

THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 22 OCTOBER 2026

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PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

1. **Kufri Jamunia** — purple-fleshed, anthocyanin-rich biofortified potato bred by ICAR-CPRI, Shimla, through conventional breeding (not GM).
2. **Police Commemoration Day (21 Oct)** — honours the 10 policemen killed by Chinese troops at Hot Springs, Ladakh, in 1959.
3. **AUSTRAHIND 2026** — 5th India–Australia Army exercise, Thiruvananthapuram (19 Oct–1 Nov); New Zealand observers attend for the first time.
4. **Ebola** — Nigeria is the fourth African country hit by the outbreak first declared in DR Congo in May 2026, after Uganda and Kenya.
5. **Sengol** — Chola-style sceptre crafted by Vummidi Bangaru Jewellers in 1947; installed in the new Parliament building in May 2023.

HOW TO READ THIS BRIEF

☐ Why in News ☐ Target Prelims MCQ ☒ How to Use in UPSC Mains ☐ Mains Practice / Case Study Question

GS PAPER 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PMLA Is No ‘Super Administrator’: SC on the ED’s Section 66(2) Referrals

Why in news: An SC Special Bench stayed for a week the Keralam police probe against former CM Pinarayi Vijayan in the ₹2.78-crore CMRL-Exalogic case, holding that an ED referral under S.66(2) PMLA is an intimation, not a mandate to register an FIR.

Story so far: The 7 Oct Brief covered the CBI probe into the Punjab CM’s office and the DSPE Act’s consent rule. New today: the SC limits how far an ED referral can drive a State police case.

Key Details:

- **The holding:** S.66(2) only lets the ED share material on a suspected breach of ‘any other law’; whether an FIR is needed is for the receiving agency to decide.
- **Federal dimension:** Police and public order are State List subjects; treating ED intimations as binding would let a central agency steer State investigations.
- **Due process:** The petitioners were not heard before the HC Single Judge ordered the FIR; the SC sent the case back to the HC for adjudication.
- **Section 17A question:** The Bench asked whether prior approval under S.17A PC Act was taken; S.17A’s validity awaits a larger Bench after a Jan 2026 split verdict.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Origin of S.66(2):** Inserted by the Finance Act, 2018 (in force 19 Apr 2018); the ED must share information on other-law contraventions ‘for necessary action’.
- **State’s argument:** Keralam read the SC’s 2022 ruling as making an S.66(2) communication a ‘direction’; the Bench said States cannot treat judgments as statutes.
- **Interim relief:** FIR left intact but the investigation stalled for seven days; liberty given to challenge the ECIR before the appropriate forum.

The PMLA, 2002 and the Enforcement Directorate

- **What it does:** PMLA makes it a crime to launder ‘proceeds of crime’ that come from ‘scheduled offences’ listed in the Act.
- **Who enforces:** The ED, under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, investigates PMLA cases and also enforces FEMA.
- **Predicate offence:** A PMLA case needs an underlying scheduled offence, which other agencies probe; S.66(2) is the bridge for sharing such leads.
- **Key powers:** S.5 provisional attachment, S.17 search and seizure, S.19 arrest, S.50 summons; S.45 ‘twin conditions’ make bail harder.
- **Appeals:** An Adjudicating Authority confirms attachments; appeals go to the Appellate Tribunal (constituted under SAFEMA), then the HC.
- **Not to confuse:** An ECIR is the ED’s internal case record; an FIR is registered by police under S.173 BNSS.

Prelims angle: FIU-IND, which receives suspicious-transaction reports from banks under PMLA, also sits under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Quote in GS2 answers on federalism and central agencies, and in GS3 on money laundering, to show the SC drawing lines around the ED's role.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	PMLA's separate track and rising Centre–State friction over central agencies.
BODY	Legal: intimation vs mandate; federal: police a State subject; due process: right to be heard; probity: S.17A protection vs accountability.
WAY FORWARD	Clear inter-agency sharing SOPs; early larger-Bench ruling on S.17A; preliminary inquiry in graft cases as allowed in Lalita Kumari (2013).

Mains value-add: *Vijay Madanlal Chaudhary v UoI* (2022): the SC upheld PMLA's arrest, search and twin bail conditions and held an ECIR is not an FIR — cite to explain why PMLA runs on a track separate from police law.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002, consider the following statements:

1. The ED shares information about contravention of other laws with the concerned agency for necessary action.
2. Offences under the Act are investigated by the CBI under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
3. The ED functions under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

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: Statement 1 is correct: S.66(2) provides for such sharing. Statement 2 is incorrect: PMLA offences are investigated by the ED under PMLA itself; the CBI works under the DSPE Act for other offences, a common mix-up. Statement 3 is correct: the ED is under the Department of Revenue.

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2013, GS3: “Money laundering poses a serious threat to country’s economic sovereignty. What is its significance for India and what steps are required to be taken to control this menace?”

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SC: Supreme Court | ED: Enforcement Directorate | PMLA: Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002 | FIR: First Information Report | CM: Chief Minister | CMRL: Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd | HC: High Court | PC Act: Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 | ECIR: Enforcement Case Information Report | FEMA: Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 | SAFEMA: Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture of Property) Act, 1976 | BNSS: Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 | FIU-IND: Financial Intelligence Unit-India | CBI: Central Bureau of Investigation | DSPE: Delhi Special Police Establishment | UoI: Union of India | SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

Free and Fair Local Polls: SC Steps In on Andhra Pradesh Civic Nominations

Why in news: The SC held that ‘the right to file nominations is a facet of free and fair elections’, let the A.P. SEC extend nomination time where violence blocked candidates and deferred the final list to 25 Oct; the SEC then halted polls in all 100 ULBs.

Story so far: The 21 Oct Brief covered the Allahabad HC ordering overdue U.P. panchayat polls. New today: the SC protects candidates’ access to a municipal poll already under way.

Key Details:

- **The complaint:** YSRCP alleged 63.5% of its candidates were physically blocked from filing nominations; the HC had declined to step into an ongoing process.
- **Calibrated relief:** No blanket extension: only seats where the SEC finds violence stopped nominations; the DGP must give security, keep CCTV footage and report by 27 Oct.
- **Why it matters:** Unopposed wins secured through intimidation hollow out the 74th Amendment’s promise of elected urban self-government.
- **Judicial restraint:** Courts usually avoid interrupting a notified election; relief here protects entry to the contest rather than reopening a result.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Scale:** 13 municipal corporations and 87 municipalities/nagar panchayats; notification issued 14 Oct, polling was due 28 Oct.
- **Ground reports:** YSRCP reported 76 incidents — attacks, detentions, house arrests, seizure of papers — across 11 districts on 21 Oct.
- **Legal anchor:** Under Art 243ZG(b), a municipal election can be challenged only by an election petition under State law.

