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TODAY'S COVERAGE

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PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

1. Under Article 324(5), the Chief Election Commissioner can be removed only in the manner and on the grounds applicable to a Supreme Court judge (Article 124(4)) -- a more insulated process than removal of other Election Commissioners.
2. Section 8(6) of the DPDP Act, 2023 and Rule 7 of the DPDP Rules, 2025 -- India's statutory data-breach notification regime -- will not come into force until 13 May 2027.
3. The Cauvery Water Management Authority (2018) and its Cauvery Water Regulation Committee function under the Ministry of Jal Shakti to enforce the Supreme Court-modified 2018 Cauvery award.
4. The National Medical Commission, set up under the NMC Act, 2019, replaced the Medical Council of India and works through four autonomous Boards -- UGMEB, PGMEB, MARB and EMRB.
5. Ladakh, a Union Territory without a legislature since 2019, has had its two original districts (Leh, Kargil) expanded toward eight, with six new districts announced in October 2026 ahead of fresh Hill Council elections.

HOW TO READ THIS BRIEF

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

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER I

A Distant Pacific Pattern May Be Drying North India

Why in news: An IMD-IITM study (MAUSAM, Oct 2026) links a lesser-known Pacific Ocean pattern, the 'Victoria Mode' (VM), to the shrinking of milder climate zones and the growth of semi-arid steppe across northwest and northeast India since 1951-2020.

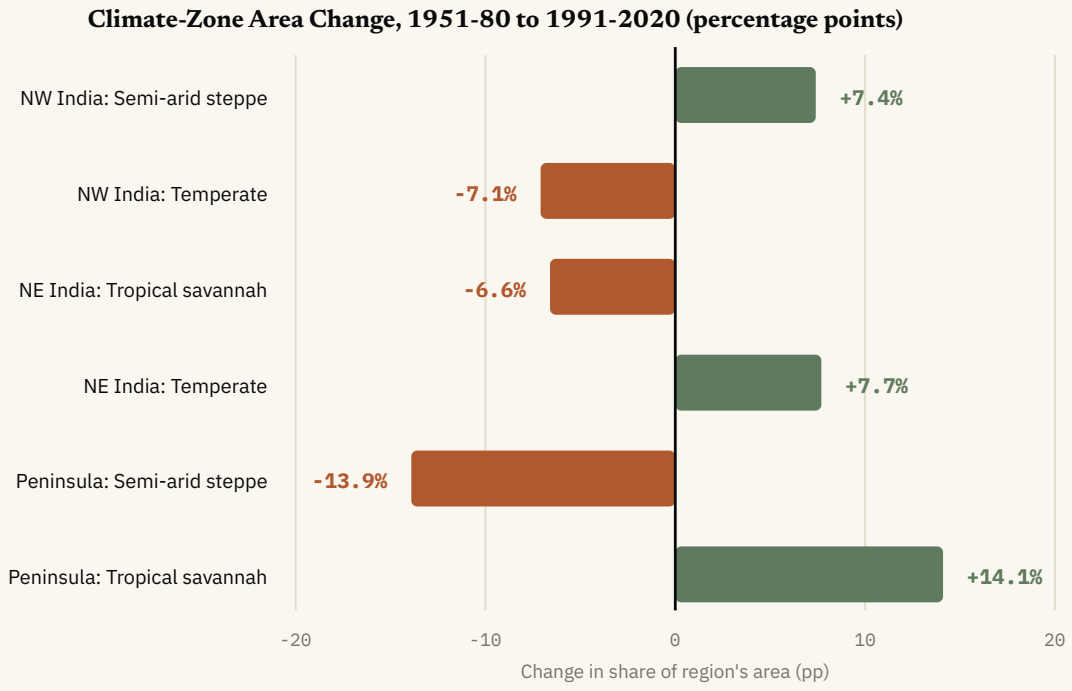
Story so far: The Brief traced this year's historically strong El Niño and its ~12% monsoon shortfall on 1 Oct, and a contrasting signal for Tamil Nadu's winter rain on 11 Oct; today's study adds a second, independent Pacific driver -- the Victoria Mode -- behind the same drying trend in the north.

Key Details:

- **The Victoria Mode:** a recurring pattern of warm/cool surface water in the North Pacific, distinct from the better-known Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO).
- **Interaction with ENSO:** when VM and El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) are 'in phase', their monsoon effects reinforce each other; 'out of phase', they offset.
- **Method:** scientists classified India into climate types on IMD's 0.25° gridded records, comparing 1951-80 with 1991-2020.
- **Compounding event:** a historically strong ongoing El Niño has independently cut 2026 monsoon rainfall by 12%.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **NW India:** hot semi-arid 'steppe' zone grew from 25.7% to 33.1% of the region's area; the milder 'temperate' zone shrank from 25.8% to 18.7%.
- **Northeast India:** warm 'tropical savannah' zone fell from 18.4% to 11.8%, while 'temperate' rose from 74.8% to 82.5%; Gangetic West Bengal shifted from savannah to temperate.
- **Peninsular India:** hot semi-arid steppe fell sharply from 30.3% to 16.4%, while tropical savannah rose from 61.6% to 75.7% -- the opposite trend to the north.



