

THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 24 OCTOBER 2026

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PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

- Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2026** — Indian Navy's apex strategic dialogue, 3–5 Nov at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi; the National Maritime Foundation is the principal organiser.
- Land Warfare Doctrine 2026** — released by the Defence Minister at the Army Commanders' Conference (23 Oct); aligned with Defence Forces Vision 2047, it succeeds the 2018 doctrine.
- Asian Para Games 2026 (Aichi-Nagoya, Japan)** — India's best-ever haul of 114 medals (30 gold), surpassing 108 at Hangzhou.
- Pankaj Advani** — won his 29th world title in cue sports at the World Billiards Championship 2026, beating England's Robert Hall in the final.
- Asian Table Tennis Championships** — Harmeet Desai and Yashaswini Ghorpade assured India's first mixed doubles medal at the event since 1954.

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: GEOGRAPHY & GEOPHYSICAL PHENOMENA

A Cyclone Brews in the Bay: Why October–December Is Cyclone Season

Why in news: A low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal is expected to intensify into a cyclonic storm by 26 Oct and cross the south Odisha–north Andhra coast around 28 Oct; Odisha has cancelled officials' leave and kept NDRF and ODRAF on standby.

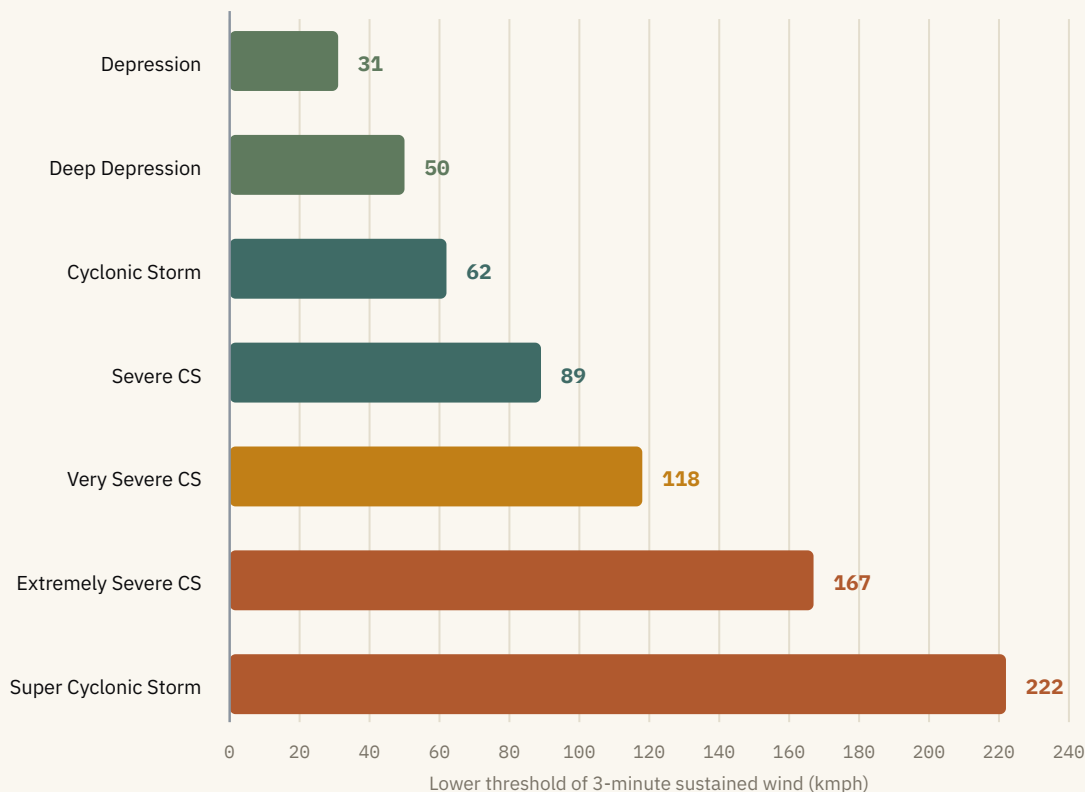
Story so far: The 11 Oct Brief covered how El Niño and a warm southern Bay could make the northeast monsoon extreme. New today: a Bay system is forecast to become a cyclonic storm, bringing red alerts for extremely heavy rain on the east coast.

Key Details:

- **Forecast track:** IMD expects a depression on 24 Oct, a deep depression on 25 Oct and a cyclonic storm over the west-central Bay on 26 Oct, moving west-northwest towards the coast.
- **Likely intensity:** The head of the Amaravati Meteorological Centre expects at least a severe cyclonic storm, with some models showing a very severe storm and a 1–2 m storm surge.
- **Why now:** After the monsoon withdraws, a warm Bay surface, the southward-shifting ITCZ and weak vertical wind shear favour cyclone formation.
- **Preparedness:** Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have cancelled leave, warned fishermen and positioned response forces — the zero-casualty playbook built since the 1999 super cyclone.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Seasonality:** North Indian Ocean cyclones peak twice a year — a primary peak in November and a secondary one in May (IMD).
- **Bay vs Arabian Sea:** The Bay of Bengal generates far more cyclones than the Arabian Sea, and its shallow, funnel-shaped head amplifies storm surges.

