THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 19 OCTOBER 2026

TODAY'S COVERAGE

Table of Contents

9	4	9
ARTICLES	GS PAPERS	MCQS & MAINS QS

GS Paper 1: History, Culture & Society — Page 1

1. Pattanam and Muziris: Reviving the Study of an Ancient Indian Ocean Port GS1 · Indian Culture: Ancient India 1

GS Paper 2: Polity, Governance & Social Justice — Page 3

2. No Mid-Course Fee Hikes: SC Sets a Certainty Rule for Professional Colleges GS2 · Issues relating to Education 3
3. More MPs, Same Hours? Floor Time and the Delimitation Debate GS2 · Parliament: Functioning & Business 4

GS Paper 3: Economy, Environment, S&T & Disaster Management — Page 6

4. Sugar Out of the Tank: Ethanol Feedstock Shifts to Grain for 2026-27 GS3 · Energy & Food Security 6
5. Drought and the 25% Cap: Telangana Seeks Full MSP Procurement GS3 · MSP & Agricultural Marketing 8
6. India's Carbon Market Goes Live: Should It Join the OCCCM? GS3 · Conservation & Climate Change 9
7. Kolkata and Gwalior: Treating Crowd Safety as Disaster Management GS3 · Disaster Management 10
8. Satellite Constellations Are Drowning Out Radio Astronomy GS3 · Space Technology 12

GS Paper 4: Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude — Page 14

9. Justice Seen to Be Done: The CJI's Refusal and Judicial Propriety GS4 · Probity & Codes of Conduct 14

PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

1. **Pratas (Dongsha) Islands** — Taiwan-administered atoll in the northern South China Sea, also claimed by China; site of Chinese vessels' 'maritime harassment'.
2. **Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*)** — mascot of COP31, which Türkiye hosts in November 2026; listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.
3. **ISPS Code** — International Maritime Organization's port and ship security code (in force 2004); the Central Industrial Security Force is a Recognised Security Organisation for Indian ports.
4. **Ladakh Bench** — a Bench of the common High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh now sits at Leh; a ceremonial Bench marked its opening.
5. **Ebola** — a filovirus disease; the outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo has spread to an eighth province, North Ubangi.

HOW TO READ THIS BRIEF

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

GS PAPER 1: HISTORY, CULTURE & SOCIETY

Pattanam and Muziris: Reviving the Study of an Ancient Indian Ocean Port

Why in news: Pattanam's long-time excavation director has called for resuming research at the Periyar-delta site, disrupted since 2016, and building a global research centre around it.

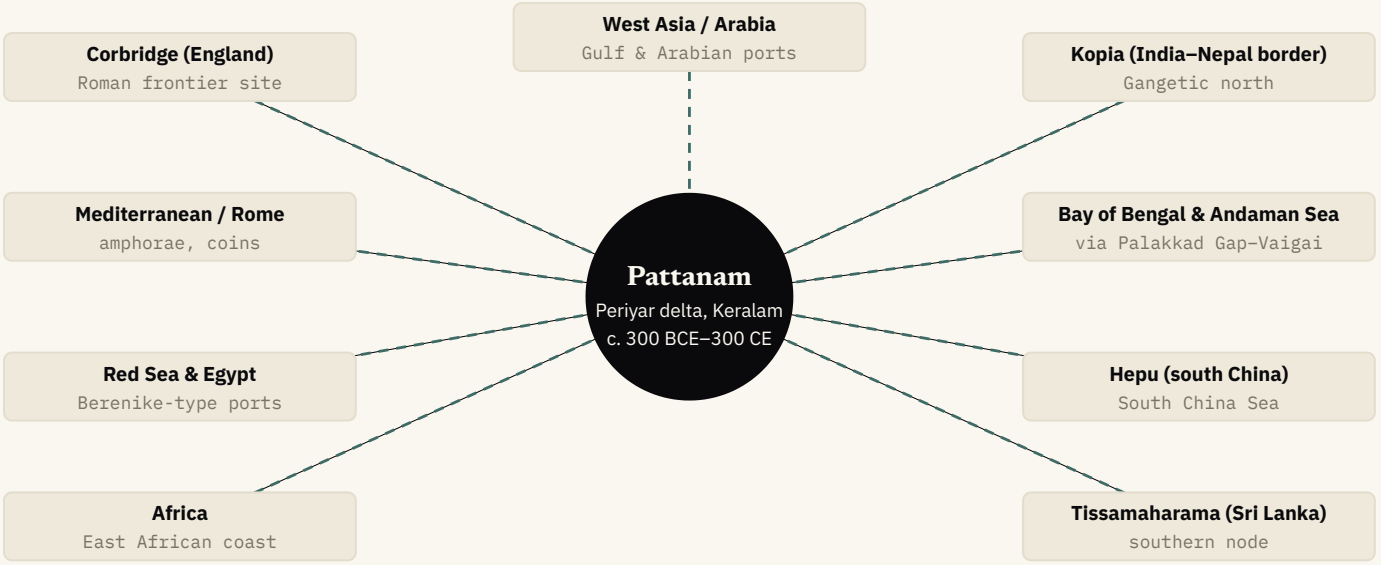
Key Details:

- **Chronology:** Evidence spans c. 300 BCE–300 CE, densest from 100 BCE; a harbour complex held a wooden canoe dated 100 BCE–100 CE.
- **Scale:** 67 trenches (2006–2023) yielded ~1.3 lakh registered artefacts and ~45 lakh pottery sherds, yet under 1% of the 100-acre mound is dug.
- **Network:** Parallels link Pattanam from Corbridge (England) to Hepu (south China), and from Tissamaharama (Sri Lanka) to Kopia near the India–Nepal border.
- **Governance gap:** A science lab, in-situ museum and land purchases stalled after 2016; an autonomous Pattanam Heritage Authority is proposed.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Hinterland:** The Periyar, the Palakkad Gap and the Vaigai basin tied the port to Western Ghats forest produce and to the east coast.
- **Finds:** Material from West Asia, the Red Sea, Africa and the Mediterranean; a sculpted head identified as Roman Emperor Domitian.
- **Open question:** Whether the whole ancient port of Muziris lies at present-day Pattanam is still debated.