State Election Commissions (SECs)

- **Constitutional basis:** Art 243K creates the SEC for panchayat polls; Art 243ZA extends it to municipalities (73rd and 74th Amendments, 1992).
- **Powers:** Superintendence, direction and control of electoral rolls and of all panchayat and municipal elections in the State.
- **Appointment:** The State Election Commissioner is appointed by the Governor and can be removed only like a HC judge.
- **Service protection:** Conditions of service cannot be varied to the Commissioner's disadvantage after appointment.
- **Bar on courts:** Art 243O (panchayats) and Art 243ZG (municipalities) keep delimitation laws out of court and route disputes to election petitions.
- **Not to confuse:** The ECI (Art 324) runs Parliament, Assembly, President and Vice-President polls; SECs are separate, not under the ECI.

Prelims angle: *N.P. Ponnuswami* (1952) laid down that courts should not interrupt an election in progress — the principle behind Art 329(b) for Parliament and Assembly polls.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on local self-government and electoral integrity to show both the promise and the fragility of grassroots democracy.

Answer skeleton

INTRO Local polls as the foundation of the 73rd/74th Amendment democracy.

BODY Constitutional: Arts 243ZA, 243ZG; political: violence and unopposed wins; institutional: SEC autonomy, police neutrality; judicial: limits of intervention.

WAY FORWARD Online nominations, CCTV at RO offices, central observers, time-bound election petitions and an insulated SEC.

Mains value-add: *State of Goa v Fouziya Imtiaz Shaikh* (2021): the SC held State Election Commissioners must be independent persons, not serving government officials — cite to argue for SEC autonomy.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE-HARD

Q. Consider the following statements regarding elections to Municipalities in India:

1. The superintendence, direction and control of these elections vests in the State Election Commission.
2. The State Election Commissioner can be removed only in the manner and on the grounds prescribed for a judge of a High Court.
3. The Constitution allows any candidate to challenge an ongoing municipal election by a writ petition under Article 226 at any stage.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct (Art 243ZA). Statement 2 is correct (Art 243K(2), applied to municipalities through Art 243ZA). Statement 3 is incorrect: Art 243ZG(b) says a municipal election can be called in question only by an election petition; aspirants often assume writ courts have open-ended power mid-election.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SC: Supreme Court | SEC: State Election Commission | ULB: Urban Local Body | YSRCP: Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party | HC: High Court | DGP: Director General of Police | ECI: Election Commission of India | RO: Returning Officer | CCTV: Closed-Circuit Television

Programme Code and Prime Time: The I&B Ministry's Advisory to TV News

Why in news: The I&B Ministry advised TV news channels to follow the Programme Code — no content promoting communal disharmony or anti-national attitudes, prompt action on abusive remarks, and responsible use of AI.

Story so far: The 17 Oct Brief covered PCI guidelines on press freedom at protests. New today: the Union restates broadcast content rules for TV news.

Key Details:

- **Trigger:** An Inter-Departmental Committee found some telecasts in breach of the Programme Code under the CTN Act, 1995 and the CTN Rules.
- **Security reporting:** Live coverage of anti-terror operations stays barred; coverage is limited to periodic briefings by an authorised officer, with visuals time-stamped.
- **Victim dignity:** Blurring or masking for crimes against women and children; no looping of disturbing visuals, sensationalism or half-truths.
- **Free-speech test:** Curbs must fit Art 19(2) grounds such as public order, security of the State and decency; an advisory guides, statutory process enforces.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Live-coverage bar:** Added through a 2015 amendment to the CTN Rules after concerns over how the 26/11 Mumbai attacks were televised.
- **Grievance ladder:** The 2021 amendment created three tiers: broadcaster self-regulation, self-regulating bodies of broadcasters, and Union oversight through the IDC.
- **New concern:** The advisory asks channels to deploy AI responsibly, as synthetic visuals can blur fact and fiction.

The Programme Code for TV Channels

- **Legal basis:** S.5 of the CTN Act bars transmitting any programme that does not conform to the prescribed Programme Code (Rule 6, CTN Rules, 1994).
- **What it bars:** Content against decency or good taste, inciting violence, attacking religions or communities, or against India's integrity.
- **Power to prohibit:** S.20 lets the Centre prohibit a channel or programme for sovereignty, security, friendly relations, public order or decency.
- **Permission to broadcast:** Private channels need I&B Ministry permission under the Uplinking and Downlinking Guidelines, 2022.
- **Industry body:** The NBDSA is the news industry's self-regulatory authority hearing complaints against member channels.
- **Not to confuse:** The PCI covers only print media; digital news publishers fall under the IT Rules, 2021 Code of Ethics.

Prelims angle: Prasar Bharati, which runs Doordarshan and All India Radio, is a statutory autonomous body set up under the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on media regulation and in GS3 on the media's role in internal security to balance free speech with national security.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Media as the fourth estate; the line between regulation and censorship.
BODY	Legal: CTN Act, Art 19(2); security: operational secrecy in live coverage; social: communal harmony, victim dignity; ethical: sensationalism, AI deepfakes.
WAY FORWARD	Stronger independent self-regulation, reasoned and public IDC orders, newsroom codes on AI, and media literacy.

Mains value-add: *Mohd. Ajmal Kasab v State of Maharashtra* (2012): the SC criticised live TV coverage of 26/11 for feeding real-time information to the attackers' handlers — cite to justify limits on live security coverage as reasonable.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY-MODERATE

Q. With reference to the regulation of television news channels in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Programme Code that channels must follow is prescribed under rules made under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995.
2. Live coverage of anti-terrorist operations is barred, and coverage is restricted to periodic briefings by an officer designated by the government.
3. The Press Council of India adjudicates complaints against television news channels.

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: Statement 1 is correct: the Code sits in the CTN Rules, 1994 under the 1995 Act. Statement 2 is correct: a 2015 amendment introduced this bar. Statement 3 is incorrect: the PCI's jurisdiction under the Press Council Act, 1978 covers only print; TV news complaints go to channel-level, industry (NBDSA) and Union mechanisms.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** I&B: Information and Broadcasting | TV: Television | AI: Artificial Intelligence | PCI: Press Council of India | CTN: Cable Television Networks (Regulation) | IDC: Inter-Departmental Committee | NBDSA: News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority | IT Rules: Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules | SC: Supreme Court

Two Chokepoints, One Crisis: Saudi Arabia, the Houthis and India's Stakes

Why in news: Saudi Arabia faces simultaneous pressure at Bab-el-Mandeb, from Houthi attacks, and at Hormuz, from Iranian restrictions; Houthi missiles and drones have hit targets including Riyadh airport.

