

THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 3 OCTOBER 2026

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PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

1. **Ladakh place names** — the Centre and the UT administration standardised names of 28 places (11 peaks, 2 glaciers, 2 passes, among others) on the Survey of India map.
2. **Women's hockey, Asian Games 2026** — India beat China 1-0 for its first Asian Games gold since 1982 (Delhi), earning a direct berth at LA 2028.
3. **Recurve archery** — India's women's team (Kumkum Mohod, Ankita Bhakat, Kirti) won India's first-ever Asian Games recurve team gold, beating South Korea 5-3.
4. **LEAP-2** — Dhruva Space's second Launching Expeditions for Aspiring Payloads mission flew Indian payloads on SpaceX's Transporter-18 rideshare from Vandenberg, U.S.
5. **Vande Bharat Sleeper** — Railway Board approved a Bengaluru–Mumbai (CSMT) sleeper service, six days a week, via Anantapur, Kalaburagi, Solapur and Pune.

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

A Split Bench and Article 145(3): Who Should Hear the CEC Act Challenge?

Why in news: A two-judge SC Bench split on whether it could decide the challenge to the CEC and ECs Act, 2023, and sent the papers to the CJI to consider a Constitution Bench — after the petitions had waited since early 2024.

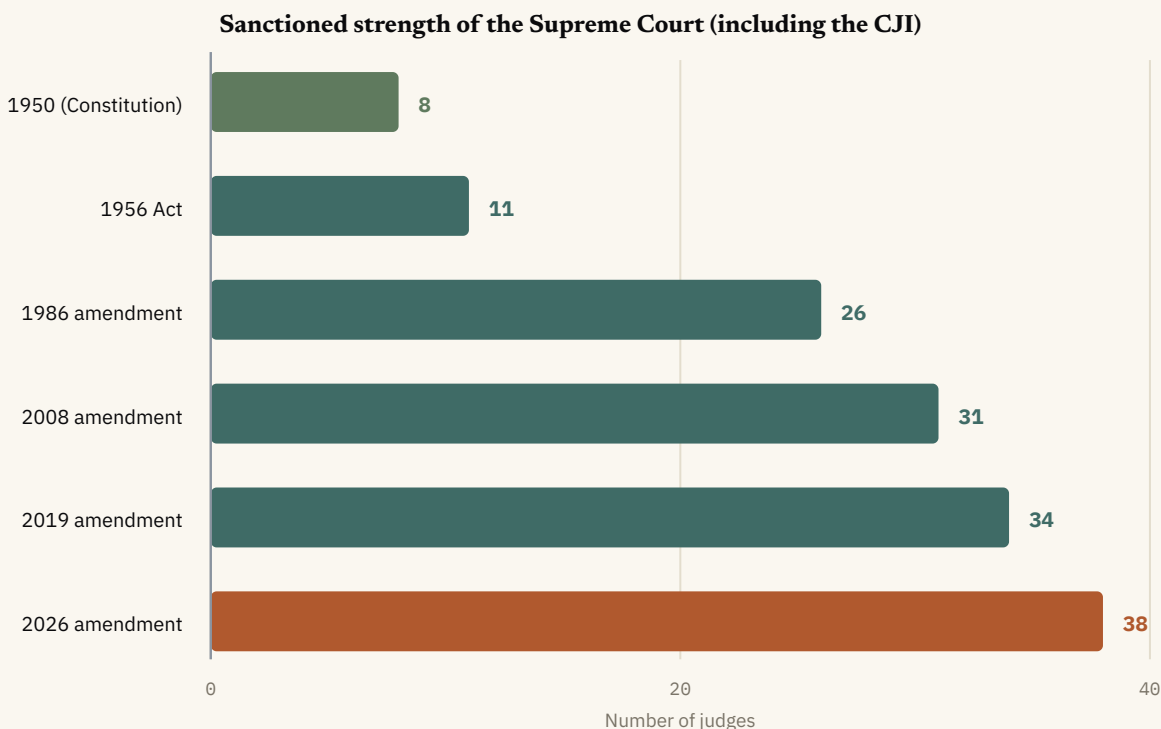
Story so far: The 1 Oct Brief covered the 2023 Act's majority rule and Section 16 immunity. New today: the constitutional challenge itself stalls on a question of Bench size.

