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Common Electoral Role

- Currently, in many Indian states, the voters' list for the panchayat and municipality elections is different from the one used for Parliament and Assembly elections.
- This distinction arises from the fact that the supervision and conduct of elections in our country are entrusted with two constitutional bodies

1. Election Commission (EC) of India and
2. State Election Commissions (SECs)

- Each State Election Commission (SEC) is governed by a separate state Act.
- Few state laws allow the SEC to borrow and use the EC's voter's rolls for the local body elections.
- In a few states, the state commission uses the EC's voters list as the basis for the preparation and revision of rolls for municipality and panchayat elections.
- Currently, all states, except Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, adopt EC's rolls for local body polls.
- Recently a High level meeting was help in PMO to discuss the possibility of having a common electoral roll for elections to the panchayat, municipality, state assembly, and the Lok Sabha.
- In the meeting, the following two options were discussed.
- **Constitutional amendment** to Articles 243K and 243ZA - These provisions give the power of superintendence, direction, and control of preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of local body elections to the SECs.
- The amendment would make it mandatory to have a single electoral roll for all elections in the country.
- **Tweaking State laws -** To persuade the state governments to tweak their respective laws and adopt the Election Commission's (EC) voters list for municipal and panchayat polls.

Urdu Language

- Urdu is a major language of South Asia, It is spoken in countries including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal.
- Both Urdu and Hindi belong to the new Indo-Aryan group sharing the same Indic base.
- Urdu is one of the languages mentioned in the 8th Schedule to the Constitution.
- Urdu had developed and flourished in Delhi during the period of 'Delhi Sultanate' from 12th to 16th century.
- Then during the period of 'Mughal Empire' in Delhi from 16th century to 19th century when several court poets used this language in their great poetry and writings.
- Its first major folk poet Amir Khusrau (1253-1325), composed dohas (couplets) and riddles in the newly-formed speech, then called Hindavi.
- When Delhi Sultanate and then Mughal Empire spread in the Deccan, Urdu spread in southern states.
- The language derived even local words from the local languages of those states and developed as a 'Dakhni' language which was a bit distinctive of Urdu language in the North.
- The divide between Urdu and Hindi occurred under the colonial impact.
- Hindi and Urdu got split along religious lines with Hindi in Nagari script becoming identified with Hindus, and Urdu in Persian script identified with Muslims.
- World Urdu Conference 2020 was held recently by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL)

National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language

- National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language started functioning as an autonomous body in 1996, under the Union Ministry of Education.
- It is the National Nodal Agency for Promotion of Urdu.
- NCPUL has also been assigned the responsibility of promotion of Arabic and Persian.
- NCPUL would advise the Government on issues connected with Urdu language as may be referred to it.

Chunauti Contest

- Union Ministry for Electronics and Information Technology has launched "Chunauti"- Next Generation Startup Challenge Contest.
- It aims to further boost startups and software products with special focus

on Tier-II towns in the country.

- The contest will identify around three hundred startups working in specified areas and providing them seed funds of up to 25 lakh rupees and other facilities.
- The areas identified potential under the scheme are

1. Edu Tech,
2. Agri Tech
3. Fintech solutions for masses,
4. Supply Chain and Logistic management,
5. Infrastructure,
6. Medical Healthcare as well as jobs and skilling.

- The government has allocated a budget of over 95 crore rupees over a period of three years for this programme.

AREAS website

- Recently union government has launched a website for Association of Renewable Energy Agencies of States (AREAS).
- AREAS provides State Nodal Agencies (SNAs) for Renewable Energy (RE) to interact and learn from each other's experiences and also share their best practices and knowledge regarding technologies and schemes/programmes.
- The Union Minister for New & Renewable Energy (NRE) is the Patron of the Association.
- Secretary of MNRE is the ex-officio President of the Association.
- All SNAs are members of the Association.
- AREAS is registered under Society Registration Act, 1860.

Perseids Meteor Shower

- The Perseids are one of the brighter meteor showers of the year, it was active from August 17-26.
- They occur every year between July and August and tend to peak around mid-August.
- Perseids are made of tiny space debris from the comet Swift-Tuttle.
- The Perseids are widely sought after by astronomers and stargazers because most years at its peak, one can see 60 to 100 meteors in an hour from a dark place.
- They are visible in the Northern Hemisphere and can be viewed in skies all across.

Excellence in PubAd 2020 Awards

- PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration was constituted in 2006 to acknowledge the extraordinary work done by districts and organizations of the Central and State Governments.
- The award consists of a trophy, scroll and an incentive of Rs. 10 lakh to the awarded district or organization.
- The Award will be conferred by the Prime Minister on Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) -31st October 2020 at the Statue of Unity, Gujarat.
- The award programme was restructured in 2014 for recognizing the performance of District Collectors in Priority Programs, Innovations and Aspirational Districts.
- It has been restructured again in 2020, to recognize the contribution of civil servants in strengthening of:

1. Inclusive Development through Credit Flow to the Priority Sector.
2. Promoting people's movements through Swachh Bharat Mission in the District.
3. Improving Service Delivery and Redressal of Public Grievances.

- The restructuring also seeks to recognize the efforts of District level officials in the Namami Gange Program and to recognize the performance of District Collectors towards economic development of the District.
- The award for the Aspirational Districts Program has been revamped to reward the District having the best overall progress under the Scheme following 2 years of implementation.
- Through restructuring, the scope of the awards has been expanded to identify areas of overall outcome-oriented performance in the districts across sectors.

Source: PIB, AIR News, Indian Express

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