THE PACIFIC DECADAL OSCILLATION & OCEAN-ATMOSPHERE TELECONNECTIONS

- **PDO:** a multi-decadal (20-30 year) pattern of Pacific Ocean surface temperature, warm or cool phase, distinct from the shorter 2-7 year ENSO cycle.
- **ENSO:** El Niño (warm) and La Niña (cool) phases of the Central-Eastern Pacific, the best-studied driver of Indian monsoon variability.
- **Victoria Mode:** a North Pacific pattern distinct from both, increasingly implicated in Indian climate-zone shifts.
- **Teleconnection:** a climate link between weather in distant regions via atmospheric/oceanic circulation -- the general mechanism behind all three patterns' influence on India.

Prelims angle: A Prelims question could ask you to match a described ocean pattern (PDO/ENSO/Victoria Mode) to its correct identity, or to pick the zone (north vs peninsula) showing the opposite climatic trend.

Distinguish VM, PDO and ENSO as three separate ocean-atmosphere patterns, and note that India's climate shift is geographically differentiated -- the north is drying while peninsular India's tropical zone is expanding -- so all-India rainfall averages can mask opposite regional trends.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Distinguish VM/PDO/ENSO as three separate Pacific ocean-atmosphere drivers of Indian climate.
BODY	(a) Mechanism -- in/out-of-phase interaction with ENSO; (b) Evidence -- regionally differentiated zone-area shifts; (c) Implications -- food security and displacement risk in drying zones.
CONCLUSION	Region-specific adaptation planning is needed; all-India rainfall averages mask opposite north-south trends.

Mains value-add: A 2026 IMD-IITM study (MAUSAM) found Northwest India's semi-arid zone expanded from 25.7% to 33.1% of the region's area between 1951-80 and 1991-2020 -- a concrete, quotable statistic for a Mains answer on climate-zone shifts beyond rainfall-deficit figures alone.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to large-scale ocean-atmosphere patterns affecting Indian climate, consider the following statements:
1. The Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) and the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) are the same phenomenon operating on different timescales.
2. The 'Victoria Mode' is a recurring pattern of warm and cool surface water in the North Pacific, distinct from the PDO.
3. When the Victoria Mode and ENSO are 'in phase', their effects on Indian monsoon rainfall are mutually reinforcing.
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 incorrect: PDO and ENSO are related but distinct basin-scale phenomena, not the same thing on different timescales -- a common conflation. Statement 2 is correct: the Victoria Mode is explicitly separate from the 'better-known' PDO. Statement 3 is correct: in-phase VM-ENSO interactions reinforce the usual El Niño-monsoon link.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2002 asked which event, detected in the last decade, is associated with occasional weak monsoon rains in the Indian subcontinent -- the keyed answer was El Niño and Southern Oscillation. Today's Victoria Mode finding supplements, rather than replaces, that same ENSO-monsoon link.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** VM: Victoria Mode | PDO: Pacific Decadal Oscillation | ENSO: El Niño-Southern Oscillation | IITM: Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology

Kutch's Vanishing Camels: A Warning for India's Pastoral Economy

Why in news: A photo-essay from Gujarat's Kutch district documents a steep decline in camel numbers -- from a peak of 17,639 in the 1992 Livestock Census to fewer than 200 sighted at this year's flagship camel fair -- driven by industrialisation, mining and shrinking grazing commons.

Key Details:

- **Kutch:** at 45,674 sq km, India's largest district -- larger than States such as Haryana and Kerala -- yet unable to protect its camel population.
- **Pressure on commons:** solar/wind projects, and mining of lignite, bauxite, china clay and gypsum have depleted forest/grazing land since the 1980s-90s.
- **Invasive species:** the spread of Prosopis juliflora has further degraded grazing habitat.
- **Why camels specifically:** camels are browsers dependent on tree/shrub foliage, unlike cattle or goats with wider forage options, making habitat loss a disproportionate threat.
- **Value-chain gap:** camel milk has recognised nutraceutical value, but herders report poor farm-gate prices even as camel-milk-based products sell at a premium.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Peak population:** 17,639 camels recorded in Kutch in the 1992 Livestock Census, the highest on record; decline accelerated after 2010, per a Bhuj-based NGO.
- **Fair attendance:** the annual Bhed Mata Vijay Camel Fair at Kotda-Chakar drew 'thousands' of camels in the 1980s-90s; fewer than 200 were seen this year.

PASTORALISM & COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

- **CPR:** land/water/forest resources collectively used and managed by a community rather than owned individually or by the State.
- **Transhumance:** seasonal movement of livestock between grazing grounds -- the traditional pastoral practice now squeezed by land diversion.
- **Livestock Census:** conducted every 5 years by the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying; 21st Census in 2019.
- **Policy response:** Rashtriya Gokul Mission and the National Livestock Mission support indigenous-breed conservation; GI tags (e.g., for specific breeds) aid market recognition.

Prelims angle: A map/fact-based MCQ could ask you to match India's indigenous camel breeds (Bikaneri, Jaisalmeri, Kachchhi, Kharai, Marwari) to their home regions.

Frame this as a case of common-property-resource (CPR) erosion: pastoral grazing rights have no codified protection comparable to the Forest Rights Act, 2006, leaving indigenous livestock breeds exposed to land diverted for industry and renewables.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Shrinking commons and industrial/renewable-energy land pressure are squeezing traditional pastoralism.
BODY	(a) Ecological role of browsing livestock; (b) Economic/livelihood gap in the value chain; (c) Policy gap -- no codified grazing-rights law akin to the FRA.
CONCLUSION	Codified common-land/grazing rights for pastoral communities, alongside GI-backed market linkages, are needed to arrest the decline.

