

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Topic: Constitutional bodies

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SC calls out Centre over short tenures of CECs

Centre paying mere 'lip-service' to independence of poll panel, evident in the way Chief Election Commissioners have had a term of just a few hundred days since 2004, says Justice Joseph

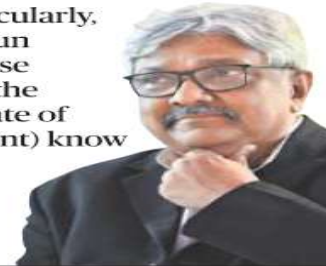
Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the government pays mere "lip-service" to the independence of the Election Commissioners and this is evident from the way the tenures of Chief Election Commissioners (CECs) have "slid" down from over eight years in the 1950s to just about a few hundred days after 2004.

"Their (CECs) tenure is highly truncated and known from the very beginning... In this way, this so-called independence that you pay lip-service to, I am sorry to say, is completely destroyed by getting this kind of a term," Justice K.M. Joseph, heading a Constitution Bench,

After 2004, particularly, the slide has begun in terms of picking up those persons whom of course the government knows the date of birth of... They (government) know that these persons would never ever get anywhere close to six years

JUSTICE K.M. JOSEPH



addressed the Union government.

Justice Joseph said the previous UPA government had six CECs in just eight years. "After the present government took over, from 2015 to 2022, for seven years, we have had eight CECs!" Justice Joseph, leading a five-judge Bench, addressed Attorney-General R. Venkatara-

mani, appearing for the Centre.

Justice Joseph said successive governments, particularly after 2004, have "picked" people whom it knew would "never ever" get close to the full term of six years prescribed under the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Busi-

ness) Act of 1991. Section 4 of the 1991 Act says the term of a CEC and Election Commissioners is six years or till the age of 65, whichever is earlier.

"This is a very, very, very disturbing trend! After 2004, particularly, the slide has begun in terms of picking up those persons whom of course the government knows the date of birth of... They (government) know that these persons would never ever get anywhere close to six years," he observed orally.

He said protections under Article 324, like removal through impeachment, available under the Constitution to the CECs would only be of any use if he or she had a full term.

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Topic: Wildlife Protection

Tamil Nadu gets its first biodiversity heritage site

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI

The Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday issued a notification declaring Arittapatti and Meenakshipuram villages in Madurai district the first biodiversity heritage site in the State.

The site, comprising 139.63 hectares in Arittapatti village (in Melur taluk) and 53.58 hectares in Meenakshipuram village (Madurai East taluk), will be known as the Arittapatti Biodiversity Heritage Site, said a notification. Arittapatti, known for its ecological and historical significance, houses around 250 species of birds, including three important raptors – the Laggar Falcon, the Shaheen Falcon and Bonelli's Eagle. It is also home to wildlife such as the Indian pangolin, slender loris and pythons.

- BHS are areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems - terrestrial, coastal, inland and marine waters - having a rich biodiversity.
- The biodiversity comprises any one or more of the components like,
- Species richness - Wild and domesticated species or intra-specific categories,
- High endemism,
- Presence of rare, endemic and threatened species, keystone species, species of evolutionary significance,
- Presence of wild ancestors of domestic/cultivated species or landraces or their varieties.

- ▶ Past pre-eminence of biological components represented by fossil beds and having cultural or aesthetic values.
- ▶ Area with significant cultural, ethical or aesthetic values; important for the maintenance of cultural diversity.
- ▶ As per Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002,
- ▶ State Governments can notify in the official gazette, in consultation with 'local bodies', areas of biodiversity importance as BHS.
- ▶ State Government in consultation with the Central Government may frame rules for the management and conservation of BHS.
- ▶ State Governments can frame schemes for compensating or rehabilitating anyone economically affected by such notification.

Topic:

5

Forest Range Officer killed by Gutti Koya tribals in Telangana

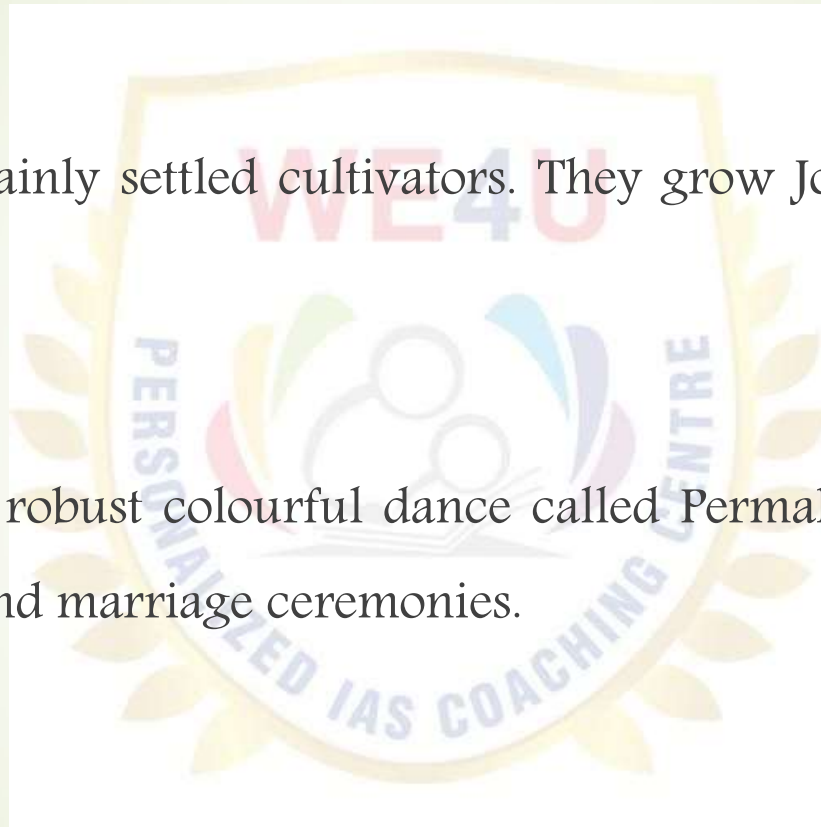
Koya Tribe:

- Koya tribe is the largest adivasi tribe of Telangana and listed as Scheduled Tribe in Telangana.
- The community is spread across Telugu speaking states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- Habitat and livelihood:
- The Godavari and Sabari rivers which are flowing through their area of habitation exercise profound influence on Koyas' economic, social and cultural life.

Topic:

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- The Koyas are mainly settled cultivators. They grow Jowar, Ragi, Bajra and other millets.
- Lord Bhima
- Koyas perform a robust colourful dance called Permakok ata (Bison horn dance) during festivals and marriage ceremonies.



Topic:

7

Europe to be hit hardest in global slowdown, says OECD

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

- ▶ The OECD is an intergovernmental economic organisation, founded to stimulate economic progress and world trade.
- ▶ Most OECD members are high-income economies with a very high Human Development Index (HDI) and are regarded as developed countries.
- ▶ Founded: 1961.

Topic:

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- Headquarters: Paris, France.
- Total Members: 36.
- India is not a member, but a key economic partner.
- Reports and Indices by OECD
- Government at a Glance 2017 report.
- International Migration Outlook.
- OECD Better Life Index.



India's fiscal consolidation trend intact, to see strong revenues, says Moody's

Topic:

What is Fiscal Consolidation?

- Various policies undertaken by the government at national as well as sub-national levels to reduce the accumulation of debts and reduce deficits is known as fiscal consolidation.
- Fiscal consolidation can be achieved by increasing revenue and decreasing expenditure.

THANK YOU