IMD classification: minimum sustained wind speed for each category (kmph)

Tropical Cyclones: IMD Classification and Naming

- **Who tracks:** IMD's RSMC New Delhi tracks and warns on cyclones over the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea for the region's countries.
- **Naming:** Names come from a list contributed by the 13 members of the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones; the current list of 169 names was released in 2020.
- **Categories:** From Depression (31–49 kmph) up to Super Cyclonic Storm (222 kmph or more), based on 3-minute average sustained winds.
- **Formation needs:** Warm sea surface (above about 26.5°C), enough Coriolis force (so not right at the equator), moist air and low vertical wind shear.
- **Not to confuse:** Cyclone categories (wind strength) vs IMD's colour-coded warnings (green, yellow, orange, red), which signal the expected impact and need for action.

Prelims angle: Storm surge — the rise of sea water pushed ashore by the cyclone — usually causes more deaths than wind, which is why evacuation of low-lying coasts comes first.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 answers on tropical cyclones and their distribution, and in GS3 disaster-management answers on early warning and evacuation.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	The post-monsoon Bay of Bengal is the world's most cyclone-prone basin for loss of life.
BODY	geographical (SST, ITCZ, shear, coastline shape); social (coastal poverty, fishers); economic (ports, crops); governance (IMD forecasts, State DM authorities, NDRF).
WAY FORWARD	Impact-based forecasting; multipurpose cyclone shelters; mangrove belts; the Sendai Framework's 'build back better'.

Mains value-add: The 1999 Odisha super cyclone killed nearly 10,000 people; for Cyclone Phailin (2013), the evacuation of about 10 lakh people kept deaths in double digits — cite to show how early warning plus evacuation saves lives.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean, consider the following statements:

- Names for these cyclones are assigned by RSMC New Delhi from a list contributed by member countries of the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones.
- A 'very severe cyclonic storm' has sustained winds of more than 222 kmph.
- Cyclone frequency in the region has a primary peak in November and a secondary peak in May.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: RSMC New Delhi names storms from the Panel's list. Statement 2 is incorrect: a very severe cyclonic storm has 118–166 kmph; 222 kmph or more is a super cyclonic storm. Statement 3 is correct: IMD describes this two-peak pattern.

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2022, GS-I: "Discuss the meaning of colour-coded weather warnings for cyclone prone areas given by India Meteorological Department." (150 words)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NDRF: National Disaster Response Force | ODRAF: Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force | IMD: India Meteorological Department | ITCZ: Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone | CS: Cyclonic Storm | RSMC: Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre | WMO: World Meteorological Organization | ESCAP: UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific | SST: Sea Surface Temperature | DM: Disaster Management

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 1

M7.0 earthquake in Tibet (22 Oct): A shallow quake (depth about 18 km) struck about 191 km east-northeast of Nagqu, north of Lhasa, at an altitude of over 4,500 m; at least 16 people were killed and hundreds of homes collapsed.

How to use: *GS1 answers on Himalayan seismicity — the continuing northward push of the Indian plate stresses the Tibetan plateau, a reminder for earthquake-resilient building in India's Himalayan States.*

GS PAPER 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**Voters Can Prosecute Candidates for False Affidavits: SC on Section 125A**

Why in news: The SC (Datta and Nagu JJ, judgment of 16 Oct) held that any voter can file a private criminal complaint against a candidate for false information or concealment in nomination papers under S.125A of the RP Act, 1951.

Key Details:

- **Holding:** S.195 CrPC, which lets courts act on certain offences only on a public servant's complaint, does not list S.125A — an omission the Court called deliberate; so a private complaint is valid.
- **Safeguard:** Frivolous complaints are for the magistrate to filter; ECI guidelines suggesting otherwise "do not bind" the Court.
- **On the facts:** The complaint against a Bidar MLA alleging a false address was still quashed, as the allegation stood rebutted — the ruling settles the law, not this case.
- **Why it matters:** It turns the voter's right to know into a right to enforce, strengthening the 2002 disclosure regime against hidden assets and criminal cases.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **S.125A:** Inserted in 2002: failure to furnish information, giving false information or concealing information in the nomination paper or affidavit is punishable with up to 6 months' imprisonment, or fine, or both.
- **Penalty debate:** The ECI has proposed raising the punishment to 2 years, arguing that 6 months does not deter.