Key Details:

- **The split:** Justice Dipankar Datta held two judges could apply the settled *Anoop Baranwal* (2023) principle; Justice Satish Chandra Sharma held a first challenge to a new statute needs five judges.
- **Union's shift:** Midway through the hearings in May, the Union argued the case raised a 'substantial question of law' under Art. 145(3) — a plea absent from its counter-affidavit.
- **Structural fault:** With a sanctioned strength of 38 judges sitting mostly in two-judge panels, the SC speaks as 'many courts' (Nick Robinson); Constitution Benches are formed only when judges can be spared.
- **Cost of delay:** By decision time, Commissioners appointed under the Act may have run several elections — a *fait accompli*.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Test of a constitutional question:** *State of J&K v. Thakur Ganga Singh* (1959): such a question arises only where rival interpretations of a provision are pressed.
- **Reform idea:** The Law Commission's 229th Report (2009) proposed a Constitution Bench in Delhi and four regional Cassation Benches for ordinary appeals.



Article 145(3) & Constitution Benches

- **The rule:** A case involving a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution must be heard by at least five judges.
- **Also covers:** References from the President under Art. 143 (advisory jurisdiction) must also go to a Bench of at least five.
- **Original design:** In 1950 the SC had eight judges, so five was a majority — the Court was meant to sit together on constitutional cases.
- **Strength:** Parliament fixes the number of judges by law under Art. 124(1); it rose from 8 (1950) to 34 (2019) and to 38 under the SC (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2026 (assent 12 August 2026).
- **Master of the Roster:** The CJI alone constitutes Benches and allocates cases (*Campaign for Judicial Accountability*, 2017; *Shanti Bhushan*, 2018).
- **Precedent ladder:** A larger Bench's ruling binds smaller Benches; a Bench of equal strength that doubts it must refer the matter to a larger one.
- **Not to confuse:** Art. 145(3) is about Bench size; Art. 141 makes the law declared by the SC binding on all courts.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (SC's functioning, judicial delays, separation of powers, independence of the ECI). The split shows how procedural rules on Bench size can decide whether constitutional review is timely or merely academic.

Mains value-add: Article 130 lets the SC sit in Delhi or at any other place the CJI appoints with the President's approval — cite it to show that regional benches need no constitutional amendment, only political will.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to the Supreme Court of India, consider the following statements:

1. Article 145(3) requires a minimum of seven judges to decide a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution.
2. A reference by the President under Article 143 must be heard by a Bench of at least five judges.
3. The number of Supreme Court judges can be increased by Parliament by ordinary law.

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: (b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is wrong: the minimum is five, not seven (larger Benches are formed by practice, not mandate). Statement 2 is correct: Art. 145(3) covers Art. 143 references. Statement 3 is correct: Art. 124(1) lets Parliament change the strength by ordinary law — most recently from 34 to 38 in 2026.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2021: "We adopted parliamentary democracy based on the British model, but how does our model differ from that model? 1. As regards legislation, the British Parliament is supreme or sovereign but in India, the power of the Parliament to legislate is limited. 2. In India, matters related to the constitutionality of the Amendment of an Act of the Parliament are referred to the Constitution Bench by the Supreme Court." — Answer (most keys): (c) Both 1 and 2.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SC: Supreme Court | CEC: Chief Election Commissioner | EC: Election Commissioner | CJI: Chief Justice of India | ECI: Election Commission of India | Art.: Article

Rules Framed for the National Tribunals Commission

Why in news: The Law Ministry notified the Members of Tribunals Rules, 2026, enabling the newly created National Tribunals Commission to appoint chairpersons and members to 16 tribunals and appellate bodies.

Key Details:

- **Selection:** Search-cum-selection committees assess candidates through expert evaluation, personal interaction and, where applicable, written exercises; filling of vacancies begins at least six months in advance.
- **Pay:** A tribunal chairperson gets ₹2.5 lakh a month and members ₹2.25 lakh; the rules also set a formal inquiry mechanism for misconduct.
- **The NTC:** Headed by a retired SC judge or retired HC Chief Justice, with two judicial and two technical members; based in Delhi.

- **Why now:** The SC struck down parts of the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 for breaching separation of powers and directed an independent commission.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Coverage:** The 16 tribunals include the CAT, NGT, NCLAT, NCDRC, AFT and ITAT.
- **Tenure:** Members serve five years or until age 70, whichever is earlier, under the 2026 Act.

