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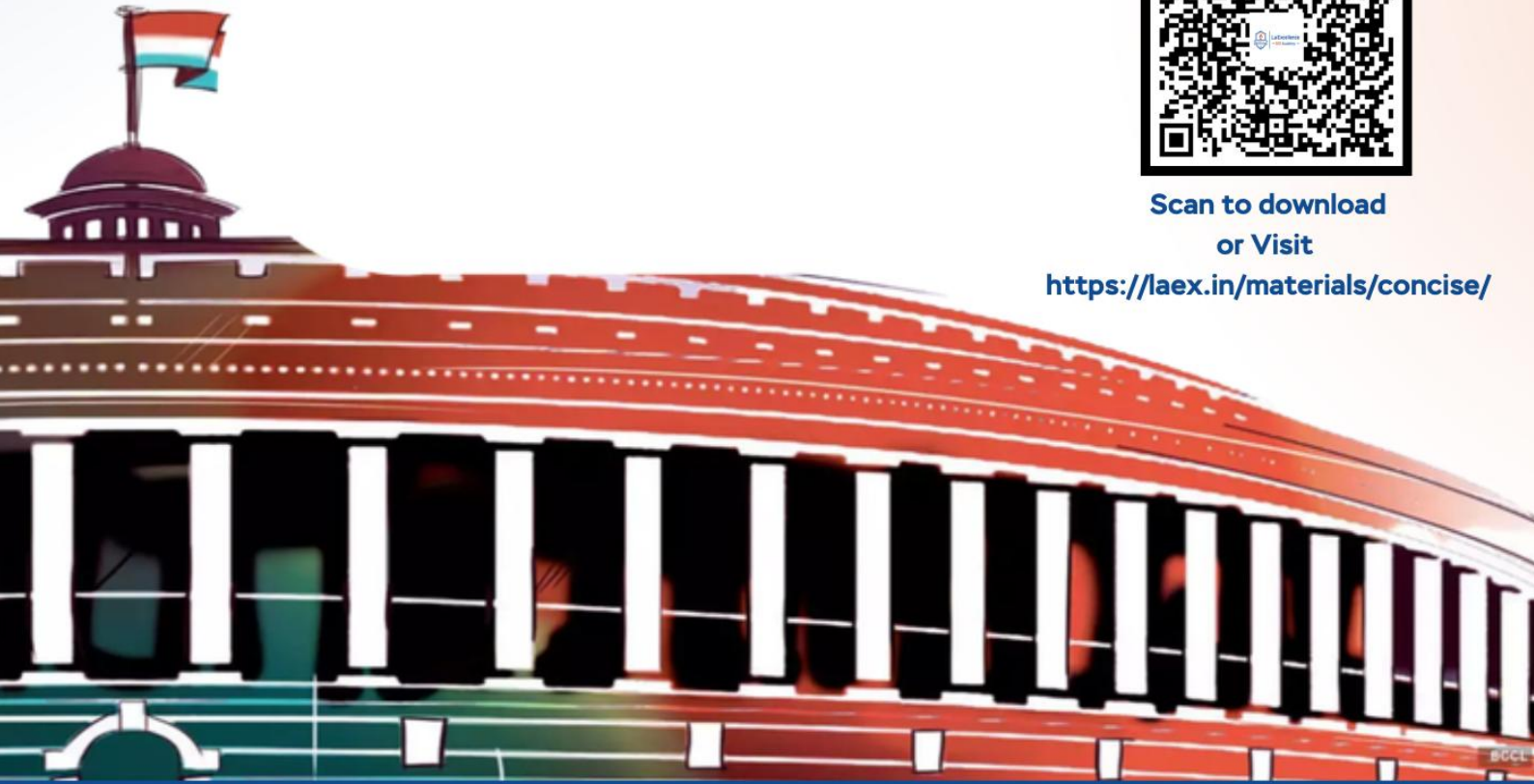
Volume - II

**Current Affairs for Prelims 2026
(OCTOBER 2025- JANUARY 2026)**



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PREFACE

Concise Prelims Current Affairs 2026

Current Affairs-Sine Qua Non of UPSC Preparation

Proficiency in Current affairs is sine non qua for UPSC preparation. It is the basic foundation of any aspirant 's preparation. Knowledge and skill to relate current news with UPSC syllabus is quintessential part of the preparation.

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Index

Sl no.	Topic	Pg no.
01	Kerala's Dharmadam Declared Extreme Poverty-Free	
02	Ayushman Bharat – PM-JAY: Latest Report Highlights (2025)	
03	Central Information Commission vs State Information Commission	
04	Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)	
05	LOKPAL	
06	National Security Guard (NSG)	
07	Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas	
08	Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025	
09	National Unity Day 2025 (Rashtriya Ekta Diwas)	
10	8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)	
11	Rajya Sabha (Council of States)	
12	Execution Petitions in India	
13	Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000 – “Safe Harbour” Provision	
14	Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021	
15	National Security Act (NSA), 1980	
16	Chief Justice of India (CJI)	
17	Article 371	
18	Juvenile Justice Boards – Pendency, Staff Shortage & Systemic Issues	
19	SC Advisory on Presidential Reference (Governors’ Timelines)	
20	Ahmedabad to Host 2030 Commonwealth Games (CWG)	
21	Justice Surya Kant – 53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI)	
22	CISF	
23	Selection of the UN Secretary-General	
24	DIGITAL ARREST SCAM & UN CYBERCRIME CONVENTION	
25	Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)	
26	Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)	
27	Aadhaar, Foreigners & Electoral Roll Verification (SIR Exercise)	
28	Draft Seeds Bill 2025	
29	106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023	
30	Assam – Anti Polygamy Bill 2025	
31	RIGHT TO VOTE	
32	POCSO Act, 2012	
33	Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025	
34	Assam Accord (1985)	
35	Schedule Tribe Status	
36	Right to Constitutional Remedies (Article 32)	
37	Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development	
38	BOOKER PRIZE	
39	Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD) Report 2023	
40	Vinod Kumar Shukla & Jnanpith Award	
41	NATGRID	
42	Bureau of Port Security (BoPS)	
43	Prime Ministers’ Museum and Library (PMML)	

44	Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)	
45	Central Information Commission (CIC)	
46	National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)	
47	Maternal Mortality	
48	Sabka Bima Sabka Raksha Bill, 2025	
49	SHANTI Bill, 2025	
50	SECURITIES MARKET CODE BILL, 2025	
51	Appointment of Vice-Chancellor	
52	Karnataka Social Boycott Bill, 2025	
53	Health Security se national Security Cess Bill, 2025	
54	New Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025	
55	RIGHT TO DISCONNECT BILL, 2025	
56	Mercy Petition	
57	Sahitya Akademi Awards	
58	Vijay Diwas	
59	FIR at Home	
60	Partners in Health	
61	National Register of Citizens (NRC)	
62	Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)	
63	India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM), 2026	
64	Rajasthan "Disturbed Areas" Bill, 2026	
65	Census 2027	
66	MeitY flags AI misuse on X	
67	IT Act, 2000 & IT Rules 2021	
68	Governor's address (Article 176)	
69	Governors' Address to State Legislature	
70	President's Rule (Article 356)	
71	Indira Gandhi Peace Prize	

Kerala's Dharmadam Declared Extreme Poverty-Free

Space for Notes:

Why in News?

Dharmadam constituency in Kannur, represented by CM Pinarayi Vijayan, became Kerala's first "Extreme Poverty-Free" constituency – part of the state's mission to eradicate extreme poverty by 1 November 2025.

Description:

What is Extreme Poverty?

A condition where a household cannot meet **basic needs** essential for survival:

- **Food:** Access to sufficient and nutritious food.
- **Healthcare:** Basic medical services and mental well-being.
- **Income:** Sufficient for essential consumption.
- **Housing:** Safe and hygienic shelter.

Kerala's Approach: Identified extremely poor households via **grassroots-level survey** using these four indicators, ensuring **localized and data-driven targeting**.

Global & National Poverty Lines

Level	Definition / Recommendation
Global Poverty Line (UN)	Living on less than USD 1.90/day
Tendulkar Committee (2009)	₹32/day (urban), ₹26/day (rural); Poverty line ₹816 (rural), ₹1,000 (urban) per month
Rangarajan Committee (2014)	₹47/day (urban), ₹32/day (rural); Poverty line ₹972 (rural), ₹1,407 (urban) per month
Current Official Line Used	Tendulkar Line (Government continues with it)

Major Government Schemes to Reduce Poverty:

Scheme	Objective
PM Awas Yojana (PMAY)	Affordable housing for poor (urban & rural).
National Food Security Act (NFSA)	Subsidized food grains to low-income families.
Ayushman Bharat – PM-JAY	Health insurance for vulnerable households.
MGNREGS	100 days of wage employment annually in rural areas.
DAY-NRLM	Promotes rural livelihoods & women's SHGs.
PM Garib Kalyan Yojana	COVID-19 support through free food & cash transfer.
Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)	Ensures direct subsidy to beneficiaries to reduce leakages.

Significance:

- Marks a milestone in Kerala's inclusive development model.
- Reflects effective local governance, targeted welfare delivery, and data-based poverty tracking.
- Part of Kerala's "No Extreme Poverty by 2025" mission aligning with SDG-1 (No Poverty).

Ayushman Bharat – PM-JAY: Latest Report Highlights (2025)

Why in News?

The latest National Health Authority report (2025) shows PM-JAY largely utilized in private hospitals, haemodialysis is the most common treatment, and digital health records (ABHA) now cover 50 crore citizens.

Description:

Source: Annual Report, National Health Authority (Oct 2025)

Scheme Launch: 2018 | **Implementing Body:** National Health Authority (NHA)

Objective: Universal Health Coverage through cashless secondary & tertiary care up to ₹5 lakh/family/year.

Key Findings (2025 Report):**1. Private vs Government Hospitals:**

- A total of 31,005 hospitals were empanelled.
- **Private hospitals:** 45% of total.
- **Yet, they handled 52% of hospitalisations and 66% of total treatment cost** (₹1.29 lakh crore).
- Shows higher reliance on the private sector under PM-JAY.

2. Treatment Data:

- **Total treatments since 2018:** ~9.19 crore hospitalisations.
- **Total cost incurred:** ₹1.29 lakh crore.
- **Most sought treatment: Haemodialysis** (14% of all treatments).
- Other common treatments:
 - Fever (4%)
 - Gastroenteritis/stomach infection (3%)
 - Animal bites (3%)
- **Top specialities (2024–25):** General Medicine, Ophthalmology, General Surgery.

3. Portability (Treatment Across States):

- Patients can seek treatment anywhere in India (key PM-JAY feature).
- **Top “in-migration” destinations:**
 - Chandigarh (19%)
 - Uttar Pradesh (13%)
 - Gujarat (11%)
 - Uttarakhand (8%)
 - Punjab (8%)
- **Top “out-migration” states:**
 - Uttar Pradesh (24%)
 - Madhya Pradesh (17%)
 - Bihar (16%)
 - Punjab, Himachal Pradesh (7% each)

4. Digital Health Ecosystem Progress:

- **ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account)** – 14-digit health ID for digital records.
- **50 crore health records** linked under the scheme since 2021.
- **6 in 10 citizens** have ABHA numbers.
- **Registered Facilities:** 3.8 lakh (~38% of total).
- **Registered Health Personnel:** 5.8 lakh (~26% of total).
- Aim: Create integrated **Digital Health Infrastructure** for seamless record-sharing.

5. Significance:

- Indicates success in reducing **out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE)**.
- Demonstrates **portability** and **private sector dependency** for healthcare delivery.
- Strengthens India’s **digital health ecosystem**.

Space for Notes:

Central Information Commission vs State Information Commission
Space for Notes:
Why in News?

A report by Satark Nagrik Sangathan highlights severe vacancies and dysfunction in State and Central Information Commissions, causing massive RTI appeal backlogs. Some SICs are defunct, and delays could extend decades, undermining citizens' right to information.

Description:

Feature / Aspect	Central Information Commission (CIC)	State Information Commission (SIC)
Constitutional / Statutory Status	Statutory body under the Right to Information Act, 2005	Statutory body under the Right to Information Act, 2005
Established by	Central Government	State Government
Headquarters	New Delhi	State Capital (varies by state)
Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) • Up to 10 Information Commissioners (ICs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Chief Information Commissioner (SCIC) • Up to 10 State Information Commissioners (SICs)
Appointment Authority	Appointed by the President of India	Appointed by the Governor of the State
Appointing Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister (Chairperson) • Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha • Union Cabinet Minister nominated by PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Minister (Chairperson) • Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly • State Cabinet Minister nominated by CM
Tenure	3 years or until 65 years of age , whichever is earlier (after 2019 amendment)	3 years or until 65 years of age , whichever is earlier
Reappointment	Not eligible for reappointment	Not eligible for reappointment
Salary and Conditions of Service	Same as Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners	Same as State Election Commissioner and State Election Commissioners
Jurisdiction	All Central Public Authorities (Ministries, Departments, PSUs, etc.)	All State Public Authorities (State Departments, PSUs, local bodies, etc.)
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear appeals against decisions of Central Public Information Officers (CPIOs) • Order disclosure of information • Impose penalties for non-compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear appeals against decisions of State Public Information Officers (SPIOs) • Order disclosure of information • Impose penalties for non-compliance
Reports	Submits Annual Report to the Central Government , which is laid before Parliament	Submits Annual Report to the State Government , which is laid before State Legislature

Removal	By the President on grounds of proved misbehavior or incapacity after inquiry by the Supreme Court	By the Governor on similar grounds after inquiry by the Supreme Court
Legal Backing	Sections 12–17 of the RTI Act, 2005	Sections 15–17 of the RTI Act, 2005

Space for Notes:

Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)

Why in News?

The Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by Rajnath Singh, approved ₹79,000 crore in acquisitions to enhance Army, Navy, and Air Force capabilities, including Nag missiles, LPDs, ALWT torpedoes, and long-range precision systems, promoting modernization and Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Description:

- The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** recently approved multiple procurement proposals worth **₹67,000 crore** to strengthen India's military preparedness.

About DAC:

- **Nature:** Highest decision-making body in the **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** for capital acquisitions and procurement.
- **Objective:** Ensure **expeditious procurement** of approved requirements of the Armed Forces – meeting capability, timeframe, and budgetary efficiency.

Formation:

- **Established:** 2001
- **Based on:** Recommendations of the **Group of Ministers (GoM)** report on *Reforming the National Security System*, post **Kargil War (1999)**.

Composition:

Position	Role
Chairman	Defence Minister
Members	MoS Defence, CDS, COAS, CNS, CAS
	Defence Secretary
	Secretary (Defence Production & Supplies)
	Secretary (Defence R&D)
	Secretary (Defence Finance)
	Vice Chief of Defence Staff / CISC
	Special Secretary (Acquisition)
Member Secretary	Dy. Chief of Defence Staff (Planning & Procurement – PP&FD)

Key Functions

- **Approve Long-Term Plans:** Gives *in-principle* approval to **15-year Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP)** of the Armed Forces.
- **Acceptance of Necessity (AoN):** Grants clearance to acquisition proposals.
- **Categorisation:** Decides on mode of acquisition –
 - *Buy (Indian/Global)*
 - *Buy & Make (Indian/Global)*
 - *Make (Indian)*

- **Offsets:** Reviews offset provisions for deals above ₹300 crore.
- **Technology Transfer:** Approves ToT proposals under 'Buy & Make'.
- **Vendor Clearance:** Resolves issues of *single vendor* cases.
- **Field Trial Evaluation:** Monitors and approves field trial processes for equipment.