Candidate Disclosure: Key Milestones

Year	Milestone	Effect
2002	Union of India v. ADR; S.33A and S.125A inserted	Voters' right to know; duty to disclose, offence for false disclosure
2003	PUCL v. Union of India	Struck down S.33B, which had limited disclosure
2015	Krishnamoorthy v. Sivakumar	Hiding criminal cases = undue influence (corrupt practice)
2018	Lok Prahari v. Union of India	Sources of income of candidate, spouse and dependants to be disclosed
2018	Public Interest Foundation	Parties to publicise candidates' criminal antecedents
2026	Madki v. Beldale	Private voters can file S.125A complaints

Candidate Disclosure under the RP Act

- **Form 26:** The sworn affidavit filed with nomination papers (under Rule 4A, Conduct of Election Rules, 1961) declaring criminal cases, assets, liabilities and education.
- **S.33A:** Requires candidates to disclose pending cases with charges framed and past convictions.
- **Corrupt practice route:** Concealment can be challenged in an election petition as 'undue influence' under S.123(2), which can void the election under S.100.
- **Not to confuse:** S.125A (a criminal offence tried by a magistrate, leading to punishment) vs an election petition (heard by the High Court, which can set aside the election).

Prelims angle: Election petitions under the RP Act are tried by the High Court, with an appeal lying directly to the SC (S.116A).

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on electoral reforms, criminalisation of politics and the voter's right to information; it shows citizen-led enforcement filling gaps in institutional enforcement.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Disclosure without enforcement is a paper tiger; the SC has opened enforcement to every voter.
BODY	legal (S.33A, 125A, S.195 CrPC); constitutional (Art 19(1)(a) right to know); institutional (ECI, magistrates); political (criminalisation, money power); risks (vexatious complaints).
WAY FORWARD	Raise the S.125A penalty (ECI proposal); time-bound trials; ECI verification of affidavits with tax and court data.

Mains value-add: *Union of India v. ADR* (2002): the voter's right to know a candidate's antecedents is part of freedom of expression under Art 19(1)(a) — cite to anchor disclosure in Fundamental Rights.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to disclosures by candidates under the Representation of the People Act, 1951, consider the following statements:

1. Furnishing false information in the nomination affidavit is punishable with imprisonment up to six months, or fine, or both.
2. A court can take cognisance of an offence under Section 125A only on a complaint by the Returning Officer.
3. Non-disclosure of criminal antecedents has been held by the Supreme Court to amount to 'undue influence'.

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: this is the S.125A punishment. Statement 2 is incorrect: the SC has held that any private person, including a voter, can file the complaint; S.195 CrPC does not cover S.125A. Statement 3 is correct: Krishnamoorthy (2015) held such concealment to be undue influence.

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2022, GS-II: "Discuss the procedures to decide the disputes arising out of the election of a Member of the Parliament or State Legislature under The Representation of the People Act, 1951. What are the grounds on which the election of any returned candidate may be declared void? What remedy is available to the aggrieved party against the decision? Refer to the case laws." (250 words)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SC: Supreme Court | JJ: Justices | RP Act: Representation of the People Act, 1951 | CrPC: Code of Criminal Procedure | ECI: Election Commission of India | ADR: Association for Democratic Reforms | PUCL: People's Union for Civil Liberties | MLA: Member of Legislative Assembly

AI to Guard Attendance in the Rural Jobs Scheme: VB-G RAM G and NMMS

Why in news: Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has launched an upgraded NMMS app with AI face verification, liveness detection and anti-tampering checks to stop fake attendance under VB-G RAM G.

Story so far: The 15 Oct Brief covered the 50 extra days of work for Forest Rights Act title-holders under VB-G RAM G. New today: the Centre tightens how attendance is captured, using AI.

Key Details:

- **The leak:** Photo-of-a-photo uploads, the same workers' images on several muster rolls, and mismatches in worker count and gender kept recurring despite face authentication.
- **New checks:** AI de-duplication flags repeated photos; wage lists and Fund Transfer Orders are held until flagged entries are checked; liveness detection rejects dummy images.
- **Inclusion safeguards:** Offline capture where networks fail, and an exception route for elderly workers, persons with disabilities or device failures.
- **The trade-off:** Tech-based checks cut leakage but can delay wages and exclude the genuine poor if exceptions are not used quickly — exclusion errors cost more than leakage.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **VB-G RAM G Act:** In force from 1 July 2026: 125 days of guaranteed work per rural household (up from 100 under MGNREGA), with Centre–State funding of 60:40 (90:10 for NE and Himalayan States).
- **NMMS:** Launched on 21 May 2021 for geotagged, photo-based attendance; made mandatory from 1 Jan 2023 for all works except individual-beneficiary works.

