THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & INTERACTIVE ANALYSIS | FRIDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2026

14	3	28
ARTICLES	GS PAPERS	MCQS & MAINS QS

TOPIC RADAR: GS1: 2 Topics | GS2: 5 Topics | GS3: 7 Topics

QUOTE OF THE DAY · GS2 & ESSAY • DEMOCRACY, FRANCHISE & DUE PROCESS

*"The vote is the sacred currency of citizenship. An administrative quest for statistical purity in voter rolls must never erode the constitutional guarantees of due process and universal franchise." — **Ashok Lavasa***

TOP 3 NUMBERS TO REMEMBER TODAY

6.09%: Headline CPI breaches 6% ceiling (14-mo high); food inflation at 8.94%; vegetable prices surge +42.18%.

18.51%: NITI Aayog review: ₹35,354 Cr disbursed of ₹1.91L Cr outlay across 14 schemes; electronics/pharma lead.

99%: Adani 1,500 MW hydro cost deflated from ₹5,675 Cr to ₹56.75 Cr, cutting NBWL tiger fund to ₹2.27 Cr.

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PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

1. Infosys Prize 2026 Laureates Announced: Infosys Science Foundation awarded Infosys Prize 2026 across 6 categories: Gautam Bhatia (Humanities/Law, transformative constitutionalism); Karthik Sastry (Economics, climate change macroeconomics); Isha Jain (Life Sciences, oxygen biology and hypoxia); Riddhipratim Basu (Mathematical Sciences, probability theory); Swarun Kumar (Engineering, low-power wireless); and Manoj Joshi (Physical Sciences, trapped-ion quantum computing).
2. Siang Upper Multipurpose Hydropower Project (11,200 MW): Tensions intensified in Arunachal Pradesh as the Siang Indigenous Farmers Forum (SIFF) opposed pre-feasibility work on the 11,200 MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project on the Siang/Brahmaputra. Activists were detained under the Arunachal Pradesh Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (APUAPA). The mega-dam is planned as an ecological and strategic buffer against Chinese upstream diversion in Tibet.
3. Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh Elections: The Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) called for a complete boycott of the upcoming LAHDC-Leh elections scheduled for December 4, 2026, protesting the ongoing detention of Sonam Wangchuk and demanding full statehood with Sixth Schedule constitutional safeguards under Article 244.
4. 45th India International Trade Fair (IITF 2026) at Bharat Mandapam: Inaugurated on November 13, 2026 by Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Organized by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO). Theme: 'Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi'. Partner States: Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Focus States: Assam, Delhi, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. Features 3,500+ exhibitors across 11 countries.
5. Swachh Survekshan 2025-26 State Awards: Patna Conferred 'State First Swachh City': President Droupadi Murmu conferred the 10th Swachh Survekshan Awards 2025-26. Patna Municipal Corporation was honored with the 'State First Swachh City' award in Bihar under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U 2.0) for achieving 100% door-to-door waste segregation and remediating legacy dumpsites.
6. Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) Commences Audit of 39 State Power Discoms: The CAG initiated a nationwide financial and performance audit across 39 state-owned power distribution companies (discoms) carrying accumulated debts exceeding ₹6.2 lakh crore. The audit focuses on Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), Aggregate Technical & Commercial (AT&C) losses, smart meter rollouts, and state tariff subsidy arrears.
7. IIT Kharagpur Launches NMC-Approved Integrated MD-PhD Programmes: IIT Kharagpur's Dr. B. C. Roy Multi-Speciality Medical Research Centre became the first Indian Institute of Technology to admit postgraduate medical students for MD programmes in 6 disciplines (Pathology, Community Medicine, Biochemistry, etc.) under National Medical Commission (NMC) regulations, bridging clinical practice with biomedical AI and quantum engineering.
8. Digital Rupee (CBDC) Pilot Snags in Delhi's Lakshmi Yojana DBT Welfare: Delhi Government's Mukhyamantri Lakshmi Yojana welfare scheme faced operational bottlenecks in digital currency disbursement: out of 4,541 approved women beneficiaries, only 53 successfully received cash in Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) wallets due to technical onboarding and merchant ecosystem limitations, prompting a temporary shift to Post Office Fixed Deposits.

HOW TO READ THIS BRIEF • INTERACTIVE STUDY EDITION (TAP TOC OR SCANNER TO JUMP)

Subhead Pill | Case Law | Data / Stat | Act / Section | Memory / Hack | Feynman / Mains | Trap Radar

⚡ THE 3-MINUTE EXECUTIVE SCANNER — *ALL 14 TOPICS AT A GLANCE* [TAP TOPIC TO JUMP]

GS1	**Chhath Mahaparva & Eco-Centrism**	Rigvedic Surya/Usha worship; 4-day non-sacerdotal progression (Nahay-Khay to Usha Arghya); riverine bio-ethics and egalitarian community preservation.	p.3
GS1	**SC on Hindu Succession Act 1956**	J. Rajesh v. M. Kumaran; Section 8 intestate property inherited by son becomes absolute estate; grandson has no Class I birthright claim while father is alive.	p.4
GS2	**Women's Quota & Delimitation Delin…**	Article 334A delimitation and census contingency; proposed special session amendment bill to operationalise 33% quota within existing 543 Lok Sabha seats.	p.5
GS2	**ECI's Intensive Revision vs Summary**	Section 21 RPA 1950; Ashok Lavasa critique; due process safeguards in Form 6/7; protecting migrant, slum, and borderland electors under Article 324.	p.6
GS2	**WHO Global TB Report 2026**	Transition from 2019-21 sample survey to 57-district sentinel surveillance; India achieves 16.5% incidence and 38% mortality drop; 96% domestic NTEP funding.	p.7
GS2	**IAF Officer Charged Under OSA 1923**	Sections 3 and 5 of OSA 1923; operational airbase leaks via encrypted social engineering; DCyA tri-service cyber protocols; zero-trust human intelligence.	p.8
GS2	**Quad Sideline Summit in Manila**	Manila dialogue on ASEAN margins; IPMDA dark-vessel tracking; Quad-at-Sea coast guard interoperability; undersea cable resilience and UNCLOS 1982 order.	p.10
GS3	**NITI Aayog 14 PLI Schemes Review**	₹35,354 Cr disbursed (18.51%) of ₹1.91L Cr outlay; Drones/Pharma/Electronics lead while ACC Batteries and Solar PV lag; NITI recommends extending sunset dates.	p.11
GS3	**Adani Tarali Pumped Storage Probe**	Tarali reservoir in Satara within Koyna WLS 10km ESZ; paper cost cut from ₹5,675 Cr to ₹56.75 Cr, slashing 4% NBWL tiger fund from ₹227 Cr to ₹2.27 Cr.	p.12
GS3	**October 2026 CPI Surges to 6.09%**	Breaches 6% ceiling; vegetable inflation at 42.18% (Tomato +161%); adverse base effect; RBI MPC expected to hold 6.50% repo rate steady in December.	p.13
GS3	**India Surpasses China in Russian Cr…**	CREA report; India overtakes China with 38% share ($6.4B in Oct); Urals discount widens to $12-14/bbl amid Strait of Hormuz tanker attacks; Vadinar and Jamnagar hubs.	p.14
GS3	**Global Carbon Budget 2026 (COP31)**	Antalya GCP report; world at 41.6 Gt CO2; India at 3.2 Gt (+4.4% surge) driven by thermal power and steel/cement; per capita equity gap (2.2t vs US 14.9t).	p.16
GS3	**CEC River Sand Mining Framework**	Supreme Court reinforces CEC 2022 guidelines; mandatory 5-year replenishment audits; distinction between desilting and commercial mining; drone LiDAR tracking.	p.17
GS3	**NCLT Declares Venugopal Dhoot Ba…**	First mega personal guarantor bankruptcy under Section 123 IBC; ₹600 Cr plan rejected; personal assets vest in trustee Asish Narayan; directorship disqualifications.	p.18

GS PAPER 1: VEDIC CULTURE, SOCIAL STRUCTURE & SUCCESSION LAW

GS1.1 • INDIAN CULTURE, FESTIVALS & ECOLOGICAL ETHICS ☀️ ★★★ MUST READ

Chhath Mahaparva: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Vedic Solar Rituals & Community Eco-Centrism

Why in news: The four-day **Chhath Mahaparva** commenced on November 13, 2026 with *Nahay-Khay* across Northern and Eastern India, drawing national focus to its unique Vedic solar origins, complete absence of priestly intermediation, and community-led riverine conservation ethics.

36-Hour Nirjala

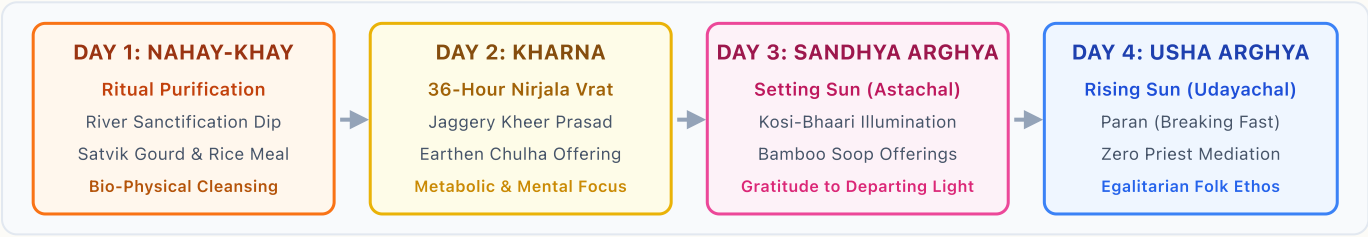
Strict waterless fast observed by Vratis across 4 distinct ritual stages, culminating in offerings to both the setting (Astachal) and rising (Udayachal) sun at natural water bodies without sacerdotal hierarchy.

KEY DETAILS • VEDIC COSMOLOGY & SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL ARCHITECTURE

- **Vedic Solar Cosmology & Shashti Divinity:** Cosmology traces to Rigvedic adoration of Surya (cosmic energy provider) and Usha (goddess of dawn), personified as Chhathi Maiya and celebrated on Shukla Paksha Shashthi of Kartika.
- **Non-Sacerdotal Egalitarianism:** Operates entirely without temple priests or liturgical intermediation; devotees commune directly with nature using indigenous bamboo soops and earthen chulhas, eliminating caste exclusivity.
- **Riparian Bio-Ethics & Water Stewardship:** Ritual standing in flowing water mandates voluntary community desilting and preservation of ghats, operationalising decentralized environmental ethics under the LiFE mission.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Four-Stage Ritual Protocol: Chronology, Bio-Physical Discipline & Solar Cycle



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Highlight how Chhath uniquely worships the setting sun before the rising sun, symbolizing cosmic gratitude and cyclical balance.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Vedic Surya Worship • Nahay-Khay to Paran • Non-Sacerdotal Rituals • Riparian Bio-Ethics • Intangible Cultural Heritage

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 (Indian Heritage, Folk Traditions & Festivals) or Essay on Environmental Ethics.