From Madras Bar Association to the National Tribunals Commission

Milestone	What it did
<i>L. Chandra Kumar</i> (1997)	Tribunal decisions subject to HC writ jurisdiction; tribunals supplement, not supplant, HCs
<i>Madras Bar Association</i> (2010-2025)	Repeatedly struck service conditions that diluted independence; urged an NTC
Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021	Merged/abolished several appellate tribunals; key provisions struck down by the SC in November 2025
Tribunals Reforms Act, 2026	Creates the NTC (assent 13 Aug 2026) for 16 tribunals
Members of Tribunals Rules, 2026	Notified 30 Sept: selection, service conditions, inquiry procedure

Tribunals in India: Articles 323A & 323B

- **Origin:** Added by the 42nd Amendment, 1976 on the Swaran Singh Committee's advice, to ease the burden on courts.
- **Art. 323A:** Lets Parliament set up administrative tribunals for public-service matters — e.g. the CAT (1985).
- **Art. 323B:** Lets Parliament and State Legislatures set up tribunals for subjects such as taxation, land reforms and industrial disputes.
- **Judicial review:** *L. Chandra Kumar* (1997) held judicial review by HCs and the SC is part of the basic structure; tribunal orders go first to a HC Division Bench.
- **Independence test:** The *Madras Bar Association* line of cases insists on judicial dominance in selection and adequate tenure.
- **Not to confuse:** The NGT is a statutory tribunal (NGT Act, 2010), not created directly under Art. 323A or 323B.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (judiciary, tribunalisation, separation of powers). The NTC answers the SC's long-standing demand for an independent body to manage tribunal appointments and oversight.

Mains value-add: In *L. Chandra Kumar* (1997) the SC held tribunals can only 'supplement' and not 'supplant' the High Courts — cite it to frame any tribunal reform as subject to judicial review.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

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

1. Articles 323A and 323B were inserted by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act.
2. Decisions of the Central Administrative Tribunal can be challenged before a High Court.
3. The National Green Tribunal is established under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.

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: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: the 42nd Amendment (1976) added Part XIV-A. Statement 2 is correct: after *L. Chandra Kumar*, CAT orders go to a HC Division Bench, not directly to the SC — the common trap. Statement 3 is correct: the NGT is a statutory body.

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2018, GS2: "How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India."

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SC: Supreme Court | HC: High Court | NTC: National Tribunals Commission | CAT: Central Administrative Tribunal | NGT: National Green Tribunal | NCLAT: National Company Law Appellate Tribunal | NCDRC: National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission | AFT: Armed Forces Tribunal | ITAT: Income Tax Appellate Tribunal | Art.: Article

Gujarat's Uniform Civil Code Act Gets Presidential Assent

Why in news: The Gujarat Uniform Civil Code Act, 2026, passed by the Assembly in March, has received President Droupadi Murmu's assent and was published in the gazette on 1 October; it takes effect on a date the State will notify.

Key Details:

- **Scope:** A common framework for marriage, divorce, succession, live-in relationships and related matters; applies across Gujarat and to its residents living outside the State.
- **Exemptions:** Excludes Scheduled Tribes notified under Art. 342 and groups whose customary rights are protected under Part XXI.
- **Key rules:** Prohibits bigamy; mandatory registration of marriages within 60 days of commencement, with a fine up to ₹10,000; live-in relationships must be registered.
- **Customs kept:** Marriages may still be solemnised according to customary practices, religious beliefs and rites.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Second State:** Gujarat follows Uttarakhand, whose UCC Act (2024) was the first in independent India; Goa's civil code predates Independence.
- **Why assent:** Marriage, divorce and succession fall under Entry 5, Concurrent List; a State law that departs from central laws needs the President's assent under Art. 254(2) to prevail in the State.

Uniform Civil Code & Article 44

- **Text:** Art. 44 (a DPSP): the State shall endeavour to secure for citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.
- **Nature:** DPSPs are not justiciable (Art. 37) but are 'fundamental in the governance of the country'.
- **Constituent Assembly:** Adopted as draft Article 35 on 23 November 1948 after members such as Mohamed Ismail and Naziruddin Ahmad sought to exempt personal laws.
- **Key cases:** *Shah Bano* (1985) and *Sarla Mudgal* (1995) urged a UCC; the 21st Law Commission (2018) called it 'neither necessary nor desirable' at that stage.
- **Goa:** The Portuguese Civil Code of 1867 still applies in Goa — the oldest common civil law in India.
- **Not to confuse:** A UCC covers personal law (marriage, divorce, succession, adoption); criminal law is already uniform under the BNS.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (DPSPs, federalism, gender justice, minority rights) and GS1 (secularism, diversity). State-level UCCs with tribal exemptions show the tension between uniformity and constitutionally protected plurality.