VB-G RAM G vs MGNREGA: What Changed

- **Guarantee:** Work rises from 100 to 125 days per household a year; the scheme remains a legal guarantee.
- **Funding:** Costs are shared 60:40 (90:10 for NE and Himalayan States); the Centre sets normative allocations and States bear any excess.
- **Farm-season pause:** Work can be paused for up to 60 days in aggregate during sowing and harvesting, to avoid labour shortages on farms.
- **Accountability:** The Gram Sabha must conduct a social audit at least once every six months.
- **Not to confuse:** Under MGNREGA (2005) the Centre bore the full cost of unskilled wages; VB-G RAM G shifts to shared funding with normative allocation.

Prelims angle: Social audit of works by the Gram Sabha was first made a statutory requirement under Section 17 of MGNREGA, 2005.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on welfare delivery, leakages and technology in governance; balance efficiency gains against exclusion errors in your conclusion.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Fake attendance drains rural jobs funds; the Centre now uses AI checks at the worksite.
BODY	governance (leakage, muster-roll fraud); technological (face authentication, liveness, offline mode); social (elderly, disabled, poor connectivity); federal (shared funding, State burden); accountability (social audit).
WAY FORWARD	Fast exception handling; real-time grievance redress; strong social audits; publish error and rejection rates.

Mains value-add: Meghalaya was the first State to enact a law making social audit of public services mandatory (2017) — cite to argue that community audits must complement, not be replaced by, digital surveillance.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY–MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, consider the following statements:

1. It guarantees 125 days of wage employment a year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer for unskilled work.
2. Its funding is shared between the Centre and the States in the ratio 60:40, and 90:10 for North-Eastern and Himalayan States.
3. It prohibits any pause in work during the agricultural season.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: the guarantee rose from 100 to 125 days. Statement 2 is correct: this is the funding pattern. Statement 3 is incorrect: the Act allows a pause of up to 60 days in aggregate during sowing and harvesting.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2011: "Among the following who are eligible to benefit from the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act'? (a) Adult members of only the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households (b) Adult members of below poverty line (BPL) households (c) Adult members of households of all backward communities (d) Adult members of any household" — Answer: (d).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** VB-G RAM G: Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) | NMMS: National Mobile Monitoring System | AI: Artificial Intelligence | MGNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 | NE: North-Eastern

UN Security Council's 'Deficit in Legitimacy': India Presses for Reform

Why in news: India's Permanent Representative Harish Parvathaneni told the UN General Assembly (22 Oct) that "authority derived from a victory eight decades ago cannot compensate for the deficit in legitimacy" of an unrepresentative Security Council.

Story so far: The 16 Oct Brief covered India's contest with Tajikistan for a 2028–29 UNSC seat, and the 23 Oct Brief noted Poland's support for India's bid. New today: India sharpens its case for reform in the annual UNGA debate.

Key Details:

- **Representation gap:** The Asia-Pacific Group, with over 60% of the world's population, remains under-represented; Africa and Latin America have no permanent seat.
- **Stalled process:** India said the IGN has "no text, no timeframe and no defined end goal" after more than a decade and a half.
- **India's position:** Expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories; adding only non-permanent seats would leave the "central imbalance" untouched.
- **Credibility:** With conflicts multiplying and the Council failing to act, India argues the UN's authority itself is "called into question".

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Only expansion so far:** The Council grew from 11 to 15 members by an amendment adopted in 1963 that came into force in 1965.
- **IGN:** Launched under General Assembly decision 62/557 (2008), with talks beginning in 2009; India has served eight non-permanent terms, the latest in 2021–22.

UNSC Reform: The Main Negotiating Positions

Group	Position
G4 (India, Brazil, Germany, Japan)	New permanent seats for themselves and Africa, plus more non-permanent seats
Uniting for Consensus (incl. Italy, Pakistan)	No new permanent members; more elected seats, some longer-term
African Union (Ezulwini Consensus, 2005)	Two permanent seats with veto and five non-permanent seats for Africa

Amending the UN Charter

- **Article 108:** An amendment needs a two-thirds vote in the General Assembly and ratification by two-thirds of members, including all five permanent members.
- **Article 23:** Sets the Council's size and lists the five permanent members; any change in size needs a Charter amendment.
- **Veto:** Under Art 27(3), substantive decisions need nine votes including the concurring votes of the permanent members; by practice, an abstention is not a veto.
- **Not to confuse:** The IGN take place in the General Assembly, not in the Security Council; and a GA resolution alone cannot change the Charter.

Prelims angle: Non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms and are not eligible for immediate re-election.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on reforming international institutions and India's multilateral diplomacy; pair the representation data with India's peacekeeping record.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	A 1945 Council for a 2026 world: legitimacy is the core problem.
BODY	representational (Asia, Africa); procedural (Art 108, P5 ratification); political (UfC opposition, P5 interests); effectiveness (vetoes, paralysis in conflicts); India's credentials (peacekeeping, economy, population).
WAY FORWARD	A text-based IGN with a timeline; G4–African coordination; interim steps like longer-term seats and veto-restraint initiatives.