Significance:

- Streamlines India's defence procurement process.
- Promotes indigenisation, Make in India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence.
- Ensures transparency and accountability in high-value acquisitions.

LOKPAL

Why in News?

The seven-member Lokpal, headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, has floated a tender to procure seven **BMW 3 Series 330Li** cars, raising public and media scrutiny over expenditure by the anti-corruption ombudsman.

Description:

- **Type:** Statutory Body
- **Established under:** *Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013*
- **Mandate:** Inquire into allegations of corruption against public functionaries.

Composition:

- **Total Members:** 1 Chairperson + 8 Members
 - **4 Judicial Members**
- **Chairperson:** Former CJI / SC Judge / Eminent person
- **Judicial Members:** Former SC Judge or former Chief Justice of a High Court
- **Social Representation:** ≥ 50% from SC/ST/OBC/Minorities/Women

Appointment:

- **Appointing Authority:** President of India
- **Selection Committee:**
 - PM (Chairperson)
 - Speaker of Lok Sabha
 - Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha
 - CJI or his nominee
 - One eminent jurist
- **Tenure:** 5 years or till age 70 (whichever earlier)
- **Salary:**
 - Chairperson → same as CJI
 - Members → same as SC Judges

Jurisdiction:

- **Covers:**
 - PM, Ministers, MPs, Group A–D officers of Union Govt.
 - Chairpersons, members, officers of boards/corporations/trusts funded by Govt.
 - NGOs receiving **foreign contribution > ₹10 lakh**.
- **Complaints:** Any person can file; must relate to offences under *Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988*.
- May order **CBI inquiry/investigation** or refer to **CVC** (for Central Govt. servants).

Space for Notes:

Exceptions for the Prime Minister:

Lokpal cannot inquire into matters relating to:

- International relations
- Internal & external security
- Public order
- Atomic energy & space
- ◆ Inquiry against PM only if approved by 2/3rd of Lokpal members.

Powers of Lokpal:

- **Superintendence over CBI** in referred cases.
- Approval required for **transfer of investigating officer**.
- Power to **authorize search/seizure**.
- **Inquiry Wing** → powers of a *civil court*.
- Can **confiscate assets** obtained through corruption.
- May **recommend transfer/suspension** of accused officers.
- Can **prevent destruction of records** during inquiry.
- Must **submit Annual Report** to President → laid before Parliament.

National Security Guard (NSG)
Why in News?

The Union Home Minister announced the establishment of the **seventh NSG hub in Ayodhya**, Uttar Pradesh, to strengthen counter-terror and counter-hijack capabilities. Additionally, a **Special Operations Training Centre** worth ₹141 crore was launched in Manesar, Haryana, to enhance commando training.

Description:

- Raised in **1984** following **Operation Blue Star** and the **assassination of Indira Gandhi**.
- Formally created under the **National Security Guard Act, 1986** (Parliament).
- **Administrative control:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- **Modelled on:** UK's SAS and Germany's GSG-9.
- **Motto:** *Sarvatra Sarvottama Suraksha* (Best of Security Everywhere).
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.
- **Director General (DG):** Always an IPS officer appointed by MHA.

Structure & Composition:

- Two main elements:
 1. **Special Action Group (SAG):** Comprises **Army personnel** – handles counter-terror operations.
 2. **Special Ranger Group (SRG):** Comprises **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) & State Police** – mainly for **VIP security**.
- Works on “**swift strike and quick withdrawal**” philosophy.
- Acts **only in exceptional situations**, not for routine law & order.

Functions / Objectives:

- Counter-terrorism & hostage rescue operations.
- Handling **air/land hijacking** and **bomb disposal (IED neutralisation)**.
- **Post-Blast Investigation (PBI)**.
- **VIP security (Z+ category)**.
- Operates as the **second line of defence** for the nation.

Space for Notes:

Special Wing:

- **National Bomb Data Centre (NBDC):**
 - Maintains database of bombings in India & abroad.
 - Analyses and shares intelligence with law enforcement agencies.

NSG Hubs & New Developments (2025 Update)

- Existing hubs: Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Jammu.
- **New NSG Hub: Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh)** – announced October 2025 by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.
 - Aim: Strengthen counter-terror response in the region.
 - Follows the 2005 Ayodhya terror attack.
- **Special Operations Training Centre (SOTC):**
 - Being built in Ayodhya at a cost of ₹141 crore on 8 acres.
 - Will train NSG & state anti-terror units with cutting-edge technology.

Significance:

- Enhances regional readiness and inter-agency coordination.
- Demonstrates India's zero-tolerance policy toward terrorism.
- Complements initiatives like Operation Sindoor and Operation Mahadev for cross-border counter-terror actions.

Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas
Why in News?

The Centre has directed States and Union Territories to organise events from November 1–15 to mark the 5th Janjatiya Gaurav Divas and conclude Birsa Munda's 150th birth anniversary, highlighting tribal welfare schemes and celebrating tribal culture nationwide.

Description:

- **Observed on:** 15th November every year.
- **Significance:** Celebrates the birth anniversary of tribal freedom fighter **Birsa Munda (1875–1900)**.
- **First celebrated:** In 2021, to honour the contributions of tribal communities to India's freedom struggle and nation-building.
- **Launched by:** The Prime Minister of India from Khunti district, Jharkhand.
- **Major Scheme Announced:** PM Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) – a ₹24,000 crore mission for the development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- **Objective:** To ensure *last-mile delivery* of welfare schemes, protect endangered tribal groups, and provide access to education, healthcare, housing, and livelihood support.
- **Associated initiatives:**
 - **Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra** – outreach to villages for welfare delivery.
 - **PM-KISAN 15th installment** – ₹18,000 crore released for over 8 crore farmers.

About Birsa Munda:

- Born on 15 November 1875 in Ulihatu village, Jharkhand (then Bihar).
- Belong to the Munda tribe of the Chotanagpur Plateau.
- Led the **Ulgulan Movement (1899–1900)** – meaning *The Great Tumult* – against British colonial rule and missionary influence.

Space for Notes:

- Founded the **Birsait faith**, promoting tribal identity and rejecting British-imposed religious conversion.
- Advocated tribal rights over land (“*Khuntkatti*” system).
- Revered as ‘**Bhagwan**’ (God) and ‘**Dharati Aba**’ (Father of Earth) by his followers.
- His movement forced the British to pass laws protecting tribal land rights.
- The **state of Jharkhand** was formed on his birth anniversary in **2000** in his honour.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):

- India has **75 PVTGs** across **18 States and Union Territories**.
- Identified as a distinct category following the **Dhebar Commission (1961)** report.
- Characterised by:
 1. Pre-agricultural level of technology.
 2. Stagnant or declining population.
 3. Extremely low literacy.
 4. Subsistence-level economy.
- **Odisha** has the highest PVTG population (~8.66 lakh).
- **Largest PVTG community:** *Saura* (Odisha).

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025

Why in News?

Astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar, who passed away in May 2025, has been posthumously awarded the **Vigyan Ratna Puraskar**.

Description:

- The Government announced the **second edition (2025)** of the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, honouring India’s leading scientists across 13 domains.
- **Announced on:** 26 October 2025
- Organized by: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology

About the Award:

The **Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar** is India’s national-level science award recognizing outstanding and inspiring contributions in the fields of:

- Science
- Technology
- Innovation

It aims to celebrate and honour individuals driving India’s scientific and technological progress.

Four Categories of Awards:

1. **Vigyan Ratna (VR):** Up to 3 awards for lifetime achievements in Science and Technology.
2. **Vigyan Shri (VS):** Up to 25 awards for distinguished contributions.
3. **Vigyan Yuva – Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB):** Up to 25 awards for exceptional young scientists.
4. **Vigyan Team (VT):** Up to 3 team awards for collaborative scientific achievements.

Fields Covered (13 Domains):

Physics, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, Mathematics & Computer Science, Earth Science, Medicine, Engineering Sciences, Agricultural Science, Environmental Science, Technology & Innovation, Atomic Energy, Space Science and Technology, Others.

Space for Notes:

Notable Winners 2025:

Vigyan Ratna: Late Jayant Narlikar – Astrophysics (for challenging the Big Bang theory)

Vigyan Shri: Dr. G.P. Singh – Agricultural Science

Vigyan Shri: Dr. Y.M. Seikh – Atomic Energy

Vigyan Shri: Dr. K. Thangaraj – Biological Sciences

Vigyan Shri: Dr. Pradeep Thalappil – Chemistry

National Unity Day 2025 (Rashtriya Ekta Diwas)
Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas parade** at Kevadia, Gujarat on October 31 to commemorate **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's 150th birth anniversary**, highlighting India's unity, cultural diversity, and contributions of security forces.

Description:

Date: 31st October 2025

Occasion: 150th Birth Anniversary of *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* – the “Iron Man of India”

Theme 2025:

“Ek Bharat, Aatmanirbhar Bharat”:

→ Links unity with self-reliance; emphasizes that a strong, united India is essential for national development.

Significance:

- Commemorates **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's** role in uniting over **560 princely states** post-Independence.
- Reinforces the vision of **“Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.”**
- Promotes national integration, unity, and collective strength.

Main Celebration Venue:

Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat – world's tallest statue (182 m), inaugurated in **2018** near **Sardar Sarovar Dam**.

Sardar Patel's Key Contributions:

- Architect of **India's political integration** post-1947 with the help of **V.P. Menon**.
- Used the **Instrument of Accession** to unify princely states.
- **Junagadh (Referendum), Hyderabad (Operation Polo), and Jammu & Kashmir** integrations were major achievements.
- Led **Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)** – earned the title “Sardar.”

About the Day:

- First observed in **2014** to mark national unity.
- Celebrated with **Unity Runs, cultural events, debates, and pledges** promoting harmony and integration.

8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)
Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the **Terms of Reference (ToR)** for the **8th Central Pay Commission**, chaired by **Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai**, to revise pay, allowances, and pensions of Central Government employees. The Commission will submit its report within **18 months**.

Space for Notes:

Description:**About Pay Commission:**

- **Constitution:** Set up periodically by the **Government of India** to review the **salary, allowances, and pensions** of Central Government employees.
- **Legal Status:** **Advisory body** – its recommendations are **not binding** on the government.
- **Frequency:** Constituted roughly **every 10 years**.
- **First Pay Commission:** 1946.

Comparison: 7th CPC vs 8th CPC:

Feature	7th Central Pay Commission (CPC)	8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)
Constituted by	Union Government (2014)	Union Government (Approved in 2025)
Chairperson	Justice A.K. Mathur	Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (Retd.)
Under	Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance	Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance
Effective Date	1 January 2016	1 January 2026 (expected)
Coverage	~47 lakh employees & 52 lakh pensioners	~50 lakh employees & 65 lakh pensioners (including Defence personnel)
Fitment Factor	2.57	2.28 - 2.86 (expected)
Minimum Basic Pay	₹7,000 → ₹18,000	₹18,000 → ₹26,000-₹41,000 (expected)
Structure	Introduced Pay Matrix (19 levels) replacing Pay Bands & Grade Pay	Likely continuation with possible revision and simplification
Minimum Pension	₹9,000	Expected upward revision (linked with inflation indexation)
Dearness Allowance (DA)	Revised periodically (merged every 10 years)	To be merged with basic pay during implementation
Focus Areas	Simplified structure, parity across services, rationalization of allowances	Pay parity, market alignment, pension reforms, fiscal impact assessment
Implementation Burden	₹1.02 lakh crore (~0.7% of GDP)	May exceed ₹1 lakh crore fiscal impact
Expected Pay Hike	23.5% overall	40-50% overall (projected)
Impact on Economy	Boosted consumption but increased fiscal burden	Expected to raise demand and inflation slightly
Timeline for Report	Around 21 months	Within 18 months of constitution
Major Innovation	Pay Matrix System	Expected introduction of performance-linked pay
Pension Reforms	Strengthened OROP (Defence)	Likely to enhance pension indexation and sustainability measures

Space for Notes:

Rajya Sabha (Council of States)

Space for Notes:

Why in News?

The National Conference won three Rajya Sabha seats in Jammu & Kashmir, while the BJP secured one seat with 32 votes despite having 28 MLAs, highlighting political maneuvering and controversies over alleged cross-voting in the 88-member Assembly.

Description:

- Modeled on the **British House of Lords**.
- It is the **Upper House** of the Indian Parliament.

Composition:

- **Total strength:** 245 members
 - 233 elected by States & Union Territories
 - 12 nominated by the President (from art, literature, science & social service)
- **Maximum limit:** 250 (as per Article 80)

Tenure:

- **6 years** term for each member.
- **1/3rd members retire every 2 years** (continuous house).

Vacancy:

- As per **Section 154, Representation of the People Act, 1951** – casual vacancies are filled for the remainder of the predecessor's term.

Presiding Officers:

- **Chairperson:** Vice-President of India
- **Deputy Chairperson:** Elected from among members

Election Process:

Method:

- **Indirect election** – by elected MLAs of States/UTs.
- **System:** Proportional Representation by Single Transferable Vote (STV).
- **Open ballot** – MLAs must show their vote to the party's authorised agent.

Voting Process:

- MLAs mark preferences (1, 2, 3...) for candidates.
- A candidate needs a **quota** of votes to win.

Quota Formula:

$$\text{Quota} = \left\{ \frac{\text{Total valid votes}}{\text{Vacancies} + 1} \right\} + 1$$

Key Points:

- Representation of States is **based on population**.
- **Independent MLAs** cannot show ballots to anyone.
- Ensures representation of States in the Union Parliament.

Execution Petitions in India

Why in News?

The Supreme Court flagged the high pendency of 8.82 lakh execution petitions in district courts, highlighting delays in enforcing civil decrees. It directed all High Courts to expedite disposal within six months, following its March 2025 monitoring order.

Definition:

- An **execution petition** is a legal tool to enforce a court decree after a civil suit.
- Even after winning a case, the **decree-holder must file this petition** to obtain what the court has awarded – e.g., payment, property possession, or vacating premises.
- Delays in execution lead to a **“second round of litigation”** and erode public trust in the judiciary.

Current Pendency (as of Oct 2025):

- 8.82 lakh execution petitions pending across district courts nationwide.
- Disposed in 6 months (after SC March 2025 order): 3,38,685 petitions.
- High pendency states:
 - Maharashtra & Goa (Bombay HC) – 3.4 lakh
 - Tamil Nadu & Puducherry (Madras HC) – 86,000+

Causes of Delay:

1. Legal counsel unavailable: 38.9%
2. Stay on proceedings: 17%
3. Awaiting documents: 12%
4. Procedural hurdles: CPC mandates notice and hearing for objections even at execution stage → adds 2–3 years.
5. Lack of granular data on type of execution (property, payment, etc.)
6. Regional disparities in judicial infrastructure

Supreme Court Intervention:

- 2021 CJI SA Bobde judgment: Trial courts directed to dispose of execution cases within 6 months.
- March 2025 judgment: Nationwide monitoring exercise ordered; High Courts to report pending cases.
- Oct 16, 2025 follow-up: SC flagged high pendency and gave additional 6 months to expedite disposal; stern action against non-compliant courts (e.g., Karnataka HC).
- Next progress hearing: April 10, 2026.

Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000 – “Safe Harbour” Provision
Why in News?

The Ministry of Electronics & IT is amending the IT Rules, 2021, to allow only senior officials (JS/DIG and above) to issue content-blocking notices under Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act, enhancing accountability and specifying legal grounds.

Description:
About the IT Act, 2000:

- India’s primary law governing digital and cyber activities.
- Provides legal framework for:
 - Cybersecurity and prevention of cybercrimes.
 - Recognition of digital signatures and e-authentication.
 - Regulation of intermediaries and digital transactions.
- Amended in 2008 and 2015 to address emerging cyber challenges.

Key Provisions Relevant to Digital Regulation:

Section	Provision	Key Features
69A	Content Blocking Power	Govt. can block access to online info for sovereignty, security, public order, etc. Upheld in <i>Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)</i> .
79	Intermediary Liability (“Safe Harbour”)	Protects intermediaries from liability for user-generated content if they act as neutral hosts.

Space for Notes:

Section 79 – Intermediary Liability:

- Grants **immunity (safe harbour)** to intermediaries (social media, e-commerce, ISPs) for **third-party content**, if they:
 - Act as **neutral platforms**.
 - Follow **due diligence** prescribed under IT (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules.
- **Section 79(3)(b):** Immunity is lost if the intermediary **fails to remove unlawful content** after receiving a **court order or government notification**.

Who Qualifies as an Intermediary?

Entities that **store, transmit, or provide access** to third-party information, e.g.:

- Social media platforms (X, Facebook)
- Search engines
- E-commerce sites (Amazon, Flipkart)
- Internet service providers (Jio, Airtel)

About Sahyog Portal:

- **Developed by:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- **Purpose:** Automate and track **content removal notices** under IT Act.
- **Functions:**
 - Centralized interface between govt. agencies and intermediaries.
 - Tracks takedown requests and compliance.
 - Enhances transparency and accountability in digital content regulation.

Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021

Why in News?

The Supreme Court ruled that the age limits under the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, cannot be applied retrospectively, allowing couples who froze embryos before January 25, 2022, to proceed with surrogacy, upholding reproductive autonomy.

Description:

Objective:

To regulate surrogacy in India, prohibit commercial surrogacy, and allow only altruistic surrogacy to prevent exploitation of women and protect child rights.

Key Features:

- **Type Allowed:** Only *altruistic surrogacy* (no monetary payment; only medical and insurance expenses covered).
- **Commercial surrogacy:** Banned.
- **Purpose:** Only for intending couples suffering from proven infertility.
- **Foreigners, single parents, and LGBTQ individuals:** Not eligible.

Eligibility:

For Intending Couple:

- Must be Indian citizens.
- Married for at least 5 years.
- Age limits: Wife 23–50 years; Husband 26–55 years.
- Must not have a surviving biological or adopted child (except in case of differently abled child).

Space for Notes:

For Surrogate Mother:

- Must be an ever-married woman aged 25–35 years.
- Must have a child of her own.
- Can act as surrogate only once.
- Should be a close relative of the intending couple.
- Cannot use her own gametes.

Regulation and Oversight:

- **National Surrogacy Board (NSB)** and **State Surrogacy Boards (SSBs)** established for policy, coordination, and supervision.
- All surrogacy clinics must be registered under the Act.

Offences and Penalties:

- Undertaking or advertising commercial surrogacy.
- Exploiting surrogate mothers.
- Selling or importing embryos or gametes. **Punishment:** Imprisonment up to 10 years and fine up to ₹10 lakh.

Rights of the Child:

- A child born through surrogacy is deemed the biological child of the intending couple.
- Entitled to all legal and inheritance rights.

Recent Update (2024 Amendment):

- Allows use of one donor gamete (egg or sperm) if medically certified by a District Medical Board.
- At least one gamete must belong to the intending couple.

Space for Notes:
National Security Act (NSA), 1980
Why in News?

Climate activist **Sonam Wangchuk's wife, Gitanjali J. Angmo**, filed a **habeas corpus petition** in the Supreme Court challenging his **preventive detention under the National Security Act (NSA), 1980**, after violent protests in Leh, seeking disclosure of his whereabouts and immediate release.

Description:

Aspect	Details
Enacted	23rd September, 1980 by Parliament of India
Nature	Preventive detention law
Objective	To prevent individuals from acting in a manner prejudicial to national security, public order, or essential supplies & services
Historical Background	- Colonial precedents: Bengal Regulation III (1818), Defence of India Act (1915), Rowlatt Act (1919) - Post-Independence: Preventive Detention Act (1950–1969), MISA (1971–1978) repealed after Emergency misuse
Constitutional Backing	Article 22(3)(b) permits preventive detention; Article 22(4) limits detention to 3 months unless approved by an Advisory Board
Key Provisions	- Power of Detention: Both Central & State govts can detain - Grounds: Threat to defence, foreign relations, public order, or essential supplies - Detention Period: Up to 12 months , extendable with fresh grounds

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory Board: Must review detention within 3 months, headed by HC judges - No Legal Representation: Detainee cannot have lawyer before Advisory Board - Temporary Release possible with govt conditions - Immunity Clause: Protection for actions taken in "good faith"
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tool for preventive action in sensitive regions - Used in Kashmir (post-Article 370) - Deters potential threats - Balances security & civil liberties (on paper)
Criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arbitrary Detention: Misused against activists & minorities - Violation of Fundamental Rights (Article 21 & 22 safeguards) - Lack of Transparency: No NCRB data (no FIRs registered) - Natural Justice Violations: No court appearance in 24 hrs, no bail rights - Low Conviction Rate: Example: Allahabad HC quashed 94/120 NSA orders in 2021
Way Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stronger judicial oversight - Amend provisions denying legal representation - Introduce Sunset Clauses to limit misuse - Ensure transparency in detention records - Balance national security with civil liberties

Space for Notes:

Chief Justice of India (CJI)

Why in News?

The Union government has requested CJI B.R. Gavai recommended his successor, initiating the appointment process. Justice Surya Kant, next in seniority, is set to become the 53rd CJI before Gavai's retirement on November 24, 2025.

Description:

- The **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** formed a **three-member committee** to probe allegations against a Delhi High Court judge.

Constitutional Basis:

- **Article 124(2):** The **President of India** appoints the CJI, based on the **Prime Minister's advice**, following a recommendation from the **Union Law Minister**.

Qualifications:

A person is eligible to be appointed as the CJI if they:

1. Are a **citizen of India**, and
2. Have served as a **Judge of a High Court** for at least **5 years**, or
3. Have been an **Advocate of a High Court** for at least **10 years**, or
4. Are considered a **distinguished jurist** by the President.

Appointment Process:

1. The **outgoing CJI** recommends their **successor** based on **seniority**.
2. The **Union Law Minister** forwards the name to the **Prime Minister**.
3. The **Prime Minister** advises the **President** to make the appointment.
4. As per the **Second Judges Case (1993)**, the **senior-most Supreme Court judge** is appointed as the CJI.

Tenure:

- No fixed tenure.
- Retirement age: 65 years (Article 124(2)).

Roles and Powers:

1. **Master of the Roster:** Allocates cases and decides bench composition in the Supreme Court.
2. **Head of the Collegium:** Leads the Collegium System for appointment and transfer of judges.
3. **Administrative Authority:** Supervises court administration, staff appointments, and case management.
4. **Judicial Leadership:** “First among equals” – no superior judicial power over other judges.

Removal (Article 124(4)):

- By President, after an address by Parliament supported by special majority in both Houses.
- Grounds:
 - Proven misbehavior, or
 - Incapacity.

Collegium System:

- Not established by law; evolved through Judges Cases (1981, 1993, 1998).
- For SC Appointments: CJI + 4 senior-most judges.
- For HC Appointments:
 - HC Collegium: Chief Justice + 2 senior-most judges of that HC.
 - SC Collegium: CJI + 2 senior-most SC judges.

Article 371
Why in News?

Following deadly protests in Leh seeking Ladakhi Statehood, civil society groups resumed talks with the MHA, with the government indicating that Article 371 provisions could be considered, while groups continue to demand inclusion under the Sixth Schedule.

Description:

- Found in Part XXI of the Indian Constitution – *Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions*.
- In force since 26 January 1950.
- Articles 371(A–J) were added later via constitutional amendments under Article 368.
- Aim: To address regional imbalances, protect cultural identities, and ensure equitable development.

States Covered under Article 371 (A–J):

Article	State	Key Provisions / Special Powers
371	Maharashtra & Gujarat	Governor to establish Development Boards for Vidarbha, Marathwada, Saurashtra & Kutch; ensure equitable fund allocation.
371A	Nagaland	Parliament cannot legislate on Naga religion, customary law, land rights, or civil/criminal justice without State Assembly's consent.

Space for Notes:

371B	Assam	Provides for Legislative Committee for tribal areas; President determines its composition and powers.
371C	Manipur	Hill Areas Committee of legislators; Governor reports annually to President on administration of Hill Areas.
371D & 371E	Andhra Pradesh & Telangana	Ensures equitable opportunities in education & employment across regions; allows President's orders for regional balance.
371F	Sikkim	Protects existing laws, customs, and rights of Sikkimese; ensures smooth integration with India.
371G	Mizoram	Protects Mizo customary laws, social/religious practices, land rights , and administration of justice.
371H	Arunachal Pradesh	Governor given special responsibility for law and order .
371I	Goa	Legislative Assembly must have minimum 30 members .
371J	Karnataka (Hyderabad-Karnataka / Kalyana Karnataka)	Establishes development board , ensures regional reservation in jobs & education .

Space for Notes:
Number of States Covered:

12 States – Maharashtra, Gujarat, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Sikkim, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, and Karnataka.

Purpose of Article 371 Series:

- Safeguard **regional identity, culture & traditions**.
- Promote **balanced regional development**.
- Address **administrative & economic disparities**.
- Preserve **customary laws & local governance systems** in tribal/hill regions.

Extension Proposal:

- **Ladakh** may get **Article 371-like protection** to preserve its demographic, cultural, and ecological balance.

Juvenile Justice Boards – Pendency, Staff Shortage & Systemic Issues

Why in News / Context?

- The *India Justice Report (IJR)* highlighted that **over 55%** cases before **362 Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs)** across India were pending as of **31 October 2023**.
- The findings point to **serious shortages** in staff, infrastructure, legal aid, and **data transparency** within the juvenile justice system.

Juvenile Justice Boards:
Legal Basis:

- Established under: **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**.

Purpose:

- To adjudicate cases involving **Children in Conflict with Law (CCL)** – i.e., children alleged or found to have committed offences under IPC or special/local laws.

Composition of a JJB:

- 1 Metropolitan Magistrate / Judicial Magistrate (First Class)
- 2 Social Workers, of whom at least one must be a woman

A Board is considered incomplete if any member is missing.

Functions of JJB:

- Conduct inquiry and pass orders for children accused of offences.
- Ensure a child-friendly judicial process.
- Coordinate with:
 - Child Welfare Committees (CWCs)
 - District Child Protection Units
 - Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU)

Powers:

- Can dispose cases for all offences committed by children except those needing trial as adults (for *heinous offences* under certain conditions).
- Can order:
 - counseling,
 - probation,
 - community service,
 - placement in special homes,
 - rehabilitation.

SC Advisory on Presidential Reference (Governors' Timelines)
Constitutional Background:

- **Article 200** – Governor's options on State Bills:
 - Assent
 - Withhold assent
 - Return for reconsideration (except Money Bills)
 - Reserve for President
- **Article 201** – President's options:
 - Assent
 - Withhold assent
 - Return Bill to State Legislature (if not a Money Bill)
- **Article 143** – Presidential Reference:

President may seek advisory opinion of the SC:

 - **Art. 143(1)** – on questions of law or fact of public importance. **May tender or may refuse to tender** its opinion. E.g., the Supreme court has **declined to provide** its opinion in **1993** with respect to the **Ram Janmabhoomi case**.
 - **Art. 143(2)** – on disputes arising out of pre-Constitution treaties. **Must tender** its opinion.

Why the Presidential Reference?

- SC (April 8 judgment) imposed **timelines** on Governors and President for dealing with State Bills.
- President sent **14 questions** to the SC under Article 143 regarding:
 - Separation of powers
 - Executive discretion vs judicial review
 - Federal balance
 - Extent of Supreme Court's powers under Article 142

Space for Notes:

The April 8 Supreme Court Judgment (Trigger Point)

SC held:

1. **Governor cannot delay Bills indefinitely.**
2. **Mandatory timelines imposed:**
 - **3 months** → Governor must decide on assent/withhold/return/reserve.
 - If Bill is returned → State Legislature reconsiders → If re-passed:
 - **1 month** → Governor must send Bill to President.
 - **3 months** → President must take a decision.

SC also called Governor's act of **reserving 10 TN Bills** as "illegal" and "erroneous".

Why the Presidential Reference is Significant?

- Instead of filing a **review petition**, the Executive invoked **Article 143** → elevates the issue to a **constitutional dialogue**.
- It concerns:
 - Boundaries of **judicial power**.
 - Extent of **executive discretion**.
 - Working of **federal democracy**.
 - Powers of **Governor and President** when dealing with State Legislatures.

Key Pointers:

- **SC advisory opinion** under Art. 143 is **NOT binding**.
- Governor acts on **aid and advice of State Council of Ministers**, except in discretionary matters.
- **Delaying Bills** is *not* an enumerated discretionary power.
- **President acts on aid and advice of Union Council of Ministers** (Art. 74).
- Judicial review extends to **constitutional inaction** (SC doctrine).
- Issue directly tests the **basic structure principles**

Ahmedabad to Host 2030 Commonwealth Games (CWG)

Context / Why in News?

The Commonwealth Sport's General Assembly in Glasgow confirmed **Ahmedabad** as the **host city for the 2030 Commonwealth Games**, marking India's first time hosting the Games since 2010.

About the Commonwealth Games (CWG):

A multinational, multi-sport event held every four years among athletes from the **Commonwealth of Nations**, governed by the **Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF)**.

Genesis & Mandate:

- Established in **1930** (then called British Empire Games).
- Mandate: promote sports, cultural exchange, and friendly cooperation among Commonwealth nations.
- India is a regular participant since **1934**.

Details of India Hosting 2030 CWG:

- Venue: **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**.
- Confirmation: Approved at **CGF Assembly, Glasgow (2025)**.
- India to propose **Yoga** as a medal sport.
- Possible return of events previously removed from the roster: **badminton, hockey, wrestling, T20 cricket, shooting**.
- India aims to host a "**controversy-free**" and highly modernised edition.

Space for Notes:

Key Features of Hosting Plan:

- Focus on sports infrastructure, athlete villages, transport planning, and global tourism.
- Coordination between **Government of India, Government of Gujarat, and Indian Olympic Association (IOA)**.
- India plans to work closely with **Commonwealth Sport** to finalise the event programme.

NOTE: The 2026 Commonwealth Games, officially known as the XXIII Commonwealth Games and Glasgow 2026, are scheduled to take place from 23 July to 2 August 2026 in Glasgow, Scotland.

