

1. What do you understand by the collective responsibility by the Council of Ministers? How does it work? Explain.

Approach

We need to define collective responsibility by the Council of Ministers. Further we have to mention working of the concept of collective responsibility. We can put constitutional articles and examples related to concept

Introduction

Articles 75 and 164 of the Indian Constitution enshrine this principle of collective responsibility; these articles mention that the Council of Ministers of Union and States shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assembly of the State respectively

Body

The Constitution of India provides for a parliamentary system of government modelled on the British pattern, the council of ministers headed by the prime minister is the real executive authority in our politico-administrative system

The principle of collective responsibility implies that the council of ministers headed by the prime minister own joint responsibility to respective lower house of Union and states (i.e. Lok Sabha and state legislative assembly) for their all acts of omission and commission.

The fundamental principle underlying the working of parliamentary system of government is the principle of collective responsibility.

The principle of collective responsibility works in following ways and means-

- Team work: The council of ministers headed by Prime Minister or Chief Minister act as a team, and swim and sink together.
- No confidence motion: It is used to test the collective responsibility. This motion needs to garner the 50 lawmakers to introduce the motion in the lower house. The Lok Sabha and State legislative assemblies can remove respective council of ministers from office by passing a vote of no confidence. All the ministers have to resign including ministers from upper house (i.e. Rajya Sabha and State Legislative councils). E.g.: Atal Bihari Vajpayee government lost the no confidence motion in 1999.
- Binding decisions: The cabinet decisions bind all ministers even if they differed in the cabinet meeting. Every minister has to stand by cabinet decisions and support them both with and outside the Parliament.

- If any minister disagrees with a cabinet decision and is not prepared to defend it, he must resign. E.g.: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar resigned because of his differences with his colleagues on the Hindu Code Bill in 1953.
- The council of ministers can advise the president to dissolve the Lok Sabha on the ground that the House does not represent the views of the electorate faithfully and call for fresh elections.
- Prime Minister can bring about the collapse of the council of ministers by resigning from office. In 1963, Morarji Desai resigned as Prime Minister.
- The Prime Minister can ensure the realisation of the rule of collective responsibility by asking a minister to resign or advice the President to dismiss him in case of a difference of opinion or dissatisfaction with the performance of a minister

Conclusion

Collective responsibility is the bedrock principle of parliamentary government. It promotes the responsible government over stable government and enables parliamentary scrutiny of the government.

2. In the past few months, farmers' pressure groups have become highly vocal with respect to their demands. Do you think the presence of pressure groups makes a democracy stronger? Critically comment.

Approach

Candidates are expected to define the pressure groups and then can write how farmers groups pressurise government. As question directs candidates have to critically comment on role pressure groups in strengthening democracy.

Introduction

A pressure group is a group of people who are organised actively for promoting and defending their common interest. It is called so, as it attempts to bring a change in public policy by exerting pressure on the government. It acts as a liaison between the government and its members.

Body

Farmer's Pressure groups as interest groups or vested groups towards new farm laws:

- Pressure group in the farmers' interests occupies the domain between the state and the marketplace. Prominent farmers organization are All India Kisan Sabha, Bharatiya Kisan Union, Hind Kisan Panchayat, etc.
- Pressure groups trying influence the farms laws and its implementation in the government through methods like morcha, lobbying, correspondence, publicity, propagandising, petitioning, public debating, maintaining contacts with their legislators and many rounds of talk with agriculture minister.

- Their demands relate to procurement prices of agricultural products, fertiliser subsidy, tenancy rights, electricity charges, etc.

Pressure groups are agents of political socialisation they have role in strengthening the democracy:

- Pressure Groups bring the demands and needs of the people to the notice of the decision-makers. The process by which the claims of the people get crystallized and articulated is called interest articulation.
- Pressure groups play a vital role in the legislative process, not only as important structures of interest articulation, but also as active agencies engaged in lobbying with the legislators for securing desired laws or amendments in laws and policies of the government.
- Right from the time of preparation of election manifestos of various political parties to the passing of laws by the legislators, the pressure groups remain associated with the process of rule-making.
- Pressure groups play a leading role in the formulation of public opinion. Each pressure group is continuously engaged in evaluating all such laws, rules, decisions and policies which have a direct or indirect bearing on the interests it represents.
- For example with the gains made in mass media and education level, various experts and members of these farmers organizations who constantly raise their issues and opinions through media, social media and interviews. Through this, they have tried to influence public opinions.
- It always places the pros and cons not only before its members but also before the general public for eliciting popular support as well as for catching the attention of the government.