Mains value-add: The African Union's Ezulwini Consensus (2005) demands two permanent seats with veto and five non-permanent seats for Africa — cite to show that India's G4 push needs African support to cross the two-thirds threshold.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the reform of the United Nations Security Council, consider the following statements:

1. The Council was expanded from 11 to 15 members by a Charter amendment that came into force in 1965.
2. An amendment to the UN Charter requires ratification by two-thirds of UN members, including all five permanent members of the Security Council.
3. The Intergovernmental Negotiations on Council reform are conducted within the Security Council.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: the 1963 amendment took effect in 1965. Statement 2 is correct under Art 108. Statement 3 is incorrect: the IGN are held in the General Assembly, launched by its decision 62/557.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** UN: United Nations | UNSC: UN Security Council | UNGA: UN General Assembly | GA: General Assembly | IGN: Intergovernmental Negotiations | G4: Group of Four | P5: Five Permanent Members

India–Azerbaijan Reset: Jaishankar in Baku

Why in news: EAM S. Jaishankar met President Ilham Aliyev and FM Jeyhun Bayramov in Baku (23 Oct), the first bilateral EAM visit since 2018, after ties soured over Azerbaijan's condemnation of Operation Sindoor.

Key Details:

- **Reset:** Both sides acknowledged earlier differences but agreed to deepen political consultations and expand trade, energy, connectivity and tourism; terrorism was also discussed.
- **Caucasus peace:** India welcomed the Azerbaijan–Armenia peace agreement, signalling support for stability in a region where it has ties with both.
- **Strategic logic:** Engaging Baku can loosen Azerbaijan's alignment with Pakistan and Türkiye, which backed Pakistan in May 2025.
- **Energy link:** ONGC Videsh has invested over US\$1.2 bn in Azerbaijan's ACG oil fields and the BTC pipeline.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Trade (2024):** About US\$958 mn: Indian exports \$224 mn, imports \$734 mn, mostly crude oil (MEA).
- **The rift:** On 7 May 2025, Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry condemned India's strikes on terror targets in Pakistan.

Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus

- **Geography:** Azerbaijan lies on the western shore of the Caspian Sea; its capital, Baku, is an oil hub.
- **Nakhchivan:** An Azerbaijani exclave separated by Armenian territory, bordering Armenia, Iran and Türkiye.
- **Conflict and peace:** Azerbaijan took full control of Nagorno-Karabakh in Sept 2023; the Washington Joint Declaration (8 Aug 2025) initialled a peace treaty with Armenia.
- **TRIPP:** The 2025 declaration set up a transit route through southern Armenia linking mainland Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan.
- **Not to confuse:** Caspian littoral States (Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Azerbaijan) vs Georgia (Black Sea coast) and Armenia (landlocked).

Prelims angle: The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline carries Caspian crude from Azerbaijan through Georgia to Türkiye's Mediterranean coast.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on India's Eurasian outreach, energy diplomacy and countering Pakistan's diplomatic coalitions.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	After a year of strain over Operation Sindoor, India is resetting ties with Azerbaijan.
BODY	strategic (Pakistan–Türkiye–Azerbaijan alignment); economic (oil, OVL investment); connectivity (Caspian, South Caucasus routes); regional (Armenia–Azerbaijan peace); multilateral (NAM, OIC positions on Kashmir).
WAY FORWARD	Regular political consultations; balance with Armenia; energy and connectivity projects; counter-terrorism dialogue.

Mains value-add: India's 'Connect Central Asia' policy (2012) set out a sustained push for political, economic and connectivity links with Eurasia — cite to place the Baku visit within a long-term strategy.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Azerbaijan is a littoral State of the Caspian Sea.
2. Nakhchivan, an exclave of Azerbaijan, shares a border with Iran.
3. Armenia has a coastline on the Black Sea.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: Azerbaijan borders the Caspian Sea. Statement 2 is correct: Nakhchivan borders Armenia, Iran and Türkiye. Statement 3 is incorrect: Armenia is landlocked; Georgia is the South Caucasus country on the Black Sea.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** EAM: External Affairs Minister | FM: Foreign Minister | ONGC: Oil and Natural Gas Corporation | OVL: ONGC Videsh Ltd | ACG: Azeri–Chirag–Gunashli | BTC: Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan | MEA: Ministry of External Affairs | TRIPP: Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity | NAM: Non-Aligned Movement | OIC: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 2

Odd entries in U.P.'s graduates' voter roll: The State CEO found 158 "strange" entries (such as a sentence in place of a name) out of 14,81,310 in the Allahabad Graduates' constituency roll for the Legislative Council polls, blaming a transliteration glitch and human negligence.