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) Chhath Mahaparva demonstrates how folk traditions synthesize ancient Vedic solar cosmology with modern principles of environmental conservation and casteless social solidarity.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Decentralized Water Stewardship:** Mandates voluntary community desilting and cleaning of rivers and ponds without bureaucratic enforcement, turning riparian preservation into sacred duty.
- **Complete Social Egalitarianism:** Rejection of sacerdotal hierarchy and uniform reliance on indigenous bamboo craftsmanship levels caste and economic disparities on the riverbank.
- **Matriarchal Spiritual Agency:** Positions women as primary religious leaders (Vratis), exercising autonomous spiritual authority over household and communal rituals.

WAY FWD (~30w) Integrating traditional folk festivals into community water governance models operationalises local environmental ethics under the LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) global mandate.

⚠️ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — SACERDOTAL MISCONCEPTION

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP:	WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL:	THE FACT CHECK:
Believing that Chhath Puja requires mandatory ordination by hereditary temple priests and is restricted to agrarian landholding elites.	Aspirants confuse classical temple rituals with folk nature worship and assume liturgical intermediation.	Chhath is entirely **non-sacerdotal (priest-less)** and observed universally across all social, caste, and economic strata directly at natural water bodies.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. With reference to traditional Indian festivals and socio-ecological practices, consider the following statements regarding Chhath Mahaparva:
1. It involves ritual offerings to both the setting sun and the rising sun from natural water bodies.
2. The rituals mandate the mediation of ordained temple priests for the consecration of the offerings.
3. The offerings traditionally rely on indigenous bamboo craftsmanship and seasonal unrefined produce.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 3 are correct: Chhath worships the setting sun (Sandhya Arghya) and rising sun (Usha Arghya) using bamboo soops and seasonal produce. Statement 2 is incorrect: Chhath is completely priest-less; devotees directly commune with nature without liturgical mediation.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Look at Statement 2: Chhath is widely recognized for its lack of temple or priest intermediation. Eliminating 2 leaves (c) immediately!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims questions on intangible cultural heritage and folk traditions.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS1 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Examine the socio-ecological significance of folk festivals in India. How does the living tradition of Chhath Puja synthesize Vedic solar cosmology, community-led water conservation, and casteless egalitarianism?

Evaluation rubric: Explain Vedic origins (Rigvedic Surya/Usha); detail the 4-stage ritual discipline; discuss riverine conservation and priest-less egalitarianism; conclude with LiFE relevance.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: LiFE: Lifestyle for Environment | ICH: Intangible Cultural Heritage

GS1.3 • INDIAN SOCIETY, FAMILY STRUCTURE & SUCCESSION LAW ⚖ *** MUST READ

Supreme Court on Hindu Succession Act 1956: Grandson Has No Birthright in Grandfather's Property Under Section 8

Why in news: In *J. Rajesh v. M. Kumaran (Civil Appeal No. 7020 of 2012)*, a Supreme Court Bench of **Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Sunita Agarwal** ruled that a grandson cannot claim a birthright share in his paternal grandfather's property that devolved under Section 8 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, while his father is alive.

Section 8 vs 6

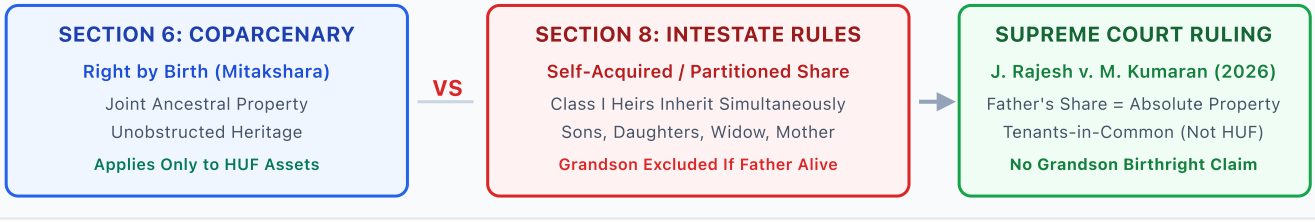
Supreme Court affirms that partitioned or self-acquired property inherited by a son from an intestate father becomes his absolute individual estate, barring birthright claims by grandsons.

KEY DETAILS • STATUTORY INTERPRETATION & JURISPRUDENCE

- **Statutory Boundary (Sec 6 vs Sec 8):** Section 6 governs devolution of joint Mitakshara coparcenary property, whereas Section 8 governs intestate succession where property devolves as individual absolute estate.
- **Class I Heir Priority & Living Father Rule:** Under Section 8, property passes simultaneously to Class I heirs (son, daughter, widow, mother). A grandson is NOT a Class I heir while his father is alive.
- **Absolute Title & Speculative Suit Bar:** Property inherited by a son becomes his absolute estate held as tenant-in-common, extinguishing coparcenary claims and barring grandsons from filing speculative partition suits.

✏ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Hindu Succession Act: Mitakshara Coparcenary (Sec 6) vs Intestate Succession (Sec 8)



✏ **Examiner Note:** Focus on the father's life status: if the father is alive, the grandson has zero independent inheritance claim under Section 8.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Hindu Succession Act 1956 • Section 8 vs Section 6 • Class I Legal Heirs • Tenants-in-Common • J. Rajesh v. M. Kumaran

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 (Indian Society/Family Structure) or GS2 (Statutory Law & Judiciary).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) The Supreme Court's ruling in J. Rajesh v. M. Kumaran (2026) reinforces the primacy of codified statutory succession under Section 8 over uncodified Mitakshara coparcenary customs.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Protection of Title Alienability:** Ensures that land inherited by a father under Section 8 can be transferred, mortgaged, or sold without frivolous partition suits from sons or grandsons.
- **Curtailing Speculative Litigation:** Prevents third-generation descendants from re-opening crystallized family partitions decades after succession opened upon the grandfather's demise.
- **Clarity on Coparcenary Extinction:** Reaffirms that partition severs the coparcenary ties, converting joint tenants into absolute individual tenants-in-common.

WAY FWD (~30w) Harmonizing testamentary certainty under Section 8 with gender-equal coparcenary rights under Section 6 establishes legal stability in India's agrarian and urban property markets.

⚠ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR STATUTORY INVERSION

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP: Assuming that every male descendant up to three degrees automatically acquires a coparcenary right by birth in all properties held by his paternal grandfather.

WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL: Aspirants confuse Section 6 coparcenary ancestral property with Section 8 intestate personal devolution.

THE FACT CHECK: Birthright applies **strictly to ancestral coparcenary property under Section 6**, never to self-acquired or partitioned property devolving under Section 8.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

UPSC PRELIMS • TOUGH • □ SOLVED □ REVISE

Q. Consider the following statements regarding property devolution under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956:
1. Under Section 8, the self-acquired property of a Hindu male dying intestate devolves simultaneously upon all Class I heirs.
2. A grandson is categorized as a Class I heir alongside his living father for intestate succession.
3. Property inherited by a son under Section 8 becomes his individual absolute estate in which his children do not acquire a birthright.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 1 and 3 only | (c) 2 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 3 are correct: Section 8 governs intestate succession devolving on Class I heirs as absolute property. Statement 2 is incorrect because a grandson is NOT a Class I heir while his father is alive; only the son of a predeceased son is a Class I heir.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Notice Statement 2: If both father and grandson were Class I heirs simultaneously, property would double-count within one family branch. Eliminate 2 to get (b)!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2021 question on Mitakshara and Dayabhaga schools of Hindu law.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS1/GS2 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Differentiate between the devolution of coparcenary property under Section 6 and intestate succession under Section 8 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956. How does recent judicial interpretation resolve conflicts between ancestral claims and individual property rights?

Evaluation rubric: Contrast Sec 6 (birthright, HUF) with Sec 8 (individual, Class I); cite J. Rajesh v. M. Kumaran; analyze economic impact on land alienation; conclude on legal certainty.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: HSA: Hindu Succession Act | HUF: Hindu Undivided Family

⚡ 30-SECOND ACTIVE RECALL CHECKPOINT — GS PAPER 1

[COVER & RECALL • 10-SEC DRILL]

Q. What is the core distinction between property devolution under Section 6 and Section 8 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956? → Sec 6 governs ancestral coparcenary property with right by birth; Sec 8 governs self-acquired/partitioned intestate property devolving on Class I heirs as absolute personal property.

Q. Why is Chhath Mahaparva characterized as a unique non-sacerdotal festival? → Devotees directly worship the setting and rising sun without priestly mediation, using domestically woven bamboo baskets (soop) and natural produce.

GS PAPER 2: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS, ELECTORAL DUE PROCESS & GLOBAL HEALTH

GS2.1 • CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS, LEGISLATURE & WOMEN'S RIGHTS 🏛

*** MUST READ

Fast-Tracking 106th Amendment Act: Govt Weighs Special Session Route to Delink Women's Quota from Delimitation

Why in news: The Union Government is weighing a special session of Parliament or an urgent constitutional amendment to delink the implementation of the `106th Constitutional Amendment Act (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam)` from the protracted decennial Census and subsequent delimitation exercise.

Article 334A Lock

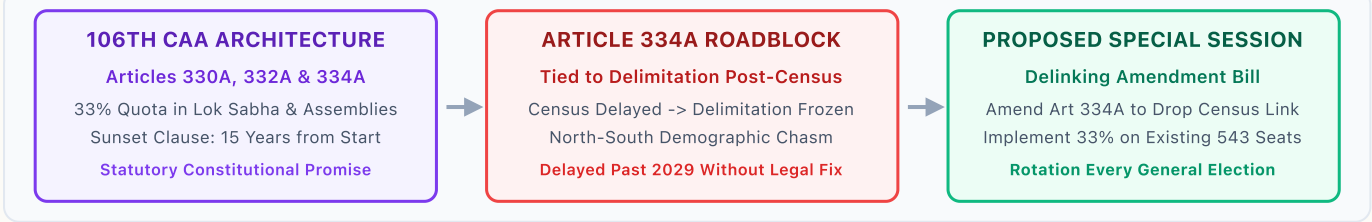
The 106th Amendment reserves 33% seats for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, but Article 334A ties its rollout to post-census delimitation, risking postponement beyond 2029.

