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ECI says by law it has duty to bar foreigners

The Supreme Court resumed hearings on January 6, 2025, on a batch of petitions challenging the Election Commission of India's (ECI) decision to conduct a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in several States.

Appearing for the ECI, senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi submitted that the Commission possesses constitutional authority to revise electoral rolls. This was in response to the petitioners' contention that such powers rest only with the Central Government. The Election Commission also rejected the allegation that the exercise amounts to a parallel National Register of Citizens (NRC).



The ECI argued that under Article 324 of the Constitution, it has not only the power but also the constitutional duty to ensure the purity and integrity of electoral rolls, including preventing the inclusion of foreign persons. It was further submitted that Articles 324 and 327 separately confer upon the Commission authority over the preparation and revision of electoral rolls.

The Commission also sought to distinguish the SIR from the NRC. It was argued that while the NRC is a population register covering all residents, the electoral roll is limited to eligible voters above 18 years of age and excludes persons of unsound mind.

The SIR exercise began in Bihar in 2025 and has since been extended to 12 additional States and Union Territories in its second phase. The Election Commission cited rapid urbanisation, migration, and the need to maintain the accuracy and integrity of electoral rolls as the reasons for undertaking the exercise.

Sufferers of poor AQI contribute to the problem : SC



The Supreme Court has pulled up the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) for the absence of a comprehensive and evidence-based plan to identify the precise causes of air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region and to frame long-term solutions.

The Court directed the CAQM to undertake cause-wise and proportionate attribution of pollution sources, observing that even now there is no clear and authoritative assessment of the relative contribution of different factors such as stubble burning and vehicular emissions.

The Supreme Court also noted that several preventive and emergency measures adopted to curb pollution impose significant costs on the public, such as:

- Restrictions on truck movement affecting the supply of essential goods
- Suspension of construction activities impacting housing and livelihoods

The Court therefore directed the CAQM to scientifically analyse the problem and formulate targeted, long-term solutions at the earliest.