How to use: GS2 answers on Legislative Councils — Art 171 reserves 1/12 of Council seats for graduates of three years' standing and 1/12 for teachers; also an example of data-quality risks in electoral rolls.

Greece bans social media for under-15s: Greece's Parliament passed a law (23 Oct) barring children under 15 from social media from 1 Jan 2027, with mandatory age verification; Australia's under-16 ban began on 10 Dec 2025.

How to use: GS2 answers on child online safety — contrast with India's SC preferring targeted safeguards over blanket bans (18 Oct Brief).

Delhi HC on public toilets: The High Court held that access to hygienic public toilets is part of the right to life and proposed surprise inspections by social-work students of three institutions across the MCD area.

How to use: GS2 answers on Art 21's expanding scope and urban governance — civic bodies must maintain, not just build, sanitation facilities.

GS PAPER 3: ECONOMY & INTERNAL SECURITY

Counting Invisible Work: PLFS to Track Platform Workers and Unpaid Care

Why in news: MoSPI has proposed redesigning the PLFS from Jan 2027 to identify digital platform workers and capture unpaid household, caregiving, volunteer and trainee work, inviting comments within 15 days.

Story so far: The 17 Oct Brief covered women's labour force participation rising to 40%, and the 23 Oct Brief the gig workers' old-age security gap. New today: the main labour survey itself will start counting platform work and unpaid care.

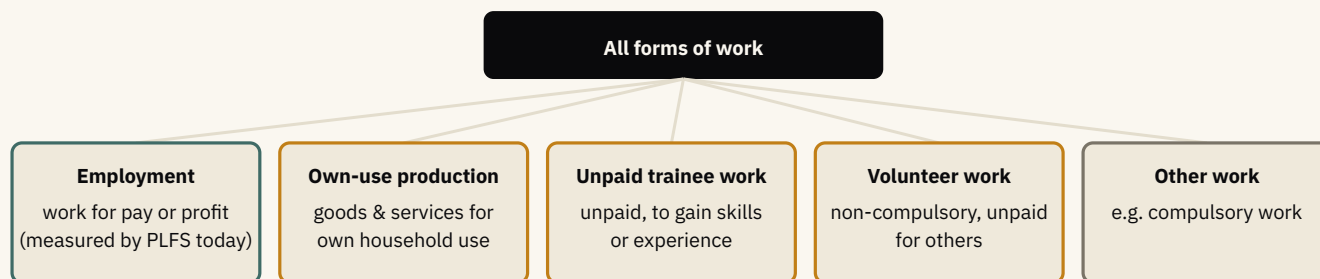
Key Details:

- **Platform workers:** A new Second Stage Stratum will oversample households with at least one platform worker, and every household will be asked a yes/no question on platform work.
- **Unpaid work:** A new block will cover own-use production, unpaid household and care work, volunteer and trainee work for those aged 15+, mainly affecting women's counted contribution.
- **Global alignment:** It brings India closer to the ILO's 2013 standards, which treat 'employment' (paid work) as only one of several forms of work.
- **Policy use:** Better data can guide social security schemes for gig workers under the SS Code and care-economy policies such as crèches and elderly care.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Time Use Survey 2024:** Women spent 289 minutes a day on unpaid domestic services against 88 for men, and 137 minutes on unpaid caregiving against 75 for men.
- **Survey design:** The sampling frame will be updated for 2027–28; the PLFS, launched in April 2017, has issued monthly bulletins since May 2025.

"Work" Is Wider Than "Employment": ILO Forms of Work (19th ICLS, 2013)



■ Amber: forms the redesigned PLFS (from Jan 2027) will add questions on — incl. unpaid household and care work

Forms of Work and the Production Boundary

- **19th ICLS (2013):** The ILO conference narrowed 'employment' to work for pay or profit and recognised other forms: own-use production, unpaid trainee work and volunteer work.
- **GDP boundary:** Under the 2008 SNA, own-use production of goods counts in GDP, but unpaid household services (cooking, cleaning, care) do not.
- **Time Use Survey:** MoSPI's survey of how people spend 24 hours; India conducted it in 2019 and 2024.
- **Not to confuse:** PLFS (labour status, earnings, unemployment) vs Time Use Survey (time allocation across activities, paid and unpaid).

Prelims angle: The PLFS reports labour indicators in two approaches: usual status (principal plus subsidiary activity) and Current Weekly Status (CWS).

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on employment data and the gig economy, and in GS1 answers on women's unpaid work; the time-use gap makes the point vivid.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	What is not counted is not valued: PLFS will now see platform and unpaid care work.
BODY	statistical (ICLS 2013, SNA boundary); economic (care economy, productivity); social (women's double burden); policy (SS Code schemes, crèches); federal (State labour policies).
WAY FORWARD	Regular time-use surveys; satellite accounts for unpaid work; gender budgeting informed by data; publish platform-worker estimates.