Justice Surya Kant – 53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI)
Context:

- **Justice Surya Kant** took oath as the 53rd Chief Justice of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Oath administered by **President Droupadi Murmu**.

APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA (CJI):

1. **Constitutional Basis: Article 124(2)** of the Constitution: Judges of the Supreme Court (including the CJI) are appointed by the **President of India**.
2. **Convention: Senior-most Judge Principle:**
 - By long-standing convention (not in the Constitution), the **senior-most judge of the Supreme Court** is appointed as the CJI.
 - This convention has been consistently followed since the **Second Judges Case (1993)**.
3. **Role of the Collegium:**
 - The outgoing CJI recommends the name of the next senior-most judge to the Government.
 - The recommendation is processed through the **Supreme Court Collegium**.
4. **Final Appointing Authority: President of India** appoints the CJI after receiving the recommendation from the Government, which is based on the Collegium's advice.

CISF
Why in News / Context?

- The Government of India has decided to **unify security regulations for 250+ seaports**.
- **CISF (Central Industrial Security Force)** has been designated as the **security regulator** for ports handling cargo, beginning with **80 major export–import ports**.
- CISF currently guards **13 major ports**.

About CISF:

Parent Ministry: Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

Established: 1969 (through the *CISF Act, 1968*)

Nature: A **Central Armed Police Force (CAPF)** specially mandated for **industrial and critical infrastructure security**.

Key Functions:

- Security of **critical PSUs, industrial establishments, and key government infrastructure**.
- Security of **airports, major seaports, Delhi Metro, atomic and space installations, currency note presses, mints, etc.**

Space for Notes:

- VIP security (limited), disaster response and fire protection in certain units.
- Increasing role in **private-sector security** on a cost-reimbursement basis.
- Can be deployed in private industries, but with Government approval and on payment basis (as per CISF Amendment Act, 2009).

Central Armed Police Force:

CAPF		Category
BSF	Border Security Force	Border Guarding Force
AR	Assam Rifles	Border Guarding Force
ITBP	Indo-Tibetan Border Police	Border Guarding Force
SSB	Sashastra Seema Bal	Border Guarding Force
NSG	National Security Guard	Special Operations
CISF	Central Industrial Security Force	Internal Security
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force	Internal Security

Space for Notes:
Selection of the UN Secretary-General
Context:

The process of selecting the next UN Secretary-General has begun, with the **UN Security Council and General Assembly jointly inviting nominations**. The next SG will serve a five-year term.

Selection Process – Key Features:
(A) Nomination Stage:

- Any **UN member state** may nominate a candidate.
- No formal eligibility criteria, but **regional rotation** is informally followed.
 - Traditionally rotates among regions; next turn is **expected for Latin America**.

(B) Security Council Process:
1. Straw Polls (Informal Voting):

- Conducted via **secret ballots**.
- Council members mark: **Encourage / Discourage / No opinion**.
- Helps identify candidates acceptable to the P5.

2. P5 Veto Role:

- Any P5 member can effectively **block** a candidate.
- A final recommendation requires:
 - **At least 9 votes in favour**, and
 - **No veto** from any P5 member.

P5: USA, UK, France, Russia, China.

3. Final Recommendation:

- The Security Council adopts a **formal resolution** recommending one candidate to the General Assembly.

(C) General Assembly Approval:

- The **193-member UNGA** elects the Secretary-General based on the Security Council's recommendation.
- Historically seen as a **rubber stamp**, as UNGA does not alter the recommended candidate.

Additional Facts:

- Term: **Five years**, eligible for re-appointment.
- First UNSG: **Trygve Lie** (Norway, 1946).
- Current UNSG (until 2026): **António Guterres** (Portugal).
- SG is often selected by **consensus**, not competitive election.

DIGITAL ARREST SCAM & UN CYBERCRIME CONVENTION
Why in News?

The Supreme Court asked the Centre to decide on ratifying the UN Convention against Cybercrime while hearing a digital arrest scam case, issuing strict no-bail orders and proposing CBI takeover of such cases nationwide.

Description:
What is a Digital Arrest Scam?

A **digital arrest scam** is a **cyber fraud technique** where criminals impersonate law-enforcement agencies and falsely convince victims that they are under a "virtual arrest".

UN Convention Against Cybercrime:

- Adopted: December 2024 (UN General Assembly)
- Opened for Signature: October 2025
- Becomes Binding: After ratification by 40 states (Currently India **has not ratified**.)

Purpose of the Treaty:

The world's **first global, comprehensive treaty on cybercrime**.

Creates a unified legal framework for countries to:

- Prevent cybercrime
- Investigate and prosecute offenders
- Cooperate internationally
- Share **electronic evidence** across borders
- Handle crimes where criminals exploit **ICT systems across jurisdictions**

Major Provisions:

Treaty requires countries to criminalise: Illegal access, System/data interference, Online fraud & forgery, Child sexual abuse material, Online grooming, Non-consensual intimate image sharing.

It mandates:

- **Extradition**
- **Mutual legal assistance**
- **24/7 contact points** for quick evidence preservation
- **Procedural powers** like expedited preservation, search & seizure, production orders
- Respect for **human rights and due process**

Treaty Structure:

Contains **Preamble + Nine Chapters**, covering: General provisions, Criminalization, Jurisdiction, Procedural measures, international cooperation, Preventive measures, technical assistance, Implementation, Final provisions.

Implementation Mechanism:

- A **Conference of States Parties** will monitor treaty compliance.
- **UNODC** acts as Secretariat.

Space for Notes:

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

Space for Notes:

Why in News?

The National Board for Wildlife cleared Chhattisgarh's proposal to alter Pamed Wildlife Sanctuary boundaries to establish a CRPF jungle warfare college and battalion camp after Operation Black Forest. The move aims to strengthen anti-Maoist operations while ensuring wildlife conservation.

Description:

- CRPF is the premier Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) responsible for internal security in India.
- Functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

History:

- **1939:** Formed as Crown Representative Police.
- Created to maintain law & order in princely states after political unrest post the Madras Resolution of 1936.
- **28 December 1949:** Renamed as Central Reserve Police Force under the CRPF Act, 1949.
- One of the oldest CAPFs in India.

Roles & Duties of CRPF:

- Crowd control & Riot control.
- Counter-insurgency operations.
- Anti-militancy duties.
- Handling Left Wing Extremism (LWE) operations.
- Provides security during elections, especially in sensitive & disturbed areas.
- VIP security & protection of vital installations.
- Environmental protection → prevents forest degradation + protects flora & fauna.
- UN Peacekeeping Missions participation.
- Disaster relief & rescue in natural calamities.
- War-time role: Supports the army; deals with aggression on borders (as per requirement).

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)

Why in News?

The CAG has approved creation of two new specialised cadres – Central Revenue Audit (CRA) and Central Expenditure Audit (CEA) – within the Indian Audit and Accounts Department from January 1, 2026, to enhance domain expertise and centralise audit functions.

Description:

Constitutional Basis:

- Article 148 → Provides for independent office of CAG
- Article 149 → Duties & powers decided by Parliament (CAG Act 1971)
- Article 150 → Accounts format of Union & States as advised by CAG
- Article 151 → CAG reports to President/Governor → laid before legislature
- Article 279 → CAG certifies net proceeds of taxes

Appointment & Conditions:

- Appointed by **President** (Warrant under hand & seal)
- Salary & service conditions determined by **Parliament**
- Expenses of CAG office **charged on CFI** (Consolidated Fund of India)
- Not eligible for further Govt office after tenure → ensures independence
- Removal like **SC Judge** (impeachment type)
- Tenure: **6 years or 65 years** whichever earlier (CAG Act 1971)

Nature & Importance:

- Head of **Indian Audit & Accounts Department**
- Guardian of **Public Purse**
- Ensures financial accountability of Centre + States
- Major bulwark of Indian Parliamentary Democracy

Audit Coverage:

- Consolidated Fund of India / State CF / UT CF
- Contingency Fund (Centre + States)
- Public Account (Centre + States)
- Govt departments / P&L Accounts / Trading accounts / Balance Sheets
- Can audit other bodies/Local bodies when requested by President/Governor

Relation with PAC:

- CAG submits 3 reports → Appropriation / Finance / PSU report
- CAG = **guide, friend, philosopher** of PAC

India vs Britain difference:

India CAG	Britain CAG
Only Auditor General	Comptroller + Auditor General both
Audits after expenditure	Can prevent withdrawal

CAG to Audit Major Railway Projects:

- CAG will conduct special audits on 4 key Indian Railways programmes:
 1. Suburban Train Services
 2. E-Procurement Platform
 3. Multi-Modal Transport & Logistics Initiatives
 4. Sustainable Rail Transport (ESG/Green Energy)
- Reports to be presented in **Monsoon Session 2026** of Parliament.
- Linked to National Rail Plan 2030 → aim: increase freight modal share to **45%**.
- Audit will cover Dedicated Freight Corridors + Golden Quadrilateral network.
- IIM Mumbai engaged as knowledge partner for multi-modal audit.
- Parallel reform: CAG creating **two new specialised cadres** (CRA & CEA) to centralise audit capacity (operational from 1 January 2026).

Aadhaar, Foreigners & Electoral Roll Verification (SIR Exercise)
Context / Why in News?

During hearings on the **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls, the Supreme Court asked whether a **foreigner or intruder**, who uses Aadhaar to access welfare schemes, can also use it to enter the electoral roll.

Space for Notes:

About the Issue:

The case examines whether **Aadhaar**, a welfare-linked identity document, can be used to justify inclusion in the voter list—an area governed strictly by **citizenship requirements** under the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950.

Aadhaar: Legal Position

- Aadhaar is created under the **Aadhaar Act, 2016**.
- It is an **identity and welfare delivery document**, not a proof of Indian citizenship.
- Can be used to access subsidies, PDS benefits, and government services.
- The Court reiterated that merely possessing Aadhaar **does not confer citizenship** or right to vote.

Electoral Roll Requirements:

- Governed by **RPA 1950** and **Article 326** of the Constitution.
- Only **citizens of India** aged 18+ can be registered as voters.
- EC has inherent jurisdiction to “**examine, vet, and verify**” entries, especially when entries are of “doubtful integrity.”

Key Legal Questions Raised by SC:

- If a foreigner who accessed subsidised ration via Aadhaar can demand inclusion as a voter.
- Whether EC can ask electors to fill **enumeration forms**, which petitioners call “exclusionary.”
- Whether SIR’s verification process is constitutionally reasonable and non-discriminatory.

EC’s Authority:

- EC’s verification powers stem from **Section 21 of RPA 1950**.
- It can review entries, remove doubtful electors, and require documentation to maintain roll integrity.
- EC clarified that verifying citizenship status is inherent to ensuring a clean electoral roll.

Draft Seeds Bill 2025
Why in News?

The Centre has released the **Draft Seeds Bill 2025**, proposing **mandatory registration of seed varieties** and strict penalties—including fines up to **₹30 lakh** and **three years’ imprisonment**—for selling spurious or unregistered seeds, aiming to replace the outdated **Seeds Act, 1966**.

Description:

- Replaces **Seeds Act, 1966** and **Seeds (Control) Order, 1983**.
- Modernises seed regulation, improves quality, ensures farmer protection, and supports innovation.

Scope- Regulates sale, import, export, production, distribution of seeds in India.

Seed Quality Standards:

- Mandatory compliance with **Indian Minimum Seed Certification Standards**:
 - Germination
 - Genetic purity
 - Physical purity
 - Seed health
 - Trait expression

Space for Notes:

Mandatory Registration:

- All seed varieties must be registered (Except farmer varieties & varieties produced only for export).
- Already notified varieties under 1966 Act → Deemed registered.

Dealer/Distributor Registration- Every seed dealer/distributor must obtain State government registration before business operations.

Liberalised Seed Imports:

- Central Government may import unregistered varieties for
 - Research
 - Trials
- Promotes innovation & global germplasm access.

Offence Classification:

- Offences divided into: Trivial, Minor, Major.
- Decriminalisation of *minor* offences → Ease of Doing Business.

Institutional Framework:

- Establishes:
 - Central Seeds Committee
 - State Seeds Committees
- Functions: Coordination, oversight, regulation, policy guidance.

106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023
Why in News?

The Supreme Court termed women as the “largest minority” in India while hearing a plea challenging the delay in implementing the 106th Constitutional Amendment (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam). The Court questioned why women’s reservation is being held back till Census and delimitation.

Description:

- **History:**
 - Women Reservation Bill first introduced in 1996.
 - Multiple attempts made in 1996, 1998, 1999 & 2008 → lapsed earlier due to Lok Sabha dissolution.
 - Finally passed by both Houses in 2023.
- **Objective:**
 - Enhance women’s political participation + representation.
 - Address structural gender gaps in politics.
- **Purpose:**
 - Provides 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and Delhi Legislative Assembly.
- **Bill Name:** Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam.
- **When will it be implemented?**
 - Only after:
 - Decennial Census
 - Subsequent Delimitation (*This is a major prelims trap point*)

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Space for Notes:

- **New Articles Inserted / Amended:**
 - **Article 330A** → One-third reservation for women in Lok Sabha (including SC/ST reserved seats).
 - **Article 332A** → One-third reservation in State Assemblies (including SC/ST seats).
 - **Article 239AA** → Reservation in Legislative Assembly of Delhi.
 - **Article 334A** → Provides for *post-delimitation implementation* + **15-year sunset clause** (can be extended) + rotation of seats.
- **Not applicable to:**
 - **Rajya Sabha**
 - **State Legislative Councils**

Assam – Anti Polygamy Bill 2025

Why in News?

Assam Cabinet has cleared the **Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill, 2025** which will be tabled on 25 November 2025, to criminalise polygamy irrespective of religion.

Description:

Key Features:

- Criminalises any **2nd marriage / 3rd marriage without legal divorce**.
- Punishment: **7 years imprisonment** or more.
- **Cognizable offence** → Police can arrest without warrant + immediate bail not allowed.
- The state will create a **Women Compensation Fund** to support women affected by polygamy (victim-centric model).
- Clear movement from personal law protection → constitutional gender value protection.

Exemptions:

Bill will **not apply** to:

- Scheduled Tribes in Assam.
- Sixth Schedule Areas (BTC, Dima Hasao, Karbi Anglong).
- Minority Muslims living in Sixth Schedule areas **prior to 2005**.

Constitutional / Legal Angle:

- Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act, 1937 allows polygamy.
- IPC 494 criminalises bigamy → but does not cover personal law permitted polygamy.
- SC (2015) judgement: Polygamy is **not essential religious practice** → can be regulated by the State.
- Aligns with **Gender Justice, Equality** (Art 14, 15) and **Life with Dignity** (Art 21).
- Continues Assam policy line (child marriage crackdown + women's safety reforms).
- Moves closer towards Uniform Civil Norm culture like **Uttarakhand UCC 2024**.

RIGHT TO VOTE

Why in News?

The Centre told the Supreme Court that the 'right to vote' is only a statutory right, while 'freedom of voting' (including NOTA expression) is a part of Article 19(1)(a). A petition challenges uncontested election provision under Section 53(2) RP Act, 1951.

Description:

Legal Status:

- **Right to Vote in India** → Statutory Right
- Derived mainly from **Representation of the People Acts (1950 & 1951)**

Constitutional Basis:

- **Article 326** → Universal Adult Franchise (18+ years)

Why NOT Fundamental Right?