Mains value-add: Quote the specific figures -- 17,639 camels (1992 peak) now down to under 200 sighted at Kutch's flagship fair -- as a ready statistic for a GS3 answer on loss of livestock genetic diversity or a GS1 answer on land-use conflict with pastoralism.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY-MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements about India's indigenous camel breeds and their enumeration:
1. The Kharai breed of camel, found in Gujarat's Kutch region, is known for its ability to swim in coastal creeks and feed on mangrove vegetation.
2. India's Livestock Census is conducted every five years.
3. Rajasthan has declared the camel its State Animal and restricts its slaughter and unregulated export.
How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (c) All three

Explanation: All three statements are correct. The Kharai is a distinct Kutch breed adapted to mangrove/coastal foraging and swimming (1). The Livestock Census is quinquennial, the 21st held in 2019 (2). Rajasthan's 2015 Act made the camel its State Animal with slaughter/export curbs (3) -- this question has no false statement by design, to test comprehensive recall rather than trap-spotting alone.

- **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CPR: Common Property Resource

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER I

IMD's 25 October bulletin said a Bay of Bengal low-pressure system is very likely to intensify into a 'very severe cyclonic storm' and cross the Andhra Pradesh coast between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam around the morning of 28 October, with sustained winds of 115-125 kmph gusting to 140 kmph; red alerts were issued for 12 Andhra Pradesh and 5 Odisha districts, with Odisha deploying 60 Disaster Rapid Action Force and 17 NDRF units under a 'zero casualty' target.

How to use: *Quote IMD's wind-speed thresholds (a 'very severe cyclonic storm' spans 118-166 kmph) alongside this live example to show applied knowledge of India's cyclone-classification and disaster-response architecture in a GS1/GS3 answer.*

A thick layer of toxic foam was seen covering the Yamuna in Delhi amid haze on 25 October -- a recurring pre-winter phenomenon linked to high ammonia/phosphate loads from untreated sewage and industrial effluent discharged upstream.

How to use: *Cite this as a live example of non-point-source river pollution and the Yamuna Action Plan's unfinished mandate in a GS1/GS3 answer on river rejuvenation.*

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER II

Can Parliament Remove the Chief Election Commissioner? The Article 324(5) Route

Why in news: With the INDIA bloc announcing a 'public impeachment proceeding' against CEC Gyanesh Kumar on 30 October over the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, the demand has reopened the constitutional question of how -- and on what grounds -- a CEC can actually be removed.

> **Story so far:** The Brief flagged a Kerala Assembly resolution on CEC removal in its 13 Oct quick facts and covered the CJI's declining to meet Opposition leaders over the issue on 19 Oct; today's 'public impeachment' announcement is the next step in this still-unresolved stand-off.

Key Details:

- **Article 324(5):** the CEC can be removed only 'in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court' -- i.e., via the Article 124(4) impeachment-style process in Parliament.
- **Asymmetric safeguard:** other Election Commissioners can be removed on the CEC's own recommendation -- a safeguard the CEC himself does not enjoy from anyone but Parliament.
- **No constitutional standing for a 'public' impeachment:** only a formal Parliamentary motion carries legal effect; a rally or political announcement is pressure, not constitutional process.

- **A separate question: appointment:** the CEC and Other ECs Act, 2023 changed how the CEC is appointed (Selection Committee), which is often conflated in public debate with the distinct question of removal.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Removal threshold:** Article 124(4): a motion needs a majority of the total membership of each House AND two-thirds of members present and voting, in the same session, addressed to the President.
- **No precedent:** no sitting CEC has ever been removed via Article 324(5) in India's history since 1950 -- this would be a first if actually pursued to a vote.
- **Origin of the 2023 Act:** it followed the Constitution Bench ruling in Anoop Baranwal v Union of India (2023), which had interim-directed a PM + Leader of Opposition + CJI selection panel until Parliament legislated.

Appointment vs Removal of the CEC: Two Different Safeguards

Mechanism	Who decides	Legal basis
Appointment	Selection Committee: PM, a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by PM, Leader of Opposition (Lok Sabha)	CEC and Other ECs Act, 2023
Removal	Parliament, by the same special-majority motion as for a Supreme Court judge	Article 324(5) read with Article 124(4)

THE CEC AND OTHER ECs ACT, 2023

- **Selection Committee:** Prime Minister (Chair), a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the PM, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.
- **Search Committee:** headed by the Union Law Minister with two members of Secretary rank, shortlists five names for the Selection Committee.
- **Tenure & status:** salary, allowances and service conditions at parity with a Supreme Court Judge.
- **Section 16:** provides a degree of immunity to the ECI/ECs for actions taken in official capacity, flagged in the Brief's 1 Oct coverage.

Prelims angle: A classic trap area: distinguishing 'removal' (Art 324(5), SC-judge parity) from 'appointment' (CEC Act 2023 Selection Committee) -- the two are easily conflated.

Keep the two constitutional questions distinct: the 2023 Act reformed how the CEC is appointed; it left the Article 324(5) removal safeguard -- parity with an SC judge -- untouched.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	The ECI's constitutional design insulates it via both appointment and removal safeguards.
BODY	(a) Appointment safeguard -- the Anoop Baranwal-triggered 2023 Act; (b) Removal safeguard -- Article 324(5)'s SC-judge parity; (c) Current controversy -- political pressure vs constitutional process.
CONCLUSION	ECI independence needs both safeguards to hold in practice, not just on paper.