Story so far: The 13 Oct Brief covered attacks on tankers in the Strait of Hormuz. New today: a second chokepoint front opens around Saudi Arabia at Bab-el-Mandeb.

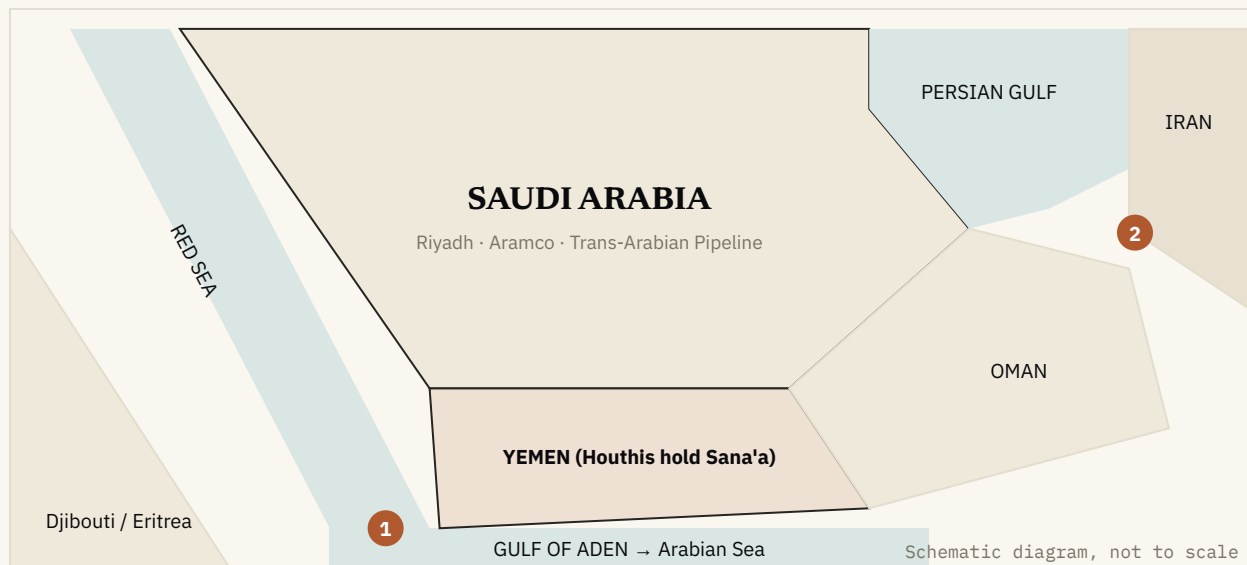
Key Details:

- **An old conflict:** Saudi–Yemen rivalry dates to the 1934 war and Treaty of Taif; the border was settled only by the 2000 Treaty of Jeddah, still questioned by Yemeni nationalists.
- **Not just a proxy:** The Houthis (Zaydi Shia, about a third of Yemenis) have Iranian ties but their own Arab identity; Iran has even offered to mediate.
- **Energy squeeze:** Hormuz curbs and disruption of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline hit Saudi oil exports, especially to Asia; Brent touched \$110 a barrel.
- **Realistic exit:** Defeating the Houthis on the ground looks unlikely; a negotiated truce built on the 2022 ceasefire is Riyadh's practical route.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Bab-el-Mandeb:** Carries nearly 12% of global maritime traffic.
- **Diaspora:** About nine million Indians live in the Gulf.
- **Evacuation record:** Operation Rahat (2015) brought out about 4,640 Indians and 960 foreigners of 41 nationalities from Yemen, using Djibouti as a hub.

The Arabian Peninsula's two chokepoints



1 = Bab-el-Mandeb (Red Sea ↔ Gulf of Aden; ~12% of global maritime traffic) 2 = Hormuz (Persian Gulf ↔ Gulf of Oman)

Bab-el-Mandeb and Hormuz: The Twin Chokepoints

- **Bab-el-Mandeb:** Links the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden; it lies between Yemen and Djibouti/Eritrea on the Horn of Africa.
- **Hormuz:** Links the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman; it lies between Iran and Oman's Musandam peninsula.
- **Suez link:** Europe–Asia ships use Suez Canal → Red Sea → Bab-el-Mandeb; a closure forces the long Cape of Good Hope detour.
- **Legal regime:** UNCLOS gives ships the right of 'transit passage' through straits used for international navigation.
- **Indian Navy:** Operation Sankalp (since 2019) escorts Indian-flagged merchant ships in the Gulf region.
- **Not to confuse:** The Strait of Tiran links the Gulf of Aqaba with the Red Sea; the Suez Canal links the Mediterranean with the Red Sea.

Prelims angle: Djibouti, beside Bab-el-Mandeb, hosts military bases of the U.S., France, Japan and China (China's first overseas base, opened 2017).

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on India–West Asia relations and in GS3 on energy security and maritime security.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	West Asian chokepoints as India's energy and trade lifelines.
BODY	Strategic: Iran–Houthi pincer; economic: oil, gas, fertiliser and freight costs; diaspora: nine million Indians, remittances; security: missile threats to shipping.
WAY FORWARD	Diversify crude sources, expand the SPR, sustain naval escort missions, back de-escalation diplomacy and evacuation readiness.

Mains value-add: The 1990 Kuwait airlift evacuated about 1.7 lakh Indians, one of history's largest civilian air evacuations — cite to show both India's capacity and the cost of a Gulf crisis.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY

Q. Consider the following pairs:

Strait — Water bodies it connects

1. Bab-el-Mandeb — Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

2. Hormuz — Persian Gulf and Red Sea

3. Tiran — Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation: Pair 1 is correct. Pair 2 is incorrect: Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman, not the Red Sea; the trap mixes up the two Arabian chokepoints. Pair 3 is correct: Tiran sits at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba.

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2017, GS2: “The question of India’s Energy Security constitutes the most important part of India’s economic progress. Analyze India’s energy policy cooperation with West Asian countries.”

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** UNCLOS: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea | SPR: Strategic Petroleum Reserves

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 2

Kuki-Zo groups demanded re-imposition of President’s Rule in Manipur, claiming 32 deaths since March 2026. Central rule under Art 356 had run from 13 Feb 2025 to 4 Feb 2026.

How to use: GS2 answers on Art 356, federalism and the North-East: shows President’s Rule is a stopgap, not a political settlement.

Ladakh dissolved the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Kargil after reorganising the region into eight districts and called panchayat elections on 21 Nov across 100 constituencies — the first since 2018.