KEY DETAILS • CONSTITUTIONAL MECHANICS & DELIMITATION NEXUS

- **Constitutional Precondition under Article 334A:** The 106th CAA 2023 conditions the 33% Lok Sabha and Assembly quota on conducting the first post-enactment Census and subsequent nationwide delimitation.
- **Proposed Special Session Delinking:** Government is weighing an urgent constitutional amendment bill to decouple the reservation from delimitation, enabling 33% quota rollout within existing 543 Lok Sabha seats.
- **Article 368 Amendment Threshold:** Because Article 334A affects State representation in Parliament, any amendment altering the operational timeline requires a special majority in Parliament plus ratification by 50% of State legislatures.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

106th Amendment Implementation: Delimitation Linkage vs Proposed Delinking Bill



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Distinguish clearly between seat quota (Articles 330A/332A) and commencement conditionality (Article 334A).

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: 106th Amendment Act 2023 • Article 334A Conditionality • Article 82 Delimitation Freeze • Substantive Representation • Rotational Seat Quota

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (Elections, Constitutional Amendments & Representation of Women).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) The 106th Constitutional Amendment Act represents a historic commitment to gender parity, yet Article 334A has inadvertently converted a fundamental democratic right into a delayed administrative contingency.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Overcoming Demographic Gridlock:** Delinking women's reservation from national delimitation insulates gender empowerment from contentious North-South population disputes.
- **Fulfilling Substantive Democracy:** India currently ranks 143rd globally in female legislative presence (~14.4% in 18th Lok Sabha); immediate rollout restores constitutional fidelity under Article 15(3).
- **Operational Feasibility:** Rotational reservation of existing single-member constituencies can be administered by the ECI without redrawing geographic boundary lines.

WAY FWD (~30w) Amending Article 334A will fulfill the constitutional promise of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam without waiting for a protracted post-2026 census.

⚠ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — INSTITUTIONAL SCOPE ERROR

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP:	WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL:	THE FACT CHECK:
Believing that the 106th Constitutional Amendment Act applies to the Rajya Sabha and State Legislative Councils.	Aspirants confuse parliamentary reservation with upper chamber representation.	The 106th Amendment reserves seats **strictly in directly elected lower houses** (Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, Delhi Assembly), NOT in the Rajya Sabha or Legislative Councils.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. With reference to the Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023, consider the following statements:
1. It provides for one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and all State Legislative Assemblies.
2. Article 334A stipulates that the reservation shall take effect only after delimitation based on the first census conducted after the Act's commencement.
3. The reservation is subject to a constitutional sunset clause of fifteen years unless extended by Parliament.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 2 and 3 are correct: Article 334A conditions rollout on post-census delimitation and specifies a 15-year sunset clause. Statement 1 is incorrect because the Act reserves seats in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, but NOT in the Rajya Sabha.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Check the bodies included: Rajya Sabha is an indirectly elected permanent chamber where quota provisions do not apply. Eliminate Statement 1!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2019 question on Delimitation Commission powers and composition.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS2 • 250 WORDS • 15 MARKS)

Examine the constitutional and political impasses surrounding Article 334A of the Constitution. Can women's reservation be operationalised independently of national delimitation without violating federal equity?

Evaluation rubric: Explain 106th CAA and Art 334A lock; analyze North-South delimitation concerns; evaluate options to implement quota on existing 543 seats; conclude on substantive political justice.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: CAA: Constitution Amendment Act | ECI: Election Commission of India

GS2.2 • ELECTORAL REFORMS, CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS & DUE PROCESS ★★ EXAM CORE

ECI's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) vs Summary Revision: Voter Roll Deletions, Form 6/7 Safeguards & Section 21 RPA 1950

Why in news: Former Election Commissioner **Ashok Lavasa** critiqued the **Election Commission of India's (ECI)** Special Intensive Revision (SIR) drive, cautioning that automated and summary voter roll deletions under 'Absent, Shifted, Dead' categories without strict due process risk disenfranchising vulnerable and migrant citizens.

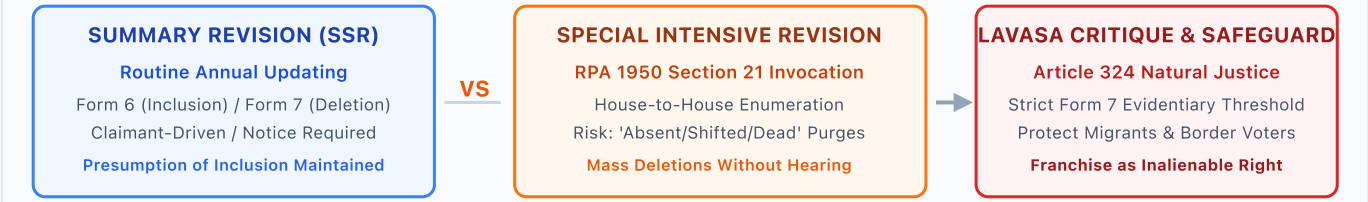
Section 21(3) RPA Empowers ECI to order intensive house-to-house enumeration, contrasting with annual Special Summary Revision (SSR) governed by Section 21(2) and strict Form 7 objection protocols.

KEY DETAILS • ELECTORAL ENUMERATION & PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

- **Intensive (SIR) vs Summary (SSR) Revision:** Under Section 21 of RPA 1950, SIR undertakes house-to-house physical enumeration to reconstitute rolls de novo, whereas SSR updates existing rolls via claims and objections.
- **Natural Justice & Deletion Safeguards:** Section 22 mandates reasonable opportunity of being heard before deleting any voter; mass automated unverified purge of migrant or slum dwellers violates Article 324 fair franchise tenets.
- **Administrative Proportionality:** ECI must balance roll purity against disenfranchisement risks, ensuring Form 7 deletion objections undergo strict field verification rather than summary bureaucratic strike-offs.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Electoral Roll Cleanse: Summary Revision (SSR) vs Special Intensive Revision (SIR) Safeguards



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Emphasize that administrative zeal for 'clean rolls' must never circumvent statutory notice and personal hearing mandates.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Section 21 RPA 1950 • Special Intensive Revision (SIR) • Form 7 Deletion Rules • Natural Justice (Sec 22) • Lal Babu Hussein Precedent

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (Elections, RPA 1950 & Role of Election Commission of India).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) The integrity of electoral democracy rests on the accuracy of voter rolls, yet the administrative method used to purge rolls determines whether universal adult suffrage under Article 326 is protected or compromised.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Procedural Safeguard Deficit:** Unilateral categorization of uncontacted electors under 'Shifted' or 'Absent' without verified postal notices undermines statutory due process.
- **Disproportionate Marginalized Impact:** Seasonal inter-state migrant workers and slum dwellers bear the burden of administrative clean-up drives due to residential transience.
- **Institutional Accountability:** Section 22 mandates individualized inquiry and hearing; administrative speed cannot supersede constitutional rights.

WAY FWD (~30w) ECI must institutionalise digital pre-deletion alerts, multi-tier physical summons, and mandatory publication of draft deletion lists at ward levels.

⚠️ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — PROCEDURAL MISCONCEPTION

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP:	WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL:	THE FACT CHECK:
Believing that an Electoral Registration Officer has untrammeled power to delete an elector's name during intensive revision without issuing notice or conducting an inquiry.	Aspirants assume intensive revisions suspend normal statutory notice requirements under RPA 1950.	Section 22 of RPA 1950 and Rule 21A **mandate an inquiry and reasonable opportunity of being heard** before any deletion can be lawfully executed.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. Under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and associated rules, consider the following statements:
1. A Special Intensive Revision (SIR) can be ordered by the Election Commission of India under Section 21(3) of the Act.
2. Any voter's name can be deleted on grounds of permanent relocation without serving individual notice if recommended by a Booth Level Officer.
3. Form 7 is specifically prescribed for lodging objections to the proposed inclusion or seeking deletion of an existing name in the roll.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 3 are correct: Section 21(3) authorizes SIR, and Form 7 is the statutory form for deletions and objections. Statement 2 is incorrect because Section 22 and Rule 21A strictly require an inquiry and notice to the elector before deletion.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Look at Statement 2: No democratic election system allows unilateral deletion without notice or hearing. Eliminating 2 gives (b) immediately!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2017 question on the Right to Vote and provisions of RPA 1950/1951.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS2 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Examine the delicate balance between ensuring clean electoral rolls and protecting universal adult franchise. How can the Election Commission of India reform its revision protocols to prevent inadvertent disenfranchisement of migrant populations?

Evaluation rubric: Differentiate SSR and SIR under RPA 1950; discuss Section 22 notice safeguards; analyze risks to migrant workers; propose technology and ward-level notification solutions.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: RPA: Representation of the People Act | ERO: Electoral Registration Officer | BLO: Booth Level Officer

GS2.4 • PUBLIC HEALTH, MULTILATERAL SURVEILLANCE & EPIDEMIOLOGY — ★★★ MUST READ

WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2026: India's Incidence Kept Under Review Pending District Sentinel Surveillance Integration

Why in news: In its flagship **Global Tuberculosis Report 2026**, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** kept India's national TB incidence estimates 'under review', awaiting reconciliation with empirical data from India's newly established 57-district sentinel surveillance network.

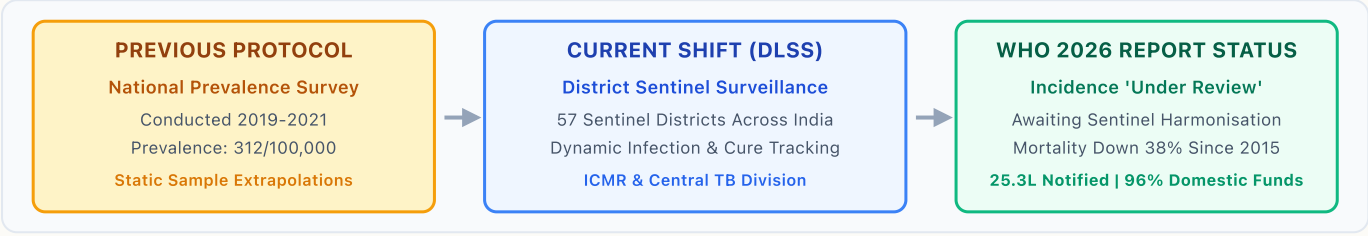
38% Mortality Drop India achieved a 38% reduction in TB mortality and a 16.5% decline in incidence since 2015, with an unprecedented 96% of the National TB Elimination Programme funded domestically.