Mains value-add: B.R. Ambedkar told the Constituent Assembly (23 Nov 1948) that the future Parliament might make the code applicable only to those who voluntarily consent — cite it to argue for a gradual, consent-based path to uniformity.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), consider the following statements:

1. Article 44 is a Directive Principle that is not enforceable by any court.
2. Uttarakhand was the first State in independent India to enact a UCC law.
3. Marriage and divorce are subjects in the Union List of the Seventh Schedule.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: DPSPs are non-justiciable under Art. 37. Statement 2 is correct: Uttarakhand's 2024 Act was the first after Independence (Goa's code dates to 1867). Statement 3 is wrong: marriage and divorce are in the Concurrent List (Entry 5) — which is why States can legislate and need presidential assent for conflicts.

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2015, GS2: "Discuss the possible factors that inhibit India from enacting for its citizens a uniform civil code as provided for in the Directive Principles of State Policy."

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** UCC: Uniform Civil Code | DPSP: Directive Principle of State Policy | BNS: Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita | Art.: Article

India's Model BIT, a Decade Later: Time for a Rewrite

Why in news: With a revised Model Bilateral Investment Treaty reportedly finalised and awaiting Cabinet approval, the debate is about what India has learnt since the restrictive 2015 Model, not simply more or less investor protection.

Key Details:

- **2015 model:** Born after the *White Industries* award (2011) and ISDS concerns; narrow definition of investment, regulatory carve-outs and five years' exhaustion of local remedies.
- **Recent practice:** New-generation treaties with the UAE, Uzbekistan and Israel show flexibility, e.g. three years for local remedies and State counterclaims.
- **MFN choice:** Most Indian treaties omit MFN; if added, its scope over dispute settlement must be precise — *Maffezini v. Spain* used MFN to skip an 18-month local-court rule.
- **Global shift:** UNCTAD notes a move towards investment facilitation and narrower protections; UNCITRAL Working Group III is weighing an ISDS appellate mechanism.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Budget signal:** The Union Budget 2025-26 announced that the Model BIT would be revamped to be more investor-friendly.
- **Drafting goals:** Clearer wording on expropriation and fair and equitable treatment, binding investor obligations, and pre-arbitration consultation.

Local-remedies requirement before an investor can go to arbitration

Instrument	Status	Wait to exhaust local remedies
Model BIT, 2015	Template for all negotiations	5 years
India–UAE BIT	Signed 2024	3 years
India–Israel BIA	In force since July 2026	3 years
India–Uzbekistan BIT	Signed 2024	Lets the State bring counterclaims against investors

Bilateral Investment Treaties & ISDS

- **What a BIT is:** A treaty in which two countries agree to protect each other's investors — against expropriation without compensation, unfair treatment and discrimination.
- **ISDS:** Investor-State Dispute Settlement lets a foreign investor sue a host State before an international arbitral tribunal.
- **India's turn:** After *White Industries* (2011) India adopted the 2015 Model and served termination notices on most older BITs (2016-17).
- **Standard clauses:** Fair and equitable treatment (FET), national treatment, MFN, expropriation compensation, free transfer of funds.
- **Bodies:** UNCTAD tracks investment treaties; UNCITRAL frames arbitration rules; ICSID (World Bank) hosts many ISDS cases — India is not an ICSID member.
- **Not to confuse:** A BIT protects investment after entry; an FTA or CEPA mainly opens markets for trade in goods and services.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (India's economic diplomacy, international institutions) and GS3 (FDI, investment climate). A balanced BIT protects the State's right to regulate while giving investors predictability.

Mains value-add: The *White Industries v. India* award (2011) found that nine years of delay in Indian courts denied 'effective means' of asserting claims — cite it to show that judicial delay, not just policy, drives investment-treaty risk.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to India's investment treaty practice, consider the following statements:

1. India's 2015 Model BIT requires an investor to pursue local remedies for a period before starting arbitration.
2. India is a member of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).
3. Investor-State Dispute Settlement allows a foreign investor to bring a claim directly against a host State.

