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## **1. All-India Judicial Service – still a non-starter**

### **Government's view**

Article 312 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of All India Judicial Service (AIJS), which shall not include any post inferior to that of a District Judge. The constitutional provision enables creation of the AIJS at District Judge level.

In Government's view, a properly framed All India Judicial Service is important to strengthen overall justice delivery system. This will give an opportunity for induction of suitably qualified fresh legal talent selected through a proper all-India merit selection system as well as address the issue of social inclusion by enabling suitable representation to marginalized and deprived sections of society.

### **Disagreements on the AIJS Proposal**

The Union Law Minister disclosed that there is no consensus on the AIJS proposal, with only two High Courts supporting the idea while 13 opposed it. The existing system of recruiting district judges through High Courts and other subordinate judicial officers through public service commissions is seen as more conducive to ensuring diversity.

### **Issues with the Proposed All-India Judicial Service**

While the AIJS may seem like a solution to diversify the judiciary, the current system allows for reservation and a better understanding of local practices and conditions. The absence of a clear consensus among states, the lack of uniformity in legal education, and the potential unattractiveness of a national judicial service to top-performing lawyers raise doubts about its effectiveness.

### **Constitutional Provisions**

Article 312 provides for creation of All India Services including All India Judicial Services. If the Council of States has declared by resolution supported by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting that it is necessary or expedient in the national interest so to do, Parliament may by law provide for the creation of one or more all India services (including an all-India judicial service) common to the Union and the States.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Polity

Source: The Hindu

## 2. UNLF, a Meitei insurgent group, signed peace deal with Centre

### Why in news?

Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently announced the signing of a peace agreement with the Meitei separatist group United National Liberation Front (UNLF) in Manipur, terming it a "historic milestone." The details of the peace agreement have not been made public.

The Home Minister also expressed the hope that this would encourage other valley-based insurgent groups (VBIGs) to participate in a peace process.

### What is the UNLF?

The UNLF was formed on November 24, 1964, and is the oldest valley-based insurgent group — distinct from the insurgent groups active in the state's Naga-dominated and Kuki-Zomi dominated hills. It was formed with the demand of secession from India under the leadership of Arembam Samarendra Singh, who was the general secretary of the group.

The UNLF is believed to have received its initial training from the NSCN (IM), the largest Naga insurgent group. Its armed wing, the Manipur People's Army, was formed in 1990 and over the years, it has carried out multiple attacks targeting Indian security personnel.

### Support in Myanmar

A proscribed group, banned under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, it has largely been functioning from camps and training bases in Myanmar's Sagaing Region, Chin state, and Rakhine state with the patronage of the Myanmar military. However, it is now on the backfoot there, with mounting attacks against the military junta by various Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) and People's Defence Forces (PDFs).

### Recent Resurgence

While the UNLF has weakened over the years, pushed across the border to Myanmar, there have been concerns about its increased activity, along with other VBIGs, during the course of the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur. The UNLF is believed to have trained around 500 new recruits in the past months.

### What about the other groups?

While the UNLF is the oldest of such groups, several other Meitei insurgent groups have come into being in subsequent years. The UNLF is one of the seven "Meitei Extremist Organisations" banned by the Union government.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Internal Security

### 3. Cabinet approves Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission

#### Introduction

The Union Cabinet has approved the Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission.

The Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission will be notified in due course of time. The 16th Finance Commission's recommendations, upon the acceptance by the government, would cover the period of five (5) years commencing April 1, 2026.

The Fifteenth Finance Commission was constituted on November 27, 2017. It made recommendations covering the period of six years commencing on 1st April, 2020 through its Interim and Final Reports. The recommendations of the Fifteenth Finance Commission are valid upto the financial year 2025-26.

#### Constitutional Provision

Article 280(1) of the Constitution lays down that the modalities for setting up of a Finance Commission to make recommendation on the distribution of net proceeds of taxes between the Union and the States, allocation between the States of respective shares of such proceeds; grants-in-aid and the revenues of the States and measures needed to supplement the resources of the Panchayats during the award period.

#### Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission:

The Finance Commission shall make recommendations as to the following matters, namely:

- i. The distribution between the Union and the States of the net proceeds of taxes which are to be, or may be, divided between them under Chapter I, Part XII of the Constitution and the allocation between the States of the respective shares of such proceeds;
- ii. The principles which should govern the grants-in-aid of the revenues of the States out of the Consolidated Fund of India and the sums to be paid to the States by way of grants-in-aid of their revenues under article 275 of the Constitution for the purposes other than those specified in the provisos to clause (1) of that article; and
- iii. The measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats and Municipalities in the State on the basis of the recommendations made by the Finance Commission of the State.

The Commission may review the present arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives, with reference to the funds constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and make appropriate recommendations thereon.

The Commission shall make its report available by 31st day of October, 2025 covering a period of five years commencing on the 1st day of April, 2026.

**Background:**

The Fifteenth Finance Commission (the 15th FC) was constituted on 27.11.2017 for making recommendations for a five-year period of 2020-21 to 2024-25.

The Finance Commission normally takes about two years to make their recommendations. As per the clause (1) of article 280 of the Constitution, the Finance Commission is to be constituted every fifth year or earlier. However, as the recommendations of the 15th FC cover the six-year period up to 31st March 2026, the 16th FC is proposed to be constituted now. In this context, it is pertinent to mention that there are precedents where the Eleventh Finance Commission was constituted six years after the Tenth Finance Commission. Similarly, the Fourteenth Finance Commission was constituted five years and two months after the Thirteenth Finance Commission.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: PIB