Mains value-add: Cite the Supreme Court's observation in Anoop Baranwal v Union of India (2023) on insulating the ECI from executive influence -- a ready Mains quote linking the appointment reform to the removal safeguard discussed here.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE-HARD

Q. With reference to the Election Commission of India, consider the following statements:
1. Under Article 324(5) of the Constitution, the Chief Election Commissioner can be removed only in the manner and on the grounds applicable to a Judge of the Supreme Court.
2. Under the same Article, any Election Commissioner other than the Chief Election Commissioner can be removed only on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.
3. The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023 provides for a Selection Committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India.
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: Statements 1 and 2 correctly state Article 324(5)'s dual safeguard. Statement 3 is incorrect -- the trap: the 2023 Act replaced the Chief Justice of India in the Selection Committee with a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, a change that departed from the Supreme Court's interim Anoop Baranwal (2023) formula.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** ECI: Election Commission of India | SIR: Special Intensive Revision | CEC: Chief Election Commissioner

Ladakh's New Districts and the Centre's Shifting Playbook on Statehood

Why in news: Days after Ladakh's two main civil-society blocs rejected a Ministry of Home Affairs sub-committee's 32-page draft, the Centre separately carved out Sankoo as Ladakh's eighth district -- an administrative-first approach even as the region's core demand for Statehood or Sixth Schedule protection remains unmet.

> **Story so far:** The Brief covered the MHA's two-stage, Article 240-based plan on 18 Oct and the LAHDC Amendment Regulation 2026 (notified) (council seats, L-G's final say) on 21 Oct; today's rejected 32-page proposal and the new Sankoo district are the latest moves in this unresolved three-way negotiation between Leh, Kargil and the Centre.

Key Details:

- **Union Territory without a legislature:** Ladakh has been a UT without a legislature since the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 bifurcated the erstwhile State; it seeks Statehood, Sixth Schedule inclusion, or at minimum a 'sui generis' UT-with-legislature model.
- **The rejected draft:** offered a UT-level elected executive body with Article 240 regulation-making powers plus 'a customised model' under Article 371 -- which the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) say falls short of the elected-legislature commitment recorded in a 22 May 2026 meeting's minutes.
- **Six new districts:** Sankoo, Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zanskar and Drass are being carved from the original two (Leh and Kargil), each to get its own Hill Council of 7-24 elected members.
- **The High-Powered Committee (2023):** chaired by MoS Home Nityanand Rai, was tasked with safeguarding Ladakh's culture, land and employment while examining the Statehood/Sixth-Schedule demands -- its recommendations feed the still-contested draft.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Scale:** Ladakh's ~3.5 lakh people are spread over 59,146 sq km -- originally just two districts: Buddhist-majority Leh and Shia Muslim-majority Kargil.
- **Hill Councils:** LAHDC-Leh was established in 1995 and LAHDC-Kargil in 2003; both lost much of their power after 2019's direct Central rule.
- **Local-democracy push:** a three-tier election plan (panchayats, municipalities and hill councils) is being pursued as a participatory substitute for a full legislature.

Ladakh's Governance Timeline

Year	Development
1947-95	Two districts: Leh and Kargil
1995 / 2003	LAHDC-Leh / LAHDC-Kargil established
2019	UT status (J&K Reorganisation Act), direct Central rule begins
2023	High-Powered Committee constituted
May 2026	Centre-Ladakh talks; minutes hint at Art 371-type safeguards
Oct 2026	32-page draft rejected; six new districts announced

ARTICLE 371: SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR CERTAIN STATES

- **Applies only to States:** Article 371 and sub-clauses 371A-371J protect specific States (e.g., 371A Nagaland's customary law, 371F Sikkim, 371-I Goa) -- never a Union Territory.
- **Why this matters for Ladakh:** the MHA's talk of a 'customised model under Article 371' is itself a novel, untested idea, since the series has never been applied to a UT.
- **Typical content:** special legislative/executive safeguards for land, customary law, or regional development boards, tailored State-by-State.
- **Contrast:** the Sixth Schedule instead creates autonomous district/regional councils for tribal areas within specified States -- a different protective model again.

Prelims angle: A map/matching MCQ could ask you to pair an Article 371 sub-clause (371A-371J) with its State -- a frequently tested format.

Frame Ladakh's case as a test of 'asymmetric federalism' -- compare the Sixth Schedule (currently Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram), the Article 371 series (specified States only), and Article 240 (certain UTs) as three distinct constitutional tools for protecting regional distinctiveness, each with different reach.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Ladakh's 7-year-old demand sits at the intersection of identity, strategic location and ecology.
BODY	(a) Constitutional options compared -- Sixth Schedule/371/240; (b) Centre's incremental administrative response (districts, hill councils) vs the political demand (legislature); (c) Strategic context as a border UT.
CONCLUSION	A genuine sui generis solution is needed; administrative tinkering alone will not resolve the legitimacy demand.

Mains value-add: A comparative Mains point: three distinct constitutional tools -- the Sixth Schedule, the Article 371 series, and Article 240 -- protect regional distinctiveness differently, and Ladakh's demand sits awkwardly across all three because none was designed for its exact situation (a border UT without a legislature).