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 2015 Model requires five years of local remedies. Statement 2 is wrong: India has not signed the ICSID Convention — a common trap. Statement 3 is correct: ISDS gives investors a direct right of action against States.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** BIT: Bilateral Investment Treaty | BIA: Bilateral Investment Agreement | ISDS: Investor-State Dispute Settlement | MFN: Most-Favoured-Nation | UNCTAD: UN Conference on Trade and Development | UNCITRAL: UN Commission on International Trade Law | ICSID: International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes | FDI: Foreign Direct Investment | FTA/CEPA: Free Trade Agreement / Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 2

SIR, by the numbers. Nearly 13.4 crore electors have been removed from draft rolls across 30 States/UTs (about 14% of the pre-revision electorate): 8.3% in Bihar, 12.9% in Phase 2 States and 17% in Phase 3. The EC has now directed BLOs to compare pre-SIR and current rolls and enrol left-out eligible voters through Form 6 within a month; West Bengal's 22.21 lakh tribunal appellants are excluded from this drive.

How to use: *GS2 elections: data for answers on the right to vote vs roll purification — continues the 1-2 Oct Briefs.*

Sickle cell severity score. CSIR-CCMB built an India-specific Severity Score (ISSI) from Indian children's data; a version using simple clinical markers matches about 85% with the lab-based score, helping clinicians without full testing.

How to use: *GS2 health: an example of context-specific medical tools supporting the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (2023).*

Vande Mataram challenge. A fresh SC petition (B.D. Borkar) seeks recognition of only the two-stanza version and quashing of MHA orders of 28 January and 9 July mandating all six stanzas.

How to use: *GS2 rights: shows Arts. 25 and 19 challenges to the 2026 national-honour framework (covered 2 Oct).*

GS PAPER 3: SECURITY, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**Kuki-Zo SoO Pact Lapses Into Abeyance in Manipur**

Why in news: A month after the one-year Suspension of Operations agreement with Kuki-Zo groups expired on 4 September, the Home Ministry has not renewed it, keeping the pact 'in abeyance' till all weapons are surrendered.

Key Details:

- **Centre's stand:** Weapons in civilian hands are seen as prime drivers of violence; Meitei and Naga groups, including Deputy CM Losii Dikho, seek abrogation.
- **Ground situation:** More than 40 people have died in Naga-Kuki clashes in Ukhrul, Kangpokpi and Kamjong since February, three days after President's Rule was revoked.
- **Security push:** About 30 more CRPF companies (around 3,000 personnel) and two CoBRA battalions are being deployed; the Home Minister visits Senapati on 7 October.
- **Humanitarian step:** Manipur's Cabinet approved ₹10 lakh each for families of 49 people missing since the conflict began on 3 May 2023.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Toll:** The conflict has claimed 306 lives and displaced more than 60,000 people, per the State Home Minister.
- **Last renewal:** On 4 September 2025 the Centre, State and Kuki-Zo groups re-signed the SoO on 're-negotiated terms'.

Suspension of Operations (SoO) Agreements

- **Origin:** The tripartite SoO with Manipur's Kuki groups was signed on 22 August 2008 by the Centre, the State and two umbrella bodies — the KNO and the UPF.
- **Coverage:** About 24 Kuki-Zo insurgent groups; the pact followed the 1990s Kuki-Naga clashes that killed hundreds.
- **Ground rules:** Cadres stay in designated camps, weapons are kept in double-locked storage, and members receive a monthly stipend.
- **Political demand:** The groups seek a separate administration (territorial council/UT) for Kuki-Zo areas; talks run alongside the SoO.
- **Not to confuse:** An SoO is a halt in operations pending talks; a ceasefire with the NSCN (IM) dates to 1997 and led to the 2015 Framework Agreement.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (internal security, Northeast insurgency, role of disarmament in peace processes) and GS2 (Centre-State coordination). The abeyance shows how peace agreements can turn into instruments of leverage.

Mains value-add: Article 355 casts a duty on the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance — cite it to frame the Centre's responsibility for both disarmament and a negotiated settlement in Manipur.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Suspension of Operations agreements have bought peace but not settlement in Manipur. Critically examine their role in the State's security situation and suggest a way forward. (250 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2025, GS3: "What are the major challenges to internal security and peace process in the North-Eastern States? Map the various peace accords and agreements initiated by the government in the past decade."