How to use: GS2 answers on local governance in Union Territories and Ladakh’s autonomy debate.

Delhi received 13,462 Form 7 deletion objections (31 Aug–16 Oct) during the special intensive revision of rolls but listed only 9,199 in Form 10; the Election Commission’s 2023 manual bars action on objections not displayed publicly for seven days.

How to use: GS2 answers on electoral-roll integrity: transparency rules protect voters from silent deletion.

The Jammu & Kashmir High Court summoned Srinagar’s Deputy Commissioner over a Public Safety Act detention order passed ‘without application of mind’: ‘the more extraordinary the power, the greater the obligation’.

How to use: GS2 answers on preventive detention and Art 22 safeguards.

Pakistan and the Maldives signed 20 memorandums of understanding, including on defence, maritime security and artificial intelligence, during President Muizzu’s Islamabad visit.

How to use: GS2 answers on India’s neighbourhood: competition for influence in the Indian Ocean island states.

Türkiye, Qatar, Pakistan and Indonesia signed the ‘Badr Memorandum’ in Doha to integrate their defence industries.

How to use: GS2 answers on emerging West Asian and Islamic-world security groupings and their implications for India.

GS PAPER 3: ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, SECURITY & AGRICULTURE**CORSIA’s Mandatory Phase and India’s Sustainable Aviation Fuel Push**

Why in news: India is expected to require 1% SAF blending on international flights from January 2027, as CORSIA’s mandatory phase begins; industry warns there is still no national SAF policy.

Story so far: The 19 Oct Brief covered India's CCTS going live. New today: international aviation enters a mandatory offsetting regime from 2027.

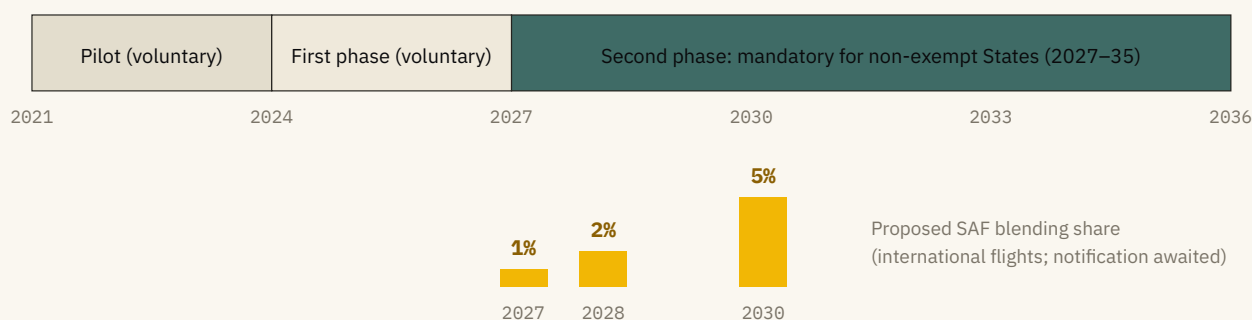
Key Details:

- **Offsetting bill:** Indian airlines face about 5 million tonnes of CO₂ a year to offset — roughly \$50-75 million at \$10-15 per credit.
- **Proposed path:** Industry sources indicate 1% SAF in 2027, 2% in 2028 and 5% in 2030 for international flights; a formal notification is awaited.
- **Policy gaps:** No national SAF policy yet on blending obligations, pricing, domestic production, exports or eligibility of carbon credits.
- **Cost gap:** SAF costs 2-5 times ATF; OMCs seek subsidies and offtake guarantees, while airlines want ATF-parity pricing.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Potential:** An ICAO feasibility study pegs India's SAF potential at 14-33 million tonnes from used cooking oil, farm residues and other feedstocks.
- **First certified plant:** IOC's Panipat refinery became India's first ISCC CORSIA-certified SAF producer (Aug 2025), co-processing used cooking oil.
- **Peers:** The EU mandates 2% SAF from 2025, rising to 6% by 2030; the U.K. 2% in 2025, rising to 10% by 2030.

CORSIA phases and India's proposed SAF path for international flights



CORSIA (ICAO)

- **What it is:** A carbon offsetting scheme for international flights — the first global market-based measure for any industry sector.
- **Adopted by:** ICAO's 39th Assembly in 2016; ICAO is a UN specialised agency headquartered in Montreal.
- **Phases:** Pilot (2021-23) and first phase (2024-26) are voluntary; the second phase (2027-35) is mandatory for non-exempt States.
- **Baseline:** Airlines offset international emissions above 85% of 2019 levels.
- **Exemptions:** LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs; small operators (under 10,000 t CO₂ a year) and humanitarian or medical flights.
- **Compliance:** Use CORSIA-eligible fuels or surrender eligible emissions units (one unit = one tonne CO₂-equivalent).
- **Not to confuse:** CORSIA covers only international flights; domestic aviation emissions count in a country's NDC under the Paris Agreement.

Prelims angle: HEFA (from oils and fats) and ATJ (from alcohols such as ethanol) are ASTM-approved SAF pathways; IOC is developing an ATJ unit.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on climate mitigation in hard-to-abate sectors, biofuels and the energy–agriculture link.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Aviation as a hard-to-abate sector; CORSIA turns mandatory in 2027.
BODY	Environmental: lifecycle emission cuts; economic: offset bill, SAF premium; agrarian: used oil and residue feedstocks; international: EU and U.K. mandates, equity.
WAY FORWARD	Notify a national SAF policy with pricing support and offtake guarantees; certify feedstock chains; align SAF credits with the CCTS.

Mains value-add: ICAO's Long-Term Aspirational Goal (2022) seeks net-zero international aviation emissions by 2050, and its CAAF/3 framework (2023) targets a 5% cut in carbon intensity by 2030 through cleaner fuels — cite for the global direction of travel.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), consider the following statements:

1. It was adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization in 2016.
2. Participation in its second phase (2027-2035) is mandatory for all States, including Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.
3. Airlines can meet their obligations by using eligible fuels or by surrendering eligible emissions units.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct (ICAO Assembly Resolution A39-3, 2016). Statement 2 is incorrect: the phase is mandatory only for non-exempt States; LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs are exempt — the trap equates 'mandatory' with 'universal'. Statement 3 is correct.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SAF: Sustainable Aviation Fuel | CORSIA: Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation | ICAO: International Civil Aviation Organization | CCTS: Carbon Credit Trading Scheme | ATF: Aviation Turbine Fuel | OMC: Oil Marketing Company | IOC: Indian Oil Corporation | ISCC: International Sustainability and Carbon Certification | EU: European Union | UN: United Nations | LDC: Least Developed Country | SIDS: Small Island Developing States | LLDC: Landlocked Developing Country | NDC: Nationally Determined Contribution | HEFA: Hydroprocessed Esters and Fatty Acids | ATJ: Alcohol-to-Jet | ASTM: ASTM International (standards body) | CAAF/3: Third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels

Leaked Keys and Dark-Web Data: Two Tests for India's Digital Trust

Why in news: Eight private keys of eMudhra — India's only globally trusted root CA — used to issue web-security certificates leaked; separately, SBI disclosed 3,897 customer records with personal data on the dark web.