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE-HARD

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Article 240 of the Constitution empowers the President to make regulations for the peace, progress and good government of certain Union Territories, including Ladakh.
2. The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution currently extends to tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
3. Provisions under Article 371 of the Constitution currently apply to one or more Union Territories.
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: Article 240 covers UTs such as Ladakh and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Statement 2 is correct. Statement 3 is incorrect -- the trap: Article 371 and its sub-clauses (371A-371J) apply only to specified STATES, never to a Union Territory; any 'Article 371-type' protection for Ladakh would need a wholly new constitutional provision, not an extension of the existing series.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** LAB: Leh Apex Body | KDA: Kargil Democratic Alliance | MHA: Ministry of Home Affairs | HPC: High-Powered Committee | LAHDC: Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council

NMC Withdraws Its 2023 Medical-Education Standards -- With No Replacement Yet

Why in news: The National Medical Commission has withdrawn, with effect from 17 October, its Maintenance of Standards of Medical Education Regulations, 2023 (MSMER-2023) without notifying a replacement -- raising questions on how medical-college violations will now be penalised and verified.

> **Story so far:** A Brief quick-fact item on 17 Oct noted the NMC's new patient-safety committee mandate for hospitals; today's story is a separate, more serious regulatory rollback -- the withdrawal of the NMC's own college-standards verification regulation.

Key Details:

- **NMC's structure:** set up under the NMC Act, 2019 to replace the Medical Council of India, the NMC works through four autonomous Boards: UGMEB, PGMEB, MARB and EMRB, advised by a Medical Advisory Council.
- **What MSMER-2023 did:** codified fines up to ₹1 crore for institutions and ₹5 lakh personally for faculty/administrators submitting false records, plus a verification mechanism for colleges' annual disclosures.
- **NMC's explanation:** a legal-team review recommended 'streamlining' regulatory powers and removing 'overlapping' provisions.
- **Activists' concern:** no single new regulation has replaced MSMER-2023, leaving enforcement mechanisms and timelines undefined in the interim.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Withdrawal:** notified on 14 October 2026, published in the Gazette on 17 October 2026, with immediate effect and no single replacement regulation.
- **Penalties now in limbo:** institutional fines up to ₹1 crore and personal fines up to ₹5 lakh for false disclosures.

NMC's Four Autonomous Boards

Board	Core Mandate
UGMEB	Standards for undergraduate medical education
PGMEB	Standards for postgraduate medical education
MARB	Assessment & rating of institutions; permissions for new colleges
EMRB	Registration of doctors; professional conduct & ethics

THE NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION ACT, 2019: STRUCTURE

- **Composition:** a Chairperson and a mix of ex-officio and part-time members (up to 25 total), nominated/elected as prescribed by the Act.
- **Four Boards:** UGMEB, PGMEB, MARB and EMRB each handle a distinct function (see table above).
- **Why MCI was replaced:** persistent allegations of corruption in medical-college recognition, documented in a Parliamentary Standing Committee report that preceded the reform.
- **Medical Advisory Council:** an advisory body representing States/UTs, to ensure a federal voice in NMC policy.

Prelims angle: A common trap: confusing MARB's assessment/permission role with EMRB's registration/ethics role -- know which Board does what.

Note that a regulatory withdrawal without a published replacement creates a governance vacuum -- distinct from a repeal-and-replace reform -- and ask which Board's mandate is actually affected before assuming the whole NMC architecture is in question.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	A regulatory withdrawal without a replacement is a governance vacuum, not a reform.
BODY	(a) What MSMER-2023 did -- verification plus penalties; (b) Why withdrawn -- NMC's 'streamlining' vs activists' 'dilution' concern; (c) Risk to patient safety/education quality if unaddressed.
CONCLUSION	NMC must notify a replacement framework quickly, with at least equivalent verifiability and penalty teeth.

Mains value-add: Cite that 'the NMC Act, 2019 replaced the Medical Council of India following persistent allegations of corruption in medical-college recognition, documented in a Parliamentary Standing Committee report' as a ready citation for a healthcare-governance Mains answer.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the National Medical Commission (NMC), consider the following statements:
1. The NMC was constituted under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, replacing the Medical Council of India.
2. The Ethics and Medical Registration Board, one of the NMC's four autonomous Boards, maintains the national register of licensed medical practitioners.
3. The Medical Assessment and Rating Board is responsible for regulating the fee structure of private medical colleges across States.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: the NMC Act, 2019 replaced the MCI. Statement 2 is correct: the Ethics and Medical Registration Board (EMRB) handles registration and professional conduct. Statement 3 is incorrect -- the trap: fee regulation of private professional colleges is typically done by State-level Fee Regulatory Committees/Authorities, not by MARB, whose mandate is assessment, rating and institutional permissions.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NMC: National Medical Commission | MSMER: Maintenance of Standards of Medical Education Regulations | MCI: Medical Council of India | UGMEB: Under-Graduate Medical Education Board | PGMEB: Post-Graduate Medical Education Board | MARB: Medical Assessment and Rating Board | EMRB: Ethics and Medical Registration Board

The Cauvery Water Management Authority Orders Karnataka to Release Water -- Again

Why in news: With Tamil Nadu's delta districts facing a monsoon shortfall, the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee has directed Karnataka to release 3,000 cusecs a day at Biligundlu for 15 days, reopening the annual compliance tussle over the Supreme Court-modified Cauvery award.

Story so far: The Brief covered Karnataka's 'changed circumstances' argument before the Supreme Court on 8 Oct and flagged this as an ongoing distress-year dispute in its 13 Oct quick facts; today's CWRC order for a 15-day release is the mechanism's latest attempt to enforce compliance.