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SoO: Suspension of Operations | CM: Chief Minister | CRPF: Central Reserve Police Force | CoBRA: Commando Battalion for Resolute Action | KNO: Kuki National Organisation | UPF: United People's Front | UT: Union Territory | NSCN (IM): National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) | Art.: Article

GOBARDhan Scheme Launched to Multiply Compressed Biogas Output

Why in news: Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri formally launched the ₹23,731-crore GOBARDhan scheme, which aims for a ten-fold rise in CBG output by turning farm and organic waste into fuel.

Story so far: The 2 Oct Brief covered PNG Drive 3.0 and the goal of raising natural gas to 15% of the energy mix by 2030. New today: a supply-side push through domestic biogas.

Key Details:

- **Design:** Capital support plus guaranteed offtake is meant to make CBG plants commercially viable for processors of animal dung, crop residue, food waste and biomass.
- **Fuel swap:** CBG is designed to replace about 10 million tonnes of fossil fuel and cut over 40 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions.
- **Farm angle:** Puri said farmers can become 'Urjadas' (energy givers) besides 'Annadas', earning from residues often burnt in fields.
- **Gas mix:** Higher CBG supports raising natural gas from about 6-7% to 15% of the energy basket by 2030.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Blending:** Mandatory CBG blending in transport CNG and domestic PNG rises from 3% (FY27) to 5% from FY29, per the scheme notification.
- **Base:** Over 200 CBG plants have been commissioned under earlier initiatives such as SATAT.

GOBARdhan – National Circular Bioenergy Scheme at a glance

Parameter	Detail
Outlay & period	₹23,731 crore; FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36
Output target	CBG from ~0.4 mmscmd to 4-6 mmscmd (~10-fold)
Capital assistance	Up to ₹30 crore per project; greenfield ₹1.25 crore per TPD; brownfield 50% of that
Assured offtake	Up to 100% of eligible output at ₹2,110 per MMBtu (~₹98/kg)
Expected gains	~₹40,000 crore fuel imports saved; 1.5 lakh+ jobs; ~250 million tonnes organic manure

Compressed Biogas, SATAT & GOBARdhan

- **What CBG is:** Biogas from anaerobic digestion of organic waste, purified to over 90% methane and compressed — similar to CNG.
- **SATAT (2018):** 'Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation' — MoPNG initiative inviting entrepreneurs to set up CBG plants with OMC offtake.
- **GOBARdhan (2018):** Began under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) for village waste-to-wealth; now an umbrella scheme with MoPNG as nodal ministry.
- **By-product:** Fermented organic manure (FOM) from CBG plants can replace part of chemical fertiliser use.
- **Not to confuse:** CBG (biogenic methane) vs CNG (fossil natural gas) vs bio-CNG (marketing term for upgraded biogas); ethanol blending is a separate liquid-biofuel track.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (energy security, circular economy, stubble burning, farm incomes). CBG links waste management, air pollution and import substitution in one policy.

Mains value-add: The National Policy on Biofuels, 2018 (amended 2022) places CBG among advanced biofuels and allows a wide range of feedstocks — cite it to show the scheme fits a broader legal-policy framework.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to Compressed Biogas (CBG) in India, consider the following statements:

1. CBG is chemically similar to CNG as both are composed mainly of methane.
2. The SATAT initiative was launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
3. Fermented organic manure is a by-product of CBG plants.

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: purified biogas is over 90% methane, like CNG. Statement 2 is wrong: SATAT (2018) is an initiative of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas with OMCs — the MNRE trap. Statement 3 is correct: digestate becomes fermented organic manure.

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]:** CBG: Compressed Biogas | CNG: Compressed Natural Gas | PNG: Piped Natural Gas | TPD: tonnes per day | mmscmd: million standard cubic metres per day | MMBtu: Million British thermal units | SATAT: Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation | MoPNG: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas | OMC: Oil Marketing Company | MNRE: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

Buxa Gets Its First Reintroduced Tiger

Why in news: A three-year-old tigress, T138, translocated from Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve, was released in West Bengal's Buxa Tiger Reserve on 2 October — the first of seven tigers to be relocated over two years.