KEY DETAILS • EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE & CLINICAL RESTRUCTURING

- **57-District Sentinel Surveillance Transition:** WHO placed India's incidence under formal review pending the 57-District Sentinel Surveillance Survey (DLSS), moving away from older 2019–21 sample projections.
- **Sustained Mortality & Incidence Drop:** Official NTEP metrics show India achieved a 16.5% decline in TB incidence and a 38% decline in TB mortality between 2015 and 2025, outperforming global averages.
- **Diagnostic Scale & 96% Domestic Funding:** Record 25.5 lakh case notifications in 2025 supported by 96% domestic NTEP funding, paired with rapid Bedaquiline rollouts and decentralized Ni-kshay molecular testing.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

TB Surveillance Evolution: Static Prevalence Survey to 57-District Dynamic Sentinel Network



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Highlight that incidence is under review for methodological harmonisation, not due to under-reporting or programmatic failure.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Global TB Report 2026 • District Sentinel Surveillance • Ni-kshay Ecosystem • BPaL/M Oral Regimen • 96% Domestic Funding

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (Public Health Governance, WHO & Multilateral Bodies).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) India's transition to district-level sentinel surveillance marks an epidemiological maturation from static sample projections to real-time public health disease tracking.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Granular Public Health Data:** 57 sentinel sites capture micro-regional transmission dynamics and sub-clinical cases, enabling targeted block-level interventions.
- **Fiscal Sovereignty:** 96% domestic NTEP funding insulates India's disease elimination programs from shifting international donor priorities.
- **Nutritional Support Interventions:** Direct Benefit Transfers under Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana address undernutrition as the primary underlying driver of tuberculosis morbidity.

WAY FWD (~30w) Scaling indigenous molecular diagnostics and expanding oral BPaL/M regimens will accelerate India's path toward End TB targets ahead of global benchmarks.

⚠️ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — METHODOLOGICAL MISCONCEPTION

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP:	WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL:	THE FACT CHECK:
Believing that WHO excluded India's TB incidence due to data falsification or a resurgence of multidrug-resistant outbreaks.	Aspirants misinterpret 'under review' as a punitive finding rather than a scheduled technical calibration.	The incidence estimate is under review purely to **harmonize mathematical models with India's new 57-district sentinel surveillance data**, with agreed numbers due in early 2027.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. Regarding tuberculosis epidemiology and the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) in India, consider the following statements:
1. The WHO Global TB Report 2026 reflects that over 90% of India's national TB programme budget is now met through domestic financial resources.
2. India has shifted from periodic national sample surveys to a dynamic district-level sentinel surveillance system to assess incidence.
3. The BPaL regimen for drug-resistant TB relies primarily on injectable aminoglycoside antibiotics rather than oral agents.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 2 are correct: India funds 96% of its TB budget domestically, and surveillance has shifted to 57 sentinel districts. Statement 3 is incorrect because BPaL/M is an all-oral, injection-free regimen that eliminates toxic daily injections.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Statement 3: The revolutionary milestone of Bedaquiline-Pretomanid (BPaL) is that it is entirely injection-free. Eliminating 3 leaves (a) instantly!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2019 question on Multi-Drug Resistant TB and Bedaquiline.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS2 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Evaluate the structural transformations in India's National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP). How does the transition from static modeling to district sentinel surveillance strengthen policy interventions towards ending TB?

Evaluation rubric: Discuss NTEP progress (mortality -38%, notification 25.3L); contrast static surveys with 57 sentinel districts; analyze nutritional and diagnostic interventions; conclude on End TB targets.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: **NTEP:** National TB Elimination Programme | **DLSS:** District-Level Sentinel Surveillance | **BPaL:** Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid

GS2.5 • INTERNAL SECURITY, COUNTER-ESPIONAGE & CYBER HYGIENE — ★★ EXAM CORE

IAF Officer Charged Under Official Secrets Act, 1923: Cyber Honey-Traps, Operational Airbase Leaks &

Counter-Intelligence Protocols

Why in news: A chargesheet filed in a Delhi court against a decorated **Indian Air Force Wing Commander** detailed how classified operational airbase layouts, combat aircraft movements, and forward deployment doctrines were compromised via social engineering and honey-traps by adversarial intelligence operatives.

OSA 1923 Charges

Accused booked under Sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923 (penalties for spying and wrongful communication), carrying up to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment.

KEY DETAILS • COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE BREACH & STATUTORY ENFORCEMENT

- **Statutory Net under OSA 1923:** Sections 3 (espionage/spying carrying up to 14 years) and 5 (wrongful communication of defense information) invoked against operational airbase data leakage.
- **Cognitive Social Engineering Threat:** Adversary intelligence assets utilized multi-month digital honey-traps over encrypted messaging, extracting sensitive operational coordinates through human compromise rather than network infiltration.
- **Defence Cyber Agency (DCyA) Mandate:** Highlights urgent need for tri-service DCyA counter-intelligence integration and zero-trust mobile security protocols to counter modern cognitive and digital hybrid warfare.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Vectors of Cognitive Infiltration vs Tri-Services Counter-Intelligence Net



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Contrast colonial-era OSA penal frameworks with modern cyber and cognitive warfare defense requirements.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Official Secrets Act 1923 • Sections 3 & 5 Penalties • Defence Cyber Agency • Cognitive Infiltration • Zero-Trust InfoSec Architecture

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (Security Governance) or GS3 (Cyber Security & Intelligence Reforms).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) The chargesheet under the Official Secrets Act, 1923 exposes how digital social engineering and asymmetric cyber espionage have emerged as frontline threats to national defense integrity.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Asymmetric Cyber Vulnerabilities:** Hostile operatives weaponise encrypted social platforms to bypass perimeter security, exploiting human cognitive vulnerabilities rather than network firewalls.
- **Zero-Trust Human Architecture:** Armed forces must transition from reactive policing to proactive behavioral screening, air-gapped device zones, and continuous OSINT monitoring.
- **Legislative Modernisation:** The century-old OSA 1923 must be replaced by a comprehensive National Security Information Act defining cloud exfiltration and digital espionage.

WAY FWD (~30w) Strengthening psychological resilience training and institutionalizing tri-service cyber hygiene protocols are imperative to defend India's strategic command and control networks.

⚠️ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — INSTITUTIONAL MISATTRIBUTION

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP: Assuming that cyber espionage involving armed forces personnel is investigated exclusively by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) under the IT Act, 2000.

WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL: Aspirants confuse intelligence-gathering agencies with statutory police investigation authorities.

THE FACT CHECK: The IB has **no statutory police powers to register FIRs or file chargesheets**; offenses are prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act, 1923 and Service Acts by specialized police units and military courts-martial.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. With reference to counter-espionage laws and security frameworks in India, consider the following statements:
1. Section 3 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923 prescribes severe penalties for obtaining or communicating classified sketches or plans useful to an enemy.
2. The Defence Cyber Agency (DCyA) is a tri-service agency functioning under the Ministry of Defence to handle cyber warfare threats.
3. Offenses under the Official Secrets Act can only be investigated by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) without police jurisdiction.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 2 are correct: Section 3 of OSA covers spying and DCyA is a tri-service agency under MoD. Statement 3 is incorrect because the Intelligence Bureau (IB) is an intelligence agency without statutory police powers to investigate or file chargesheets.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Look at Statement 3: The IB does not file chargesheets in court (special police units or NIA do). Eliminate 3 to get (a)!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2018 question on tri-service defense agencies (Defence Cyber Agency, Defence Space Agency).

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS2/GS3 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Analyze how cognitive social engineering and digital espionage are redefining internal security paradigms. What institutional and legal upgrades are necessary to modernize India's counter-intelligence apparatus?

Evaluation rubric: Define cognitive espionage/honey-traps; analyze limitations of OSA 1923; detail DCyA and zero-trust measures; propose legislative intelligence reforms.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: **OSA:** Official Secrets Act | **DCyA:** Defence Cyber Agency | **OSINT:** Open Source Intelligence

GS2.6 • INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, INDO-PACIFIC & MARITIME ORDER ★★ EXAM CORE

Quad Sideline Summit in Manila: Institutionalising Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Amid Delayed Leaders' Host Cycles

Why in news: Leaders of the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (India, US, Japan, Australia)** gathered for an extraordinary sideline summit in Manila during the ASEAN-India and East Asia summits, reaffirming ASEAN centrality while institutionalising Indo-Pacific maritime domain security.

IPMDA Expansion

Quad reviews real-time satellite tracking of dark vessels across the Indo-Pacific, linking regional fusion hubs including India's IFC-IOR at Gurugram with ASEAN littoral surveillance.

KEY DETAILS • DIPLOMATIC CONVERGENCE & MARITIME DELIVERABLES

- **Strategic Symbolism of Manila Venue:** Meeting on ASEAN margins underscores Quad's commitment to ASEAN centrality, maritime deterrence, and rules-based order under UNCLOS 1982 in the South China Sea.
- **Operationalising IPMDA Dark-Vessel Tracking:** Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness integrates satellite tracking to monitor illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and dual-use maritime militia.
- **Quad-at-Sea & Subsea Cable Resilience:** Launches first 'Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission' among coast guards, alongside the Quad Infrastructure Fellowship safeguarding undersea telecommunication cable networks.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Quad Indo-Pacific Strategic Diamond & Synergies with ASEAN Centrality



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Emphasize that Quad is a plurilateral partnership delivering public goods (IPMDA, cables), not an exclusive military alliance.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Quad Manila Summit • IPMDA Dark Vessels • IFC-IOR Gurugram • Undersea Cable Resilience • UNCLOS 1982 Order

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (Bilateral & Regional Groupings / Indo-Pacific Geopolitics).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) The Quad's sideline summit in Manila demonstrates the grouping's evolution from a consultative diplomatic dialogue into an institutionalized provider of maritime public goods.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Non-Military Strategic Deterrence:** Tracking dark shipping via IPMDA and conducting joint coast guard patrols builds transparent deterrence against grey-zone aggression without formal alliance treaties.
- **Anchoring ASEAN Centrality:** Meeting on the margins of ASEAN summits reassures Southeast Asian states that Quad initiatives complement rather than supplant regional multilateralism.
- **Critical Infrastructure Defense:** Undersea cable investments protect the physical data backbones supporting digital trade and communications across the Indo-Pacific.