Key Details:

- **The institutional chain:** the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal's 2007 final award, modified by the Supreme Court in February 2018, is implemented by the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA, constituted June 2018), whose operational arm is the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC).
- **Ministry oversight:** CWMA/CWRC function under the Ministry of Jal Shakti (moved there from the erstwhile Ministry of Water Resources in 2019).
- **Karnataka's argument:** distress-year sharing should account for actual inflows and intermediate-catchment contributions, not just the Tribunal's fixed schedule -- it cites a 55.35% inflow deficit of its own against the 30-year average.
- **Tamil Nadu's argument:** anticipated future rainfall cannot substitute for its due, scheduled share; it points to an excess release shortfall and a backlog.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **CWRC-directed release:** 3,000 cusecs/day for 15 days = 3.88 tmc ft, from 8 a.m. on 24 October.
- **Karnataka's position:** combined live storage in its four Cauvery reservoirs at 46.510 tmc ft (22 Oct); this year's inflow of 122.293 tmc ft against a 30-year average of 273.865 tmc ft -- a 55.35% deficit; 226 of 240 taluks declared drought-affected.
- **Tamil Nadu's position:** Mettur reservoir storage at 20.887 tmc ft; a claimed backlog of 13.829 tmc ft, calculated using a 46.98% pro-rata sharing factor.

Cauvery Basin Reservoir Storage, as on 22 Oct 2026 (tmc ft)

Metric	Karnataka	Tamil Nadu
Live storage	46.510 (4 reservoirs)	20.887 (Mettur)
This year's inflow vs 30-yr avg.	122.293 vs 273.865	—
Deficit / claimed backlog	55.35% inflow deficit	13.829 claimed backlog

THE RIVER BOARDS ACT, 1956 & INTER-STATE WATER GOVERNANCE

- **Article 262:** lets Parliament legislate on inter-State river/river-valley disputes, and bar courts (including the Supreme Court) from adjudicating them.
- **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956:** the Tribunal route actually used for Cauvery, Krishna, Godavari and others -- binding, litigated awards.
- **River Boards Act, 1956:** a largely unused alternative providing for cooperative, advisory River Boards for integrated basin development -- never actually notified for any basin.
- **Contrast:** the Tribunal route resolves disputes through adjudication; the River Boards route was meant to pre-empt them through cooperation -- India has relied almost entirely on the former.

Prelims angle: Note that Article 262's ouster of Supreme Court jurisdiction applies specifically to inter-State RIVER disputes, not to inter-State disputes generally (which remain under Article 131) -- a classic, tested distinction.

This is a recurring institutional stress-test of river-water federalism: a Tribunal award, modified by the Supreme Court, now administered by a statutory Authority -- yet still triggering fresh disputes almost every distress year.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Recurring river disputes persist despite a legally 'final', Supreme Court-modified award.
BODY	(a) Institutional architecture -- Tribunal → SC modification → CWMA/CWRC implementation; (b) The genuine technical dispute -- distress-year sharing formula; (c) Federalism lesson -- a legal 'final' award does not end political contestation.
CONCLUSION	Real-time joint telemetry/monitoring, which CWRC already partly does, can depoliticise the data dispute even where the political dispute persists.

Mains value-add: Cite the Tribunal's 2007 final award figures (as modified by the Supreme Court in 2018): of the 740 tmc ft at Biligundlu, Karnataka's share is 284.75 tmc ft and Tamil Nadu's is 404.25 tmc ft -- a ready comparative statistic for a federalism/water-governance Mains answer.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ HARD

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Article 262 of the Constitution empowers Parliament to bar the Supreme Court from exercising original jurisdiction under Article 131 in respect of inter-State river water disputes.
2. The Cauvery Water Management Authority was constituted under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.
3. The River Boards Act, 1956 provides for the Union government to constitute advisory River Boards for the integrated development of inter-State river basins.
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 (Article 262(2), exercised via the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act's ouster clause). Statement 2 is incorrect -- the trap: the CWMA was constituted by a Gazette notification implementing the Cauvery Tribunal's own 2007 final award (as modified by the Supreme Court in 2018), not directly 'under' the 1956 Act, which only governs Tribunal constitution. Statement 3 is correct: the River Boards Act, 1956 provides for advisory Boards, though none has ever actually been constituted under it.

- **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CWMA: Cauvery Water Management Authority | CWRC: Cauvery Water Regulation Committee | tmc ft: thousand million cubic feet

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER II

During the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of Uttar Pradesh's electoral rolls, a man in Mumbai was booked for allegedly filing 24 Form-7 objection applications in a single day -- well above the ECI's prescribed cap of 10 Form-7 applications per person per day.

How to use: *Cite the 10-applications-per-day Form 7 cap as a concrete procedural safeguard against mass, coordinated objection or deletion attempts when answering on electoral-roll integrity or SIR procedure.*

Lok Sabha Public Accounts Committee chairperson K.C. Venugopal has written to the Speaker seeking action against the Chief Secretaries of six States who skipped PAC hearings on delays in disbursing SC pre- and post-matric scholarships, citing gaps in onboarding States to the national scholarship portal.

How to use: *Use this as a ready example of Centre-State coordination failure in DBT-based welfare delivery for a federalism or social-justice answer.*

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER III

Three Breaches, One Gap: India's Data-Protection Law Isn't Fully in Force Yet

Why in news: Within days of each other, a CBFC film-certification portal leak, a vehicle-data sale racket on VAHAN/SARATHI, and a suspected SBI customer-data breach have exposed how India's principal breach-notification safeguard -- Section 8(6) of the DPDP Act, 2023 -- will not take legal effect until 13 May 2027.

Story so far: The Brief covered the Kerala High Court's direction to make the Data Protection Board functional within 8 weeks on 12 Oct, and a separate CA/PKI key leak alongside the same SBI breach figure (3,897 records) on 22 Oct; today's CBFC and VAHAN/SARATHI incidents show the pattern widening across government portals.