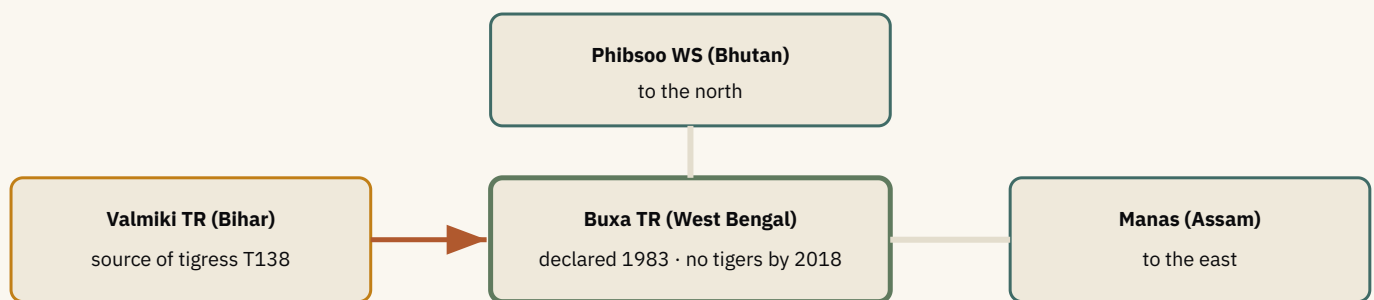
Key Details:

- **Why Buxa lost tigers:** Habitat degradation, fragmentation, land-use change and a decline in prey left no resident tiger population; NTCA found none in Buxa, Dampa and Palamau by 2018.
- **Groundwork:** Since 2018, chital were reintroduced, canopies opened to revive grasslands, and some villagers relocated to reduce conflict.
- **Monitoring:** T138 will be tracked through telemetry, camera traps and field monitoring for movement, adaptation, health and behaviour.
- **Pressures:** Settlements, revenue villages, tea estates, a railway route through elephant habitat and Bhutan-bound road traffic fragment the reserve.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Corridor:** Buxa links Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary in Bhutan to the north and Manas in Assam to the east (see diagram).
- **Critique:** The reactive model (Sariska, Panna, now Buxa) acts after tigers vanish; success means breeding, not just survival of released animals.

Buxa's place in a cross-border tiger landscape



Plan: seven tigers relocated over two years; grey lines = wildlife corridors

Schematic diagram, not to scale

Project Tiger & the NTCA

- **Origin:** Project Tiger was launched on 1 April 1973 with nine reserves, including Corbett, Manas, Palamau and Sunderbans.
- **NTCA:** A statutory body set up in 2006 by amending the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; chaired by the Union Environment Minister.
- **Core and buffer:** Each tiger reserve has a core/critical tiger habitat kept inviolate and a buffer zone allowing co-existence with people.
- **Monitoring:** The All-India Tiger Estimation is held every four years; India has around 75% of the world's wild tigers.
- **Reintroductions:** Sariska (2008) and Panna (2009) were repopulated after local extinction — Buxa follows that model.
- **Not to confuse:** Tiger reserves are notified by States on NTCA's advice under Sec. 38V of the WPA; national parks and sanctuaries are separate categories.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (biodiversity conservation, human-wildlife conflict, transboundary corridors). Buxa illustrates the shift from preventive habitat protection to costly reintroduction — and its social costs for forest dwellers.

Mains value-add: The Forest Rights Act, 2006 requires that relocation from critical wildlife habitats be voluntary, with informed consent of the Gram Sabha — cite it to argue reintroduction must not override forest dwellers' rights.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to tiger conservation in India, consider the following statements:

1. The National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. Buxa Tiger Reserve is located in Assam.
3. Tigers have earlier been reintroduced in Sariska and Panna after local extinction.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: the NTCA was created by the 2006 amendment to the WPA. Statement 2 is wrong: Buxa is in West Bengal's Alipurduar district; Manas is the neighbouring reserve in Assam — a location trap. Statement 3 is correct: Sariska (2008) and Panna (2009) were repopulated.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2020: "Among the following Tiger Reserves, which one has the largest area under 'Critical Tiger Habitat'? (a) Corbett (b) Ranthambore (c) Nagarjunsagar-Srisaillam (d) Sunderbans" — Answer: (c).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** TR: Tiger Reserve | NTCA: National Tiger Conservation Authority | WS: Wildlife Sanctuary | WPA: Wildlife (Protection) Act | Sec.: Section

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 3

U.S. 'forced labour' tariff. USTR has levied a 10% tariff on Indian imports for not doing enough to bar goods made with forced labour and is probing 60 countries for 'structural excess capacity'. At the G20 Trade Ministers' meet, Piyush Goyal cited Art. 23, India's ratification of ILO Conventions 29 and 105, and a July amendment to the Foreign Trade Policy banning such imports.