Pattanam as a Node: Archaeological Parallels Across the Ancient World



Schematic diagram, not to scale — links show sites with related finds

Muziris and Indo-Roman Trade

- **What:** A Chera port near the mouth of the Periyar; Sangam poems (Akananuru, Purananuru) call it Muchiri.
- **Greek guide:** The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (1st century CE, anonymous Greek) describes Muziris thronged with ships from Arabia and Greek lands.
- **Muziris Papyrus:** A 2nd-century CE Greek loan contract for a cargo shipped on the vessel *Hermapollon*, worth about 9 million sesterces.
- **Roman map:** The Tabula Peutingeriana marks Muziris with a 'Templum Augusti', read as a temple to Augustus.
- **Trade:** Pepper and other spices went west; Roman gold coins, wine amphorae and fine pottery came east.
- **Decline:** The port vanishes from records; a 1341 Periyar flood that reshaped the coast is often cited.
- **Not to confuse:** Muziris (Chera, Malabar coast) with Korkai (Pandya pearl port) or Puhar/Kaveripattinam (Chola).

Prelims angle: Arikamedu, near Puducherry on the Coromandel coast, is another Indo-Roman trading site; Mortimer Wheeler excavated it in 1945.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 answers on maritime trade, Indo-Roman contacts and heritage management; Pattanam shows archaeology correcting a text-only picture of early history.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Pattanam (c. 300 BCE–300 CE) as a node of a trade network from Britain to China.
BODY	Economic: pepper-for-gold trade; cultural: a multi-ethnic port; scientific: archaeo-science, genetics, geology; governance: stalled funding, land, staffing.
WAY FORWARD	Autonomous site authority; ASI–university partnerships; community-centred site museums; open digital archives of finds.

Mains value-add: Pliny the Elder called Muziris 'primum emporium Indiae', the first emporium of India — cite to show how central Malabar was to Roman commerce.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to ancient trade on India's west coast, consider the following statements:
1. Muziris was a principal port of the Chera kingdom near the mouth of the Periyar.
2. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea is a Latin work written by Pliny the Elder.
3. Arikamedu, another Indo-Roman trading site, lies on the Coromandel coast.
Which of the statements given above is/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: Muziris (Muchiri) was the Chera port on the Periyar. Statement 2 is incorrect: the Periplus is an anonymous 1st-century CE Greek guide; Pliny wrote the Latin *Natural History*. Statement 3 is correct: Arikamedu is near Puducherry on the east coast.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2023: "With reference to ancient South India, Korkai, Poompuhar and Muchiri were well known as (a) capital cities (b) ports (c) centres of iron-and-steel making (d) shrines of Jain Tirthankaras" — Answer: (b) ports.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** BCE: Before Common Era | CE: Common Era | ASI: Archaeological Survey of India

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 1

Women's work in the North East. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025 shows female labour force participation rising since 2019-20, faster in rural areas (33% to 45.9%) than urban (23.3% to 27.7%). Arunachal Pradesh's rural rate rose 8.28 percentage points a year, more than three times the all-India 2.58; Delhi and Lakshadweep declined.

How to use: *GS1 (role of women, regional variation): shows that national averages hide sharp State-level divergence — the level and the pace of change both matter.*

Children online. An Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)-supported study of over 2,000 Delhi schoolchildren aged 9–14 (2025) found 97.6% access the Internet from home, about 4.5 hours a day, and nearly 47% had talked to unknown people online in six months; anxiety and sleep disturbance were the most reported effects.

How to use: *GS1 (society, effects of technology on youth) and GS2 (child protection): evidence for digital-literacy programmes involving schools and parents.*

GS PAPER 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

No Mid-Course Fee Hikes: SC Sets a Certainty Rule for Professional Colleges

Why in news: In *Dr B.C. Roy Engineering College v State of West Bengal* (2026), the SC held that fees for an entire professional course must be notified before admission.

Key Details:

- **Holding:** Mid-stream hikes are impermissible except in unforeseeable or extraordinary economic conditions or statutory changes; the exception cannot replace timely planning.
- **Fee committees:** They perform a public function, are open to HC judicial review, and must work as continuing institutions that anticipate costs.
- **Facts:** WB capped fees at ₹1.10 lakh a year on 16 Oct 2023 (first revision since 2016-17); the college then raised fees ~37.5% for the 2023-27 batch.
- **Balance:** Periodic revision is not barred: cost under-recovered from one batch and pushed to later ones creates deficits that hurt teaching quality.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Affordability:** NSSO data cited by the Bench show professional course fees are 711% higher than those for general programmes.
- **Regulatory anchors:** AICTE Regulations, 1994 and NEP 2020 both seek to pre-empt arbitrary fee increases by self-financing institutions.
- **Outcome:** The SC set aside the HC's estoppel-based refund order but directed HCs to ensure fee committees act with expertise and integrity.

Fee Regulation in Private Professional Education

- **Right to run institutions:** *TMA Pai* (2002, 11 judges): setting up and running an educational institution is an 'occupation' under Art 19(1)(g).
- **Limits:** Institutions may fix fees with a reasonable surplus for expansion, but capitation fees and profiteering are barred (*TMA Pai*).
- **Committees:** *Islamic Academy* (2003) directed State committees headed by a retired HC judge to approve fee structures.
- **Endorsed:** *P.A. Inamdar* (2005, 7 judges) upheld such committees as a regulatory measure.
- **Minority institutions:** Art 30(1) protects minorities' right to run institutions, but fee regulation against profiteering still applies (*Inamdar*).
- **AICTE:** A statutory body under the AICTE Act, 1987 that approves and regulates technical education institutions.
- **Not to confuse:** A 'reasonable surplus' for growth (allowed) with a capitation fee (barred).

Prelims angle: Art 21A (86th Amendment, 2002) makes free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right only for children aged 6–14; higher education is outside it.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use for GS2 questions on education governance and private-sector regulation; the 'certainty principle' frames fee notification as protection for students and families.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Professional education is largely self-financed; unpredictable fees burden families who rely on savings and loans.
BODY	Legal: Art 19(1)(g) vs reasonable restriction; institutional: slow fee committees; economic: viability of colleges; social: equity in access.
WAY FORWARD	Time-bound fee reviews; full-course notification before admission; transparent cost audits; scholarships and interest subvention.