WAY FWD (~30w) Sustaining practical cooperation in HADR, green shipping, and maritime domain awareness cements the Quad as an indispensable pillar of a rules-based Indo-Pacific order.

⚠️ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — ALLIANCE MISCONCEPTION

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP:	WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL:	THE FACT CHECK:
Assuming that the Quad has established a formal military command with mutual defense obligations under Article 51 of the UN Charter.	Aspirants confuse joint exercises like Malabar with a formal treaty-based mutual defense alliance like NATO.	The Quad is a **plurilateral diplomatic partnership** focused on maritime domain awareness, critical infrastructure, and public goods; it has no mutual defense treaty or permanent military command.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • □ SOLVED □ REVISE

Q. With reference to the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and its initiatives, consider the following statements:
1. The Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) provides real-time satellite data to track vessels that turn off their automatic identification transponders.
2. Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), located in New Delhi, functions as the sole operational headquarters of the Quad.
3. The Quad has formulated an undersea cable connectivity initiative to enhance digital infrastructure security across the Indo-Pacific.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 3 are correct: IPMDA tracks dark shipping and the Quad Cable Initiative builds subsea data resilience. Statement 2 is incorrect because IFC-IOR is located in Gurugram (not New Delhi) and is an Indian Navy fusion centre, not the 'sole headquarters' of the Quad (the Quad has no permanent headquarters).

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Look at Statement 2: The Quad famously has NO permanent headquarters or secretariat. Eliminating 2 leaves (b) instantly!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2020 question on the Quad and Malabar naval exercise.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS2 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Discuss how the Quad's functional focus on maritime domain awareness, critical infrastructure, and public goods enhances stability in the Indo-Pacific while respecting ASEAN centrality.

Evaluation rubric: Explain Manila dialogue context; analyze IPMDA and dark vessel tracking; discuss subsea cable security; evaluate synergies with ASEAN centrality; conclude on open Indo-Pacific.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: **IPMDA:** Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness | **IFC-IOR:** Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region | **UNCLOS:** UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

⚡ 30-SECOND ACTIVE RECALL CHECKPOINT — GS PAPER 2

[COVER & RECALL • 10-SEC DRILL]

Q. Why does Article 334A currently act as a hurdle to the immediate rollout of the 106th Amendment Act? → It mandates that the 33% women's quota takes effect only after delimitation based on the first census taken after the Act's commencement.

Q. What due process safeguard under Section 22 of RPA 1950 is emphasized by former EC Ashok Lavasa? → No elector's name can be struck off the roll during summary or intensive revision without issuing individual notice and providing a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

Q. What surveillance transition prompted WHO to place India's TB incidence under review in the 2026 Report? → The transition from static sample surveys (2019-21) to 57-district sentinel surveillance (DLSS), with reconciled figures slated for release in early 2027.

GS PAPER 3: INDUSTRIAL POLICY, ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE, INFLATION & INSOLVENCY

GS3.1 • INDUSTRIAL POLICY, MANUFACTURING & EXPORTS 🏭

*** MUST READ

NITI Aayog Comprehensive Review of 14 PLI Schemes: 18.5% Disbursal Rate, Sectoral Skew & Extending Sunset Clauses

Why in news: NITI Aayog's comprehensive impact assessment of the 14 Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes revealed that cumulative incentive disbursals reached only 18.51% (₹35,354 crore of the ₹1.91 lakh crore outlay), prompting urgent recommendations to extend sunset dates and add demand-pull support.

₹35,354 Cr Disbursed

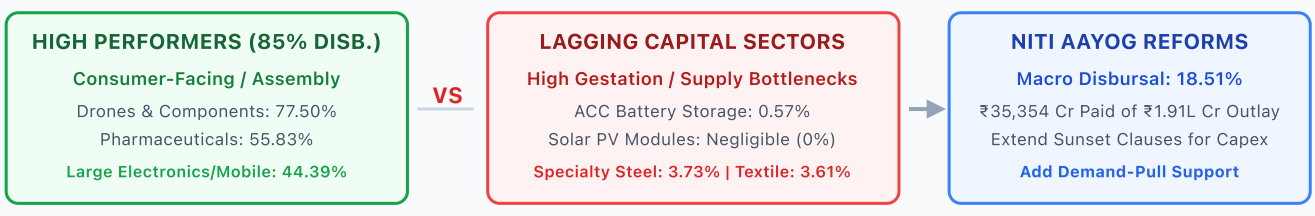
Cumulative incentive payout represents 18.51% of outlay, yet schemes attracted ₹2.40 lakh crore capex (76% of tenure target) and generated ₹22.66 lakh crore in production.

KEY DETAILS • EVALUATION METRICS & SECTORAL DYNAMICS

- **18.51% Disbursal vs Capex Reality:** NITI Aayog review shows ₹35,354 crore disbursed out of ₹1.91 lakh crore total outlay (18.51%), despite private capex commitments reaching ₹2.40 lakh crore and output ₹22.66 lakh crore.
- **Extreme Sectoral Asymmetry:** Electronics, pharmaceuticals, and drones account for over 80% of total incentive claims, whereas heavy capital-intensive sectors like ACC batteries and solar PV lag gestation targets.
- **Strategic Roadmap for PLI 2.0:** NITI Aayog recommends extending sunset clauses by 2–3 years, recalibrating value-addition criteria, and transitioning from pure output subsidies to R&D and supply-chain localization.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

14 PLI Sectors Performance Spectrum: Disbursal Percentage vs Gestation Bottlenecks



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Contrast final assembly success in mobile phones with upstream raw material bottlenecks in ACC batteries and solar PV.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: PLI Impact Assessment • 18.51% Disbursal Cap • Capex vs Disbursal Gap • ACC Batteries & Solar Lag • Demand-Pull Incentives

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (Industrial Policy, Manufacturing & Employment).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) NITI Aayog's review of the 14 PLI schemes highlights the dichotomy between rapid mobile phone assembly exports and sluggish capacity addition in high-gestation green technology sectors.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **The Value-Addition Deficit:** While mobile manufacturing achieved high disbursals, domestic value addition remains modest (~18-22%) due to heavy dependence on imported sub-assemblies.
- **Upstream Gestation Delays:** Capital-intensive sectors like ACC batteries faced delayed machinery imports, environmental clearances, and protracted grid testing.
- **SME Supply Chain Exclusion:** High minimum capex thresholds excluded Tier-2 MSME component suppliers, preventing the formation of dense industrial clusters.

WAY FWD (~30w) Reforming PLI into an outcome-oriented framework with tiered local value addition incentives and demand guarantees will solidify India's position in global value chains.

⚠ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — MECHANISM CONFUSION

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP:	WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL:	THE FACT CHECK:
Assuming that PLI incentives are disbursed as upfront capital grants upon factory construction before any commercial sales occur.	Aspirants confuse capital investment subsidies with performance-linked sales incentives.	PLI operates on an **ex-post reimbursement model**; incentives are released strictly on verified incremental sales over a base year, never as upfront capex grants.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. With reference to the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes in India, consider the following statements:
1. Incentives are paid out as upfront capital subsidies before production commences to reduce initial gestation costs.
2. According to NITI Aayog assessments, sectors like Large-Scale Electronics and Pharmaceuticals have achieved higher disbursal rates than Advanced Chemistry Cells.
3. The scheme incorporates incremental sales over a designated base year as the core qualifying criterion.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 2 and 3 are correct: Electronics and Pharma lead payouts while ACC batteries lag (0.57%), and qualifying relies on incremental sales over base years. Statement 1 is incorrect because PLI disburses incentives after verified sales, not as upfront capex grants.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Notice Statement 1: 'Production Linked' by definition means payments depend on production and sales, not upfront grants. Eliminate 1!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2021 question on sectors covered under the PLI scheme.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS3 • 250 WORDS • 15 MARKS)

While the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme has transformed India's electronics export profile, its performance in deep-tech and capital-intensive sectors remains sluggish. Critically analyze the bottlenecks in PLI implementation and suggest policy refinements.

Evaluation rubric: Highlight NITI Aayog findings (18.51% disbursal, ₹2.4L Cr capex); contrast mobile assembly with ACC batteries/solar PV; discuss SME exclusion; suggest PLI 2.0 reforms.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: PLI: Production Linked Incentive | ACC: Advanced Chemistry Cell | PMA: Project Management Agency

GS3.2 • ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE, WILDLIFE LAW & ESZ COMPLIANCE ⚡ ★★★ MUST READ

Adani Tarali 1,500 MW Pumped Storage Project: Centre Orders MoEFCC Probe into 99% Cost Deflation and Wildlife Fund Evasion

Why in news: The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** ordered a priority inquiry into Adani Green Energy Limited's 1,500 MW Tarali Pumped Storage Project in Maharashtra after the company revised its paper project cost downward by 99% (from ₹5,675 crore to ₹56.75 crore), slashing its mandatory wildlife conservation deposit from ₹227 crore to ₹2.27 crore.

₹227 Cr to ₹2.27 Cr Paper cost deflation from ₹5,675 Cr to ₹56.75 Cr slashed the 4% National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) conservation deposit for Sahyadri Tiger Reserve by 99%.

KEY DETAILS • STATUTORY CLEARANCES & ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION

- **Ecological Proximity & 10-km ESZ Buffer:** The 1,500 MW project at Tarali reservoir, Satara, sits within the 10-km Eco-Sensitive Zone of Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary (Sahyadri Tiger Reserve buffer), triggering strict NBWL scrutiny.
- **99% Cost Deflation & Tiger Fund Evasion:** MoEFCC ordered an inquiry after project cost was revised downward from ₹5,675 crore to ₹56.75 crore, slashing the mandatory 4% NBWL tiger conservation levy from ₹227 crore to ₹2.27 crore.
- **Statutory Integrity under WPA 1972 & EPA 1986:** Probes whether capital expenditure can be artificially partitioned into 'civil works' to evade statutory conservation deposits, setting critical precedent for renewable storage infrastructure.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Adani Tarali PSP: Environmental Clearance Timeline vs 99% Cost Deflation Contention



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Use this case to demonstrate how developers attempt to minimize compensatory conservation levies in Eco-Sensitive Zones.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Tarali Pumped Storage • Sahyadri Tiger Reserve • NBWL 4% Conservation Fund • WPA 1972 Section 38V • Eco-Sensitive Zone Norms

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (Environmental Impact Assessment, Renewable Energy & Wildlife Protection).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) The controversy over the 99% cost deflation in the Tarali Pumped Storage Project exposes a critical regulatory loophole in how environmental mitigation levies are computed and audited in mega infrastructure projects.