Mains value-add: SDG Target 5.4 calls on countries to "recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work" through public services, infrastructure and social protection — cite to link data reform to a global commitment.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the measurement of work, consider the following statements:

1. Under the resolution of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (2013), 'employment' is restricted to work performed for pay or profit.
 2. Unpaid domestic services produced by households for their own use are included in GDP under the System of National Accounts, 2008.
 3. According to India's Time Use Survey 2024, women spend more time than men on unpaid domestic services.
- 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: the 2013 resolution limits employment to paid work. Statement 2 is incorrect: own-use household services remain outside the SNA production boundary; only own-use production of goods is included. Statement 3 is correct: 289 vs 88 minutes a day.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2013: "Disguised unemployment generally means (a) large number of people remain unemployed (b) alternative employment is not available (c) marginal productivity of labour is zero (d) productivity of workers is low" — Answer: (c).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** MoSPI: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation | PLFS: Periodic Labour Force Survey | ILO: International Labour Organization | SS Code: Code on Social Security, 2020 | ICLS: International Conference of Labour Statisticians | SNA: System of National Accounts | GDP: Gross Domestic Product | CWS: Current Weekly Status | SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

LAC 'Disturbed' by PLA Patrolling: MEA Acknowledges Friction

Why in news: The MEA said the LAC situation "gets disturbed from time to time when Chinese forces diverge from established patrolling patterns", after the outgoing ITBP chief spoke of face-offs in Arunachal Pradesh since July 2026.

Story so far: The 14 Oct Brief covered China's objection to 28 Ladakh feature names. New today: the government officially acknowledges patrol friction along the eastern sector.

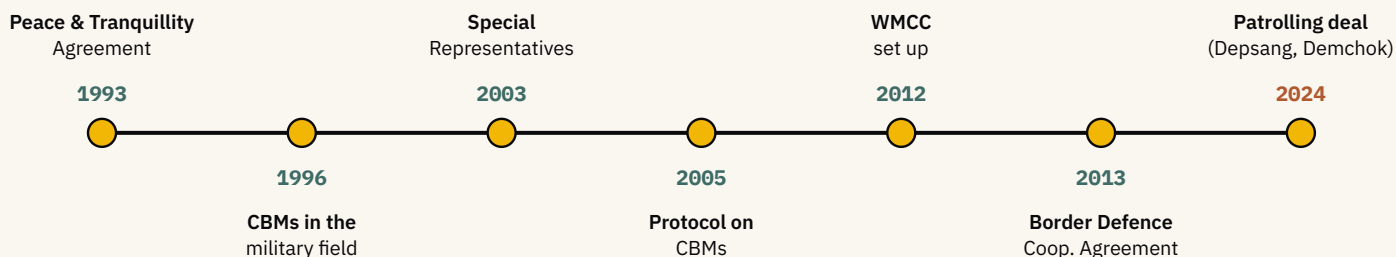
Key Details:

- **First admission:** This is the first official acknowledgement of continuing friction since the Oct 2024 patrolling arrangement and the Modi–Xi meeting at Kazan eased the standoff.
- **Root cause:** The LAC is not demarcated on the ground; overlapping claims make patrols meet, so face-offs arise even when both sides follow agreed rules.
- **Managing friction:** Both sides are using existing diplomatic and military mechanisms to avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation.
- **Strategic stakes:** Peace on the border remains India's stated precondition for normal ties, even as trade and investment links with China expand.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **The border:** The India–China border is 3,488 km long and guarded by the ITBP.
- **Special Representatives:** The SR mechanism dates from 2003; its 24th round was held on 19 Aug 2025.

Managing the LAC: India–China Agreements and Mechanisms



WMCC: Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India–China Border Affairs. Schematic timeline, not to scale.

India–China Border: Sectors and Lines

- **Three sectors:** Western (Ladakh, including Aksai Chin under illegal Chinese occupation), Middle (Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand) and Eastern (Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh).
- **McMahon Line:** Drawn at the Simla Convention of 1914; India treats it as the boundary in the east, while China rejects it.
- **ITBP:** Raised on 24 Oct 1962 after the war with China, it is a Central Armed Police Force under the MHA.
- **Not to confuse:** LAC (de facto line with China, undemarcated) vs LoC (with Pakistan, delineated under the 1972 Simla Agreement) vs the McMahon Line (claimed boundary in the east).