- Supreme Court has repeatedly held voting is not a Part III FR
- It is granted through statute → thus Parliament can regulate

Key Judicial Cases:

Case	Position
N.P. Ponnuswami (1952)	Right to vote is purely statutory
Jyoti Basu (1982)	Not a fundamental nor common law right
PUCL (2003)	Voting can be expression → constitutional angle hinted
Kuldip Nayar (2006)	Statutory reaffirmed
Raj Bala (2015)	Constitutional nature noted
Anoop Baranwal (2023)	Majority → Statutory continues

(Important for UPSC – oscillation exists but **CURRENT LAW** position = statutory right)

Statutory Provisions:

Act	Related Sections
RP Act 1950	Sec 16 → Disqualification for roll, Sec 19 → Age & residence
RP Act 1951	Sec 62 → Right to vote for those enrolled (unless disqualified)

Additional Concept:

- Freedom of Voting (expression while choosing candidate) → Linked to Article 19(1)(a) (as judicially interpreted) – BUT only arises **when poll exists**.

Key Prelims Line:

- **Right to Vote ≠ Freedom of Voting**
 - Right to Vote = Statutory
 - Freedom of Voting (choice expression) = Linked to Freedom of Speech (Article 19)

POCSO Act, 2012
Why in News?

The Supreme Court expressed concern over misuse of the POCSO Act to criminalise consensual adolescent relationships, noting rising instances where stringent provisions are being invoked as retaliation. The Court is considering issuing directions to enhance legal awareness and gender sensitisation among students.

Description:

Parameter	Details
Full Name	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012
Enactment Date	19 June 2012
Enforcement Date	14 November 2012
Ministry	Ministry of Women & Child Development
Purpose	To protect children (<18 years) from sexual assault, sexual harassment & pornography + establishment of Special Courts

Key Features (Prelims High Yield):

- Applies to children **below 18 years of age**
- **Gender Neutral Law** (protects both boys & girls & transgender children)
- Covers **penetrative & non-penetrative sexual assault, sexual harassment, use of child for pornography**
- **Aggravated offences** defined (doctor, teacher, police officer, family member, persons in authority, mentally ill victim etc.)

Space for Notes:

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- **Child-Friendly Procedures** mandated
 - Statement to be recorded at child's residence or a non-hostile environment
 - No aggressive questioning / repeated cross examination
 - Identity of child must be protected
- **Special Courts** to handle cases exclusively under POCSO
- **Mandatory Reporting** of offence (failure to report → punishable)
- **False complaint** made with intent to defame → punishable
- **NCPDR + SCPCRs** monitor implementation
- **Section 42A** → POCSO overrides any inconsistency with other laws
- **Aim** to dispose cases within **1 year** from date of reporting

Why was POCSO needed?

- **IPC sections** were inadequate:
 - 375 did not cover boys
 - 354 lacked definitions of "modesty"
 - 377 vague "unnatural offence" term
- **India:** largest child population (Census 2011 → 472 million <18 years)
- **India** is signatory to **UN Convention on Rights of the Child**

POCSO General Principles (12): Best interest of child, Right to life / survival, Right to dignity & compassion, Right to privacy, Right to be informed, Right to be heard, Right to safety, Right to compensation etc.

Related Digital Initiative:

- **POCSO e-box** launched by MWCD → online portal to directly report child sexual abuse.

Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025
Why in News?

The Supreme Court has sought the Centre's response on a petition demanding a ban on online gambling and betting platforms allegedly operating as social and e-sports games. The plea highlights risk to children and seeks harmonised interpretation of central and state laws.

Key Features:

- **Comprehensive legal framework** to **regulate + promote** online gaming sector.
- **Bans Online Money Games** (real money betting / deposit based play).
- Financial institutions **prohibited** from processing payments for such platforms.
- IT Act authorities can **block unlawful platforms**.

Classification of Online Games:

Category	Meaning
E-Sports	Recognised sport, organised tournaments, skill based
Online Social Games	Entertainment / Educational / Skill based (Ex: Wordle)
Online Money Games	Any game with financial stakes (Dream11, Poker, Rummy etc.)

Regulatory Structure:

- **National Level Regulator** to register, categorise games & handle grievances.
- Officers have power of **search / seizure / arrest** (in some cases even without warrant).

Penalties:

- Offering Online Money Games → **Up to 3 years + ₹1 crore fine**
- Advertising banned games → **Up to 2 years + ₹50 lakh fine**
- Offences = **Cognisable & Non-Bailable**

Applicability:

- **Pan India + platforms overseas** but accessible in India also included.

Initiatives to Counter Online Gaming Risks



Information Technology Act, 2000

The IT Act and related rules address online gaming risks. Intermediaries must register with self-regulatory bodies. Section 69A allows blocking illegal websites.



Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023

Sections 111 and 112 penalise unlawful economic activities, cybercrimes, unauthorised betting, and gambling.



Integrated Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017

The IGST Act regulates illegal and offshore gaming platforms. Online money gaming suppliers must register under the Simplified Registration Scheme.



Consumer Protection Act, 2019

This act prohibits misleading advertisements. The CCPA can investigate, penalise, and take criminal action against offenders.

Space for Notes:

Assam Accord (1985)

Context:

- Signed on 15 August 1985 between Government of India, AASU, AAGSP.
- Aimed to end the 1979–85 Assam Movement against illegal immigration from Bangladesh.

Key Features:

1. Cut-off Date for Citizenship:

- 25 March 1971 fixed as the *cut-off* for identifying illegal immigrants.
- Before 1 Jan 1966: Full citizenship, including voting rights.
- 1 Jan 1966 – 24 March 1971:
 - Allowed to stay
 - Names deleted from electoral rolls for 10 years.
- After 25 March 1971: To be detected and deported.

2. Safeguards for Assamese Identity (Clause 6):

- Constitutional, legislative, and administrative measures to:
 - Protect cultural, social, linguistic identity
 - Preserve heritage of Assamese people
- Most sensitive clause; committees set up to define implementation.

3. Prevention of Future Illegal Immigration:

- Complete sealing of Indo-Bangladesh border:
 - Fencing
 - BSF deployment
 - Riverine patrolling
 - Border roads

4. NRC Update: NRC for Assam to be updated with 1971 as the cut-off year.

5. Economic Development of Assam:

- Special package for socio-economic development.

- Promotion of:
 - Oil refineries
 - Paper mills
 - Industrial infrastructure
 - Employment schemes

6. Restoration of Peace:

- Withdrawal of cases against agitators (except heinous offences).
- Rehabilitation of people displaced during the agitation.

7. **Equality Clause:** All Indian citizens to be treated equally, without discrimination based on place of origin.

Space for Notes:

Schedule Tribe Status

Context / Why in News?

The Assam Cabinet has approved the **Group of Ministers (GoM)** report recommending **Scheduled Tribe (ST) status** for six communities—**Koch-Rajbongshi, Matak, Moran, Chutia, Tai Ahom, and “Tea tribes”**—and forwarded it to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

GoM Recommendation:

- The GoM report will be **placed before the Assam Legislative Assembly**.
- After approval, it goes to the **Ministry of Home Affairs** for further action.
- Final decision requires **Parliamentary amendment** to the Constitution (Article 342).

How ST Status Is Granted:

Constitutional Basis:

- **Article 342** empowers the **President** to specify tribes or tribal communities to be included in the list of STs.
- Parliament alone can **include or exclude** communities from the ST list.

Constitutional Amendment Type: **Ordinary Amendment (NOT Article 368):**

A Bill is introduced in Parliament to amend the **ST list under Article 342**,

→ This is done by a **simple majority** (ordinary legislation).

After Parliament passes the Bill → Sent to the **President** → Becomes law.

Key Terms:

- **Scheduled Tribes (ST):** Communities listed under **Article 342** for special constitutional protection.
- **Tea Tribes (Adivasis):** Descendants of workers brought during the colonial period to Assam’s tea estates.

Right to Constitutional Remedies (Article 32)

Why in News?

CJI B.R. Gavai, speaking at an event marking 75 years of the Constitution in Andhra Pradesh, highlighted Ambedkar’s role in creating Article 32, stressing that rights need remedies. He called the Constitution a living document shaped by justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Description:

- **Fundamental Right** to move the **Supreme Court** for enforcement of **Fundamental Rights**.
- Dr. Ambedkar: **“Heart and Soul of the Constitution.”**

Key Provisions (4 Sub-clauses):

1. Right to move SC for enforcement of FRs.
2. SC can issue **directions, orders, writs** of all kinds.
3. Parliament may empower **any other court** to issue writs (not incl. High Courts → they already have Art 226).
4. Right cannot be suspended **except during National Emergency** (Art 359).

Nature of Article 32:

- **Original jurisdiction** → can directly approach SC.
- **Wide powers** → writs + any suitable order.
- **Not exclusive** → High Courts also have writ powers under Art 226.
- Enforces **only Fundamental Rights**, not other rights.
- **Basic feature** (SC ruling) → cannot be amended.

Writs:

- 1) **Habeas Corpus** – “Produce the body”:
 - Against illegal detention.
 - Can be issued against private individuals too.
- 2) **Mandamus** – “We command”:
 - Directs public authority to perform duty.
 - Not against the President, Governor, CJI, or private bodies.
- 3) **Prohibition** – “To forbid”:
 - Higher court → lower court/tribunal.
 - Prevents excess/absence of jurisdiction.
- 4) **Certiorari** – “To be certified”:
 - Higher court quashes order of lower court/tribunal.
 - Both **preventive + curative**.
 - Can be issued against administrative bodies too.
- 5) **Quo Warranto** – “By what authority?”
 - Challenges claim to **public office**.
 - Can be filed by **any person**, not only the aggrieved.

SC vs High Court Writ Jurisdiction:

Parameter	Supreme Court (Art 32)	High Court (Art 226)
Scope	Only FRs	FRs + other legal rights
Territory	Whole India	Only within its jurisdiction (with cause-of-action extension)
Discretion	Cannot refuse (FR itself)	Discretionary

Significance of Article 32:

- Ensures **judicial review** → constitutional supremacy.
- Protects citizens against **state excesses & arbitrary action**.
- Acts as **check & balance** on administrative and judicial bodies.
- Quick, effective remedy for FR violation.

Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development
About the Prize:

- **Established:** 1986
- **By:** Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust (not Government of India)

Space for Notes:

- **Purpose:**
 - Promote **international peace**
 - Encourage **development cooperation**
 - Support **disarmament efforts**
- **Awarded To:** Individuals, groups, or institutions working towards:
 - Peace, human rights, development
 - Scientific discoveries benefiting humanity
 - Environmental protection
 - Strengthening democracy and international cooperation

2024 Awardee:

Michelle Bachelet:

- **Former President of Chile**
 - Two terms: **2006–2010 & 2014–2018**
- **Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**
- **First Director of UN Women** (established 2010)
- **First & only woman President of Chile**
- **Key contributions:**
 - Promoted **education and tax reforms** in Chile
 - Strengthened **human rights institutions**
 - Advocated for **gender equality**
 - Worked for **women's political participation**
 - Known globally for advancing **LGBTQ rights**

Past Prominent Recipients:

- **Mikhail Gorbachev**
- **Aung San Suu Kyi**
- **UNHCR**
- **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**
- **Angela Merkel**
- **David Attenborough**

BOOKER PRIZE

Why in News?

The Booker Prize, the world's most prestigious award for a single work of fiction, has been highlighted again as its winner was announced. The article reviewed its history, eligibility evolution, and noted new expansions like the Children's Booker Prize launching in 2026.

Description:

- One of the world's most prestigious literary prizes given for a **single work of fiction**.
- Established: **1969**, in the **United Kingdom**.
- Earlier restricted to Commonwealth → now **global**.

Objective:

- To recognise, promote and reward the **best fiction novel of the year**, written in English.

Eligibility:

- Must be **originally written in English** (NOT a translation).
- Must be **published in the UK or Ireland**.
- **Self-published works are NOT eligible**.
- **Nationality of the author does not matter**.

Space for Notes:

Prize Money:

- Winner receives: **£50,000**
- Shortlisted authors receive: **£2,500 each**

Booker Prize Foundation:

- Established as a registered charity in **2002**
- Administers:
 - Booker Prize (for Fiction)
 - Man Booker International Prize (since 2005)

India-linked:

- **2025 Winner** → David Szalay for novel "Flesh"
- **2024 Winner** → Banu Mushtaq (Kannada) for "Heart Lamp"
 - 1st Kannada author to win
 - 1st short story collection to ever win International Booker

Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD) Report 2023
Context:

The Annual Report on Medical Certification of Cause of Death, 2023 released by the Office of the Registrar General of India shows that diseases of the circulatory system remained the leading cause of medically certified deaths in India.

Top Causes of Medically Certified Deaths (2023):

- The report tracks deaths where a medical practitioner has certified the underlying cause.

Cause Category	Share of Deaths (%)	Key Components
Diseases of the Circulatory System	36.4%	Ischaemic heart disease, hypertensive diseases, pulmonary circulation disorders
Diseases of the Respiratory System	~9%	Pneumonia, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
Neoplasms (Cancers)	~5%	Malignant and benign tumours

Note: While circulatory diseases remain the top killer, their share dropped from over 40% in 2022 to 36.4% in 2023.

Demographic & Geographic Trends:

- **Age Profile: 15+ Years:** Circulatory diseases become the leading cause of death across all adult age groups.
 - **Elderly:** Mortality is highest in the **70+ age bracket**, followed by the **55–64 age bracket**.
- **Regional Performance: * High Certification (>50%):** Delhi, Goa, Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.
 - **National Average:** Only **~22%** of all registered deaths in India are "Medically Certified." This indicates a significant data gap in rural areas.

Critical Insights:

- **Epidemiological Transition:** India is shifting from infectious/communicable diseases to **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)**.
- **Data Integrity:** The low percentage of medical certification (~22%) suggests that the "true" cause of death for many Indians (especially in rural settings) remains unrecorded by physicians.
- **Cardio-Pulmonary Dominance:** Within circulatory deaths, "Pulmonary circulation disorders" and "Other heart diseases" constitute more than half of the fatalities.

Space for Notes:

Registrar General of India (RGI):

- **Origin:** Set up in 1949; permanent department since 1961.
- **Key Functions:**
 - Conducts **Population Census**. Census Act, 1948.
 - Implements the **Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969**.
 - Compiles the **Sample Registration System (SRS)** data (Infant Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Rate, etc.).

Vinod Kumar Shukla & Jnanpith Award
Why in News?

The passing of Vinod Kumar Shukla on **December 23, 2025**, marks the end of an era for modern Hindi literature. He is a recipient of the **2024 Jnanpith Award**.

Vinod Kumar Shukla (1937–2025):

Feature	Details
Birth & Origins	Born 1937 in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh.
Literary Identity	Pioneer of Quiet Realism ; known for minimalist and surrealist prose.
Key Style	Focused on "ordinary life," dignity, and inner emotions; avoided grand political narratives.
First Major Work	<i>Lagbhag Jaihind</i> (1971) – Poetry collection.
Major Novels	<i>Naukar Ki Kameez</i> (adapted to film by Mani Kaul), <i>Deewar Mein Ek Khidki Rahti Thi</i> .
Major Poetry	<i>Kavita Se Lambi Kavita</i> , <i>Sab Kuch Hona Bacha Rahega</i> .
State Significance	First writer from Chhattisgarh to receive the Jnanpith Award.