Story so far: The 17 Oct Brief covered CERT-In's warning on AI agents reaching live systems. New today: a CA key leak and a bank data exposure test the trust layer itself.

Key Details:

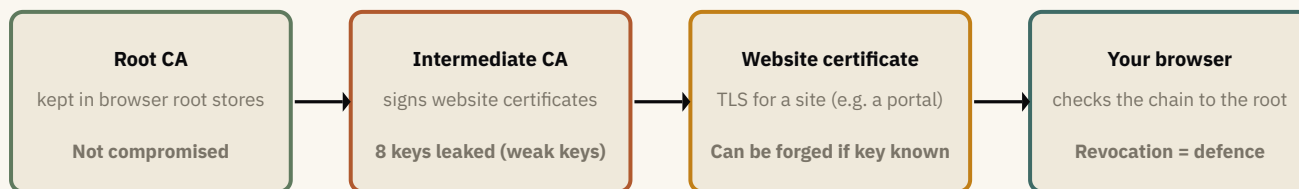
- **The eMudhra flaw:** A key-generation error produced weak keys in place of 384-bit secrets — one was just the number 4 preceded by 383 zeroes; six were trusted by major browsers.
- **Containment:** eMudhra revoked the certificates; MeitY says CCA-regulated digital signatures and eSign are unaffected and the root keys are not compromised.
- **SBI exposure:** Leaked fields include mobile numbers, dates of birth, addresses and loan-lead data — raw material for frauds by callers posing as bank staff.
- **Disclosure gap:** SBI learnt of it from outside agencies, including CERT-In, and told exchanges five days later; notice to affected customers is unclear.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Scale:** A group calling itself 'Siriusim' claimed 3.75 lakh rows of SBI data; preliminary analysis confirmed 3,897 records with PII.
- **Old wound:** Browsers have been wary of Indian root CAs since NIC issued unauthorised certificates for Google domains in July 2014.

- **Reporting rules:** CERT-In's 2022 directions require incident reports within 6 hours; DPDP Rules, 2025 (phasing in by 2027) add notice to the Board and each affected person.

How web trust flows, and where the eMudhra leak hit



Each link is a digital signature made with the issuer's private key. A guessable private key lets an attacker sign look-alike certificates.

Fix: revoke the affected certificates, patch root programmes, and update devices (IoT devices are the slowest to patch).

Certifying Authorities and Digital Certificates (IT Act, 2000)

- **Regulator:** S.17 of the IT Act provides for the CCA, appointed by the Centre under MeitY, which licenses and regulates CAs.
- **National root:** The CCA runs the RCAI, which signs the public keys of licensed CAs so their certificates can be verified.
- **What a certificate does:** It binds a public key to an identity; the issuing CA signs it with its private key so anyone can check it.
- **Chain of trust:** Root CA → intermediate CA → website certificate; a leaked intermediate key can be used to forge certificates.
- **Legal value:** Electronic signatures backed by licensed CAs have legal recognition under the IT Act.
- **Not to confuse:** Browser trust for TLS/SSL comes from the root programmes of Google, Mozilla, Microsoft and Apple, not from CCA licensing.

Prelims angle: CERT-In is the national nodal agency under S.70B of the IT Act, while NCIIPC under S.70A protects critical information infrastructure.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on cyber security and digital public infrastructure, and in GS2 on data protection and banking governance.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Digital public infrastructure rests on cryptographic and institutional trust.
BODY	Technical: weak keys, revocation, slow IoT patching; legal: IT Act, CERT-In 6-hour rule, DPDP; economic: fraud risk, bank reputation; governance: CA audits, user notice.
WAY FORWARD	Independent audits of CAs, mandatory notice to affected users, crypto-agility, and the Srikrishna Committee (2018) principles on accountability.

Mains value-add: *K.S. Puttaswamy v UoI* (2017): a nine-judge Bench recognised informational privacy as part of Art 21 — cite to argue that a data breach without notice to the victims is a rights issue, not just an IT lapse.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to digital trust in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Controller of Certifying Authorities is appointed under the Information Technology Act, 2000 and operates the Root Certifying Authority of India.
2. Under CERT-In's 2022 directions, cyber security incidents must be reported within 72 hours of being noticed.
3. A digital certificate binds a public key to an identity and is signed using the issuing authority's private key.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct (S.17 and S.18 of the IT Act). Statement 2 is incorrect: the CERT-In window is 6 hours; 72 hours is the DPDP-linked detailed report to the Board, a frequent mix-up. Statement 3 is correct: this is how public-key certificates work.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2017: "In India, it is legally mandatory for which of the following to report on cyber security incidents? 1. Service providers 2. Data centres 3. Body corporate" — Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CA: Certifying Authority / Certificate Authority | SBI: State Bank of India | CERT-In: Indian Computer Emergency Response Team | AI: Artificial Intelligence | MeitY: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology | CCA: Controller of Certifying Authorities | PII: Personally Identifiable Information | NIC: National Informatics Centre | DPDP: Digital Personal Data Protection | IT Act: Information Technology Act, 2000 | RCAI: Root Certifying Authority of India | TLS/SSL: Transport Layer Security / Secure Sockets Layer | NCIIPC: National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre | IoT: Internet of Things | UoI: Union of India

Starshield's Lesson: How Exposed Is India to Foreign-Controlled Technology?

Why in news: Reports that Elon Musk throttled the military-grade Starshield network for Ukraine have revived concern over India's reliance on foreign-controlled systems, from satellite navigation to cloud and defence.

Story so far: The 17 Oct Brief covered the satcom spectrum debate (auction vs allotment). New today: Starshield shows why control of a network matters as much as licensing it.