Key Details:

- **CBFC:** its e-Cinepramaan portal leaked film-certification documents for 500+ titles, apparently via a compromised user account; the documents were briefly downloadable from the Internet Archive.
- **VAHAN/SARATHI (MoRTH):** vehicle-owner and driving-licence data were sold via Telegram channels for as little as ₹5 a record; the Ministry has sought a CERT-In forensic audit and asked app stores to remove offending apps.
- **SBI:** ~3,897 customer records with personally identifiable information (PII) were found among ~3,75,000 dark-web records examined, flagged by a threat-intelligence firm; the bank has notified affected customers and stock exchanges.
- **The DPDP gap:** Section 8(6) requires intimating the Data Protection Board and each affected individual of a breach; Rule 7 of the DPDP Rules, 2025 prescribes how -- but both provisions are notified to commence only on 13 May 2027.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **SBI breach scale:** 3,897 of ~3,75,000 examined dark-web records confirmed to contain PII (names, loan applications, KYC documents, addresses).
- **VAHAN/SARATHI exposure:** the Vehicle Information App alone had 10 million+ downloads; records sold for as little as ₹5 each.
- **Interim safeguards:** CERT-In's 2022 directions require incident reporting within 6 hours; RBI norms cap customer liability if fraud is reported within 3 working days -- both far faster, and currently more operative, than the DPDP Board's eventual timelines.

Three Breaches in One Week

Entity	What was exposed	Status
CBFC e-Cinepramaan	Film-certification documents, 500+ titles	Account deleted; security audit ordered
VAHAN/SARATHI (MoRTH)	Vehicle & licence data sold online	CERT-In audit sought; data-sharing policy under review
SBI	~3,897 customer PII records	Customers notified; exchanges informed

THE DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT, 2023: KEY PROVISIONS

- **Section 7(b):** lets the State process personal data without fresh consent to deliver a prescribed subsidy, benefit or service.
- **Section 8(6):** the Data Fiduciary's duty to notify both the Data Protection Board and affected individuals of a breach (commencing 13 May 2027).
- **Data Protection Board of India:** the Act's adjudicatory body; a Kerala High Court direction (12 Oct coverage) required it to become functional within 8 weeks.
- **Extraterritorial reach:** the Act also covers processing abroad that is linked to offering goods or services to persons in India.

Prelims angle: A frequent trap: confusing the CERT-In 6-hour incident-reporting window with the DPDP Board's still-uncommenced breach-notification timelines.

Note the precise commencement date for Section 8(6)/Rule 7 -- 13 May 2027 -- and that, until then, breach notification in India runs on a patchwork of sectoral rules (CERT-In, RBI), not on the DPDP Act's own statutory duty.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Repeated breaches are occurring while India's dedicated breach-notification law remains uncommenced.
BODY	(a) What the DPDP Act promises once Section 8(6)/Rule 7 are in force; (b) The interim patchwork -- CERT-In, RBI norms, sectoral rules; (c) The risk of this gap -- victims lack a statutory right to prompt notice.
CONCLUSION	Government should consider advancing the breach-notification provisions ahead of May 2027, given demonstrated real-world harm.

Mains value-add: Cite the precise commencement date -- 13 May 2027 -- for Section 8(6)/Rule 7 as a ready, quotable implementation-gap fact for a GS2/GS3 answer on data governance, paired with the real-world harm shown by this week's three breaches.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, consider the following statements:
1. Section 8(6) requires a Data Fiduciary to intimate the Data Protection Board of India and each affected Data Principal in the event of a personal data breach.
2. These breach-notification provisions, along with Rule 7 of the DPDP Rules, 2025, are already in force across India.
3. CERT-In's 2022 directions separately require reporting of cyber security incidents within six hours of being noticed.
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. Statement 2 is incorrect -- the trap: the government's own notification sets the Section 8(6)/Rule 7 commencement date at 13 May 2027, so breach notification is not yet governed by the DPDP Act. Statement 3 is correct, and explains why sectoral rules remain the operative safeguard in the interim.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** DPDP: Digital Personal Data Protection (Act, 2023) | CERT-In: Indian Computer Emergency Response Team | PII: Personally Identifiable Information | MoRTH: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

A Grain-vs-Cane Tug of War Breaks Out Over India's Ethanol Tender

Why in news: Oil marketing companies' latest ethanol procurement tender for Ethanol Supply Year 2026-27 has triggered a feedstock dispute: grain-based producers say the pricing structure disproportionately burdens them, even as cane-based ethanol stays excluded from this round.

> **Story so far:** The Brief covered the ethanol programme's shift from sugarcane to grain feedstock on 19 Oct (maize price ₹68.86 then); today's tender dispute shows that shift now creating friction over how demand is allocated within the grain segment itself.

