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Presidential election

- The term of the current President of India is about to end in July 2022, along with the 16th presidential election will be held in the country to elect his successor.

How is the President elected?

- The Indian President is elected through an Electoral College system, in which votes are cast by national and state level MPs.
- The election is conducted by the Election Commission of India (EC).
- The Electoral College is made up of all the elected members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha MPs) and elected members of the Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) of the States and Union Territories.

Related Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 54:** Election of the President.
- **Article 55:** Procedure for the election of the President.
- **Article 56:** Term of office of the President.
- **Article 57:** Eligibility for re-election.
- **Article 58:** Qualification for election as President.

Process:

- Before voting comes the nomination phase, where the candidate submits his intention to stand for election and files his nomination along with a signed list of 50 proposers and 50 supporters.
- These proposers and supporters can be any of the members of the Electoral College at the state and national level.

- The rule requiring 50 proposers and supporters was introduced when the Election Commission observed in 1974 that nominations were filed by many candidates, many of whom had little chance of winning.
- A voter cannot propose or support the nomination of more than one candidate.

What is the value of each vote and how is it calculated?

- The vote cast by each MP or MLA does not count as one vote.
- The value of vote of each MP of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha is fixed at 708.
- The value of votes of MLAs depends on the population of different states.
- According to the Constitution (84th Amendment) Act 2001, at present the population of the states is based on the census data of 1971, which will be changed after the publication of census data after the year 2026.
- The value of each MLA's vote is determined by dividing it by the number of MLAs in the state assembly and dividing the quotient obtained by 1000.
- For example in Uttar Pradesh the highest vote value for each MLA is 208. The vote value of an MLA in Maharashtra is 175, while in Arunachal Pradesh it is just 8.

What is needed to ensure victory?

- A nominated candidate does not win by simple majority but is ensured through the system of securing a specific quota of votes. During the counting of votes, all valid votes cast by the electoral college through ballot papers are summed up by the Election Commission and the candidate for victory has to get 50% + 1 of the total votes cast.
- Unlike general elections, here voters vote for the candidate of one party and the names of the candidates are written in the order of preference on the electoral ballot paper.
- The President is elected according to the system of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote and the process of secret ballot is adopted.

Impeachment of the President:

- According to Article 61, the President can be removed from office before the expiry of his term only on the ground of 'violation of the Constitution'.
- However, the meaning of the phrase 'violation of the constitution' has not been defined in the Indian Constitution.
- The process of impeachment of the President can be initiated in either House of the Parliament.
- A motion against the President must be signed by at least one-fourth of the members of the House.
- The impeachment motion of the President should be passed by a special majority (two-thirds) in the original house.

- After this the motion is sent to the second house for consideration. The second house acts as an inspector. A select committee has been constituted to investigate the allegations against the President.
- During the process, the President has the right to defend himself through an authorized lawyer. He may choose to defend himself or may appoint a person/lawyer or Attorney General of India to do so.

Prison Modernization Plan: Ministry of Home Affairs

- Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued guidelines to the States and Union Territories to modernize the prisons under the Prisons Modernization Project.

Need for Prison Modernization Plan:

An integral part of the justice system:

- Prisons are an important and integral part of the criminal justice system of the country.
- They not only play an important role in detaining criminals but also help in the process of their reformation and reintegration into the society through various reform programs in prisons.
- Indian prisons are facing three long standing structural constraints **which include:**
 - Overcrowding in prisons.
 - Lack of staff and lack of finance.
 - Violent confrontation between prisoners.

Prison Modernization Plan:

- It has been decided by the Government of India to provide financial assistance to the States and Union Territories through Prison Modernization Scheme for using modern security equipment in prisons **which includes:**
- Enhancing the security of prisons.

- To facilitate the task of reform and rehabilitation of prisoners through corrective administrative programmes.
- **Duration:** The duration of this scheme is five years (Year 2021 to Year 2026).

Grant:

- The Central Government will provide grants-in-aid to the States and Union Territories for the implementation of the project.
- Grants-in-aid is the payment of aid, donation or contribution given by one government to another government, body, institution or person.

Implementation Strategy:

- The Ministry of Home Affairs will provide funds to the States/UTs on the basis of the number of prisons in a State/UT, the number of prisoners in jail, prison staff, etc.
- Decision on the proposal of financing will be taken by the Steering Committee constituted for the implementation of the Jail Modernization Plan.

Coverage:

- The project will cover all the States and Union Territories and will specifically cover different types of prisons like Central Jail, District Jail, Sub-jail, Women's Jail, Open Jail, Special Jail etc.

Objective of the scheme:

- Addressing the existing gaps in the security structure of prisons.
- Providing new security equipment to the prisons as per modern technology.
- Strengthening the prison security system through security devices like door frames / metal detectors / security poles, baggage scanners / frisking / search / jamming solutions etc.
- Administrative reforms, which include changing the mindset of prison officers handling prisoners through extensive training and introducing suitable programs for skill development and rehabilitation of prisoners including appointment of trained correctional specialists, behavioral experts, psychologists etc.

Other related initiatives of the government:

- **Modernization Scheme of Prisons:** The scheme for modernization of prisons was started in the year 2002-03 with the objective of improving the condition of prisons, prisoners and prison workers.
- **E-Jail Project:** The E-Jail project aims to bring efficiency in prison management through digitization.
- **Model Jail Manual 2016:** The manual provides detailed information about the legal services (including free services) available to prison inmates.
- **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA):** It was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which came into force on 9th November, 1995 to establish a nationwide network for providing free and efficient legal services to the weaker sections of the society.

Neptune Anti-Ship Cruise Missile

- Recently Ukraine claimed that it has damaged the Russian fleet's main ship 'Moskva' stationed in the Black Sea by attacking it with Neptune anti-ship cruise missiles.

About Neptune:

- The Neptune is a coastal anti-ship cruise missile that has a range of 300 km.
- The missile system was inducted into the Ukrainian Defense Forces in March 2021 after going through six years of testing and development phases.
- The cruise missile was developed in a hurry by the military as the Russian threat to Ukraine's coastal areas was growing rapidly since the annexation of Crimea in 2014.
- The missile's design is based on a Russian KH-35 cruise missile known as the AS-20 Kayak of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
- The attack was carried out by cruise missiles using TB-2 drones by Cruiser Air Defense Systems, among other measures.

Moskva:

- It is a guided missile cruiser of the Russian Navy named after the city of Moscow.
- A cruiser is a large surface warship built for high speed and high cruise radius, capable of defending not only its own fleet and coastline but also controlling enemy nations.
- Moskva was originally commissioned as Slava in the year 1983.
- It was recommissioned in the year 2000 as Moskva with updated weapon systems and electronics.
- It has a transfer capacity of 12,490 tonnes.
- It is the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Navy and has a crew of about 500 personnel.

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