Key Details:

- **Satcom:** Starlink, Eutelsat OneWeb and Jio-SES hold licences but none had security clearance as of 16 Oct; foreign operators retain network control despite Indian stakes.
- **Navigation gap:** Only three NavIC satellites now give PNT signals; standalone positioning needs at least four, so users lean on GPS and other systems.
- **Cloud:** MeghRaj 2.0 will run AWS Outposts in NIC data centres: data stays in India, but monitoring and updates still connect to an AWS region.
- **Defence:** SIPRI ranks India the world's second-largest arms importer (2021-25), with Russia at 40%; Tejas relies on U.S.-made GE engines.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Payments:** UPI insulates domestic payments from Visa/Mastercard, but the app layer is concentrated in foreign-owned firms such as Google Pay and Walmart-backed PhonePe.
- **Precedent:** After the 1998 nuclear tests, U.S. sanctions blocked delivery of 30 LHTEC T800 engines ordered by HAL, forcing a switch to a French supplier.
- **Financial rails:** The EU's 2022 cut-off of select Russian banks from SWIFT shows sanctions can bite even where no local law is broken.

Where India depends, and the home-grown hedge

Domain	Foreign-controlled layer	Indian alternative / status
Navigation	GPS (U.S.); NavIC short of satellites	NavIC: NVS-03 ready; NVS-04, NVS-05 in development
Satellite broadband	Starlink, OneWeb network control	Licences held, security clearance pending
Cloud	AWS, Azure, Google Cloud	MeghRaj (NIC); Bharat Operating System Solutions (C-DAC)
Payments	Card networks, SWIFT, foreign apps	UPI and domestic switch (NPCI)
Defence	Russian, U.S., French, Israeli imports	Indigenisation; engines remain the weak link

NavIC (IRNSS)

- **What it is:** India's regional satellite navigation system, built and operated by ISRO.
- **Design:** Seven satellites: three in GEO and four in inclined GSO.
- **Coverage:** India and a region extending about 1,500 km beyond its boundary.
- **Services:** A Standard Positioning Service for civilians and a Restricted Service for authorised users.
- **Second generation:** The NVS series adds the L1 band for wider civilian use; NVS-01 launched in 2023, while NVS-02 (2025) failed to reach its intended orbit.
- **Not to confuse:** GAGAN (ISRO-AAI) augments GPS for aviation; it is not an independent constellation.

Prelims angle: Other satellite navigation systems: GLONASS (Russia), Galileo (EU) and BeiDou (China) are global; QZSS (Japan), like NavIC, is regional.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on indigenisation of technology, space and security, and in GS2 on strategic autonomy.

Answer skeleton

INTRO Technology sovereignty as a pillar of strategic autonomy.

BODY Security: denial risk in PNT and satcom; economic: cloud spend forecast at \$17.5 bn in 2026; technological: NavIC launch cadence; legal: localisation, sanctions exposure.

WAY FORWARD Replenish NavIC quickly, sovereign cloud with Indian control planes, open-source adoption, defence co-development with technology transfer.

Mains value-add: The Union government's 2015 Policy on Adoption of Open Source Software made OSS the preferred option for e-governance — cite as a ready policy lever to cut vendor lock-in.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE-HARD

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The second-generation NVS satellites of NavIC add the L1 frequency band for civilian users.
2. A satellite navigation receiver needs signals from at least four satellites for standalone positioning.
3. The United States still deliberately degrades the accuracy of civilian GPS signals worldwide under its 'Selective Availability' policy.

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: Statement 1 is correct: L1 was added from NVS-01 onward. Statement 2 is correct: three satellites fix position and the fourth corrects the receiver clock. Statement 3 is incorrect: the U.S. ended Selective Availability in 2000, though it keeps the ability to deny service over specific areas for military purposes.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2018: “With reference to the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), consider the following statements:

1. IRNSS has three satellites in geostationary and four satellites in geosynchronous orbits. 2. IRNSS covers entire India and about 5500 sq. km beyond its borders. 3. India will have its own satellite navigation system with full global coverage by the middle of 2019.” — Answer: (a) 1 only.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NavIC: Navigation with Indian Constellation | PNT: Positioning, Navigation and Timing | GPS: Global Positioning System | AWS: Amazon Web Services | NIC: National Informatics Centre | SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute | GE: General Electric | UPI: Unified Payments Interface | LHTEC: Light Helicopter Turbine Engine Company | HAL: Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd | EU: European Union | SWIFT: Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication | C-DAC: Centre for Development of Advanced Computing | NPCI: National Payments Corporation of India | IRNSS: Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System | ISRO: Indian Space Research Organisation | GEO: Geostationary Orbit | GSO: Geosynchronous Orbit | NVS: NavIC second-generation satellite series | GAGAN: GPS-Aided GEO Augmented Navigation | AAI: Airports Authority of India | QZSS: Quasi-Zenith Satellite System | GLONASS: Global Navigation Satellite System (Russia) | OSS: Open Source Software | SES: Société Européenne des Satellites

Delhi Enters GRAP Stage I: How the Graded Response Action Plan Works

Why in news: With Delhi’s AQI at 245 (‘poor’) on 21 Oct — the first poor day since July — the CAQM invoked Stage I of GRAP across the NCR.

Story so far: The 9 Oct Brief covered why stubble fires keep coming back. New today: the first GRAP stage of the winter comes into force.

Key Details:

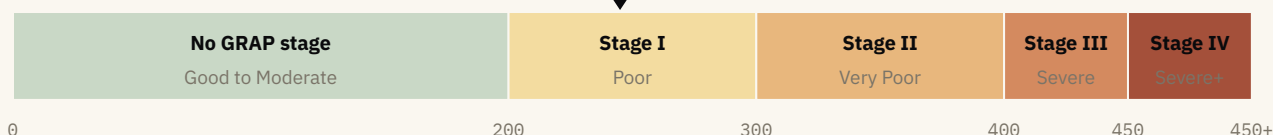
- **Stage I curbs:** Diesel generator sets cannot be a regular power source; only EV, CNG and BS-VI diesel inter-State buses may enter Delhi-NCR.
- **Seasonal drivers:** Lower wind speeds and falling temperatures trap pollutants; stubble burning and firecrackers add peaks.
- **Forecast-led:** A stage can be triggered on forecast AQI as well as actual readings, so curbs can start before a spike.
- **Limits:** GRAP treats symptoms; year-round sources — vehicles, road dust, industry, biomass — need structural fixes beyond emergency curbs.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Clean days:** Delhi has logged 214 clean-air days so far in 2026, the highest in a decade excluding the COVID-19 years.
- **Green cover:** 78 lakh saplings planted against a 70-lakh target, with a geo-tagged survival rate of 96-97%.
- **Previous reading:** The AQI was 179 (moderate) a day earlier; the last ‘poor’ day was 13 July (246).

GRAP stages on the AQI scale (curbs are cumulative)

Delhi, 21 Oct 2026: 245



Stage I examples: no diesel generator sets as a regular power source; only EV/CNG/BS-VI diesel inter-State buses into Delhi-NCR; dust control at construction sites. A stage can be invoked on forecast AQI, before the level is actually reached.

