

Cabinet Committees - Two New Committees

Why in news?

The Union government recently released the composition of 8 Cabinet Committees, including two new ones (Investment and Employment).

What are Cabinet Committees for?

- The Cabinet Committees are institutional arrangements to reduce the workload of the Cabinet.
- These committees are extra-constitutional in nature and are nowhere mentioned in the Constitution.
- The executive works under the Government of India Transaction of Business Rules, 1961.
- These Rules emerge out of Article 77(3) of the Constitution.
- Accordingly, the President shall make rules for the more convenient transaction of the business of the Government of India, and for the allocation among Ministers of the said business.
- The Rules mandate the minister-in-charge of a department (ministry) to dispose of all business allotted to a department under him or her.
- However, on subjects involving more than one department, decision will have to be taken on concurrence.
- On failing such concurrence, decision will have to be taken by or under the authority of the Cabinet.

How are they formed?

- The Prime Minister constitutes Standing Committees of the Cabinet and sets out the specific functions assigned to them.
- S/he can add or reduce the number of committees.
- Ad hoc committees of ministers, including Groups of Ministers, may be appointed by the Cabinet or by the Prime Minister for specific matters.
- The strength of each committee varies from three to eight members.
- It usually includes cabinet ministers but non-cabinet members are not debarred.

What are the key Cabinet Committees?

- **Cabinet Committee on Appointments** - This panel makes appointments to

posts of three service chiefs, Director General of Military Operations, chiefs of all Air and Army Commands.

- It also makes appointments to the posts of -
 - i. Director General of Defence Intelligence Agency
 - ii. Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister
 - iii. Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services
 - iv. Director General of Ordnance Factories
 - v. Director General of Defence Estates
 - vi. Controller General of Defence Accounts
 - vii. Director of Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
 - viii. Solicitor-General
 - ix. Governor of the Reserve Bank of India
 - x. Chairman and Members of the Railway Board
 - xi. Chief Vigilance Officers in Public Sector Undertakings
 - xii. Secretariat posts of and above the rank of Joint Secretary in the Central Government
- It also decides on all important empanelments and shift of officers serving on Central deputation.
- **Cabinet Committee on Accommodation** - This determines the guidelines or rules with regard to the allotment of government accommodation.
- It also takes a call on the allotment of government accommodation to non-eligible persons and organisations, and decides the rent to be charged from them.
- It can consider the allotment of accommodation from the General Pool to Members of Parliament.
- It can consider proposals for shifting existing Central Government Offices to locations outside the capital.
- **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** - This panel is supposed to review economic trends, problems and prospects.
- The objective is to evolve a consistent and integrated economic policy.
- It also does the following:
 - i. coordinates all activities requiring policy decisions at the highest level
 - ii. deal with fixation of prices of agricultural produce and prices of essential commodities
 - iii. considers proposals for investment of more than Rs 1,000 crore
 - iv. deal with industrial licensing policies
 - v. review rural development and the Public Distribution System
- **Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs** - This draws the schedule for Parliament sessions and monitors the progress of government business in Parliament.
- It scrutinises non-government business and decides which official Bills and

resolutions are to be presented.

- **Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs** - The committee addresses problems related to Centre-state relations.
- It also examines economic and political issues that require a wider perspective but have no internal or external security implications.
- **Cabinet Committee on Security** - It deals with issues relating to law and order and internal security.
- It also deals with policy matters concerning foreign affairs with internal or external security implications.
- It also goes into economic and political issues related to national security.
- It considers all cases involving capital defence expenditure of more than Rs 1,000 crore.
- It also considers issues related to the -
 - i. Department of Defence Production
 - ii. the Department of Defence Research and Development
 - iii. Services Capital Acquisition plans
 - iv. schemes for procurement of security-related equipment

What are the two new panels?

- **Cabinet Committee on Investment** - This Committee will identify key projects required to be implemented on a time-bound basis.
- This applies to projects involving investments of Rs 1,000 crore or more, or any other critical projects, as may be specified by it, with regard to infrastructure and manufacturing.
- It will prescribe time limits for giving requisite approvals and clearances by the ministries concerned in identified sectors.
- It will also monitor the progress of such projects.
- **Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development** - This is supposed to provide direction to all policies, programmes, schemes and initiatives for skill development.
- The objective is increasing the employability of the workforce for effectively meeting the emerging requirements of the economy.
- It facilitates mapping the benefits of demographic dividend.
- The committee is required to enhance workforce participation, foster employment growth and identification.
- It will work towards removal of gaps between requirement and availability of skills in various sectors.
- The panel will set targets for expeditious implementation of all skill development initiatives and to periodically review the progress in this regard.
- The addition of the two committees is indicative of the new focus areas for

the government. The goal of both is new jobs.

Source: Indian Express