Jnanpith Award (Bharatiya Jnanpith):

- **Institution:** Established in **1961** by the **Sahu Jain family** (Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain and Rama Jain).
- **Status:** India's **highest and oldest** literary honor. It is a **private** award, not a government honor.
- **Eligibility:**
 - Limited to **Indian citizens** only.
 - Covers all **22 languages** in the Eighth Schedule + **English** (included since 2013).
 - **Not awarded posthumously**
- **Scope:** Awarded for **Lifetime Contribution**, not for a specific single work.
- **Award Components:**
 - Cash prize: **₹11 Lakh**.
 - Bronze statue of **Vagdevi** (Goddess Saraswati).
 - Citation plaque and a shawl.

Important Facts:

- **First Recipient:** G. Sankara Kurup (Malayalam, 1965).
- **First Hindi Recipient:** Sumitranandan Pant (for *Chidambara*, 1968).
- **First Woman Recipient:** Ashapura Devi (Bengali, 1976).
- **First English Recipient:** Amitav Ghosh (2018).
- **Recent Awardees (2023):** Gulzar (Urdu) and Jagadguru Rambhadracharya (Sanskrit).

Space for Notes:

Comparison: Jnanpith vs. Sahitya Akademi:

Aspect	Jnanpith Award	Sahitya Akademi Award
Scope	Lifetime Achievement	Specific Individual Work
Languages	22 Schedule VIII + English	22 Schedule VIII + English + Rajasthani
Nature	Private Trust (Bharatiya Jnanpith)	Autonomous Govt Body (under Ministry of Culture)
Quantity	Generally, one (or joint) per year	24 awards annually (one per language)

Space for Notes:
NATGRID
Context:

India's **National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)** has been linked with the **National Population Register (NPR)**, enabling authorised law-enforcement and intelligence agencies to access **family-wise demographic details of ~119 crore residents** for investigation and intelligence purposes.

About NATGRID:

- A secure intelligence-sharing platform that integrates multiple databases for counterterrorism and serious crime investigation.
- **Full form:** National Intelligence Grid
- **Nature:** Secure IT platform (not a statutory body)
- **Administrative Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Users:** Police, intelligence, and investigative agencies
- **Purpose:** Real-time access to disparate databases to aid **counterterrorism, organised crime control, and national security**

About National Population Register (NPR):

- **Nature:** Register of usual residents (demographic, not citizenship data)
- **Coverage:** ~119 crore residents
- **Data type:** Name, age, address, family-wise particulars
- **Legal basis:** Citizenship Rules, 2003 (under the Citizenship Act, 1955)

Technology & Tools:

- **'Gandiva' tool** (upgraded NATGRID system): Supports **facial recognition**, enables **Entity resolution**, facilitates advanced analytics across datasets.
 - **Entity resolution:** Process of identifying and linking records related to the same individual across datasets.

Bureau of Port Security (BoPS)
Why in News?

The Union Government has decided to set up a **Bureau of Port Security (BoPS)** to oversee **security of ports, ships and port facilities** across India.

About Bureau of Port Security:

- It shall be constituted as a statutory body under the provisions of **Section 13 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025**.

- It is headed by a **Director General**, shall function under the aegis of the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**
 - He /she shall be responsible for **regulatory and oversight functions** relating to the security of ships and port facilities.
 - It is being modelled on the lines of the **Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)**.
 - The BoPS shall be headed by an **IPS officer (Pay Level-15)**.
 - During the transition period of one year, the **Director General of Shipping (DGS/DGMA)** shall function as the **Director General, BoPS**.

Functions Bureau of Port Security:

- It ensures timely analysis, collection and exchange of security-related information, with a special focus on cyber security, including a dedicated division to safeguard port IT infrastructure from digital threats.
- The **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)** has been designated as a **Recognised Security Organisation (RSO)** for port facilities with responsibility for undertaking security assessments and preparation of security plans for ports.

Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML)

Context:

A potential standoff has emerged over the **custody and ownership of private papers of Jawaharlal Nehru**, with Congress leader Sonia Gandhi assuring the **Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML)** that her staff would examine the issue.

What is it?

- **Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML)** is an **autonomous institution** under the **Ministry of Culture**.
- It serves as a **national repository and research centre** documenting the lives, works, and contributions of all **Prime Ministers of India** since Independence.

Location:

- Situated at **Teen Murti House campus**, New Delhi.
- Teen Murti House was the official residence of **Jawaharlal Nehru (1948–1964)**.

Historical Background:

- Established in **1964** as the **Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML)**.
- Renamed as **Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML)** in **2022–23**.
- Renaming marked a shift from a **single-leader focus** to an **inclusive representation of all Prime Ministers**.

Major Components:

- Museum
- Library
- Centre for Contemporary Studies
- Nehru Planetarium

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)

Context:

A political controversy erupted after the **Leader of the Opposition** alleged that the **Election Commission** “colluded with those in power,” criticising the **Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023**.

Space for Notes:

Statutory Basis:

- Immunity flows from the **Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023**.
- **Key Provision (Clause 16 of the 2023 Act**

“Notwithstanding anything in any other law, no court shall entertain or continue any civil or criminal proceedings against a person who is or was a CEC or EC for any act, thing, or word done in the discharge of official duty.”

- Protection applies **during and after** their tenure.

Critics claim this may shield EC officials from accountability, while the government argues it ensures institutional independence.

About ECI:

- **Established: 25 January 1950**
- **Nature: Permanent Constitutional Body.**
- **Constitutional Provisions: Part XV, Articles 324–329.**
- **National Voters’ Day: Celebrated annually on 25 January** since 2011.

Key Functions:

ECI administers elections to Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, Offices of President and Vice-President

Composition:

- **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) + two Election Commissioners (ECs).**
- Chronology:
- Only CEC (1950–1989)
- Two ECs appointed in 1989 (till Jan 1990)
- **Permanent 3-member Commission since 1993**

Key Provisions of the 2023 Election Commission Act	
Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must hold/have held post equivalent to Secretary to Government of India • Must possess expertise in managing and conducting elections 	
Search Committee	Select Committee
Prepares panel of 5 candidates Leadership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headed by Minister of Law and Justice Composition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two members (Secretary rank or higher) 	Recommends candidates to President Committee Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister (Chairperson) • Leader of Opposition (Member) • Union Cabinet Minister nominated by PM
Resignation and Removal	Term of Office
Resignation Process: CEC or EC can resign by writing to President Removal Conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC: Like Supreme Court Judge • ECs: Require CEC recommendation 	Duration: 6 years or until 65 years of age, whichever earlier Terms and Conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an EC becomes the CEC, combined tenure cannot exceed 6 years • No reappointment allowed

Space for Notes:

Central Information Commission (CIC)

Space for Notes:

Context:

The high-level selection panel comprising the **Prime Minister, Union Home Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition** met to finalise appointments to the CIC.

About CIC:

- **Independent statutory body** under the **RTI Act, 2005** (not constitutional).
- Ensures **transparency and accountability** across Central Government ministries, departments, Public Sector Units, financial institutions, and Union Territories.
- Decides **second appeals and complaints** related to denial or improper handling of RTI requests.

Composition:

- **1 Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)**
- **Up to 10 Information Commissioners (ICs)**
- Current CIC (2024): **Heeralal Samariya**.

Appointment Mechanism:

Appointed by the **President** on the recommendation of a **three-member committee**:

1. **Prime Minister** (Chairperson)
2. **Leader of Opposition (Lok Sabha)**
3. **Union Cabinet Minister** nominated by the PM

Qualifications:

- Must be persons of **eminence in public life** with expertise in: law, science & tech, social service, journalism, mass media, governance, management, etc.
- **Restrictions:** Cannot be MPs/MLAs, hold office of profit, have political ties, or pursue business/profession while in office.

Tenure & Service Conditions:

The 2019 Amendment **removed fixed statutory protections** and vested power in the **Central Government** to decide:

1. **Tenure of CIC and ICs:** Now notified by the **Central Government** (currently fixed at **3 years**).
2. **Salaries, allowances, and service conditions:**
 - No longer linked to CEC/EC.
 - Determined through executive rules notified by the Centre.
3. **Service conditions on reappointment:**
 - Clarified by rules: **CIC and ICs are not eligible for reappointment.**
 - IC can become CIC, but total tenure is restricted (currently to **5 years combined**).

Removal:

Removed by the **President** on grounds including:

- insolvency, conviction involving moral turpitude, paid employment, infirmity, conflict of interest.
- For **proved misbehavior or incapacity**, President must refer matter to **Supreme Court**.

Powers:

- Holds powers of a **civil court**, initiating, **suo motu investigations**, preparing **Annual Reports** tabled in Parliament

National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)

Space for Notes:

Why in the News?

NCBC is currently **reviewing State OBC lists** using its powers under the 102nd Constitutional Amendment and has recently recommended exclusion of 35 communities from West Bengal's Central OBC List for not meeting SEBC criteria.

About OBCs and the OBC Lists:

Definition:

- No explicit definition of OBC in the Constitution.
- Constitution uses **Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBCs)**, understood as OBCs.

Two OBC Lists:

Central List	State List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determined by President under Article 342A (1) (after consulting the Governor). • Only Parliament can modify it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Article 342A (3), States/UTs can maintain their own list of SEBCs for state-level benefits. • These may differ from the Central List.

NCBC – Background:

- Created originally by the **NCBC Act, 1993** under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- Became a **constitutional body** through the 102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2018.
- Amendment inserted:

Article 338B – NCBC: Constitutional body for safeguarding SEBC/OBC rights.

Article 342A – Governs the Central List of OBCs.

Article 366(26C) – Definition of SEBCs

Composition:

- **Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, three Members.**
- All in rank and pay of **Secretary to GoI.**
- Appointed by the **President** through warrant under his hand and seal.
- Service conditions also decided by the **President.**

Functions (Article 338B):

- Monitor & investigate matters relating to **safeguards for SEBCs.**
- Inquire into **complaints** of rights denial.
- Advise Union and States on **SEBC development.**
- Submit **annual/special reports** to the President.
- Recommend **corrective measures** for SEBC protection and welfare.
- Perform additional functions prescribed by the President.

Reporting Mechanism:

- President lays NCBC reports before **both Houses of Parliament**

Powers:

- NCBC has **civil court powers** (summoning, document demand, affidavit evidence).
- **Mandatory consultation:** Union and States must consult NCBC on all **major policy matters** concerning OBC rights.
- The Commission can **regulate its own procedures.**

Maternal Mortality

Space for Notes:

Context:

India has recorded a **significant decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** alongside a rise in **institutional deliveries to 89%**, reflecting sustained improvements in maternal and child healthcare delivery.

Key Terms:

- **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR):** Number of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births.
- **Institutional Delivery:** Childbirth occurring in a health facility under trained medical supervision. Institutional delivery ≠ only hospitals; includes CHCs/PHCs with skilled staff.

Data & Trends:

- **Institutional delivery rate: 89%** (national level).
- **Outcome:** Sharp reduction in MMR due to safer deliveries and timely obstetric care.
- **Preventive care:** 12 types of vaccines administered to children under the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).
- **Primary healthcare reach:** ~1.81 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs operational nationwide.

Policy & Programmatic Drivers:

1. **Ayushman Bharat Programme:**
 - **Health & Wellness Centres (AAMs)** for comprehensive primary care.
 - **PM-JAY** for secondary/tertiary hospitalisation (indirect maternal care support).
2. **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY):** Conditional cash transfers to promote institutional deliveries.
3. **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA):** Assured antenatal care (ANC) on fixed days.
4. **LaQshya Programme:** Labour room and maternity OT quality improvement.

Why Institutional Deliveries Reduce MMR:

- Skilled birth attendants reduce hemorrhage, sepsis, eclampsia risks.
- Timely referrals and emergency obstetric care.
- Access to blood banks, neonatal care, and infection control.

Sabka Bima Sabka Raksha Bill, 2025

Why in News?

The Lok Sabha passed the Sabka Bima Sabka Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025, raising the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in the insurance sector from 74% to 100% to boost capital inflow, competition, insurance penetration, and technology adoption.

1. Key Structural Reforms:

- **100% FDI:** Raises the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in Indian insurance companies from 74% to 100%.
- **Net Owned Funds (NOF):** Reduced requirement for foreign reinsurers from ₹5,000 crore to ₹1,000 crore to boost reinsurance capacity.
- **One-Time Registration:** Intermediaries will now have a one-time registration system, removing the need for repeated approvals.
- **Equity Transfer Threshold:** The limit for requiring IRDAI approval for transfer of paid-up equity capital increased from 1% to 5%.

2. Operational Freedom & Expansion:

- **LIC Autonomy:** Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) can now set up new zonal offices without prior government approval.
- **Agent Multiplicity:** Allows individual insurance agents to sell products from multiple companies, ending the previous restriction to one life and one general insurer.
- **Merger Provision:** Paves the way for the merger of a non-insurance company with an insurance company.

3. Critical Omissions:

- **No Composite Licenses:** Insurers still cannot sell both life and non-life products under a single license.
- **No Capital Requirement Reduction:** The minimum paid-up capital remains ₹100 crore for insurers and ₹200 crore for reinsurers.
- **No Captive Insurers:** Proposals to allow large corporations to establish captive insurance entities were deferred.

Key Terms:

Insurance penetration:

Insurance penetration in India refers to the ratio of total insurance premiums collected in a given year to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), expressed as a percentage.

Net Owned Funds:

Net Owned Funds means the aggregate of paid-up equity share capital and free reserves as reduced by accumulated losses and intangible assets appearing in the last audited balance sheet.

SHANTI Bill, 2025

Context:

The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025 was introduced in the Lok Sabha to allow private sector participation in nuclear power generation and to overhaul India's nuclear liability and regulatory framework.

Key Features and Reforms:

1. Private Sector Participation:

- **Permitted Entry:** For the first time, private companies and joint ventures are allowed to **build, own, operate, or decommission** a nuclear power plant/reactor.
- **Equity Cap:** Allows private companies up to **49% minority equity** in nuclear power projects.
- **Foreign Investment:** Permits up to **49% FDI** in certain nuclear activities.
- **Expanded Scope (Value Chain):** Private players are allowed in areas like:
 - Exploration of atomic minerals, Fuel fabrication and manufacturing of nuclear equipment/components & Research and Development, including **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) {maximum output of 300-Megawatt electric (MWe)}**
- **Core Areas Retained by Government:** Critical activities remain under exclusive central government control, such as:
 - Enrichment and isotopic separation of radioactive substances.
 - Management and reprocessing of spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

Space for Notes:

2. Overhaul of Nuclear Liability (Addressing a major investment bottleneck):

- **Acts to be Repealed:** Atomic Energy Act, 1962, Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLND Act), 2010
- **Removal of Supplier Liability:** The Bill omits the contentious supplier liability clause (Section 46 of the former CLND Act, 2010). This provision, which allowed operators to seek recourse from suppliers for defective equipment, was a major deterrent for foreign vendors (e.g., US companies).
- **Operator Liability Cap:** Specifies graded liability caps for the operator based on reactor size, with a maximum cap of ₹3,000 crore for the largest reactors (above 3,600 MWe).
- **Financial Mechanism:** Mandates operators to obtain an insurance policy or financial security mechanism to cover their liability.
- **Government Backstop:** The Central Government is empowered to establish a Nuclear Liability Fund to meet liability where it exceeds the operator's specified amount or where the government itself is involved.