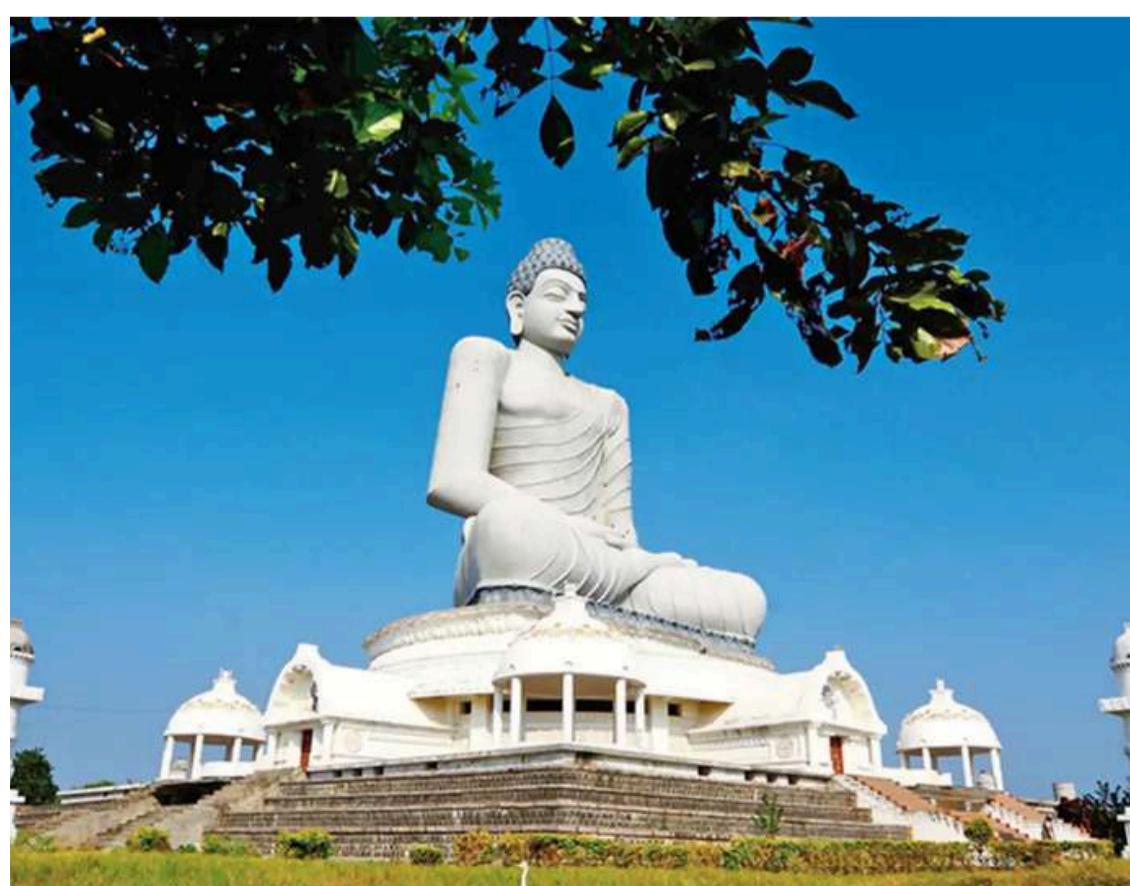
A central law to protect Amaravati

The Andhra Pradesh government has proposed to move a Bill in Parliament to provide statutory backing to Amaravati as the capital of the residuary State by seeking an amendment to the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 (APRA).

Under the APRA, Hyderabad was designated as the common capital of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for a period of 10 years. Subsequently, Amaravati was notified as the capital of Andhra Pradesh on December 31, 2014.

In the years that followed, changes in the political and administrative approach to capital development, including proposals for multiple capitals, resulted in uncertainty regarding the status of Amaravati.

The State government is now seeking to amend Section 5(2) of the APRA in order to provide clear legal recognition and statutory certainty to Amaravati's position as the capital of Andhra Pradesh.



US takeover of Greenland would mark the end of NATO : Danish PM



Following U.S. President Donald Trump's renewed call to bring Greenland under U.S. control on grounds of national and economic security, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen responded that any military action against a NATO member would effectively undermine the foundations of the transatlantic security architecture that has existed since the Second World War.

Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory of the Danish kingdom. It occupies a central position in the emerging strategic competition among the United States, China, and Russia in the Arctic. From a security perspective, this arctic nation is a critical strategic asset. It hosts the Pituffik Space Base, formerly known as the Thule Air Base, a U.S. military installation that plays a key role in missile early warning, missile defence, and space surveillance. Control over Greenland would therefore strengthen any power's position in the contest for influence in the High North.

Economic considerations further explain the renewed American interest. Greenland possesses vast deposits of minerals, including lithium, graphite, yttrium, and cobalt—resources that are essential for manufacturing batteries, renewable energy technologies, and advanced military equipment. Securing access to these minerals would allow the United States to reduce its dependence on China, which currently dominates global critical mineral supply chains. In addition, Greenland is believed to have significant unexplored offshore oil and gas reserves, as well as a rich fisheries sector, adding to its economic value.

Greenland is also strategically located along two emerging Arctic shipping routes: the Northwest Passage and the Transpolar Sea Route. As commercial activity in the Arctic Ocean increases, these routes are likely to become more important for global trade. Greenland's geographic position makes it central to the development of the marine infrastructure needed to operate, regulate, and secure these routes.

In light of recent developments in Venezuela, the possibility of the United States using coercive means cannot be entirely dismissed. Any such move, however, would cause severe and possibly irreversible damage to the transatlantic alliance and the existing international security order.

FinMin announces PPP project pipeline of Centre, states for 3 years

The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) in the Ministry of Finance has announced the creation of a three-year Public Private Partnership (PPP) project pipeline comprising 852 projects with a total estimated cost of over ₹17 lakh crore.