Mains value-add: *Modern Dental College* (2016, Constitution Bench) upheld State fee regulation of private colleges as a reasonable restriction under Art 19(6), since education is not trade or business — cite to justify oversight.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE–HARD

Q. With reference to the regulation of private professional education in India, consider the following statements:
1. In TMA Pai Foundation (2002), the Supreme Court held that establishing an educational institution is an occupation under Article 19(1)(g).
2. A State government may permit capitation fees in self-financing professional colleges by notification.
3. In Islamic Academy of Education (2003), the Supreme Court directed committees headed by a retired High Court judge to approve fee structures.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: *TMA Pai* placed running educational institutions under Art 19(1)(g). Statement 2 is incorrect: capitation fees are barred by the SC, and no notification can permit them. Statement 3 is correct: *Islamic Academy* created fee committees headed by retired HC judges.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SC: Supreme Court | HC: High Court | WB: West Bengal | NSSO: National Sample Survey Office | AICTE: All India Council for Technical Education | NEP: National Education Policy | Art: Article

More MPs, Same Hours? Floor Time and the Delimitation Debate

Why in news: As a proposed expansion of the Lok Sabha to 850 seats is debated, the shrinking floor time available to each MP has emerged as the real limit on representation.

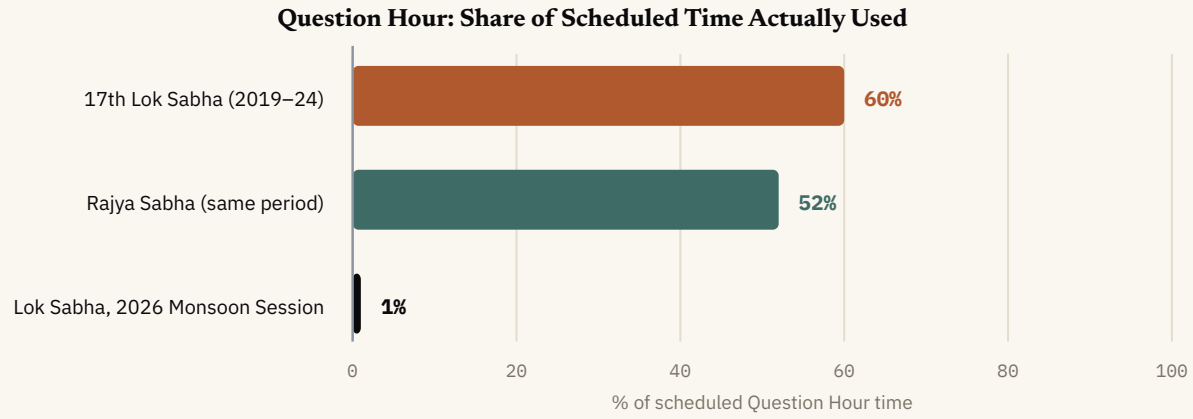
Story so far: The 17 Oct Brief covered the post-freeze delimitation road map and the Opposition's call for an all-party meeting. New today: the focus shifts to whether a larger House would have time to function.

Key Details:

- **Proposal:** The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill and the Delimitation Bill, 2026 propose raising LS strength from 550 to 850 members.
- **Disparity:** ~97.98 crore electors across 543 seats average ~18 lakh per MP; Malkajgiri has 37.8 lakh voters, Lakshadweep 57,953.
- **Bottleneck:** LS rules allow 20 starred (oral) and 230 unstarred questions a day; with 850 MPs the odds of an oral answer fall further.
- **Erosion:** Question Hour ran only 60% of scheduled time in the 17th LS and 1% (about nine minutes) in the 2026 Monsoon Session.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Sittings:** The 17th LS sat 274 days; 11 of 15 sessions ended early and only 16% of Bills went to committees (PRS).
- **Reform idea:** The NCRWC recommended at least 120 sitting days a year for the LS and 100 for the RS.
- **Tools at risk:** Zero Hour and Private Members' Business depend on spare time; fixed, protected slots are suggested.



Parliamentary Devices: Question Hour, Zero Hour and Sessions

- **Question Hour:** The first hour of a LS sitting: starred questions get oral answers with supplementaries; unstarred get written replies.
- **Short-notice question:** Asked on a matter of urgent public importance with less than 10 days' notice; answered orally.
- **Zero Hour:** The time right after Question Hour for raising urgent matters; an Indian practice since 1962, not in the Rules of Procedure.
- **Art 85:** The President summons each House; no more than six months may pass between the last sitting of one session and the first of the next.
- **Sessions:** By convention three a year: Budget, Monsoon and Winter; there is no constitutional minimum of sitting days.
- **Private Members' Business:** Usually the last two and a half hours of a Friday sitting, for Bills and resolutions by non-Ministers.
- **Not to confuse:** Adjournment (Presiding Officer) with prorogation (President) and dissolution (LS only).

Prelims angle: LS seats allotted to States are frozen on the 1971 Census until the first Census after 2026, under the 84th Amendment (2001).

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on Parliament's decline, executive accountability and delimitation; argue that representation needs floor time as well as seats.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Delimitation can fix arithmetic (voters per MP) but not voice (time per MP).
BODY	Constitutional: Art 85 sets only a maximum gap; institutional: disrupted Question Hour, few committee referrals; political: executive dominance; federal: seat shares of States.
WAY FORWARD	Statutory minimum sittings (NCRWC: 120 days); protected Question Hour; more committee scrutiny; a parliamentary calendar.

Mains value-add: The 17th LS was the first full term without a Deputy Speaker, though Art 93 says the House 'shall' choose one — cite on the weakening of parliamentary institutions.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY–MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements about the business of Parliament:
1. In the Lok Sabha, the first hour of every sitting is ordinarily Question Hour.
2. Zero Hour is a procedure laid down in the Rules of Procedure of the Lok Sabha.
3. Under Article 85, six months shall not intervene between the last sitting in one session and the first sitting of the next.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: Question Hour ordinarily opens each LS sitting. Statement 2 is incorrect: Zero Hour is an informal Indian innovation (since 1962) not found in the Rules. Statement 3 is correct: Art 85(1) caps the gap between sessions at six months.