3. New Institutional Mechanism:

- **Independent Regulator:** Confers statutory status on the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) to separate safety regulations from the policy promotional roles of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) was set up under the direct charge of the Prime Minister through a Presidential Order on August 3, 1954.
- **Dedicated Tribunal:** Provides a Dedicated Nuclear Tribunal to handle disputes related to nuclear liability and contracts, streamlining the resolution process.
- **Redressal Council:** Proposes an Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council.

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SECURITIES MARKET CODE BILL, 2025

Why in News?

The finance minister tabled the Securities Market Code (SMC) Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha.

Core Objective:

- **Consolidation:** The Bill aims to unify India's securities market framework by merging three decades-old laws into a single, principle-based code.
- **Legislative History:** Originally proposed in the Union Budget 2021-22, it has now been referred to the Standing Committee on Finance for review.
- **Purpose:** To modernise the statutory framework, reduce compliance burdens, improve regulatory governance, and support technology-driven markets.

The "3-to-1" Law Repeal:

The Code seeks to repeal and replace the following Acts:

1. Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956 (SCRA).
2. Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992 (SEBI Act).
3. Depositories Act, 1996.

SEBI:

Securities and Exchange Board of India (est. 1988; HQ: Mumbai) is the statutory regulatory body for securities and commodity market in India under the ownership of Ministry of Finance.

- **Regulatory Authority:** Primary market, Secondary Market, Mutual fund, Foreign Institutional Investment
- **Background:** Initially a non-statutory body without any statutory power. It became autonomous and given statutory powers by SEBI Act 1992
- **Aim:** To protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote the development of, and regulate the securities market

Institutional Changes: SEBI Board:

Feature	Current Provision	Proposed under SMC 2025
Total Board Size	9 Members	Up to 15 Members
Composition	Chairperson + 8 members	Chairperson, 2 from Central Govt (Finance/Companies Act), 1 from RBI, and 11 other members.
Whole-Time Members	3 members	At least 5 must be Whole-Time Members.
Conflict of Interest	Less explicit	Strict disclosure norms: Mandatory disclosure of direct/indirect interests (including family) and recusal from specific meetings.
Post-Tenure Limit	N/A	Members cannot accept employment with the Govt or market participants for one year after leaving office without prior approval.

Appointment of Vice-Chancellor
Context:

A dispute between the **Kerala Governor** (as Chancellor of state universities) and the **Chief Minister** over appointments of Vice-Chancellors (V-Cs) to two state universities led the Supreme Court to appoint a panel headed by **Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia** to recommend names in order of preference.

State Universities – Role of the Governor:
1. Governor as Ex-Officio Chancellor:

- In most states, the **Governor is the ex-officio Chancellor** of all state universities.
- As Chancellor, the Governor **does not act on the aid and advice** of the Council of Ministers.
- Exercises **independent statutory authority** on university matters.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chancellor

- As per **UGC Regulations, 2018**, VCs are to be appointed:
 - By the **Chancellor (Governor)**
 - From a **panel of 3–5 names in alphabetical order** recommended by the Search-cum-Selection Committee (SCSC).
 - The Search-cum-Selection Committee (SCSC) is composed of nominees of the Chancellor, State Government, University, and eminent academics, as mandated by UGC Regulations, 2018.

3. Conflict Between State Laws & UGC Regulations:

- When the **State University Act** contradicts **UGC Regulations, 2018**, the UGC norms prevail.
- Ground: **Article 254(1)** – Parliamentary law overrides repugnant state law on Concurrent List matters (education is Entry 25, Concurrent List).

Space for Notes:

4. Practical Implications:

- The Governor's authority often becomes a point of tension between state executive and Raj Bhavan.
- Supreme Court judgments uphold primacy of **UGC Regulations** in V-C appointments.

Constitutional & Legal Framework:

- Education is in the **Concurrent List (Entry 25)**.
- **UGC Act, 1956** and UGC Regulations, 2018 are **central laws** → prevail over conflicting state provisions under **Article 254(1)**.
- Governor's role derives from **State University Acts**; President's role derives from **Central Universities Act, 2009**.

Karnataka Social Boycott Bill, 2025

Context:

In December 2025, the Karnataka government introduced a Bill to **prohibit, criminalise and redress acts of social boycott**, especially those imposed by **caste panchayats**, to safeguard individual rights and dignity.

About the Bill:

- Official name: **Karnataka Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2025**.
- Purpose:
 - To **prevent, prohibit and criminalise** social boycott.
 - To provide **mechanisms of redressal** and compensation to victims.
 - To curb atrocities by **caste panchayats** and other community bodies.

Genesis & Need:

- Inspired by similar legislation such as **Maharashtra Protection of People from Social Boycott Act, 2016**.
- Addresses increasing cases where individuals/groups face ostracism due to caste, personal choices, inter-caste marriage, social customs, etc.
- Aligns with **Articles 14, 15, 17, 19, 21** of the Constitution guaranteeing equality and liberty.

Key Features:

1. Caste Panchayats Banned
2. Criminalisation of Social Boycott
3. 20 Forms of Social Boycott Recognised
4. Social Boycott Prohibition Officer
5. Victim Compensation

Significance:

- Strengthens **constitutional morality**, individual dignity and social justice.
- Aims to deter caste-based and community-based coercion.
- Enhances protection of vulnerable communities—Dalits, OBC groups, inter-caste couples, women, minorities.
- Promotes **rule of law** over extra-legal community verdicts.

Space for Notes:

Health Security se national Security Cess Bill, 2025

Space for Notes:

Context:

Lok Sabha has passed the **Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025** aiming to raise revenue for health and national security expenditure. This cess on **pan masala**, will operate **outside the GST framework**.

GST Compensation Cess:

What is it?

A special cess imposed on **sin and luxury goods** (tobacco, pan masala, coal, aerated drinks, automobiles, etc.) to **compensate States** for revenue loss after GST was introduced in 2017.

Compensation Period:

- Constitutionally assured for **5 years** → ended **30 June 2022**.

Why does cess collection continue till 2026?

- During COVID-19 (2020–21), the Centre borrowed **₹2.69 lakh crore** to compensate States. The cess continues **only to repay this loan**, not for state compensation. Will continue till **March 2026**.

New Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025

Purpose:

- Replace the old pre-GST machine-capacity levy on pan masala and tobacco.
- Create a **steady, predictable revenue stream** for **national security and public health programmes**.

Key Features:

1. **Cess based on production capacity of machines:**
 - Levy not linked to actual output or price.
 - Based on **machine capacity ratings** → prevents under-reporting and ensures steady revenue.
2. **Applies to the entire value chain:**
 - All manufacturing steps (mixing, processing, filling, packaging) come under the cess.
 - Prevents tax evasion by shifting production to unregulated units.
3. **Outside the GST framework:**
 - This is an **excise-based cess**, not a GST cess.
 - Allows the Union to impose targeted taxation on demerit goods.
4. **Revenue Sharing:** Government has indicated **States will share proceeds**, unlike most cesses (though final formula awaited).

WHAT IS A CESS?

Constitutional Basis:

- **Article 271:** Parliament may levy **surcharges and cesses** for Union purposes.

Definition:

- A **tax on tax** → imposed **over and above** the existing tax liability.
- Proceeds collected for a **specific purpose** (health, education, sanitation, infrastructure).

Features:

- Goes to the **Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)**, but can be used **only for the stated objective**.
- Usually **not shared with States**, giving the Union fiscal flexibility.

RIGHT TO DISCONNECT BILL, 2025

Space for Notes:

Context:

With rising digital connectivity and blurred work–life boundaries, a Private Member’s Bill has been reintroduced in Lok Sabha to grant employees a statutory **Right to Disconnect**—i.e., the right to refuse work-related communication after working hours.

About the Bill:

- Introduced by **Supriya Sule (NCP–SP)** as a **Private Member’s Bill**.
- Similar Bill introduced earlier in **2019** (also by Sule).
- Seeks amendments to the **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (OSHWC) Amendment Bill, 2025** (introduced by Shashi Tharoor).
- Applies to companies with **>10 workers** (negotiation mandatory with employee representatives).

Feature	Private Member’s Bill	Government Bill
Who introduces it?	Any MP who is not a Minister	A Minister (on behalf of the Government)
Government support?	Not required; usually absent	Has full government backing
Chances of passing	Very low (Only 14 passed since 1950)	Very high
Business allocation	Discussed only on Fridays	Can be taken up any day
Financial Bills?	Cannot introduce Money/Finance Bills	Govt. can introduce all Bills

Important Facts:

- Growing international practice: France (2017), Portugal (2021), Australia (2023) have legislated the right.
- Study cited: Constant monitoring of work-related communication → **sleep deprivation, stress, burnout, and “infobesity.”**
- Private Member’s Bills rarely pass: Only **14 passed** since independence.

Key Terms:

- **Right to Disconnect:** Legal right to refuse work-related calls/emails beyond office hours.
- **Infobesity:** Cognitive overload due to constant digital communication.
- **Digital Detox Centres:** Facilities proposed to address stress and improve work–life balance.

Mercy Petition

Context:

The President of India, **Droupadi Murmu**, rejected the mercy petition of a death-row convict in a case involving **rape and murder of a two-year-old girl in Maharashtra (2012)**, reaffirming the constitutional process governing **clemency powers** (mercy powers).

Constitutional Basis of Presidential Clemency:

Article 72 of the Constitution:

The President has the power to grant:

- **Pardon** – completely absolves punishment and conviction
- **Reprieve** – temporary suspension of sentence
- **Respite** – lesser punishment due to special circumstances (e.g., pregnancy)
- **Remission** – reduction of sentence without altering its character
- **Commutation** – substitution of one form of punishment with another

Scope of Article 72:

- **Applies to:**
 - Cases involving **death sentence**
 - Punishment by **court martial**
 - Offences under **Union law**
- In **death sentence cases**, the President's power is **exclusive** and not shared with Governors.
- President decides on **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers** (Article 74).
- The President **cannot act independently** or contrary to ministerial advice.

Epuru Sudhakar v. Government of A.P. (2006):

- Clemency decisions subject to **limited judicial review** on grounds of:
 1. Mala fide
 2. Arbitrariness
 3. Irrelevant considerations

Why Mercy Powers Exist:

- Humanitarian considerations
- Correction of possible **judicial errors**
- Consideration of **post-conviction circumstances**
- Final constitutional safeguard against miscarriage of justice

Sahitya Akademi Awards

Why in News?

The **Sahitya Akademi cancelled its press conference** to announce annual literary awards following a **directive from the Union Ministry of Culture**.

- **Reason:** A directive from the Union Ministry of Culture citing a lack of prior approval and consultation as required by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in July 2025.

Structural Changes in Cultural Bodies:

- **The "Big Four" Autonomous Bodies:** The restructuring directive applies to four key institutions under the Ministry of Culture:
 1. Sahitya Akademi (National Academy of Letters)
 2. Sangeet Natak Akademi (National Academy of Music, Dance, and Drama)
 3. Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Art)
 4. National School of Drama (NSD)
- **Overarching Policy:** The restructuring is part of a broader government initiative under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to standardize awards across all departments.

Space for Notes:

About Sahitya Akademi Awards:

- It is awarded for the most outstanding books of literary merit published in any of the major Indian languages recognised by the Akademi.
- Along with the **22 languages enumerated in the Constitution of India**, the Sahitya Akademi has recognised **English and Rajasthani as languages** in which its programme may be implemented.
- The authors and poets will receive a plaque, a shawl and an amount of ₹1 lakh in an award.

Key facts about the Sahitya Akademi:

- It was formally inaugurated by the **Government of India on 12 March 1954**.
- It was registered as a society under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
- It is the central institution for literary dialogue, publication and promotion in the country and the only institution that undertakes literary activities in **24 Indian languages, including English**.
- **Ministry:** An autonomous organization under the Ministry of Culture.
- **Head office:** New Delhi.

Vijay Diwas
Context:

The Indian Army celebrated **Vijay Diwas (16 December)** at Army House, New Delhi, showcasing **indigenously developed defence technologies** and highlighting progress towards a **self-reliant, future-ready force**.

Vijay Diwas – Key Facts:

- **Observed on:** 16 December
- **Commemorates:** Decisive victory of Indian Armed Forces in the **1971 India–Pakistan War**
- **Outcome of 1971 War:**
 - Creation of **Bangladesh**
 - Largest surrender after World War II (Pakistani forces in East Pakistan)
- **Supreme Commander:** President of India
- **2025 Event Attendee:** President Droupadi Murmu

FIR at Home
Context:

Telangana Police issued new norms allowing FIR registration at the complainant's residence in select sensitive cases, marking a shift from station-centric policing.

Key Terms:

- **FIR (First Information Report):** Document recording information about a cognizable offence under CrPC.
- **Zero FIR:** FIR registered at any police station irrespective of territorial jurisdiction.
- **Cognizable offence:** Police can register FIR and investigate without court approval.

What has Changed:

- **FIRs can be registered at the complainant's home** instead of only at police stations in certain sensitive cases.
- Registration can be done by **jurisdictional police or any police officer (as Zero FIR)**.

Space for Notes:

Sensitive Cases Covered:

- Offences against women and children
- Human body-related offences (physical harm)
- POCSO Act offences
- SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act offences
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act offences
- Prohibition of Ragging Act offences
- Property offences (where vulnerability exists)

Rationale:

- Victims may be **physically/mentally unfit** or in **trauma** to visit stations.
- **Immediate FIR** is critical for **safety, evidence preservation, and access to justice.**

Partners in Health
Context:

The Union Government has set a target to **formally recognise 1 lakh tribal healers** as **partners in strengthening health services** for tribal communities, integrating traditional knowledge with the public health system.

About the Initiative:

- **Aim:** Formal recognition and capacity building of **tribal healers**
- **Nature:** Institutional integration of **traditional medicine practitioners** into healthcare delivery
- **Focus Areas:** Primary healthcare, disease surveillance, community-level outreach in tribal regions

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Partner Institutions:

- **Indian Council of Medical Research**
- Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Bhubaneswar
- AIIMS, WHO, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of AYUSH (capacity building & technical support)

Institutional Mechanism:

- **MoU signed** between Ministry of Tribal Affairs and **ICMR–RMRC, Bhubaneswar**
- Establishment of **Bharat Tribal Health Observatory** (national level)

Bharat Tribal Health Observatory:

- Aims to institutionalise:
 - **Tribe-disaggregated health data**
 - Disease surveillance and implementation research
 - Evidence-based planning in tribal districts
- Priority diseases: **Malaria, Leprosy, Tuberculosis**

Who are Tribal Healers?