Of these, 232 projects worth ₹13.15 lakh crore fall under Central ministries and departments, while 620 projects worth ₹3.84 lakh crore are proposed by States and Union Territories.

Among the projects under Central ministries, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways accounts for the largest share, with 108 projects valued at ₹8.71 lakh crore.

At the State level, Andhra Pradesh shall undertake the highest number of projects, with 270 projects amounting to ₹1.16 lakh crore.

The pipeline is intended to provide visibility to upcoming infrastructure projects and facilitate private sector participation in sectors such as transport, logistics, and urban infrastructure.

Crop failure in Guatemala boosts India's Cardamom exports



A major crop failure in Guatemala due to drought conditions associated with the El Niño phenomenon has led to a tightening of global supply of cardamom, providing a boost to India's exports, particularly from Kerala, the country's largest producer of the spice.

According to data from the Spices Board of India, 6,827 tonnes of cardamom were exported during April–October 2025, almost double the 3,663 tonnes exported during the corresponding period in 2024. Sector experts attribute the improved export performance partly to favourable weather conditions in Kerala during the current season, which have supported higher yields. While the cardamom harvesting season usually ends by February, prevailing climatic conditions are expected to extend the harvest period by one to two months.

In terms of production, Kerala produced 18,310 metric tonnes of cardamom in 2024–25, compared to 22,869 metric tonnes in 2023–24. The estimated production for 2025–26 is around 22,000 metric tonnes, indicating a recovery in output.

PRELIMS CORNER :

1) With reference to the “Tea Board” in India, consider the following statements (2022) :

1. The Tea Board is a statutory body.
2. It is a regulatory body attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
3. The Tea Board’s Head Office is situated in Bengaluru.
4. The Board has overseas offices at Dubai and Moscow.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

- (a) 1 and 3
- (b) 2 and 4
- (c) 3 and 4
- (d) 1 and 4

2) Which of the following are regarded as the main feature of “Rule of Law”? (2018)

1. Limitation of power
2. Equality before the law
3. People’s responsibility to the Government
4. Liberty and civil rights