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2019, GS2: "Individual Parliamentarian's role as the national law maker is on a decline, which in turn, has adversely impacted the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss."

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** LS: Lok Sabha | RS: Rajya Sabha | MP: Member of Parliament | NCRWC: National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution | PRS: PRS Legislative Research | Art: Article

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 2

Unsafe river crossings. At least 13 children drowned on 13 October when an overloaded, dilapidated country boat capsized at Raghopur in Bihar's Vaishali district after dark, though rides are banned after sunset. Model Rules (2011) under the Bengal Ferries Act, 1885 and the Inland Vessels Act, 2021 exist but inspections lag.

How to use: *GS2/GS3 (governance, disaster risk): an example of rules without enforcement and of how missing all-weather access forces risky travel.*

Form 7 anomalies. In Karnataka, 334 pairs of electors filed Form 7s declaring each other dead, and at least 37 sought deletion of their own names citing death, per a data analysis of Election Commission of India (ECI) records; most were filed before the special intensive revision (SIR) began on 30 June.

How to use: *GS2 (electoral rolls, ECI): illustrates why deletions need notice, hearing and verification under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.*

Who picks poll chiefs? A former Andhra Pradesh CM has called for including the Chief Justice of India in selecting the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the High Court Chief Justice in selecting the State Election Commissioner (SEC). Under the CEC Act, 2023 the panel is the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and a Union Minister; the SEC is appointed by the Governor (Article 243K).

How to use: *GS2 (independence of the Election Commission): use in debates on appointment processes and the Anoop Baranwal (2023) interim arrangement.*

GS PAPER 3: ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT, S&T & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Sugar Out of the Tank: Ethanol Feedstock Shifts to Grain for 2026-27

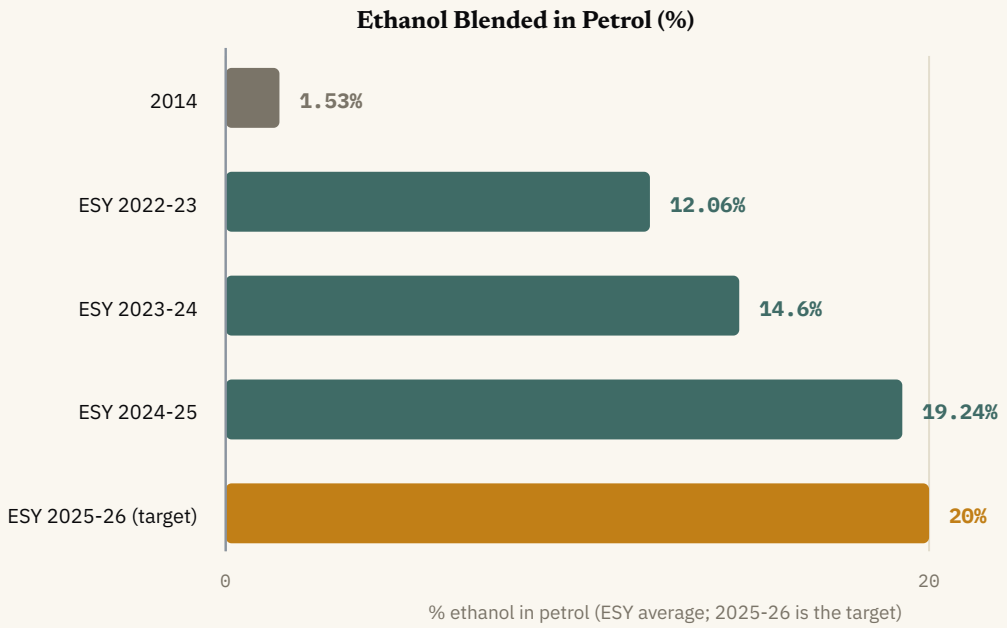
Why in news: OMCs' 2026-27 ethanol tender excludes ethanol from cane juice, sugar syrup and B-heavy molasses after the Centre set sugar diversion for ethanol to zero.

Key Details:

- **Trigger:** Poor rain in Maharashtra and Karnataka raised fears over sugar output and prices; India is the world's largest sugar consumer.
- **Tender:** BPCL, for the OMCs, seeks ~11 billion litres for the year from November; maize, broken rice, FCI rice and C-heavy molasses remain eligible.
- **Pricing:** Maize-ethanol price cut to ₹68.86/litre from ₹71.86; the maize incentive falls to ₹2.79 from ₹5.79.
- **Trade-off:** Grain must now carry E20; feedstock supply, procurement prices and distillery capacity become the binding limits.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Progress:** Average blending reached 19.24% in ESY 2024-25 and touched 19.97% in October 2025.
- **Food vs fuel:** About 40 lakh tonnes of sugar and 52 lakh tonnes of FCI rice were allotted for ethanol in ESY 2024-25.



The Ethanol Blending Programme and the National Policy on Biofuels

- **Origin:** EBP began in 2003 with 5% blending in select States; MoPNG is the nodal ministry and OMCs buy ethanol at set prices.
- **NPB 2018:** Allows feedstocks such as cane juice, sugar beet, sweet sorghum, maize, cassava, damaged grains and rotten potatoes.
- **2022 amendment:** Advanced the 20% blending target from 2030 to ESY 2025-26.
- **Supply year:** ESY runs from 1 November to 31 October.
- **Generations:** 1G uses sugar or starch; 2G uses crop residue (lignocellulose); 3G uses algae.
- **Not to confuse:** E20 (20% ethanol in petrol) with biodiesel blending, which mixes vegetable-oil fuel with diesel.

Prelims angle: PM JI-VAN Yojana (2019) gives viability-gap support for 2G ethanol plants that use agricultural residue.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on energy security, the food–fuel trade-off and agricultural diversification (maize demand).

Answer skeleton

INTRO	E20 cuts crude imports and emissions, but feedstock choices tie fuel policy to food markets.
BODY	Economic: import bill, farm incomes; food security: sugar and grain prices; environmental: water-intensive cane; industry: distillery viability and pricing.
WAY FORWARD	Diversify feedstock (2G, damaged grain); dynamic diversion rules; water-efficient crops; flex-fuel vehicles.

