

PM to chair 1st National Conference of Chief Secretaries

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Context - Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair the 1st National Conference of Chief Secretaries at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh on 16-17 June in what will be a significant step towards further strengthening the partnership between the Centre and state governments.

Key Developments

- The conference will focus on the rapid and sustained economic growth in partnership with the states.
- It will lay the ground for collaborative action for higher growth with sustainability, creation of jobs, education, ease of living and Aatmanirbharta in agriculture.
- It will emphasize on evolution and implementation of a common development agenda and blueprint for cohesive action to achieve the aspirations of the people.
- Three themes have been identified for detailed deliberations in the conference:
 1. Implementation of the National Education Policy;
 2. Urban governance; and
 3. Crop diversification and achieving self-sufficiency in oilseeds, pulses and other agri-commodities.
- There would be a session on Aspirational Districts Programme which would deliberate upon the achievements made so far, with successful case studies including on data-based governance, presented by the young collectors in specific districts.
- The outcomes of the conference will be subsequently deliberated in the Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog, where Chief Ministers and Administrators of all states and UTs will be present.

About Chief Secretaries

- Chief Secretaries are members of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) who are the administrative head of state governments. A Chief Secretary functions as the central point of interdepartmental coordination at the departmental level and is classified as being in the Apex Grade.
- The Chief Secretary is 'chosen' by the Chief Minister. As the appointment of Chief Secretary is an executive action of the Chief Minister, it is taken in the name of the Governor of the State.
- The Chief Secretary is the chief advisor to the Chief Minister in all matters of the cabinet.
- The office of Chief Secretary has been excluded from the operation of the tenure system i.e there is no fixed tenure for this post.
- The members of these services are recruited by the Centre, but their services are placed under various State cadres, and they have the liability to serve both under the State and under the Centre. This aspect of the All India Services strengthens the unitary character of the Indian federation.