CORE BODY (~80w)

- **Circumventing Conservation Funds:** NBWL conservation levies finance tiger corridor anti-poaching and habitat restoration; arbitrarily depressing reported project cost deprives protected areas of vital statutory funds.
- **Landscape-Level Ecological Disruption:** Pumped storage involves massive blasting, penstocks, and altered reservoir hydrology, affecting tiger dispersal corridors regardless of land ownership status.
- **Regulatory Harmonisation Need:** Environmental Clearance (EC) capex estimates must be legally binding across all subsidiary state-level forest and wildlife clearances.

WAY FWD (~30w) Integrating independent regulatory cost audits into MoEFCC appraisal protocols is essential to prevent corporate under-reporting of compensatory ecological obligations.

⚠️ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — STATUTORY SCOPE ERROR

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP: Believing that compensatory wildlife conservation levies apply only if a project directly clears notified reserve forest land.

WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL: Aspirants confuse forest diversion Net Present Value (NPV) with NBWL Eco-Sensitive Zone clearance conditions.

THE FACT CHECK: NBWL clearance and compensatory mitigation levies apply to **all major development activities within designated Protected Areas and their surrounding 10 km Eco-Sensitive Zones**, irrespective of land title.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. Regarding the regulatory framework governing development projects within Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ) and tiger corridors in India, consider the following statements:
1. National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) clearance is statutorily required for projects falling within 10 km of National Parks and Sanctuaries in the absence of a notified ESZ.
2. Compensatory deposits mandated for wildlife conservation are calculated exclusively on the value of forest land diverted, excluding civil infrastructure costs.
3. The Sahyadri Tiger Reserve is located along the Western Ghats in the state of Maharashtra.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 3 are correct: NBWL clearance applies within default 10 km zones and Sahyadri TR is in Maharashtra. Statement 2 is incorrect because NBWL conservation levies (such as the 4% fund) are calculated on total project cost to mitigate broader landscape-level impacts.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Statement 2: If levies excluded infrastructure costs, capital-intensive mega projects would pay negligible amounts. Eliminate 2 to get (b)!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2018 question on Eco-Sensitive Zones and WPA 1972.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS3 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Mega renewable energy projects, including pumped hydro storage, are critical for grid balancing but frequently collide with fragile Western Ghats ecology. Critically analyze the statutory safeguards governing wildlife clearances in Eco-Sensitive Zones.

Evaluation rubric: Explain pumped hydro role in green transition; analyze Western Ghats / Sahyadri TR proximity; discuss NBWL 4% levy and ESZ rules; evaluate regulatory auditing gaps.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: **PSP:** Pumped Storage Project | **NBWL:** National Board for Wildlife | **ESZ:** Eco-Sensitive Zone

GS3.3 • MACROECONOMICS, INFLATION TARGETING & MONETARY POLICY 📈 — ★★★ MUST READ

October 2026 CPI Surges to 6.09% (Food at 8.94%): Vegetable Price Shock, Base Effects & RBI Monetary Stance

Why in news: Retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to 6.09% in October 2026, breaching the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance ceiling of 6% for the first time in two years, driven by a 42.18% spike in vegetable prices and an adverse statistical base effect.

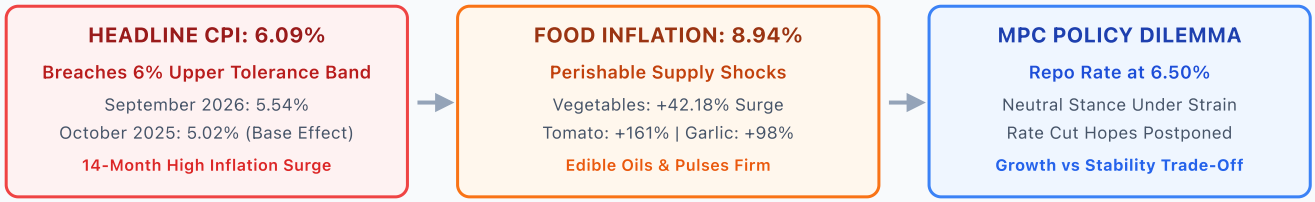
6.09% Headline CPI Breaches the 4% (+/- 2%) target band, driven by food inflation accelerating to 8.94% (led by Tomato +161% and Garlic +98%), cementing expectations of an RBI rate pause at 6.50%.

KEY DETAILS • MACROECONOMIC METRICS & MONETARY CORRIDOR

- **Inflation Breach & Perishable Food Spike:** Headline CPI surged to 6.09% (14-month high), breaching RBI's 4±2% upper tolerance ceiling, driven by Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) at 8.94% and vegetables at 42.18% (Tomato +161%).
- **Unfavourable Base Effect Mechanics:** A low index base in October 2025 mathematically amplified headline inflation despite sequential price moderation in pulses and edible oils.
- **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) Impasse:** Stagflationary headline pressures eliminate near-term rate cut expectations, forcing the MPC to hold the benchmark repo rate steady at 6.50% in December.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

October 2026 Inflation Dynamics: Headline CPI, CFPI Food Surge & MPC Policy Dilemma



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Differentiate between Core Inflation (subdued at ~3.7%) and Headline Inflation (elevated at 6.09%), explaining why monetary tools struggle against perishable food shocks.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Headline CPI: 6.09% • CFPI Food Inflation: 8.94% • Vegetable Shock (+42.18%) • Adverse Base Effect • Repo Rate Pause (6.50%)

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (Indian Economy, Monetary Policy & Price Stability).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) The breach of the 6% inflation ceiling in October 2026 exposes the vulnerability of India's flexible inflation targeting framework to recurring climate-induced food supply shocks.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Monetary Policy Trilemma:** While headline inflation is elevated at 6.09%, core inflation remains low at ~3.7%, proving that price pressures stem from perishable supply bottlenecks rather than excessive demand.
- **Risks of Premature Easing:** Cutting repo rates prematurely risks de-anchoring household inflationary expectations and triggering second-round wage-price spirals in services.
- **Fiscal Supply-Side Imperative:** Monetary policy alone cannot cool vegetable prices; active market interventions via buffer stock releases and cold storage are essential.

WAY FWD (~30w) Enhancing climate-resilient agriculture and strengthening farm-to-fork cold chains are vital to insulate India's inflation targeting framework from food price volatility.

⚠️ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — TARGETING CONFUSION

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP:	WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL:	THE FACT CHECK:
Believing that the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee targets Core Inflation when determining repo rate decisions.	Aspirants confuse international central banking practice with India's statutory mandate under Section 45ZA of the RBI Act.	Under Section 45ZA, the legal target is **Headline CPI-Combined (4% +/- 2%)**, which explicitly includes food and fuel, not Core Inflation.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. With reference to inflation measurement and monetary policy in India, consider the following statements:
1. The statutory inflation target assigned to the RBI under the Flexible Inflation Targeting framework is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI-Combined).
2. Food and beverages carry a weight of over 45% in the all-India CPI-Combined index.
3. An unfavourable base effect occurs when a high inflation rate in the corresponding month of the previous year pulls down current headline inflation.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 1 and 3 only | (c) 2 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 2 are correct: CPI-Combined is the statutory target and Food & Beverages carries ~45.86% weight. Statement 3 is incorrect because an unfavourable base effect refers to a LOW index in the previous year mathematically raising the current growth rate.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Check Statement 3: An 'unfavourable' base effect pushes inflation UP, not down. Eliminating 3 gives (a) immediately!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2020 question on WPI vs CPI weights and inflation targeting.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS3 • 250 WORDS • 15 MARKS)

Analyze why food inflation in India repeatedly breaches the RBI's flexible inflation targeting band. What structural supply-side reforms are essential to insulate monetary policy from recurring vegetable and perishable price shocks?

Evaluation rubric: Explain CPI headline vs CFPI food dynamics; discuss base effect and perishable supply shocks; evaluate MPC rate dilemma; recommend cold chain, TOP scheme, and market reforms.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: CPI: Consumer Price Index | CFPI: Consumer Food Price Index | MPC: Monetary Policy Committee

GS3.4 • ENERGY GEOPOLITICS, CRUDE OIL & EXTERNAL TRADE 🛢️ — ★★ EXAM CORE

India Surpasses China as Top Buyer of Russian Seaborne Crude ($6.4 Bn in Oct): Middle East Risk Premium

& Refining Dynamics

Why in news: Data from the **Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA)** revealed that India emerged as the world's largest buyer of Russian fossil fuels in October 2026, importing **$6.4 billion (€5.9 billion)** of seaborne crude as Strait of Hormuz tensions widened discounts on Russian Urals.

38% Russian Share

India accounted for 38% of Russia's total seaborne crude exports in October 2026, surpassing China as Urals discounts widened to $12–$14/barrel below Brent.

KEY DETAILS • SEABORNE CRUDE FLOWS & REFINING STRATEGY

- **Top Importer Status ($6.4B in Oct):** Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) data shows India overtook China with 38% market share ($6.4 billion in October), driven by attractive Urals crude discounts of $12–$14/bbl.
- **Refinery Concentration at Vadinar & Jamnagar:** Private and public refiners maximized processing of discounted Russian barrels, re-exporting refined diesel and aviation fuels to European markets compliant with G7 price caps.
- **Geopolitical Hedging & Hormuz Risks:** Escalating West Asia tensions and Strait of Hormuz tanker disruptions reinforced India's strategic diversification toward non-Middle Eastern maritime supply lanes.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Seaborne Crude Geopolitics: Strait of Hormuz Risk vs Russian Urals Route to Gujarat Refineries



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Highlight how India balances strategic autonomy by securing discounted energy while avoiding secondary sanctions compliance violations.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Russian Urals Discount ($12-14) • CREA October 2026 Report • Vadinar & Jamnagar Hubs • Strait of Hormuz Chokepoint • Current Account Deficit

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (Energy Security & Trade) or GS2 (India-Russia / India-West Asia Relations).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) India's emergence as the top buyer of Russian seaborne crude exemplifies hard-nosed strategic autonomy, balancing domestic price stability against escalating Persian Gulf geopolitical risks.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Energy Cost Cushion:** The $12-$14 Urals discount insulates domestic retail petrol and diesel prices from Middle East geopolitical spikes while containing India's oil import bill.
- **Strategic Arbitrage in Refining:** Indian coastal refineries convert discounted heavy Urals into high-value clean transport fuels, meeting international demand without secondary sanctions breaches.
- **Chokepoint Diversification:** Sourcing crude via Arctic and Baltic maritime corridors reduces acute vulnerability to Strait of Hormuz naval drone and mine threats.