- **Traditional medicine practitioners** from tribal (**Adivasi**) communities
- Hold **indigenous, community-based healing knowledge** passed down generations
- Knowledge is mainly **oral and experiential**, not formally institutionalised
- Use **local herbs, plants, minerals, rituals, and lifestyle practices**
- Serve as the **first point of healthcare** in remote and forested tribal regions
- Treat common illnesses, injuries, fevers, snakebites, and digestive disorders
- Support **maternal and child health** and aid in **disease identification and referral**

Space for Notes:

National Register of Citizens (NRC)

Space for Notes:

Context:

The Assam NRC remains unnotified since 2019 amid concerns over errors, exclusions, and its linkage with electoral rolls, as highlighted by civil society groups and recent political debate.

About NRC:

- NRC is a register of Indian citizens, prepared to identify illegal migrants, particularly in Assam.
- Only Assam has undergone NRC updating so far.
- Prepared under supervision of the Supreme Court.

Genesis & Legal Basis:

- **Origin:** First NRC prepared in 1951 after Census 1951.
- **Constitutional backing:** Article 11 – Parliament's power to regulate citizenship.
- **Statutory basis:** Citizenship Act, 1955, Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003
- **Political basis:** Assam Accord, 1985 → Detection & deportation of foreigners who entered after 24 March 1971. It is a tripartite agreement to end Assam agitation.

Assam NRC (2013–2019):

- Updating initiated in 2013 following Supreme Court directions.
- **Final draft published:** August 2019.
- **Exclusions:** ~19.06 lakh persons out of ~3.3 crore applicants.
- **Status:** Not officially notified by the Registrar General of India. Assam Government has questioned its accuracy.

Eligibility Criteria (Assam NRC):

Applicants had to prove:

- Presence of self/ancestors in Assam before 24 March 1971, and
- Linkage documents to establish descent.

Institutional Framework:

- **Registrar General of India (RGI):** Nodal authority.
- **State NRC authorities:** Implementation.
- **Foreigners Tribunals:** Quasi-judicial bodies to decide citizenship claims.
- **Supreme Court:** Supervisory role (Assam NRC).

Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)

Context:

Retired Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) officers moved the Supreme Court of India alleging non-implementation of its directions to reduce Indian Police Service (IPS) deputation in CAPFs and to review cadres and service rules.

About CAPF:

CAPFs include CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF, SSB, Assam Rifles, NSG

Force Profiles:

Force	Established	Primary Mandate	Key Features
AR (Assam Rifles)	1835	Indo-Myanmar Border	Oldest force; Administrative control by MHA, operational by Army.

BSF (Border Security Force)	1965	Indo-Pak & Indo-Bangladesh Borders	World's largest border force; "First Line of Defence."
CISF (Central Industrial Security Force)	1969	Critical Infrastructure	Guards airports, nuclear plants, Delhi Metro and PSUs etc.,
CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force)	1939	Internal Security & Election Duty	Largest CAPF; Includes RAF (anti-riot) and CoBRA (anti-Naxal).
ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police)	1962	Indo-China Border	Specialized mountain force (Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh).
NSG (National Security Guard)	1984	Counter-Terrorism	Known as "Black Cats"; handles high-risk internal disturbances.
SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal)	1963	Indo-Nepal & Indo-Bhutan Borders	Focuses on friendly border management and intelligence.

Space for Notes:

India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM), 2026

Context:

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is hosting the inaugural **India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM), 2026** to strengthen global cooperation on electoral governance and democratic practices.

About the Conference:

- **IICDEM 2026:** Inaugural 3-day international conference on electoral governance
- **Dates & Venue:** January 21–23, 2026 | Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi
- **Participants:** ~100 delegates from 70+ countries, including Election Management Bodies heads, State/UT CEOs, academic experts, and electoral practitioners

Election Commission of India (ECI):

- **Type:** Constitutional body
- **Constitutional Basis:** Article 324 of the Indian Constitution
- **Established:** 1950
- **Composition:** Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Two Election Commissioners (multi-member body since 1993)
- **Appointment:** By the President of India (as per law)
- **Tenure:** 6 years or up to 65 years of age (whichever earlier)

Rajasthan "Disturbed Areas" Bill, 2026

Context:

The Rajasthan Cabinet has cleared a Bill empowering the State government to declare certain localities as "disturbed areas" to address communal unrest, distress sale of properties, and alleged demographic imbalance during violence-related situations.

Key Terms:

- **Disturbed Area:** An area notified by the State due to communal violence, riots, or serious disturbance of public order.
- **Distress Sale:** Forced sale of property at undervalued prices, often due to fear, coercion, or insecurity.
- **Immovable Property:** Land, buildings, and property permanently attached to land.
- **Competent Authority:** District Collector / District Magistrate authorised to grant prior permission.

About the Bill:

- **Name:** *Rajasthan Prohibition of Transfer of Immovable Property and Provisions for Protection of Tenants from Eviction from the Premises in Disturbed Areas Bill, 2026*
- **Nature:** State legislation
- **Model:** Drafted on the pattern of the Gujarat Disturbed Areas Act

Salient Provisions:

- State government may **declare any area as “disturbed”** if affected by communal violence, riots or mob unrest, improper clustering linked to demographic change
- **Transfer of immovable property** in notified areas requires **prior permission** of the competent authority. Any transfer without permission is **null and void**
- **Protection of tenants:** Eviction without due process prohibited
- **Penal provisions:** Violations are **cognisable and non-bailable**. Punishment: **3–5 years imprisonment** and fine
- **Duration:** Declaration valid for **one year**, extendable periodically

Census 2027
Context:

The Ministry of Home Affairs has notified the **commencement of house-listing operations for Census 2027 from April 1, 2026**, introducing **self-enumeration** for the first time to reduce physical visits and digitise data collection.

Key Terms:

- **House-listing:** Door-to-door collection of housing and household data.
- **Self-enumeration:** Households submit details digitally before enumerator visit.
- **Population Enumeration:** Collection of individual demographic data.

Legal Basis:

- **Census Act, 1948**
- **Sections 3 & 17A:** Authorise census operations and digital data collection.
- Conducted by **Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI)** under Minister of Home Affairs (MHA).

Phases of Census 2027:

1. **House-listing & Housing Census:** April–September 2026
2. **Population Enumeration:** Early 2027

Space for Notes:**History of Census in India**

- **1872** – First non-synchronous Census
- **1881** – First synchronous Census
- **1931** – Last full socio-economic Census
- **1948** – Census Act enacted
- **1951** – First Census of independent India
- **2011** – Latest completed Census
- **2027** – Fully digital Census

- **Non-synchronous** → Different regions, different times.
- **Synchronous** → Entire country, same time reference.

Key Features (What's New):

- First fully digital Census of India.
- Self-enumeration option for households (15-day window before house-listing).
- Mobile app-based data collection by enumerators.
- Unique ID generation for each household.
- Reduced time spent during physical house visits.

House-listing Schedule (2027):

- Includes 34 data columns (expanded from earlier censuses).
- New data points added, including types of cereal consumed by households.
- Captures: Housing conditions, Amenities, Assets, Household characteristics

MeitY flags AI misuse on X
Context:

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has directed X (formerly Twitter) to conduct a comprehensive technical and governance-level review of its AI chatbot Grok following reports of image morphing and creation of obscene visuals, particularly targeting women.

Key Terms:

- **Image Morphing:** Digital alteration of images to change appearance or content, often used for impersonation or abuse.
- **Generative AI Misuse:** Use of AI tools to create fake, manipulated, or harmful content.
- **Platform Due Diligence:** Legal obligation of intermediaries to prevent misuse of their services.

About the Issue:

- Grok allegedly responded to user prompts involving undressing or altering clothing in women's photographs.
- The tool is reported to be used for creating fake accounts and sharing obscene visuals.
- Grok operates as a separate AI entity under X's holding firm but interacts directly with users on the X platform.

Legal / Regulatory Framework:

- Information Technology Act, 2000
- IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021: Mandate due diligence, content moderation, and grievance redressal
- Safe Harbour (Section 79, IT Act): Legal protection granted to online intermediaries from liability for user-generated content, provided they follow due diligence norms. Conditional protection; can be withdrawn if platforms fail to act against unlawful content

IT Act, 2000 & IT Rules 2021
Context:

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) issued an advisory to social media platforms and intermediaries to proactively block and remove "obscene" and "pornographic" content, citing obligations under the IT framework.

Space for Notes:

Legal Basis:

- Information Technology Act, 2000
 - Section 79: Conditional safe harbour to intermediaries.
- Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021)

Who is Covered:

- Large social media platforms (\geq 50 lakh registered users in India).
- All intermediaries hosting or transmitting user-generated content.

Key Directives:

- **Proactive action:** Platforms must **detect and remove** obscene/pornographic content.
- **Use of technology:** Automated tools for identification and takedown.
- **Due diligence:** Ensure platforms do not host, display, upload, transmit, or share:
 - Obscene or pornographic material
 - Content harmful to children
 - Any otherwise unlawful information

Compliance Mechanism:

- **Grievance Redressal:** Appoint India-based Grievance Officers.
- **Timely takedown:** Act on user complaints and government orders.
- **Screening gaps** flagged where platforms miss objectionable content.

Consequences of Non-Compliance:

- **Loss of safe harbour** under Section 79.
- **Legal liability**, including prosecution under the IT Act and IT Rules, 2021.

Key Terms:

- **Safe harbour** refers to the **conditional legal immunity** given to intermediaries, whereby they are **not held liable for third-party content** hosted or transmitted on their platforms **provided they follow due-diligence obligations** under the IT Act, 2000 and the IT Rules, 2021.
- **Intermediaries** are entities that **receive, store, transmit, host, or provide access** to third-party information on behalf of users, such as social media platforms, messaging apps, search engines, ISPs, online marketplaces, and cloud service providers.

Governor's address (Article 176)
Context:

Recent **walkouts by Governors** during opposition-ruled State Assemblies have triggered debate on the **constitutional limits of the Governor's address under Article 176** and the scope of gubernatorial discretion.

Key Terms:

- **Article 176:** Governor's address to the State Legislature at the commencement of the first session each year
- **Constitutional morality:** Adherence to the spirit, not just the letter, of the Constitution
- **Aid and advice:** Binding guidance of the Council of Ministers to the Governor (**Art 163**)

Constitutional Provision (Article 176):

- Mandates the **Governor to address** in the Legislative Assembly, or both Houses in case of a bicameral legislature
- Address outlines the **policies and programmes of the State Government**
- Address is **prepared by the elected government**, not the Governor

Space for Notes:

Nature of Governor's Address:

- **Executive function**, not personal or discretionary
- Governor acts on **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**
- No constitutional authority to alter, selectively read, or omit portions of the address, walk out or protest the content

Judicial Interpretation:

- **Shamsher Singh vs State of Punjab:**
 - Governor functions as **constitutional head**, not real executive
 - Must act on **aid and advice** except in limited situations
- **Nabam Rebia case:**
 - Governor's discretionary powers are **narrow and exceptional**
 - Cannot act independently in legislative matters
- **Rameshwar Prasad case:**
 - Emphasised judicial review of Governor's actions impacting democracy

Limits on Gubernatorial Discretion:

- No discretion in **Article 176 address**
- Discretion exists only where the Constitution **explicitly provides**
- Governor cannot substitute personal views for elected government policy

Governors' Address to State Legislature
Context:

Constitutional tensions resurfaced as Governors R. N. Ravi and Arif Mohammed Khan objected to portions of the Governor's Address prepared by their respective state governments, leading to walkouts and partial reading of the speeches.

What is the Governor's Address?

- A **constitutional address** delivered by the Governor at the **commencement of the first session of the year and first session after Assembly elections**.
- **Constitutional provision:** Article 176.
- The **content is prepared by the State Council of Ministers** and reflects government policy, not the Governor's personal views.

Constitutional & Legal Position:

- The Governor is **constitutionally bound** to deliver the address as per the **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers** (Articles 163).
- The address represents **government policy**, not the Governor's personal views.
- **Supreme Court position (settled principle):**
 - The Governor **cannot alter, delete, or refuse** the address prepared by the Cabinet.
 - Any disagreement must be resolved **within constitutional conventions**, not through public confrontation.

Motion of Thanks:

- After the address, the Legislature considers a **Motion of Thanks**.
- Passing it is a **mandatory constitutional convention**.
- **Rejection does not invalidate proceedings**, but has **serious political implications**, akin to loss of confidence.

Space for Notes:

President's Rule (Article 356)

Space for Notes:

Context:

The Union Government is reviewing the continuation or restoration of an elected government in **Manipur**, which has been under **President's Rule**, amid internal security concerns and political deadlock.

Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 356:** Imposition of President's Rule in States.
- **Article 365:** Non-compliance with Union directions can trigger Article 356.
- **Article 357:** Parliament exercises State legislative powers during President's Rule.

Grounds for Imposition:

- Governor's report indicating breakdown of constitutional machinery.
- Failure to form a stable government.
- Loss of majority and inability to prove confidence.
- Law and order breakdown affecting governance.
- Non-compliance with constitutional provisions.

Procedure:

1. **Governor sends report** to the President.
2. **President issues proclamation** under Article 356.
3. **Approval by Parliament** required within **2 months**.
4. If approved, continues for **6 months at a time**.

Duration Limits:

- **Maximum normal duration:** 1 year.
- **Extension beyond 1 year (up to 3 years)** only if:
 - National Emergency is in operation or
 - Election Commission certifies that elections cannot be held.

Effects of President's Rule:

- Council of Ministers dismissed or suspended.
- Governor administers the State on behalf of the President.
- State Assembly: Dissolved or kept under **suspended animation**. (State Assembly exists but its powers are suspended)
- Parliament legislates for the State.

S.R. Bommai vs Union of India (1994):

- The President's Rule is **subject to judicial review**.
- Majority must be tested on the **floor of the House**, not Governor's discretion.
- Courts can **restore dismissed State governments**.

Manipur-Specific Context:

- The President's Rule imposed amid prolonged ethnic violence.
- Assembly kept in **suspended animation**, not dissolved.

Indira Gandhi Peace Prize

Context:

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development is an annual international award recognising individuals and institutions for outstanding contributions to peace, human rights, development, and global cooperation.

Recent Awardees:
2025 Awardee: Graça Machel:

- Mozambican human rights activist and humanitarian
- Contributions in Women and child welfare, education, health, and nutrition, protection of vulnerable communities
- Recognised for sustained peace-building and advocacy under difficult social and political conditions
- Among numerous awards, Machel has received the **United Nations' Nansen Refugee Award** in recognition of her long-standing humanitarian work.
- In 1997, she was made an honorary **Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire**. In 2018, she was awarded the World Health Organisation's highest honour, the **WHO Gold Medal**, for her enormous contributions to the health and wellbeing of women, children and adolescents.

2024 Awardee: Michelle Bachelet:

- Former President of Chile (two terms: 2006–2010; 2014–2018)





Past Prominent Recipients:

- Mikhail Gorbachev, Aung San Suu Kyi, UNHCR, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Angela Merkel, David Attenborough

Selection Process:

- Awarded by an **international jury**
- Jury chaired by a distinguished Indian public figure
- Focus on **lifetime contribution** rather than isolated achievements



About the Prize

-  Established: 1986
-  Instituted by: **Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust** (independent trust, not Government of India)
-  Nature: **International Award**
-  Frequency: **Annual**

Purpose & Objectives

-  Promote international peace and non-violence
-  Encourage development cooperation
-  Support disarmament efforts
-  Uphold human rights and democratic values

Prize Components

-  ₹1 crore cash award
-  Citation and plaque / medal (as per Trust norms)

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