Many times instead of serving a useful purpose in the political administrative process, they are reduced to work for narrow selfish interests and hampers the democratic process:

- Instead of the pressure groups exerting influence on political process, they become tools and implements to subserve political interests.
- Pressure groups can allow too much influence over the government from unelected extremist minority groups, which in turn could lead to unpopular consequences.
- Unlike the pressure groups in the developed countries of the West, where these are invariably organised to safeguard economic, social, cultural interests, etc. in India these groups are organised around religious, regional and ethnic issues. Many a time factors of caste and religion eclipse the socioeconomic interests.
- Most pressure groups do not have autonomous existence; they are unstable and lack commitment, their loyalties shift with political situations which threatens general welfare. They many a times resort to unconstitutional means like violence. For example recent Republic Day-Red Fort incidents in Delhi.
- Farmers' organised groups largely influence the administrative process rather than the formulation of policy. This is dangerous as a gap is created between policy formulation and implementation.

- The organisations have limited territorial reach because of a fractured mandate, political party's support, geography and various other factors. For example farm pressure groups in current protest have their most of presence in western Uttarpradesh, Punjab and Haryana.

Conclusion

Active constructive participation of numerous groups in polity helps to reconcile general interest with individual group interests. Democratic politics has to be politics through consultation, through negotiation and some amount of bargaining is also involved. Thus, it is very essential for the government to consult these organised groups at the time of policy formulation and implementation.

4. What are the key strategic challenges that hinder the expansion of India's naval power? Examine.

Approach

Since the question is asking you to examine which means you have to probe deeper into the topic and understand the topic in detail.

Introduction

During the first few decades post-Independence, the IN existed in an environment of uncertainty. It was only in the 1980s that the navy's potential as an instrument of state power began to dawn on decision-makers and found a permanent niche in their consciousness.

Body

THE KEY STRATEGIC CHALLENGES THAT HINDER THE EXPANSION OF INDIA'S NAVAL POWER

Indian navy aimed to stand steadfast as a combat ready, credible and cohesive force, furthering the country's national and maritime interests. As the smallest of the three-armed forces of a nation beset with a continental mind-set, the INS have faced numerous challenges from time to time. The key strategic challenges that hinder the expansion of India's naval power. These includes:

- India possesses all the attributes of a potential major power; an inherent cultural diffidence holds her back from assuming the mantle and responsibilities of a regional maritime power thus the first challenge clearly lies in our minds; and re-moulding of perception has been a consistent endeavour of the naval leadership.

- Another challenge is to ensure that ships and aircraft are available at all times and this would have an impact on the revenue budget as well. Putting out a man-of-war to sea costs money and strains/burdens the budget.
- Of all the armed forces, navies take the longest to build and consolidate; and a growing force like the INS cannot afford to remain hostage to fluctuating security perceptions.
- The covid-19 pandemic disrupted and permeated every aspect and is another challenge.
- Another challenge is the rapid expansion of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) that the Indian Navy need to be cognisant of.
- The near simultaneous attempt to change the status quo at our northern borders has significantly increased the complexities in the security situation.
- Encouraging the indigenous R&D as well as industry and to become self-reliant as soon as we can is another challenge. The navy's recently established directorate of indigenisation has made a good start by focusing on the local production of systems and sub-systems of the scorpene and the aircraft carrier projects and the response from the industry has been most encouraging. But the path of self-reliance is neither easy nor free of pitfalls, as we have learnt from experience.
- Even though it may not appear so, one of the crucial factors impinging on the force planning process is the efficacy of the existing procurement procedures. The absence of a national security doctrine, as well as long term funding commitment are, by themselves debilitating factors for coherent defence planning in India.
- A factor, which creates serious impediments in the procurement process, is the current procedure, which subjects each case to the scrutiny of four layers of bureaucracy; the service HQS, the department of defence, the department of defence finance and the ministry of finance.

Conclusion

Looking at the future, we need to clearly recognize the deep impact that the changing nature of warfare is inevitably having on the force planning process. An essential requirement of long-term force planning is the reconciliation of conflicting inter-Service demands, prioritization of intra-Service plans, and evolution of joint synergies. This may often require adjustments and compromises, which could create controversies. These are best handled within the armed forces by a joint staff with a duly constituted head.