GRAP and the CAQM

- **Origin:** GRAP was first notified in 2017 following SC orders in the M.C. Mehta case; EPCA enforced it initially.
- **Enforcer:** The CAQM, set up under the CAQM Act, 2021, replaced EPCA and covers the NCR and adjoining areas.
- **Four stages:** I Poor (201-300), II Very Poor (301-400), III Severe (401-450), IV Severe+ (above 450); measures add up stage by stage.
- **AQI basis:** The NAQI (2014) is built from eight pollutants: PM10, PM2.5, NO2, SO2, CO, O3, NH3 and lead.
- **Revisions:** The CAQM has revised GRAP several times, most recently moving some curbs to earlier stages (Dec 2024).
- **Not to confuse:** NCAP (2019) is a national, long-term clean-air plan for cities; GRAP is an emergency plan for the NCR.

Prelims angle: BS-VI emission norms took effect nationwide on 1 April 2020, with India skipping BS-V entirely.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on air pollution, environmental governance and inter-State coordination.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Delhi's winter smog as a recurring test of environmental governance.
BODY	Environmental: meteorology and multiple sources; health: respiratory burden; governance: CAQM and inter-State coordination; economic: curbs on construction and transport.
WAY FORWARD	Shift from episodic GRAP to year-round NCAP enforcement; markets for crop residue; clean public transport; an airshed-wide approach.

Mains value-add: NCAP's revised goal is a 40% cut in PM10 by 2025-26 (from the 2017-18 base) across 131 non-attainment cities — cite to measure GRAP against the long-term target.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY-MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for Delhi-NCR, consider the following statements:

1. Its first stage applies when the AQI is in the 'Poor' category (201-300).
2. It is enforced by a commission constituted under an Act of Parliament passed in 2021.
3. Its fourth stage is invoked as soon as the AQI crosses 400.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. Statement 2 is correct: the CAQM Act, 2021. Statement 3 is incorrect: AQI above 400 triggers Stage III (Severe); Stage IV (Severe+) begins above 450 — the trap rests on the round number 400.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2016: "In the cities of our country, which among the following atmospheric gases are normally considered in calculating the value of Air Quality Index? 1. Carbon dioxide 2. Carbon monoxide 3. Nitrogen dioxide 4. Sulfur dioxide 5. Methane" — Answer: (b) 2, 3 and 4 only.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** AQI: Air Quality Index | CAQM: Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas | GRAP: Graded Response Action Plan | NCR: National Capital Region | EV: Electric Vehicle | CNG: Compressed Natural Gas | BS-VI: Bharat Stage VI | SC: Supreme Court | EPCA: Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority | NAQI: National Air Quality Index | PM: Particulate Matter | NCAP: National Clean Air Programme

From Forest Rights to Farm Livelihoods: Pulses and Oilseeds on FRA Lands

Why in news: EAC-PM Chairman S. Mahendra Dev and Sushil Kumar Singla argue FRA-recognised lands can become pulse and oilseed clusters, cutting import dependence while securing tribal livelihoods.

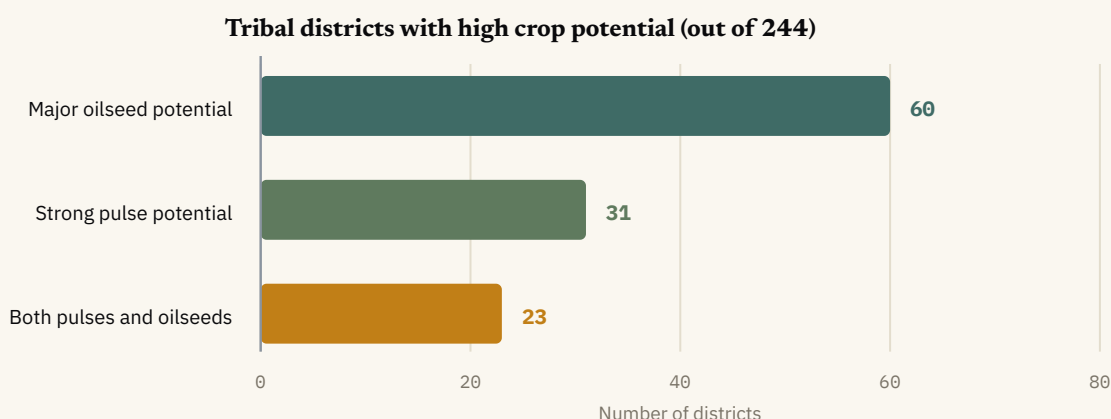
Story so far: The 15 Oct Brief covered extra work days for FRA title holders. New today: a roadmap to make FRA land itself productive through pulses and oilseeds.

Key Details:

- **Spatial fit:** Of 244 tribal districts, 60 have major oilseed potential, 31 strong pulse potential and 23 suit both, per an analysis based on FAO soil maps.
- **Why these crops:** Pulses and oilseeds do well on rain-fed, marginal land, supporting climate-resilient farming and soil health.
- **Development link:** Many tribal districts overlap aspirational districts, so farm-income gains also lift human-development indicators.
- **Bottlenecks:** Certified seed, irrigation, extension, storage and market access remain weak on FRA plots; title alone does not make land productive.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Import dependence:** Imports meet about 57% of India's edible-oil demand.
- **Pulses Mission:** Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses (2025-26 to 2030-31, ₹11,440 crore) targets 350 lakh tonnes, with 100% procurement of tur, urad and masoor for four years.
- **Oilseeds Mission:** NMEO-Oilseeds (2024-25 to 2030-31, ₹10,103 crore) targets 69.7 million tonnes of primary oilseeds.

**The Forest Rights Act, 2006: Rights That Make Land Farmable**

- **Who qualifies:** STs, and OTFDs who lived in forests for three generations (75 years) before 13 Dec 2005.
- **Land cap:** Individual rights cover land under occupation for cultivation, up to a ceiling of 4 hectares.
- **Process:** The Gram Sabha starts the claim process; Sub-Divisional and District Level Committees verify and decide.
- **Community rights:** CFR rights let communities protect, regenerate and manage forest resources they have traditionally used.
- **Nature of title:** Rights are heritable but cannot be sold or transferred; MoTA is the nodal ministry.
- **Not to confuse:** PESA, 1996 gives self-rule to Fifth Schedule areas; FRA, 2006 settles forest tenure.