Mains value-add: NITI Aayog's 'Roadmap for Ethanol Blending in India 2020-25' (June 2021) urged multiple feedstocks to avoid a food–fuel conflict — cite for the case for grain and 2G ethanol.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to India's ethanol blending programme, consider the following statements:
1. The 2022 amendment to the National Policy on Biofuels advanced the 20% blending target to the ethanol supply year 2025-26.
2. The ethanol supply year runs from April to March, matching the financial year.
3. Damaged foodgrains unfit for human consumption are a permitted feedstock for ethanol.
How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: the 2022 amendment moved the 20% target from 2030 to ESY 2025-26. Statement 2 is incorrect: ESY runs 1 November–31 October, not April–March. Statement 3 is correct: NPB 2018 allows damaged foodgrains.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2020: "According to India's National Policy on Biofuels, which of the following can be used as raw materials for the production of biofuels? 1. Cassava 2. Damaged wheat grains 3. Groundnut seeds 4. Horse gram 5. Rotten potatoes 6. Sugar beet" — Answer: (a) 1, 2, 5 and 6 only.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** OMCs: Oil Marketing Companies | BPCL: Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd | FCI: Food Corporation of India | E20: petrol with 20% ethanol | ESY: Ethanol Supply Year | EBP: Ethanol Blended Petrol programme | MoPNG: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas | NPB: National Policy on Biofuels | PM JI-VAN: Pradhan Mantri Jaiv Indhan–Vatavaran Anukool fasal awashesh Nivaran | NITI: National Institution for Transforming India

Drought and the 25% Cap: Telangana Seeks Full MSP Procurement

Why in news: With drought in 315 of its 621 mandals, Telangana has asked the Centre to lift the 25% procurement cap at MSP for maize, jowar and other major crops.

Story so far: The 13 Oct Brief covered drought in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and the Drought Manual. New today: Telangana links drought relief to the 25% procurement ceiling.

Key Details:

- **Demand:** Lift the 25% cap, rationalise fertiliser prices, and fund micro-irrigation and inter-cropping seed in an El Niño year.
- **Logic:** Farmers will change crop patterns only if their produce is procured fully at MSP — assured buying drives diversification.
- **Relief:** Wage and water-conservation works sought under VB-G RAM G; the Khet Bachao Abhiyan runs in the State from 22 October.
- **Counterpoint:** Open-ended buying creates storage, disposal and fiscal burdens, which is why PSS volumes are capped.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Ceiling:** PSS procurement is capped at 25% of a State's production; tur, urad and masur can be bought up to 100%.
- **Agencies:** NAFED and NCCF procure pulses, oilseeds and copra under PSS at MSP.

PM-AASHA: The MSP Assurance Umbrella

- **Launch:** Approved by the Union Cabinet in September 2018 and run by the MoA&FW to ensure farmers get MSP for pulses, oilseeds and copra.
- **PSS:** Physical procurement at MSP when market prices fall below it, through central nodal agencies.
- **PDPS:** Pays farmers the gap between MSP and the market price directly, without physical procurement.
- **MIS:** Intervenes for perishables such as TOP crops, which have no MSP.
- **Not to confuse:** FCI's large, open-ended wheat and paddy buying for food security with capped PSS buying of pulses and oilseeds.

Prelims angle: MSP is announced for 22 mandated crops (plus FRP for sugarcane) on the CACP's recommendation; the CCEA approves it.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on MSP, crop diversification and drought response; shows how procurement design shapes what farmers sow.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	MSP works only where procurement reaches; caps limit that reach in distress years.
BODY	Economic: price floor vs fiscal cost; agronomic: diversification away from paddy; climate: El Niño drought; federal: States vs Centre on limits.
WAY FORWARD	Flexible caps in declared droughts; wider PDPS; storage and processing for coarse grains; crop insurance (PMFBY) payouts on time.

Mains value-add: The Shanta Kumar High Level Committee (2015) found only about 6% of farmers sell to procurement agencies — cite to show MSP's narrow effective reach.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to PM-AASHA, consider the following statements:
1. The Price Support Scheme covers procurement of pulses, oilseeds and copra at MSP.
2. Under the Price Deficiency Payment Scheme, NAFED physically procures the crop from farmers.
3. Under the Price Support Scheme, tur, urad and masur can be procured beyond the general 25% ceiling.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: PSS covers pulses, oilseeds and copra. Statement 2 is incorrect: PDPS pays the price gap directly, without physical procurement. Statement 3 is correct: tur, urad and masur can be procured up to 100% of production.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2020: "1. In the case of all cereals, pulses and oil-seeds, the procurement at Minimum Support Price (MSP) is unlimited in any State/UT of India. 2. In the case of cereals and pulses, the MSP is fixed in any State/UT at a level to which the market price will never rise. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?" — Answer: (d) Neither 1 nor 2.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** MSP: Minimum Support Price | PSS: Price Support Scheme | PDPS: Price Deficiency Payment Scheme | MIS: Market Intervention Scheme | PM-AASHA: Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan | NAFED: National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India | NCCF: National Cooperative Consumers' Federation | VB-G RAM G: Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) | MoA&FW: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare | TOP: Tomato, Onion, Potato | FCI: Food Corporation of India | FRP: Fair and Remunerative Price | CACP: Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices | CCEA: Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs | PMFBY: Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

India's Carbon Market Goes Live: Should It Join the OCCCM?

Why in news: With CCTS compliance now live, a case has been made for India to join the OCCCM, a coalition launched by the EU, China and Brazil.

Story so far: The 8 Oct Brief covered GEI targets for cement under the CCTS. New today: the first compliance cycle is under way and India weighs joining a global carbon-pricing coalition.