How to use: *GS3 external sector/GS2 IR: an example of labour standards used as trade barriers — argue for WTO-consistent, evidence-based measures.*

UPI, H1 FY27. UPI volumes rose 27% to about 145 billion transactions in April-September; value grew 20% to ₹177 lakh crore. September saw a 1.7% month-on-month dip in volume.

How to use: *GS3 digital economy: evidence of deepening digital payments ahead of the MDR regime (covered 29 Sept).*

G7 oil release. G7 nations plan to release 100 million barrels of oil and fuel products through the IEA, with front-loaded diesel within 20 days, as the Iran war pushes up prices.

How to use: *GS3 energy security: shows strategic reserves as a coordinated price tool — useful for India's SPR answers.*

Pay polluters, pay the poor. Economist Michael Greenstone (with Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo) proposes OECD countries pay climate damages directly to people in the Global South — conditional on those countries pricing carbon. He cites Surat's particulate-matter emissions trading scheme with the GPCB, where compliance rose to about 99%.

How to use: *GS3 climate finance: a market-based alternative to loss-and-damage debates; pair with India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme.*

FPI outflow. Foreign portfolio investors pulled out ₹35,860 crore from Indian equities in September, taking 2026 net withdrawals to about ₹2.7 lakh crore.

How to use: *GS3 external sector: data for answers on volatility of portfolio flows vs stable FDI.*

GS PAPER 4: ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE**Captain Smit Machchhar: Duty Under the Knife**

Why in news: PM Modi spoke to Captain Smit Machchhar, the Indian flydubai pilot who, though stabbed by his co-pilot, opened the cockpit door so passengers could overpower the attacker and land 174 people safely.

Key Details:

- **The act:** Lying injured on the cockpit floor as the plane lost altitude, he chose to make 'one last try' to open the door rather than save himself.
- **His words:** 'Although I was thinking of saving myself, I could not bear to think of what would happen to others if I didn't act.'
- **Inner resource:** With 17 years of flying, he says he recites the Hanuman Chalisa in difficulty — an example of self-regulation under extreme stress.
- **GS4 linkage:** A clear exemplar of courage, dedication to duty and emotional intelligence — staying composed and acting for others in a life-and-death moment.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **PM's framing:** Modi called it a lesson to the world in ahimsa: Indians are 'willing to risk their lives to save others'.
- **Recognition:** Israel's PM credited the captain and passengers with averting catastrophe; probes in the UAE and Israel continue on the attacker's motive.

Emotional Intelligence & Moral Courage

- **Origin:** Popularised by Daniel Goleman (1995), building on Salovey and Mayer (1990).
- **Goleman's five components:** Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.
- **Moral courage:** Acting on one's values despite personal risk — distinct from physical bravery alone.
- **In public service:** Crisis leadership needs calm judgement, clear communication and placing others' safety first.
- **Syllabus link:** UPSC GS4 lists 'emotional intelligence — concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance'.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS4 answers on courage of conviction, duty of care and emotional intelligence in crisis management; the same qualities apply to civil servants in disasters and law-and-order emergencies.

Mains value-add: Aristotle treated courage as the mean between cowardice and recklessness — cite it to show the captain's act as calculated duty, not blind daring.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. "Courage is not the absence of fear but acting rightly in spite of it." With reference to a recent example, discuss the role of emotional intelligence and sense of duty in decision-making during a crisis. (150 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2021, GS4: "In case of a crisis of conscience does emotional intelligence help to overcome the same without compromising the ethical or moral stand that you are likely to follow? Critically examine."

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** PM: Prime Minister

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 4

Absenteeism in public health. Andhra Pradesh dismissed 70 government doctors absent without leave for over a year; an audit found 493 doctors and staff absent, and 78 have rejoined subject to penalties.

How to use: *GS4 work culture/accountability: an example of enforcing dedication to public service and quality of service delivery.*