Prelims angle: TRIFED, under MoTA, runs Van Dhan Vikas Kendras and the MSP scheme for Minor Forest Produce.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on cropping patterns and import substitution, and in GS2 on tribal welfare and FRA implementation.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	FRA titles secure tenure; livelihood security needs productive land.
BODY	Economic: import substitution, farm incomes; ecological: rain-fed, low-input crops; social: tribal nutrition and dignity; institutional: FPOs, extension, credit gaps.
WAY FORWARD	District crop clusters on FRA land, seed and irrigation convergence (PMKSY), procurement under the Pulses Mission, Gram Sabha-led planning.

Mains value-add: *Orissa Mining Corporation v MoEF* (2013, Niyamgiri): the SC left it to Gram Sabhas to decide whether bauxite mining affected their religious, cultural and forest rights — cite to insist that any farm plan on FRA land be Gram Sabha-led.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. “Recognition of forest rights is the beginning, not the end, of livelihood security for forest-dwelling communities.” Discuss how FRA lands can be made productive through pulses and oilseeds without compromising ecological and community interests. (250 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2013: “Under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, who shall be the authority to initiate the process for determining the nature and extent of individual or community forest rights or both?” – Answer: Gram Sabha.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** EAC-PM: Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister | FRA: Forest Rights Act, 2006 | FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization | NMEO: National Mission on Edible Oils | ST: Scheduled Tribe | OTFD: Other Traditional Forest Dweller | CFR: Community Forest Resource | MoTA: Ministry of Tribal Affairs | PESA: Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act | TRIFED: Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India | MSP: Minimum Support Price | FPO: Farmer Producer Organisation | PMKSY: Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana | SC: Supreme Court | MoEF: Ministry of Environment and Forests

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 3

The Index of Core Industries grew 7.9% in September 2026 (3.1% a year earlier), the highest since the new series began in April 2024; coal rose 10.7%, refinery products 10.3% and iron ore 18.4%, while fertilisers fell 11.7% for a seventh month.

How to use: *GS3 answers on industrial growth: shows a commodity-led pickup, partly on a low base.*

A study by The Energy and Resources Institute (July 2026) found about 47.5 million hectares — almost 30% of India’s arable land — suitable for agrivoltaics; using 10% of it could meet projected 2050 power demand. Costs run 25-30% higher than ground-mounted solar (₹3.20-3.30 vs ₹2.5-2.6 per unit).

How to use: *GS3 answers on the energy–agriculture nexus and the PM-KUSUM solar-pump scheme: a land-sharing route to solar expansion.*

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has raised ₹10,029.8 crore in overcharging demands on drug makers since its records began, but realised only ₹1,582.4 crore; ₹8,447.4 crore (about 84%) is outstanding, over ₹5,800 crore of it tied up in litigation.

How to use: *GS2/GS3 answers on drug-price regulation: enforcement, not just ceilings, decides patient benefit.*

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India issued notices to Nestlé India (infant formulas) and Zydus Wellness (Complan) over ‘misleading claims’ under the Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018, seeking scientific proof.

How to use: *GS2 answers on consumer protection and regulation of health claims on child foods.*

The Kerala High Court ordered the State Bank of India to refund ₹3.73 lakh to a cyber-fraud victim who had reported the fraudulent debit within the prescribed time.

How to use: *GS3 answers on cyber fraud: shows the Reserve Bank’s limited-liability framework protecting prompt reporters.*

Electric vehicles made up almost 10.5% of Navratri vehicle retail sales in 2026, up from about 7.7% a year earlier (Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations data); overall retail rose 27% over Navratri 2024.

How to use: *GS3 answers on e-mobility: evidence that EV adoption is becoming self-sustaining.*

GS PAPER 4: ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE**‘No Parent Is a Visitor’: Language, Attitude and Gender-Sensitive Justice**

Why in news: The Karnataka HC directed all Family Courts to use ‘parenting time’ instead of ‘visitation’ in custody matters, noting that ‘no parent is a visitor in the life of a child’.

Key Details:

- **The order:** Justice Lalitha Kanneganti (7 Oct) also told subordinate courts not to apply joint-parenting plans mechanically, saying there is ‘no straitjacket formula’.

- **Attitude at work:** Words carry assumptions: ‘visitation’ casts one parent as an outsider and echoes the norm that mothers ‘care’ while fathers ‘babysit’.
- **Institutional push:** The SC’s 2023 Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes was revised in Aug 2026 as ‘Judgments and Gender: Sensitivity and Compassion in Writing Judgments’.
- **Beyond glossaries:** Training alone has not ended terms like ‘real victim’; changing underlying attitudes needs diverse Benches and reflective practice.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Flagged terms:** The 2026 handbook flags words such as ‘prosecutrix’, ‘modesty’ and ‘chastity’, suggesting ‘survivor’ and ‘bodily autonomy violated’.
- **GS4 concept:** A textbook case of attitude’s cognitive, affective and behavioural chain: a belief about who parents shapes feelings, which shape decisions.
- **Regional template:** The 2022 Bangkok General Guidance for Judges on Applying a Gender Perspective in South and Southeast Asia offers comparable norms.

Attitude, Stereotype and Prejudice

- **Attitude:** A learned tendency to evaluate a person, group or idea favourably or unfavourably.
- **ABC model:** Attitudes have Affective (feeling), Behavioural (action) and Cognitive (belief) parts that reinforce each other.
- **Stereotype:** An over-generalised belief about a group, such as ‘mothers are natural carers’.
- **Prejudice and discrimination:** Prejudice is a judgement formed in advance; discrimination is unequal treatment that follows from it.
- **Changing attitudes:** Persuasion depends on the source’s credibility, the message and the audience; direct contact and reflection also help.
- **Not to confuse:** Aptitude is a capacity to learn or perform; attitude is an evaluative stance.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS4 answers on attitude, prejudice and the values of public functionaries, and in GS1 on gender roles in Indian society.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Language reflects and reproduces attitudes; in public institutions it shapes outcomes.
BODY	Cognitive: stereotypes in reasoning; institutional: training vs culture; constitutional: equality under Arts 14 and 15; ethical: empathy and dignity of every party.
CONCLUSION	Real change needs examined assumptions, diverse Benches and accountable reasoning, not just new vocabulary.

Mains value-add: *Aparna Bhat v State of Madhya Pradesh* (2021): the SC struck down a ‘rakhi-for-bail’ condition and barred judges from stereotyped remarks about women — cite as the judiciary’s own standard of attitudinal neutrality.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. “Words have meanings which cannot be separated from their social contexts.” In the light of recent efforts to make judicial language gender-sensitive, discuss how the attitudes of public functionaries shape the quality of justice and public service delivery. (150 words)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** HC: High Court | SC: Supreme Court