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

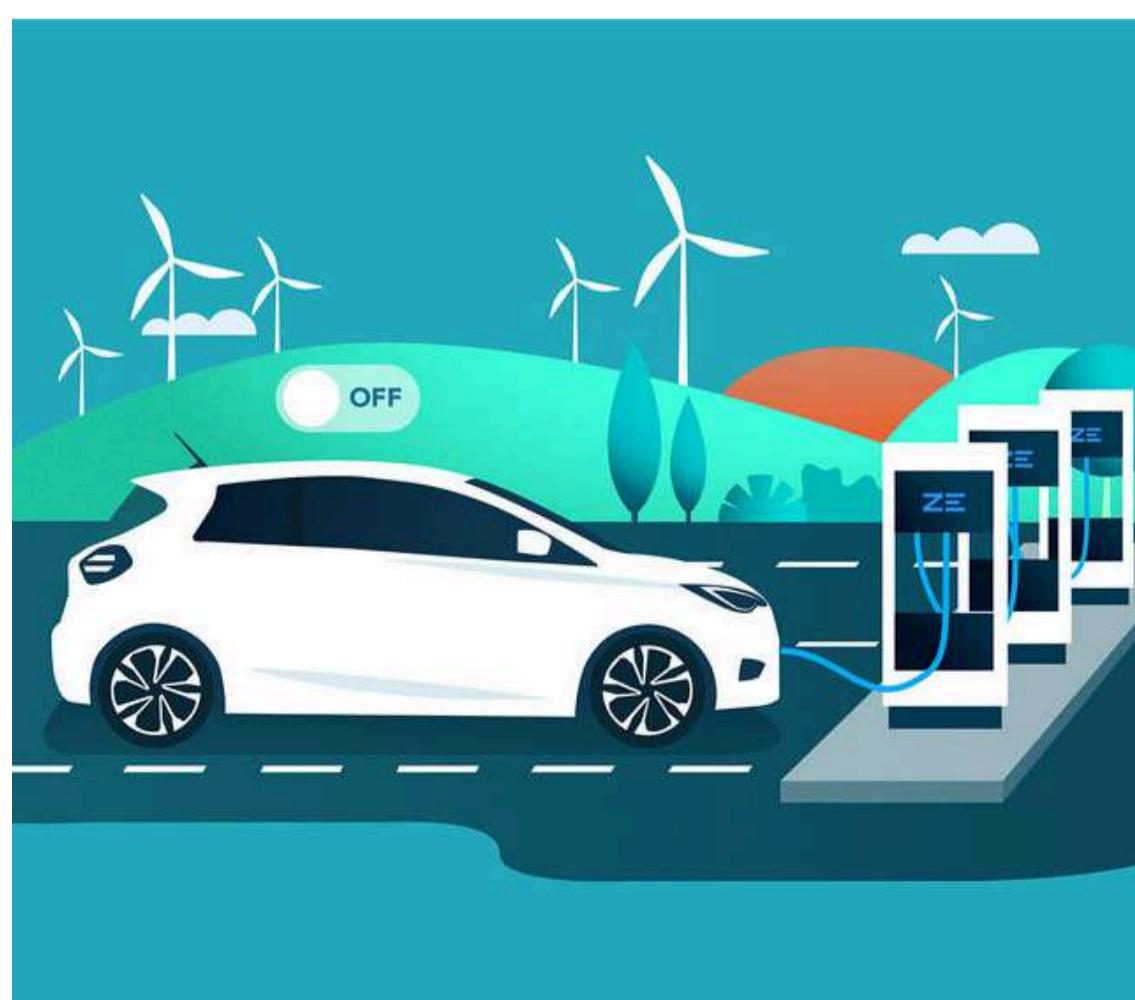
Case Study

Kerala crossed one lakh electric vehicle registrations in 2025 following the introduction of long-range electric two-wheeler and cars, demonstrating how aligning technology with consumer needs can speed up decarbonisation of transport, improve urban air quality, and advance climate and clean energy goals under SDGs 7, 11, and 13.

SDG 7 : Affordable and clean energy.

SDG 11 : Sustainable cities and communities.

SDG 13 : Climate action



Prelims Corner: Explanations

1) option d is the correct answer.

Statement 1: This is correct. The Tea Board of India is a statutory body established under the Tea Act, 1953. It is responsible for the development and promotion of the tea industry in India.

Statement 2: This is incorrect. The Tea Board is a regulatory body, but it is attached to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, not the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Statement 3: This is incorrect. The Tea Board's Head Office is located in Kolkata, not Bengaluru.

Statement 4: This is correct. The Tea Board has overseas offices in Dubai and Moscow to promote Indian tea exports in international markets.



2) option C is the correct answer.

The Rule of Law emphasizes the supremacy of law over arbitrary power. Its core features include:

1. Limitation of power: Ensures that no individual, including those in authority, is above the law, preventing misuse of power.

2. Equality before the law: Guarantees that all individuals, irrespective of status, are treated equally under the same legal framework.

3. Liberty and civil rights: Protects fundamental freedoms and individual rights, ensuring justice and fairness in governance.

The concept does not include "people's responsibility to the government," as the Rule of Law primarily focuses on limiting state power and safeguarding individual rights.

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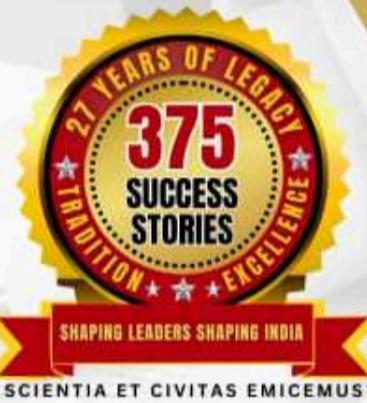
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