WAY FWD (~30w) India must leverage this transitional window to expand Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR Phase II) and accelerate domestic renewable energy integration.

⚠️ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — SETTLEMENT MECHANISM ERROR

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP: Assuming that all Indian imports of Russian crude are settled entirely in Indian Rupees through the RBI's Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVA).

WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL: Aspirants overlook the bilateral trade imbalance which limits the accumulation of non-convertible rupees by Russian exporters.

THE FACT CHECK: While SRVA exists, a substantial portion of payments continues to be settled in **convertible third currencies like UAE Dirhams and Chinese Yuan** due to severe bilateral trade deficits.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. Consider the following statements regarding India's crude oil import profile and international maritime chokepoints:
1. The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
2. In late 2026, India surpassed China to become the largest importer of Russian seaborne crude oil.
3. Crude oil and petroleum products constitute the single largest item in India's total merchandise import bill.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: All statements are correct: The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman; India surpassed China in October 2026 ($6.4B Russian crude); and petroleum is the largest component of India's import bill.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Check Statement 1: Hormuz connects Persian Gulf to Gulf of Oman (vital oil transit). Statements 2 and 3 are standard facts. Select (d)!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2022 question on international strategic chokepoints and maritime routes.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS3 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Examine how the geopolitical instability in the Strait of Hormuz and Western sanctions on Russia have restructured India's energy diplomacy and refining economics.

Evaluation rubric: Analyze Strait of Hormuz risks; detail Russia-India crude trade growth ($6.4B in Oct 2026); evaluate economic benefits for domestic refiners; discuss long-term diversification.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: CREA: Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air | CAD: Current Account Deficit | SPR: Strategic Petroleum Reserve

GS3.5 • CLIMATE CHANGE, EMISSIONS & COP31 GLOBAL CARBON BUDGET 🌍 *** MUST READ

Global Carbon Budget 2026: World Emissions Dip (-0.4%) While India's Rise (+4.4%) Driven by Thermal Power & Industrial Expansion

Why in news: The **Global Carbon Budget 2026** report presented by the **Global Carbon Project (GCP)** at **COP31 in Antalya** revealed that while global fossil CO2 emissions are projected to dip by 0.4%, India's emissions will rise by 4.4% in 2026, driven by post-monsoon thermal electricity demand and rapid industrialization.

41.6 Gt CO2 Total

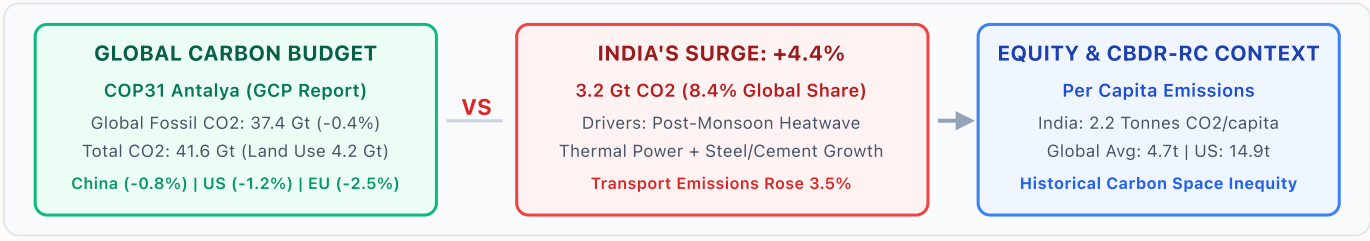
Total global emissions stand at 41.6 Gt CO2; India's fossil emissions rose 4.4% to 3.2 Gt CO2 (8.4% share), while per capita emissions remain low at 2.2 tonnes vs US 14.9 tonnes.

KEY DETAILS • EMISSION BUDGETS & CLIMATE EQUITY

- **Global vs India Emissions Divergence:** Global fossil CO_2 emissions contracted by -0.4% to 37.4 Gt, while India's emissions expanded by +4.4% to 3.2 Gt, propelled by rapid industrialization, steel/cement output, and thermal power.
- **Depleting 1.5°C Budget & Per Capita Inequity:** Remaining global 1.5°C carbon budget stands at ~150 Gt (<4 years); India's per capita emissions remain low at 2.2 tCO_2/yr, compared to 14.9 tCO_2/yr for the US and 6.1 tCO_2/yr for the EU.
- **Grid Storage & Finance Bottlenecks:** India's rapid renewable capacity additions face ~50 GW grid congestion, underscoring demands at COP31 for non-debt climate finance and affordable battery storage transfer.

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Global Carbon Budget 2026: Aggregate Emissions Trajectory vs Per Capita Inequity



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Always contrast India's rising aggregate emissions with its minimal per capita carbon footprint (2.2t vs 14.9t US) when discussing CBDR-RC.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Global Carbon Budget 2026 • COP31 Antalya (GCP) • India's +4.4% Fossil Surge • Per Capita Gap (2.2t vs 14.9t) • Common But Differentiated Responsibilities

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (Climate Change, Energy Transition & International Climate Treaties).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) India's projected 4.4% rise in emissions within a contracting global carbon budget highlights the tension between domestic poverty alleviation imperatives and global decarbonisation mandates.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Industrialisation Stage Realities:** As a developing economy building national infrastructure, India's demand for steel, cement, and thermal electricity is structurally expanding, unlike post-industrial economies.
- **The Ethical Per Capita Benchmark:** Framing climate obligations purely on absolute national totals ignores historical carbon space absorption; India's per capita footprint (2.2t) reflects sustainable consumption.
- **Storage as the Decarbonisation Linchpin:** Accelerating renewable additions without grid-scale storage simply leads to curtailment; expanding pumped storage and BESS is critical to displace coal baseload.

WAY FWD (~30w) At COP31, India must champion equitable access to clean technology transfer and concessional climate finance under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG).

⚠️ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — METRIC CONFUSION

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP: Assuming that India has surpassed developed nations like the United States in per capita carbon dioxide emissions due to its massive coal-fired power sector.

WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL: Aspirants confuse total absolute national emissions with per capita emissions.

THE FACT CHECK: India's **per capita emissions (2.2 tonnes) remain among the lowest in the G20**, far below the US (14.9 tonnes), EU (6.2 tonnes), and the global average (4.7 tonnes).

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. According to the Global Carbon Budget 2026 report, consider the following statements:
1. Global fossil carbon dioxide emissions experienced a marginal decrease of 0.4% in 2026.
2. India's per capita carbon emissions currently exceed the global average.
3. The remaining global carbon budget to limit warming to 1.5°C is being depleted at an estimated annual rate of over 40 Gt CO2.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 3 are correct: Global fossil emissions dropped 0.4% and total annual emissions are ~41.6 Gt CO2. Statement 2 is incorrect because India's per capita emissions (2.2 tonnes) are less than half the global average (4.7 tonnes).

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Statement 2: India's per capita emissions are famous for being far below world average. Eliminating 2 gives (b) immediately!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2019 question on the Global Carbon Project and carbon budgets.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS3 • 250 WORDS • 15 MARKS)

Explain why India's greenhouse gas emissions are projected to rise even as developed economies witness a plateau. How should India articulate its developmental imperatives at COP31 within the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR-RC)?

Evaluation rubric: Present GCP 2026 data (India +4.4%, world -0.4%); explain drivers (heatwaves, thermal power, steel/cement); contrast per capita footprints (2.2t vs 14.9t); propose COP31 diplomatic strategy.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: GCP: Global Carbon Project | BESS: Battery Energy Storage System | NCQG: New Collective Quantified Goal

GS3.6 • ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE, RIVERINE ECOLOGY & MINING LAWS ⛏️

★★ EXAM CORE

Central Empowered Committee (CEC) River Sand Mining Framework: SC Tightens Reins on Illegal Quarrying & Mandates 5-Year Replenishment Studies

Why in news: In response to rampant illegal sand mining across ecologically sensitive river systems like the Chambal and Son, the Supreme Court reinforced the Central Empowered Committee's (CEC) 2022 framework, prohibiting in-stream excavation and mandating scientific 5-year river replenishment audits.

5-Year Replenishment

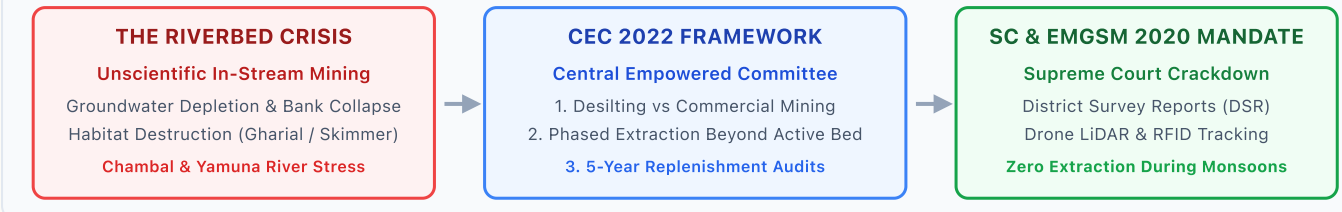
Mandated by the Supreme Court under EMGSM 2020: no sand mining lease can be auctioned without verified District Survey Reports proving rate of annual sediment replenishment.

KEY DETAILS • REGULATORY ARCHITECTURE & RIVERINE CONSERVATION

- **Judicial Enforcement of CEC 2022 Guidelines:** Supreme Court reinforced CEC framework to halt rampant illegal riverbed quarrying across UP, MP, and Rajasthan, protecting critically endangered Gharial and Gangetic Dolphin habitats.
- **Desilting vs Commercial Mining Evasion:** Mandates strict legal demarcation between reservoir desilting (clearing silt for storage) and commercial sand mining, preventing contractors from bypassing environmental clearances.
- **Mandatory 5-Year Replenishment Audits & LiDAR:** Prohibits instream mining during monsoon seasons and enforces 5-year District Survey Reports (DSR) using drone LiDAR and barcoded electronic transit passes (e-TP).

✏️ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Sustainable Sand Mining Framework: CEC Protocols, Replenishment Audits & In-Stream Buffers



✏️ **Examiner Note:** Highlight the difference between river desilting and commercial sand mining, emphasizing the Precautionary Principle.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: CEC 2022 Sand Framework • EMGSM 2020 Guidelines • 5-Year Replenishment Audits • Desilting vs Mining Distinction • National Chambal Sanctuary

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (Environmental Law, Conservation & Resource Management).