Key Details:

- **Milestone:** Nearly 500 companies in seven sectors filed first CCTS compliance reports on 31 July; first credits are due in October, trading from Nov–Jan.
- **Coalition:** OCCCM was endorsed at COP30 (Belém), formally constituted in Florence (7 May 2026) and adopted its first work plan in Wuhan (14 Sept).
- **Members:** Germany and New Zealand joined first; Canada, France, Norway, Singapore, Türkiye and the UK followed. Brazil chairs; China and the EU co-chair.
- **Case for India:** No binding targets, but members shape MRV, accounting and offset-integrity rules — useful preparation for CBAM-style climate clubs.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Spread:** Over 50 countries have carbon-pricing measures, and the EU CBAM is now operational.
- **Risk of staying out:** Future coalition choices on uniform vs differentiated prices and penalties on non-members would be made without India.

Carbon-Pricing Instruments and Where India Stands

Instrument	What it does	India's position
CCTS (compliance)	Emission-intensity (GEI) targets for obligated entities; surplus earns tradable credits	Live; first credits due Oct 2026
CCTS (offset)	Voluntary projects earn credits for verified reductions	Runs alongside compliance
EU CBAM	Charges a carbon price on imports such as steel, aluminium, cement and fertilisers	Hits Indian exporters
OCCCM	Coalition aligning compliance markets on MRV, accounting and credit integrity	Not a member

India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)

- **Legal basis:** Notified in June 2023 under the EC Act, 2001, as amended in 2022 to empower a carbon-credit scheme.
- **Institutions:** BEE is the administrator, CERC regulates trading, and Grid-India keeps the registry.
- **Metric:** Targets are set as GEI — tonnes of CO2-equivalent per unit of output — not as an absolute cap.
- **Unit:** One carbon credit certificate equals one tonne of CO2-equivalent reduced or removed.
- **Purpose:** Helps meet India's NDC and the 2070 net-zero goal at least cost.
- **Not to confuse:** CCTS (emissions, BEE) with the Green Credit Programme (2023, MoEFCC), which rewards actions such as tree planting.

Prelims angle: The EU ETS (2005) was the first major cap-and-trade system; China's national ETS began trading in 2021, starting with the power sector.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on carbon pricing, CBAM and climate diplomacy; shows how domestic markets can become bargaining tools abroad.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Carbon pricing is returning to the centre of climate policy as UNFCCC talks stall.
BODY	Economic: least-cost mitigation, export competitiveness; diplomatic: rule-making vs rule-taking; institutional: MRV capacity; equity: CBDR-RC concerns.
WAY FORWARD	Join as a member to shape rules; strengthen MRV; link CCTS cautiously; negotiate CBAM credit for domestic carbon prices.

Mains value-add: The Stern–Stiglitz High-Level Commission on Carbon Prices (2017) put the Paris-consistent price at US$40–80/tCO2 by 2020 and US$50–100 by 2030 — cite to judge how far carbon prices lag.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE–HARD

Q. With reference to carbon markets, consider the following statements:
1. India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme has been notified under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
2. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency is the administrator of the Indian carbon market.
3. The Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets sets binding emission-reduction targets for its members.
Which of the statements given above is/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 CCTS was notified in 2023 under the EC Act, 2001 (amended 2022). Statement 2 is correct: BEE administers the scheme. Statement 3 is incorrect: the OCCCM aligns rules and does not impose mitigation targets.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CCTS: Carbon Credit Trading Scheme | OCCCM: Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets | EU: European Union | COP: Conference of the Parties | MRV: Monitoring, Reporting and Verification | CBAM: Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism | GEI: Greenhouse Gas Emission Intensity | EC Act: Energy Conservation Act | BEE: Bureau of Energy Efficiency | CERC: Central Electricity Regulatory Commission | NDC: Nationally Determined Contribution | MoEFCC: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change | ETS: Emissions Trading System | UNFCCC: UN Framework Convention on Climate Change | CBDR-RC: Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities | tCO2: tonne of carbon dioxide

Kolkata and Gwalior: Treating Crowd Safety as Disaster Management

Why in news: A pandal stampede in Kolkata killed 19 and a truck that ploughed into devotees outside a Gwalior temple killed 15, exposing gaps in crowd management.

Key Details:

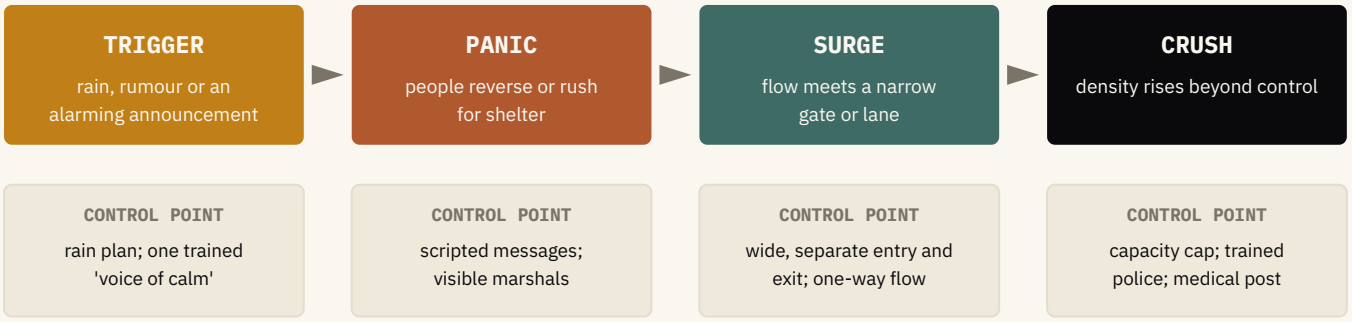
- **Kolkata:** A narrow entry and exit, sudden rain and an announcement that the structure might collapse set off panic; only temporary home guards were posted.

- **Gwalior:** A paddy-laden truck broke through about five barricades on a slope near a hilltop shrine; a magisterial inquiry has been ordered.
- **Scale:** West Bengal's pandals rose 25% this year to over 57,000 — capacity planning, not just policing, must grow with crowds.
- **Accountability:** A case under S.105 BNS was filed in Kolkata; the State has sought an SIT headed by a sitting HC judge.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Pattern:** Packed crowds stay safe if sudden surges are avoided; panic-driven surges at bottlenecks cause most deaths.
- **Communication:** A single trained announcer with scripted messages is itself a control measure.