5. What are the factors leading to high inflation prevailing currently? Discuss. What are its effects on the economy? Examine.

Approach

The students are expected to write the current inflation trends and provide the factors pushing the inflation higher. In the second part of the question, the impact of high

inflation should be mentioned. The student should try bringing clarity in these questions with some real life examples to enable the examiner understand the applicability of the respective concept.

Introduction

Inflation is a measure of the rate of rising prices of goods and services in an economy. If inflation is occurring, leading to higher prices for basic necessities such as food, it can have a negative impact on society. CPI inflation excluding food and fuel remained elevated at 5.5% in December, due to inflationary impact of rising crude oil prices and high indirect tax rates on petrol and diesel, and pick-up in inflation of key goods and services, particularly in transport and health categories.

Body

Factors leading to high inflation currently

- Fuel Hike- With the OPEC countries curtailing their production since pre-Covid times, the subsequent pick-up in the demand has resulted in rise in the crude-oil prices to 60 Dollars/Barrel hence hiking the petrol and diesel prices in the country. With constant growth of taxes on diesel/petrol the hike directly pushes the inflation up. Recent hike of petrol and diesel prices has directly impacted the overall inflationary trend in the country.
- While India's economic activity has remained muted, there has been a consistent acceleration in inflation, since December, 2019. A surge in food prices are the primary reason for the sharp increase in food inflation, which has demonstrated an upward trajectory of 7.87% in June, 9.27% in July, 9.05% in August and finally 10.68% in September before coming down to 6% in January.
- Health safety measures as well as lower capacity may have dampened supply chains to push up food prices. A rise in minimum support price (MSPs) besides aggressive government procurement could also put pressure on food prices. Overall, a confluence of these factors is responsible for jump in food prices even as activity contracts.
- Supply-chain disruption- Amidst the COVID-19 lockdown, the economy round the world took a backseat causing massive supply-chain disruptions which have continued to a certain magnitude till now, hence pushing the price of certain commodities to the higher side even when the lockdown was unlocked.
- The recent farm protests and the global chain disruption have further pushed the inflation to be on the higher side. However, RBI time and again quantitative easing resulted in pulling the food-inflation down, however bottlenecks remain and RBI maintaining the Repo-rate at same 4% in the last MPC meeting.

Effect of Inflation on Economy

- This first effect of inflation is really just a different way of stating what it is. Inflation is a decrease in the purchasing power of currency due to a rise in prices across the economy. Thus, it erodes the purchasing power of the people.
- The consumers, largely the middle and lower class would bear the brunt of the food and fuel inflation. Higher inflation means lower savings, increasing their monthly budgets. With increase in fuel prices, the automobile sector would bear the largest brunt as the demand for automobiles would decrease.
- Companies engaged in the logistics and transportation of goods are also expected to increase their service rates soon due to the fuel price hike. Demand for increasing product delivery rates has already put consumer-oriented companies in a tough spot.
- Cost of Borrowing increases as such the lenders have a hard time to lend and investments slow down, which puts brake on the entire growth of the economy. By raising interest rates, central banks can put a damper on these rampaging animal spirits.
- Wistful talk about inflation's benefits is likely to sound strange to those who remember the economic woes of the 1970s. In today's context of low growth, high unemployment (in Europe), and menacing deflation, there are reasons to think a healthy rise in prices—2% or even 3% per year—would do more good than harm. On the other hand, when growth is slow, unemployment is high, *and* inflation is in the double digits, the economy suffers from stagflation, just what some economist deemed India to be suffering from.
- High inflation is usually associated with a slumping exchange rate, though this is generally a case of the weaker currency leading to inflation, not the other way around. Economies that import significant amounts of goods and services—which, for now, is just about every economy—must pay more for these imports in local-currency terms when their currencies fall against those of their trading partners.

Conclusion

With the restoration of supply-chains, there is optimism that the inflation will be tamed in near future. Push for investment, fiscal consolidation and rationalising the taxes is key. Proactive supply side measures, particularly in enabling a calibrated unwinding of high indirect taxes on petrol and diesel – in a co-ordinated manner by centre and states – are critical to contain further build-up of cost-pressures in the economy. Indian economy is witnessing green-shoots post lockdown, which the government should capitalize on for further strengthening of the economy for an inclusive and faster recovery across sectors.