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Withdrawal of General Consent to CBI

- Recently, the Maharashtra government withdrew its general consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe cases in the State.
- The move comes a day after the CBI registered an FIR in the TRP scam after taking over the probe based on an FIR filed in Uttar Pradesh.
- **General Consent -** is normally given to help the CBI seamlessly conduct its investigation into cases of corruption against central government employees in the concerned state.
- Maharashtra is the fourth State after Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Rajasthan to take such an action.
- Outcomes of the move

1. Withdrawal of General Consent means the CBI will not be able to register any fresh case involving a central government official or a private person stationed in Maharashtra without getting case-specific consent.
2. Withdrawal of consent will only bar the CBI from registering a case within the jurisdiction of concerned states.
3. The CBI could still file cases in Delhi and continue to probe people inside Maharashtra.
4. In simple terms withdrawal of consent means that CBI officers will lose all powers of a police officer as soon as they enter the state unless the state government has allowed them.
5. It will have no impact on investigation of cases already registered with CBI as old cases were registered when general consent existed.

South Asian Flash Flood Guidance System

- Recently, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has launched the South Asian Flash Flood Guidance System (FFGS).
- It is aimed at helping disaster management teams and governments make timely evacuation plans ahead of the actual event of flooding.
- South Asian Flash Flood Guidance System has been developed by US-based Hydrologic Research Centre after the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and few South Asian countries put forth their views and the urgent need for such a warning system.

1. Based on the rainfall and potential flooding scenario, flash flood warnings will be issued to respective nations.
2. Flash flood threat warning will be issued six hours in advance, whereas flood risk warning will be issued 24 hours in advance.
3. Warnings about watershed level will be issued 12 hours in advance.

- India is leading the delegation of nations, including Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, in sharing hydrological and meteorological data towards preparing flash flood forecasts.
- India's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Central Water Commission (CWC) partnered in developing the system.

Flash Floods

- Flash Floods are sudden surges in water levels during or following an intense spell of rain.
- These are highly localised events of short duration with a very high peak and usually have less than six hours between the occurrence of the rainfall and peak flood.
- The flood situation worsens in the presence of choked drainage lines or encroachments obstructing the natural flow of water.
- Forecasting flash floods is very difficult as an event can occur within three to six hours and the water run-off quantity is very high.
- Frequency of extreme rainfall events has increased due to climate change and south Asia is highly prone to flash floods.

International Snow Leopard Day

- The day aims to raise awareness on conservation and protection of snow leopards.
- International Snow Leopard Day came into being on 23rd October, 2013, with the adoption of the Bishkek Declaration by 12 countries on the conservation of snow leopards.
- The 12 countries included, India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- The Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP) was also launched on the same day to address high-mountain development issues using conservation of the snow leopard as a flagship.

Snow Leopard

- The Snow Leopard is also known as Ghost of the mountains.
- It acts as an indicator of the health of the mountain ecosystem in which they live, due to their position as the top predator in the food web.
- The Snow Leopard lives at high altitudes in the steep mountains of Central and Southern Asia, and in an extremely cold climate.
- They inhabit the higher Himalayan and trans-Himalayan landscape in the states/union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- India is a unique country to have a good presence of 5 big cats, including Snow Leopard.
- The other 4 are, Lion, Tiger, Common Leopard, and Clouded Leopard.
- Snow Leopard capital of the world is Hemis National Park, Ladakh.
- The animal is protected under the following conventions

1. IUCN Red List- Vulnerable
2. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)- Appendix I
3. Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)- Appendix I
4. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction.
5. Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972- Schedule I

Foreign Exchange Reserves

- Foreign exchange reserves are assets held on reserve by a central bank in foreign currencies, which can include bonds, treasury bills and other government securities.
- India’s Forex Reserves include:

1. Foreign Currency Assets
2. Gold
3. Special Drawing Rights
4. Reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
5. Foreign Currency Assets

- It needs to be noted that most foreign exchange reserves are held in U.S. dollars.
- These assets serve many purposes but are most significantly held to ensure that the central bank has backup funds if the national currency rapidly devalues or becomes altogether insolvent.
- According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the country’s foreign exchange (forex) reserves touched a lifetime high of USD 555.12 billion.
- The rise in total reserves was due to a sharp rise in Foreign Currency

Assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves.
- FCA jumped by USD 3.539 billion to USD 512.322 billion.

Foreign Currency Assets

- FCA are assets that are valued based on a currency other than the country's own currency.
- FCA is the largest component of the forex reserve. It is expressed in dollar terms.
- FCA includes the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.
- Currency appreciation refers to the increase in value of one currency relative to another in the forex markets.
- Currency depreciation is a fall in the value of a currency in a floating exchange rate system.
- In a floating exchange rate system, market forces (based on demand and supply of a currency) determine the value of a currency.

ILO Governing Body

- Recently India has assumed the Chairmanship of the Governing Body of International Labour Organization (ILO).
- Labour & Employment Secretary Apurva Chandra has been elected as the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO for the period October 2020-June 2021.
- The Chairperson of the Governing Body of ILO is a position of international repute.
- The Governing Body (GB) is the apex executive body of the ILO.
- GB meets thrice a year, in March, June and November, Functions of GB are as follows

1. It takes decisions on ILO policy,
2. Decides the agenda of the International Labour Conference,
3. Ddopts the draft programme and budget of the organisation for submission to the conference,
4. Elects the Director-General.

- The broad policies of the ILO are set by the International Labour Conference, which meets once a year in June, in Geneva, Switzerland.

United Nations Day

- United Nations Day 2020 is being observed on 24 October, since 1948.

- UN Day marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter.
- The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and its founding Charter.
- The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when the Charter had been ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States and by a majority of other signatories.
- The Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 by the representatives of the 50 countries.
- Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 Member States.
- The name "United Nations" was coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and first used in the Declaration by United Nations of 1 January 1942, during Second World War.

Source: PIB, the Hindu, Indian Express

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