How a Crowd Disaster Unfolds – and Where to Break the Chain



Schematic diagram — crowd management plans ahead; crowd control only reacts

NDMA's Guide on Managing Crowds (2014)

- **Title:** 'Managing Crowds at Events and Venues of Mass Gathering', a guide for States, local authorities, administrators and organisers.
- **Core idea:** Crowd management (planning capacity, flow and exits in advance) is different from crowd control (reacting with force).
- **Elements:** Know the visitors; assess venue capacity; plan entry, exit and circulation; plan communication; coordinate police, fire and medical teams.
- **Legal frame:** The DM Act, 2005 sets up a three-tier structure: NDMA (chaired by the PM), SDMAs (CMs) and DDMAs (Collectors).
- **Not to confuse:** A stampede (a running crowd) with a crowd crush (deadly pressure in a dense crowd, often with little movement).

Prelims angle: The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030) sets seven global targets and four priorities; India has adopted it.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 disaster-management answers and GS2 governance answers on festival and pilgrimage safety; links planning failures to accountability.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Mass gatherings are predictable, so crowd disasters are largely preventable.
BODY	Administrative: permissions, venue capacity; technical: flow design, CCTV, density monitoring; legal: BNS liability, DM Act duties; social: trust and calm communication.
WAY FORWARD	Apply the NDMA 2014 guide; mandatory crowd plans for big events; trained marshals; mock drills; post-event audits.

Mains value-add: S.2(d) of the DM Act, 2005 defines 'disaster' to include catastrophes from man-made causes — cite to argue that stampedes belong in disaster plans, not just police files.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. The National Disaster Management Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister.
2. The Disaster Management Act, 2005 covers only catastrophes arising from natural causes.
3. Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita deals with culpable homicide not amounting to murder.
Which of the statements given above is/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: the PM chairs the NDMA. Statement 2 is incorrect: S.2(d) of the DM Act covers natural and man-made causes. Statement 3 is correct: S.105 BNS punishes culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2020, GS3: "Discuss the recent measures initiated in disaster management by the Government of India departing from the earlier reactive approach."

▪ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** BNS: Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita | SIT: Special Investigation Team | HC: High Court | NDMA: National Disaster Management Authority | SDMA: State Disaster Management Authority | DDMA: District Disaster Management Authority | DM Act: Disaster Management Act | PM: Prime Minister | CM: Chief Minister | CCTV: closed-circuit television

Satellite Constellations Are Drowning Out Radio Astronomy

Why in news: A study in MNRAS finds LEO satellites of Starlink, OneWeb and China's Guowang leaking radio emissions that can swamp signals from space.

Story so far: The 17 Oct Brief covered the auction-versus-allotment debate on satellite spectrum. New today: evidence that constellations interfere with radio astronomy.

Key Details:

- **Method:** Australia's Mopra telescope and the ATCA tracked satellites for about 376 hours from April 2024, across 1–26 GHz.
- **Three kinds:** Emissions were classed as intended (including direct-to-cell signals), unwanted (out-of-band, harmonics) and unintended (onboard electronics).
- **Protected band hit:** A OneWeb signal at 1,613.19 MHz falls in the band used to study OH in space; some signals were 100 billion times brighter than typical sources.
- **Ask:** Regulate stray radiation as well as licensed transmissions, and monitor continuously as direct-to-cell services expand.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Persistent leak:** Unintended radiation at 2,700 MHz appeared in about 77% of observations of one Starlink satellite version.
- **Regulatory gap:** Existing international rules on radio transmissions could be extended to cover emissions from satellite electronics.

Three Kinds of Satellite Radio Emission

Category	Source	Example from the study
Intended	Licensed transmitters doing their job	Direct-to-cell signals
Unwanted	Transmitters leaking outside their band	Harmonics at multiples of the transmit frequency
Unintended	Electronics never meant to radiate	Power converters and onboard computers

Radio Astronomy and Spectrum Protection

- **What:** Studies radio waves from space, such as pulsars, the 21-cm hydrogen line and OH (hydroxyl) lines in gas clouds.
- **Global rules:** The ITU, a UN agency in Geneva, allocates spectrum through the Radio Regulations, revised at WRCs.
- **India's facility:** The GMRT near Pune, run by NCRA-TIFR, has 30 dishes of 45 m each and observes at metre wavelengths.
- **Quiet zones:** Radio-quiet zones around observatories limit local transmitters; satellites overhead escape such controls.
- **Not to confuse:** Radio interference with optical 'streaks' — sunlight reflected off satellites onto telescope images.

Prelims angle: The 21-cm line of neutral hydrogen (about 1,420 MHz) is one of the most strongly protected radio-astronomy frequencies.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on space technology, satcom and space governance; shows a trade-off between connectivity and science.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	LEO mega-constellations bring connectivity but crowd the sky and the spectrum.
BODY	Scientific: loss of faint signals; regulatory: gaps on unintended emissions; economic: direct-to-cell growth; diplomatic: need for ITU-level rules.
WAY FORWARD	Emission limits per satellite; shielding of electronics; data-sharing with observatories; India's voice at WRCs.

Mains value-add: The IAU set up the Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Sky from Satellite Constellation Interference (CPS) in 2022 — cite as the global science community's institutional response.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. The Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope is located near Pune and is operated by NCRA-TIFR.
2. 'Unintended radiation' from satellites refers to emissions at harmonics of their transmission frequency.
3. Frequency allocations among radio services are made globally through the ITU Radio Regulations.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: the GMRT is near Pune and run by NCRA-TIFR. Statement 2 is incorrect: harmonics are 'unwanted' emissions; 'unintended' radiation comes from onboard electronics. Statement 3 is correct: the ITU Radio Regulations allocate bands.

▪ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** MNRAS: Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society | LEO: Low-Earth Orbit | ATCA: Australia Telescope Compact Array | GHz: gigahertz | MHz: megahertz | OH: hydroxyl | ITU: International Telecommunication Union | WRC: World Radiocommunication Conference | GMRT: Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope | NCRA-TIFR: National Centre for Radio Astrophysics–Tata Institute of Fundamental Research | IAU: International Astronomical Union | CPS: Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Sky

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 3

CISF goes functional. From 1 November, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) will reorganise its sectors by function — power, coal, steel, petroleum and gas, ports, and government buildings and monuments — rather than by geography. It is also a Recognised Security Organisation for ports under the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code and the nodal agency for aerial security of critical infrastructure.

