 terawatt-hours of energy by 2030 with effective **ECBC compliance**.
- The [State Energy Efficiency Index \(SEEI\) of 2022](#) ranked **Karnataka as the top state for energy efficiency in buildings**, followed by Telangana, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, and Punjab.
  - On the flip side, **Bihar scored the lowest, and along with Odisha**, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Jharkhand, ranked as the five worst states for energy efficiency in buildings.

## What are the Government Initiatives to Promote Energy Conservation and

## Energy Efficiency?

- **PAT Scheme:**
  - [Perform Achieve and Trade Scheme \(PAT\)](#) is a market based mechanism to enhance the cost effectiveness in improving the Energy Efficiency in Energy Intensive industries through certification of energy saving which can be traded.
  - It is a part of the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE), which is one of the eight missions under the [National Action Plan on Climate Change \(NAPCC\)](#).
- **Standards and Labeling:**
  - The scheme was launched in 2006 and is currently invoked for equipments/appliances Room Air Conditioner (Fixed/VariableSpeed), Ceiling Fan, Colour Television, Computer, Direct Cool Refrigerator, Distribution Transformer, Domestic Gas Stove, General Purpose Industrial Motor, LED Lamps, Agricultural Pumpset, etc.
- **Demand Side Management (DSM):**
  - DSM is the selection, planning, and implementation of measures intended to have an influence on the demand or customer-side of the electric meter.

## Way Forward

- The IEA recognises India is among the few developing countries that have building codes for commercial and residential buildings, and the uniform enforcement of it can lead to significant energy savings in the sector.
- India also passed the [Energy Conservation \(Amendment\) Act in 2022](#), which further expands the ambit of building codes in the country.
  - Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022 provides for the transitioning of ECBC into Energy Conservation and Sustainability Building Code by incorporating measures relating to embedded carbon, net zero emissions, materials and resource efficiency, deployment of clean energy, and circularity.

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## UGC Regulations Open Doors for Foreign Universities in India

[Source: IE](#)

### Why in News?

The [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#) has recently released regulations that pave the way for foreign universities, ranked among the **world's top 500, to establish branch campuses in India.**

- The move aligns with the [National Education Policy 2020](#), envisioning a legislative framework for top global universities in India.
- The guidelines were notified after the [draft norms announced by UGC for Foreign universities](#) were made public for feedback.

### What are the Key Aspects of these Regulations?

- **Collaborative Initiatives:**
  - **Two or more** foreign universities can **collaborate** to establish campuses in India.
    - Each participating institution must meet individual eligibility criteria.
    - Each foreign university has the opportunity to set up **more than one** campus in the country.

- **Faculty Engagement Requirements:**
  - International faculty appointed for Indian campuses must commit to staying in the **country for a minimum of one semester.**
    - This ensures a sustained and meaningful contribution to the academic environment.
- **Application Process Modifications:**
  - The time for the standing committee to process applications has been **extended from 45 to 60 days.**
    - Recommendations of the committee must be presented before the UGC within the revised 60-day timeframe.
- **Autonomy:**
  - Foreign universities are permitted to decide their admission process, fee structure, and also repatriate funds to their parent campuses.
- **Restrictions on Operations:**
  - Foreign universities are **prohibited** from **opening learning centers**, study centers, or franchises acting as representative offices without prior commission approval.
    - Approval is mandatory before initiating any new program on their Indian campuses.
- **Online Learning Constraints:**
  - Programs **cannot be offered online or in Open and [Distance Learning](#)** modes under these regulations.
    - Lectures in online mode are allowed but should **not exceed 10% of the program requirements.**
- **Financial Implications:**
  - Foreign universities are **exempt from paying annual fees to the UGC**, except for a one-time application fee.
    - The establishment of campuses should be **funded using the foreign universities' own infrastructure, land, and resources.**
- **Scholarships and Fee Concessions:**
  - Foreign universities are encouraged to provide **full or partial merit-based and need-based scholarships and fee concessions to Indian students.**

## University Grants Commission (UGC)

- It came into existence on **28<sup>th</sup> December, 1953** and became a statutory body by an **Act of Parliament in 1956**, for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in **[university education](#)**.
  - It also regulates the recognition of **fake universities, autonomous colleges, deemed to be universities**, and distance education institutions.
- The head office of the **UGC is located in New Delhi.**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. Which of the following provisions of the Constitution does India have a bearing on Education? (2012)**

1. Directive Principles of State Policy
2. Rural and Urban Local Bodies
3. Fifth Schedule
4. Sixth Schedule
5. Seventh Schedule

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

**(a) 1 and 2 only**

- (b) 3, 4 and 5 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans: (d)

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## Rapid Fire Current Affairs

### Winter Session of Parliament to Start on December 4

The Winter Session of Parliament will begin on December 4, 2023 as per the announcement of the Union government.

- This will also be the first full session to be held in the new Parliament building. A five-day Special Session had been held in September, 2023 during which the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha had ceremonially moved their sittings to the new building.
- India does not have a fixed parliamentary calendar. By convention (i.e. not provided by the Constitution), Parliament meets for three sessions in a year.
  - The longest, Budget Session (1st session), starts towards the end of January, and concludes by the end of April or first week of May. The session has a recess so that Parliamentary Committees can discuss the budgetary proposals.
  - The second session is the three-week Monsoon Session, which usually begins in July and finishes in August.
  - Third session is the Winter Session.

Read More: [Parliament Sessions](#)

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### Supreme Court Attains Full Strength

The **Supreme Court** welcomed three new judges, taking the judicial strength to its sanctioned capacity of 34, which becomes significant as the pendency clock on the **National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)** dashboard has risen to a high of 80,000 cases.

- Supreme Court **collegium** held that in view of the ever mounting pendency of cases, the workload of judges has increased considerably which necessitated the court having full working judge strength leaving no vacancy at any point of time.
- The swearing-in of the three judges and the court reaching its full judicial strength coincides with **Chief Justice of India** completing a year in the office.

Read More: [Case Information Software \(CIS\)](#), [Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency](#)

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### Headline Inflation and Food Price Shocks

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor** in a keynote speech delivered in Tokyo, highlighted the need for **vigilant and disinflationary monetary policy in India**, amid the threats of **food price shocks, global slowdown** and **geopolitical uncertainties**.
  - **Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation** is projected at 5.4% for 2023-24, down from 6.7% in 2022-23, but **headline inflation** is vulnerable to recurring and overlapping food price shocks
    - **Core inflation** has decreased by 170 basis points since January 2023. **Monetary policy is vigilant and actively focused on disinflation** to bring inflation in line



with the target while also supporting economic growth.

- **Headline Inflation**, as the name suggests, is the total inflation for the period, comprising a basket of commodities.
  - **Core inflation = Headline inflation - (Food and Fuel) inflation.**
- Amidst global economic challenges, policymaking grapples with trade-offs. India, staying agile, sees Japan as a key partner for future growth.

**Read more:** [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#)

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## Bihar Assembly Passes Bill to Increase Reservation Quota

- The Bihar Assembly has unanimously passed a bill to **elevate reservation quotas** in educational institutions and government jobs for various communities.
- The overall reservation quota for **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs),** and **Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** has been raised from **50% to 65%**.
  - With the existing **10% quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), the effective reservation becomes 75%.**
- The bill emphasizes **inclusive growth and aims to address societal inequalities.**
- The proposed changes align with the **caste survey report**, providing a strategic direction for policy reform.
- The Bill is set to be presented in the Legislative Council, with expectations of unanimous approval.

**Read more:** [Rethinking Reservation Policies in India](#)

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