

12– 10 – 2022

News: Pakistan to take part in closing ceremony of SCO anti terror exercise hosted by India

- Pakistan has been invited to the closing ceremony, on October 13, of the ongoing Joint Anti Terror Exercise (JATE) within the ambit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) being hosted by India.

Joint Anti Terror Exercise (JATE)

- Joint Anti Terror Exercise (JATE) JATE is an **annual counter terrorist exercise held within the framework of the SCO RATS.**
- **Pakistan hosted the 2021** version of JATE whereas **India hosts the same in 2022.**
- The exercises is aimed at exchanging expertise, best practices and build **synergy between the Counter Terrorism Forces of the SCO RATS member countries to enhance capabilities for conducting antiterrorist operations and countering other security threats collectively.**
- The **National Security Guard (NSG) is hosting the multinational JATE “Manesar Anti Terror 2022”, under the framework of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) at the NSG Manesar Garrison.**

- An Indian delegation had participated in the closing ceremony of the two week JATE 2021 hosted by Pakistan at the National Counter Terrorism Centre, Pabbi, in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, in September 2021.

News: Three lakh and counting: RTI pleas pile up at information commissions across India

- A good 17 years after India got the Right to Information (RTI) Act, the transparency regime in the country remains a mirage with nearly 3.15 lakh complaints and appeals pending with 26 information commissions across India.
- The number of appeals and complaints pending in 2019, from data obtained from 26 information commissions was 2,18,347.
- In 2020, the number climbed up to 2,33,384 with data obtained from 23 information commissions, in 2021 the number was 2,86,325 with data from 26 commissions and in 2022, it was 3,14,323.
- The highest number of pending cases was in Maharashtra at 99,722, followed by Uttar Pradesh at 44,482, Karnataka at 30,358, the Central Information Commission at 26,724 and Bihar at 21,346.
- The report says two information commissions — Jharkhand and Tripura, out of 29 across the country have been completely defunct for 29 months and 15 months respectively.

- Manipur, Telangana, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh are without chiefs at the moment. Only 5% of the all positions in commissions are being occupied by women.
- An analysis of penalties imposed shows that the commissions did not impose penalties in 95% of the cases where penalties were potentially imposable.

Information Commission of India

- Information Commission of India was constituted in 2005 under Right to Information Act 2005.
- The Right to Information act insists the appointment of 1 CIC and not more than 10 ICs.
- Currently, Information Commission consists of 7 including Chief Information Commissioner.
- They are ineligible for reappointment.
- Members of Information Commission are appointed by President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of PM as Chairperson, Leader of Opposition of Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet minister nominated by PM.
- Central Information Commission (CIC) falls under the Ministry of Personnel, so his/her appointment letter will bear the signature of the Minister of that

particular Ministry and not of President. He is **not appointed by a warrant and seal by the President.**

- Members of State Information Commission are appointed by **Governor** on the recommendation of a **committee consisting of CM as Chairperson, Leader of Opposition in State Legislative Assembly and a State Cabinet Minister nominated by CM.**
- The Chief Information Commissioner or an Information Commissioner **shall not be a Member of Parliament or Member of the Legislature of any State or Union territory**, as the case may be, or hold any other office of profit or connected with any political party or carrying on any business or pursuing any profession.
- Information Commission reports annually to **Union Government which places the report before each houses of Parliament.**
- As per section 25 of the RTI Act, the Commission is required to prepare an annual report after the end of each year on the implementation of the provisions of the Act during that year which is to be forwarded to the **appropriate Government**, which, in turn, is required to **lay the report before each House of Parliament.**

- The Chief Information Commissioner and an Information Commissioner shall hold office for such term as prescribed by the Central Government or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- The term of office and conditions of services of State Information Commission shall also be notified by Central Government.
- The Chief Information Commissioner or an Information Commissioner may, at any time, by writing under his hand addressed to the President, resign from his office.
- Removal of members of Information commission by President (or State Information Commission by Governor), can be done after consulting the Supreme Court only on the grounds of proven misbehavior or incapacity.
- Under RTI Act, the information is provided to the applicant free of cost, if the applicant is a BPL Person or if the authority fails to provide information within 30 days from the receipt of application.
- Recently, RTI Amendment act deregulated the salary status which was previously equivalent to those of EC and SC judges.
- Also, SC adjudged that office of CJI is a public office and hence comes under the purview of Information Commission of India.

- Hyderabad high court has held that **religious institutions** like temples, churches and mosques **that are not funded by the government do not fall within the purview of the Right to Information Act 2005.**
- The Delhi high court ruled that the **Office of Attorney General (AG) would be exempted from disclosing information.**
- **Intelligence and security organizations specified in the Second Schedule of Act are exempt** from furnishing details under the Act.
- President can however, remove CIC or any IC on the recommendation of SC.
- CIC works under the **Ministry of Personnel.**