How to use: *GS3 (security of critical infrastructure): example of specialisation in internal security forces.*

A two-faced immune protein. National Institute of Immunology researchers, writing in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, found the protein RelB is needed to build gut cells that make IL-23, an alarm signal against microbes, yet it also suppresses regulatory T-cells. Drugs blocking IL-23 are frontline treatment for inflammatory bowel disease.

How to use: *GS3 (biotechnology, Indian research): shows why drug targets need careful study, since one pathway can protect and harm.*

Cold chain for perishables. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has asked food businesses to transport and store khoa, paneer, meat and fish under controlled temperature, citing hygiene norms in Schedule 4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011.

How to use: *GS3 (food processing, food safety): use on cold-chain gaps and the role of FSSAI.*

GS PAPER 4: ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

Justice Seen to Be Done: The CJI's Refusal and Judicial Propriety

Why in news: CJI Surya Kant declined Opposition leaders' request for a meeting about allegations against the CEC, citing separation of powers and judicial propriety.

Key Details:

- **Reasoning:** The issues were sub judice; an out-of-court meeting on pending cases would 'wholly contravene' separation of powers, part of the basic structure.
- **Proper route:** The CJI advised invoking the SC's judicial powers; a writ petition by Rahul Gandhi and 12 other Opposition leaders has since been registered.
- **Consistency:** The same standard was applied when a JPC on simultaneous elections proposed to meet judges while the Bill was pending.
- **Lesson:** Impartiality needs appearance as well as intent: past episodes of judges praising political leaders dented trust in judicial neutrality.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Open court:** Disputes heard in open court give both sides an equal say — audi alteram partem, a principle of natural justice.
- **Duty retained:** The CJI said citizens may seek enforcement of their rights 'at all hours through the procedure known in law'.

Codes of Judicial Conduct

- **Restatement (1997):** The Restatement of Values of Judicial Life, adopted by the SC's full court on 7 May 1997, guides judges' conduct.
- **Bangalore Principles:** Six values: independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, and competence and diligence (2002).
- **Global status:** The UN's ECOSOC endorsed the Bangalore Principles in resolution 2006/23.
- **Propriety:** Judges must avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all their activities.
- **Removal:** SC judges can be removed only by Parliament on proved misbehaviour or incapacity (Art 124(4)).
- **Not to confuse:** Recusal (a judge steps away from one case) with removal (Parliament ends a judge's tenure).

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS4 answers on impartiality, non-partisanship and codes of conduct; also fits GS2 answers on separation of powers.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Public trust rests on institutions being, and being seen to be, neutral.
BODY	Ethical: impartiality, propriety; constitutional: separation of powers; procedural: natural justice in open court; institutional: precedents that cost credibility.
CONCLUSION	Codified conduct norms, transparent procedures and restraint in public engagement sustain legitimacy.

Mains value-add: Lord Hewart in *R v Sussex Justices, ex parte McCarthy* (1924): justice 'should not only be done, but should manifestly and undoubtedly be seen to be done' — cite for the role of appearances in ethics.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Impartiality in public institutions depends as much on how decisions appear as on the intent behind them. Examine this statement with reference to judicial propriety and the conduct of other constitutional authorities. (150 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2020, GS2: "Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities."

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CJI: Chief Justice of India | CEC: Chief Election Commissioner | SC: Supreme Court | JPC: Joint Parliamentary Committee | ECOSOC: UN Economic and Social Council | Art: Article

THE WEEK IN ONE PAGE – 12 Oct – 18 Oct 2026

The past week's key concepts, one line each: a quick revision sheet.

Paper	Concept	Remember
GS1	**Sanskritisation**	Term coined by M.N. Srinivas in *Religion and Society among the Coorgs* (1952).
GS1	**Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925**	Made the SGPC a statutory body managing gurdwaras after the Akali movement.
GS2	**RTI Act, S.4**	Obliges public authorities to disclose information suo motu, without a request.
GS2	**DPDP Act, 2023**	Data Protection Board adjudicates breaches; penalties up to ₹250 crore per instance.
GS2	**Katchatheevu**	The 1974 India–Sri Lanka agreement placed the island on Sri Lanka's side.
GS2	**UAPA S.43D(5)**	Bars bail if the accusation is prima facie true (*Watali*, 2019).
GS2	**Tenth Schedule**	*Kihoto Hollohan* (1992): Speaker's disqualification decisions are open to judicial review.
GS2	**Art 39A**	Free legal aid; the LSA Act, 1987 created NALSA.
GS2	**BIMSTEC**	Set up by the 1997 Bangkok Declaration; seven members; Secretariat in Dhaka.
GS2	**NSAP**	Launched on 15 August 1995 as a Directive Principle (Art 41) welfare programme.
GS2	**PESA, 1996**	Extends panchayats to Fifth Schedule areas with the gram sabha at the centre.
GS2	**PAC**	22 members (15 LS + 7 RS); chaired by an Opposition MP by convention since 1967.
GS2	**Delimitation freeze**	84th Amendment (2001): seat shares frozen until the first Census after 2026.
GS2	**Art 240**	Lets the President make regulations for certain UTs, including Ladakh.
GS2	**OCI**	Citizenship Act, 1955 S.7A–7D; S.7D lists grounds for cancellation.
GS3	**Stockholm Convention**	Bans POPs; PFOS listed in 2009, PFOA in 2019.
GS3	**Inflation targeting**	RBI Act S.45ZA; CPI target 4% with a band of ±2%.
GS3	**AT1 bonds**	Basel III perpetual bonds that absorb losses; can be written down.
GS3	**Lagrange point L1**	About 1.5 million km sunward; Aditya-L1 orbits a halo around it.
GS3	**Export control regimes**	India joined MTCR (2016), Wassenaar (2017) and the Australia Group (2018).
GS3	**NGT**	Set up under the NGT Act, 2010; principal Bench in New Delhi.
GS4	**Nolan Principles**	Seven principles of public life (UK, 1995): selflessness to leadership.
GS4	**Conflict of interest**	UNCAC Art 8 calls for codes of conduct for public officials.