📝 MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) The Supreme Court's reinforcement of the CEC sand mining framework highlights the pressing need to reconcile infrastructure aggregate demand with riverine ecological survival.

CORE BODY (~80w)
- **Flurial Morphology Degradation:** Unchecked in-stream sand dredging lowers riverbeds, accelerates bank erosion, triggers bridge scour, and destroys aquatic fauna habitats.
- **Enforcement Deficits at District Level:** Preparation of District Survey Reports is often compromised by local contractor-politician nexuses, producing inflated replenishment estimates.
- **Sustainable Manufactured Alternatives:** Promoting Manufactured Sand (M-Sand) from hard rock quarrying and processing Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste can replace river sand extraction.

WAY FWD (~30w) Integrating satellite remote sensing with automated weighbridge monitoring and scaling up M-Sand subsidies will safeguard India's river ecosystems.

⚠ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR — NODAL MINISTRY ERROR

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP:	WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL:	THE FACT CHECK:
Believing that river sand mining environmental monitoring guidelines are formulated by the Ministry of Mines under the MMDR Act, 1957.	Aspirants confuse minor mineral licensing under state rules with environmental clearance guidelines under the EPA 1986.	While sand is a minor mineral administered by states under Section 15 of MMDR Act, the **environmental guidelines (EMGSM 2020) are formulated by the MoEFCC** under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ — UPSC PRELIMS • MODERATE • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. With reference to river sand mining regulation in India, consider the following statements:
1. The Enforcement & Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining (EMGSM 2020) were notified by the Union Ministry of Mines.
2. A District Survey Report (DSR) based on scientific sediment replenishment studies is mandatory before auctioning sand mining leases.
3. In-stream river sand mining during the monsoon season is legally permitted to facilitate flood channel desilting.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 only | (c) 2 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 2 only

Explanation: Statement 2 is correct: DSR based on replenishment studies is mandatory. Statement 1 is incorrect because EMGSM 2020 was issued by MoEFCC (not Ministry of Mines). Statement 3 is incorrect because all in-stream sand mining is strictly banned during monsoons to protect ecology and flood safety.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Statement 3: Monsoon mining is banned across all states for river ecology and safety. Eliminating 3 narrows options down to (a) or (b); checking MoEFCC authority gives (b)!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2019 question on sand as a minor mineral under MMDR Act.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS3 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Examine the ecological ramifications of unscientific riverbed sand mining in India. How can the institutionalisation of replenishment audits and the promotion of Manufactured Sand (M-Sand) curb the sand mafia while meeting urbanization demands?

Evaluation rubric: Detail ecological impacts (riverbed incision, Chambal gharials); explain CEC 2022 framework and DSR replenishment audits; discuss M-Sand alternatives; conclude with surveillance.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: CEC: Central Empowered Committee | EMGSM: Enforcement & Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining | DSR: District Survey Report

GS3.7 • CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, INSOLVENCY & BANKING REFORMS 🏦 — ★★ EXAM CORE

NCLT Declares Venugopal Dhoot Bankrupt Under Part III of IBC: Enforcing Personal Guarantor Liability for ₹12,668 Cr Debt

Why in news: In a landmark insolvency ruling, the Mumbai bench of the **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** declared Videocon Group promoter **Venugopal Dhoot** bankrupt under `Section 123 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016`, following the failure of his personal insolvency resolution process regarding `₹12,668.06 crore` in personal guarantees owed to the State Bank of India (SBI).

₹12,668 Cr Default NCLT Mumbai admits bankruptcy petition under Section 123 IBC, appointing Asish Narayan as Bankruptcy Trustee and barring the promoter from corporate directorships.

KEY DETAILS • PERSONAL GUARANTOR BANKRUPTCY & ASSET VESTING

- **Personal Guarantor Bankruptcy under Part III:** NCLT Mumbai Bench operationalised Sections 94–123 of IBC, adjudicating promoter Venugopal Dhoot bankrupt following default on a ₹12,668.06 crore corporate guarantee to SBI.
- **Rejection of Speculative ₹600 Cr Plan:** Tribunal rejected a ₹600 crore repayment proposal (4.7% recovery) as speculative and inadequate, vesting all personal estate assets in Bankruptcy Trustee Asish Narayan under Section 123.
- **Statutory Disqualifications under Section 140:** Disqualifies the bankrupt from holding company directorships or public office, establishing enforceable personal liability for large corporate loan defaults.

✏ DRAW THIS IN EXAM — *30-SECOND MAINS VISUAL MODEL*

Two-Track Resolution under IBC: Corporate Debtor (CIRP) vs Personal Guarantor (PIRP to Bankruptcy)



✏ **Examiner Note:** Cite Lalit Kumar Jain v. Union of India (2021) to explain why corporate resolution does not release personal guarantors from liabilities.

🎯 EXAM VALUE-AMMO: Part III of IBC 2016 • Section 123 Bankruptcy Order • Personal Guarantor Liability • Lalit Kumar Jain Precedent • Asish Narayan (Trustee)

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (Banking, NPA Resolution & Corporate Governance).

MAINS READY-TO-WRITE ANSWER SNIPPET (IBC FORMAT)

INTRO (~25w) The NCLT's bankruptcy order against Venugopal Dhoot establishes an important precedent in holding corporate promoters personally accountable for debts secured via personal guarantees.

CORE BODY (~80w)

- **Dismantling Promoter Impunity:** Historically, promoters shielded personal wealth behind corporate limited liability while securing public bank loans; Part III makes personal assets vulnerable to liquidation.
- **Dual-Track Insolvency Architecture:** Affirmed in Lalit Kumar Jain (2021), creditors can proceed simultaneously against both corporate debtors under CIRP and personal guarantors under Part III.
- **The Asset Tracing Challenge:** Low personal recovery rates (<4%) highlight that promoters often disperse assets through complex offshore shell trusts prior to default.

WAY FWD (~30w) Empowering bankruptcy trustees with forensic cross-border asset tracing tools under UNCITRAL Model Law protocols will ensure meaningful debt realization.

⚠ UPSC EXAMINER'S TRAP RADAR

LEGAL EXTINGUISHMENT ERROR

THE EXAMINER'S TRAP: Assuming that approving a Corporate Debtor's resolution plan under CIRP automatically extinguishes all personal guarantees given by its promoters.

WHY ASPIRANTS FAIL: Aspirants confuse corporate debt discharge with personal guarantor contractual liabilities.

THE FACT CHECK: In *Lalit Kumar Jain (2021)*, the Supreme Court held that **approval of a corporate resolution plan does NOT release personal guarantors** from their independent contractual liabilities.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

UPSC PRELIMS • TOUGH • ☐ SOLVED ☐ REVISE

Q. With reference to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016 and personal guarantors, consider the following statements:
1. Personal insolvency proceedings against promoters who provided personal guarantees are adjudicated by the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT), not the NCLT.
2. The Supreme Court in Lalit Kumar Jain v. Union of India (2021) affirmed that creditors can proceed against personal guarantors even after the corporate debtor enters insolvency.
3. A debtor declared bankrupt under Part III of the IBC is disqualified from serving as a director of any corporate entity.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 and 3 only | (c) 1 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 2 and 3 are correct: Lalit Kumar Jain affirmed dual-track liability and Section 140 disqualifies bankrupts from directorships. Statement 1 is incorrect because when the corporate debtor is before NCLT, personal guarantor insolvency is ALSO adjudicated by NCLT (Section 60(2) IBC), not DRT.

⚡ 5-SEC ELIMINATION HACK: Look at Statement 1: Section 60(2) routes personal guarantors of corporate debtors to the NCLT to prevent fragmented trials. Eliminate 1!

Related PYQ: Compare with UPSC Prelims 2017 question on the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code features.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION (GS3 • 150 WORDS • 10 MARKS)

Evaluate the efficacy of Part III of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code in enforcing promoter accountability. What structural impediments hinder the recovery of dues from personal guarantors?

Evaluation rubric: Explain Part III notification and Lalit Kumar Jain precedent; analyze Dhoot bankruptcy significance; discuss asset-tracing and cross-border insolvency hurdles; propose UNCITRAL reforms.

■ [Abbreviations & Terminology]: **IBC:** Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code | **CIRP:** Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process | **PIRP:** Personal Insolvency Resolution Process

⚡ 30-SECOND ACTIVE RECALL CHECKPOINT — GS PAPER 3

[COVER & RECALL • 10-SEC DRILL]

Q. What key structural bottleneck was highlighted by NITI Aayog regarding the 14 PLI schemes? → Disbursal reached only 18.51% (₹35,354 Cr of ₹1.91L Cr outlay) with over 85% concentrated in electronics, pharma, and drones, while ACC batteries and solar lag.

Q. What environmental controversy triggered the MoEFCC probe into the Adani Tarali Pumped Storage Project? → A 99% downward revision of paper project cost (₹5,675 Cr to ₹56.75 Cr), slashing the mandatory 4% NBWL tiger conservation deposit from ₹227 Cr to ₹2.27 Cr.

Q. What factors drove India's October 2026 CPI inflation to breach the 6% upper tolerance ceiling? → A 42.18% spike in vegetable prices (tomato +161%, garlic +98%) combined with an adverse base effect from October 2025 (5.02%).

Q. Why did the NCLT declare Venugopal Dhoot bankrupt under Part III of the IBC? → Failure of the Personal Insolvency Resolution Process (PIRP) where creditors rejected a speculative ₹600 Cr repayment plan against ₹12,668 Cr in personal guarantees.

DAILY CONSOLIDATION & INTERACTIVE SELF-SCORECARD

[ACTIVE REVISION CHECKLIST]

Prelims MCQs Solved: [ ] / 14 • Trap Alerts Mastered: [ ] / 14 Mains Prompts Outlined: [ ] / 14 • Active Recall Drills: [ ] / 4

CROSS-PAPER SYNERGY MAP (USE IN ESSAYS & INTER-LINKED MAINS ANSWERS)

- **GS1 ↔ GS2** Constitutional Due Process: Succession certainty under Section 8 (Art 2) mirrors electoral due process under Article 324 (Art 4).
- **GS2 ↔ GS3** Statutory Accountability: Women's representation delinking (Art 3) links to NITI Aayog's industrial PLI governance reforms (Art 8).
- **GS3 ↔ GS1** Ecology & Climate Justice: River sand mining safeguards (Art 13) and Tarali ESZ probes (Art 9) converge with Chhath's riparian bio-ethics (Art 1).