Prelims angle: The Galwan river, site of the 2020 clash, flows from Aksai Chin into the Shyok, a tributary of the Indus.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on border management and GS2 answers on India–China relations; the agreements timeline shows a dense framework that still depends on political trust.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Two years after disengagement, the LAC still gets "disturbed" by divergent patrolling.
BODY	security (undemarcated LAC, patrol face-offs); diplomatic (WMCC, SR talks); infrastructure (border roads, Vibrant Villages); economic (trade dependence); domestic (transparency and parliamentary oversight).
WAY FORWARD	Clarify the LAC on maps; strengthen border infrastructure and ITBP capacity; keep dialogue under the 1993–2013 agreements.

Mains value-add: The 1954 India–China Agreement on Trade and Intercourse with Tibet introduced Panchsheel, the five principles of peaceful coexistence — cite to contrast stated principles with the reality of border friction.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the India–China border, consider the following statements:

1. The India–China border is 3,488 km long and is guarded by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.
 2. The McMahon Line was drawn at the Simla Convention of 1914.
 3. The Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) was set up under the 1993 Agreement on Peace and Tranquillity.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. Statement 2 is correct: the line came out of the 1913–14 Simla Convention. Statement 3 is incorrect: the WMCC was set up by a separate agreement in Jan 2012; the 1993 agreement was the first framework for peace along the LAC.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** LAC: Line of Actual Control | PLA: People's Liberation Army | MEA: Ministry of External Affairs | ITBP: Indo-Tibetan Border Police | SR: Special Representatives | MHA: Ministry of Home Affairs | LoC: Line of Control | WMCC: Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India–China Border Affairs

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 3

RBI Bulletin and prices: Net FDI stayed positive at \$3.3 bn in Aug 2026; WPI inflation on the new 2022-23 base was 11.39% in Sept, while CPI inflation was higher in rural (6.08%) than urban (4.88%) areas.

How to use: *GS3 answers on inflation and capital flows — rural inflation outpacing urban signals food-price pressure; positive net FDI eases pressure on the rupee.*

Oil shock: Brent crude touched \$117.42 a barrel after Houthi attacks on Saudi energy and civilian infrastructure; India's crude basket averaged about \$120 a barrel in October so far (PPAC).

How to use: *GS3 answers on energy security and the fiscal deficit — oil-import dependence transmits West Asian conflict straight into inflation and subsidy bills.*

Delhi's pollution sources: Transport accounted for 20.3% of Delhi's air pollution, followed by residential sources (5.2%), industries (4.2%) and construction (2.6%), as AQI stayed 'poor' under GRAP Stage I.

How to use: *GS3 answers on urban air pollution — supports source-specific, hotspot-based action over blanket curbs.*

GS PAPER 4: ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE**'Police Have No Role Here': Impartiality Under Political Pressure**

Why in news: Kolkata Police Commissioner Ajay Kumar Nand said police have "no role" in deciding who can touch Durga idols at immersion — puja committees decide; police look after law and order — after the CM said only believers in Sanatana Dharma should touch the idols.

Key Details:

- **What he did:** He drew a clear line between the police's lawful mandate (public order) and religious gatekeeping, declining to enforce a faith-based test.
- **GS4 value:** A real-life example of impartiality and non-partisanship, two of UPSC's named foundational values for civil service, in a politically charged situation.
- **The limits:** He also noted committees were asked to follow the CM's instructions — showing how hard full neutrality is when political direction touches faith.
- **Why it matters:** A police force seen as neutral keeps the trust of all communities; one seen as partisan loses legitimacy exactly when it is needed most.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Nolan Principles (1995):** Objectivity: holders of public office must act impartially, fairly and on merit, without discrimination or bias.
- **Insulation:** The SC's Prakash Singh (2006) directives call for State Security Commissions to shield police from undue political pressure.

Impartiality and Non-partisanship

- **Impartiality:** Treating every citizen equally, without bias of religion, caste or politics, in applying rules and delivering services.
- **Non-partisanship:** Serving whichever government is in power faithfully, while not aligning with any party's political agenda.
- **Service rules:** Rule 5 of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 bars officers from taking part in politics and elections.
- **Not to confuse:** Neutrality (no political bias) vs indifference: civil servants must remain committed to constitutional values such as equality and secularism.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS4 answers on impartiality, political neutrality and ethics in policing; the 'limits' point lets you show a balanced, real-world view.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Impartiality is tested most when political directions touch faith.
BODY	values (impartiality, objectivity, non-partisanship); constitutional (equality, secularism, public order); institutional (police autonomy, Prakash Singh); societal (trust across communities).
CONCLUSION	Neutral enforcement of law, insulated from politics, is the foundation of legitimate policing.

Mains value-add: Max Weber's ideal bureaucracy rests on impersonal, rule-bound administration "without regard for persons" — cite to argue that neutral application of law is the essence of a professional civil service.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. "Impartiality is tested most when political directions touch matters of faith." Examine this statement with reference to the role of the police in a diverse society. (150 words)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CM: Chief Minister | SC: Supreme Court