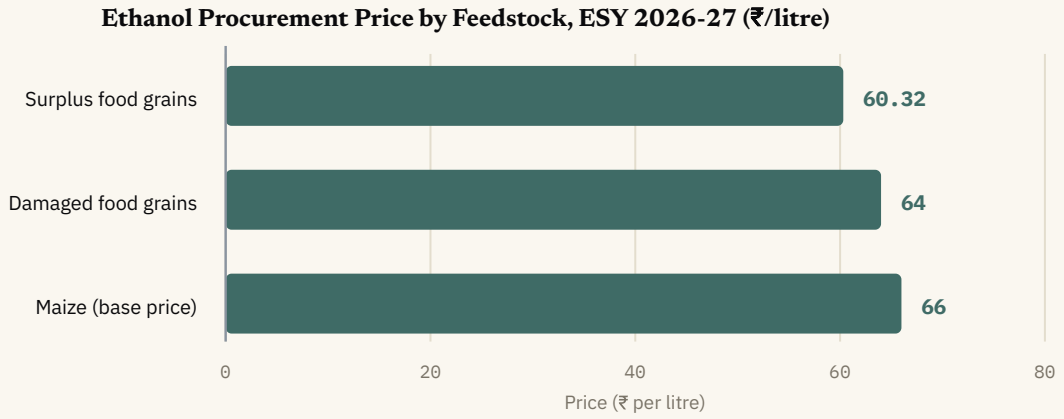
Key Details:

- **Procurement prices for ESY 2026-27:** ₹60.32/litre for surplus food grains (capped at 108 crore litres for the first three quarters); ₹64/litre for damaged food grains; ₹66/litre (plus ₹2.79/litre additional) for maize.
- **What's excluded:** ethanol from sugarcane juice, sugar syrup and B-heavy molasses is excluded this round; C-heavy-molasses-based ethanol remains eligible.
- **Industry's ask:** the Grain Ethanol Manufacturers' Association (GEMA) wants a published, transparent allocation formula and a shift toward long-term contracts rather than spot purchases.
- **Scale of the shift:** DFG-based ethanol allocation was ~60 crore litres in ESY 2025-26; industry expects it to exceed 700 crore litres in ESY 2026-27.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **National Policy on Biofuels:** a 2022 amendment advanced the 20% ethanol-blending (E20) target from 2030 to ESY 2025-26 -- since achieved, per earlier Brief coverage, at 19.24% in ESY 2024-25.

- **Pricing differential:** the gap between grain-based and foodgrain-based prices is seen by GEMA as creating uncertainty over how total demand will be distributed across feedstock categories.



Prelims angle: Know the feedstock categories and their eligibility status by name (SFG/DFG/maize eligible this round; cane-juice/syrup/B-heavy excluded; C-heavy still eligible) -- a granular distinction UPSC favours.

Weigh the food-security vs fuel-security trade-off in grain-feedstock diversion against the industry's stated need for pricing predictability -- the two are not necessarily in tension if allocation (not just price) is made transparent.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	The EBP's near-20% blending success is now straining feedstock-allocation mechanics.
BODY	(a) Pricing structure and exclusions; (b) Food-security vs fuel-security trade-off in grain diversion; (c) Industry's ask for long-term contracts.
CONCLUSION	A transparent, published allocation formula -- not just a procurement price -- would end the annual feedstock uncertainty.

Mains value-add: Cite GEMA's call for 'long-term contracts over spot purchases' as a ready policy-prescription line for a Mains answer on biofuel-sector price stability.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to India's ethanol procurement framework for Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2026-27, consider the following statements:
1. Ethanol produced from sugarcane juice, sugar syrup and B-heavy molasses is eligible for procurement at the prices notified for this cycle.
2. C-heavy-molasses-based ethanol remains eligible for procurement.
3. The procurement price notified for maize-based ethanol is higher than that for surplus food grains.
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 incorrect -- the trap: this cycle's tender explicitly excludes cane-juice, syrup and B-heavy-molasses-based ethanol from procurement. Statement 2 is correct: C-heavy molasses ethanol remains eligible. Statement 3 is correct: ₹66/litre (plus an additional ₹2.79/litre) for maize versus ₹60.32/litre for surplus food grains.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** OMC: Oil Marketing Company | ESY: Ethanol Supply Year | GEMA: Grain Ethanol Manufacturers' Association

11 Crore Farmer IDs, Five Months Early -- But What Do They Actually Unlock?

Why in news: The Agriculture Ministry says it has issued 11 crore unique Farmer IDs under the Digital Agriculture Mission, completing the milestone five months ahead of its own 31 March 2027 deadline -- meant to let farmers access schemes, credit and relief without repeated paperwork.

Story so far: The Brief's 23 Oct piece on State welfare-data governance flagged leakage of 4-7% from poor records and the DPDP Act's Section 7(b) legitimate-use provision for subsidy delivery; today's 11-crore Farmer ID milestone is exactly the kind of digital-identity layer that provision is meant to govern.

Key Details:

- **Digital Agriculture Mission:** Cabinet-approved in September 2024 with an outlay of ₹2,817 crore, implemented jointly by the Centre, States and field-level officials.
- **What Farmer ID does:** links a farmer's identity to land records, crop data and scheme eligibility, cutting repeated document submission for subsidies, bank credit, crop insurance (PMFBY) and disaster relief.
- **Wider AgriStack architecture:** digital crop surveys and a Krishi Decision Support System (built on satellite/geospatial data) are separate, related components of the same Mission.
- **A balancing concern:** the Brief's 23 Oct coverage of State welfare records flagged leakage and exclusion risk whenever digital IDs gate access to benefits -- relevant as Farmer ID coverage scales up.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Milestone:** 11 crore Farmer IDs created as of 23 October 2026, against a 31 March 2027 deadline -- five months ahead of schedule.
- **Outlay:** ₹2,817 crore, approved by the Union Cabinet in September 2024.

AGRISTACK: INDIA'S DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AGRICULTURE

- **Three core registries:** Farmer Registry (Farmer ID), Geo-referenced Village Maps, and the Crop Sown Registry.
- **Two Mission pillars:** Digital Public Infrastructure (the registries) and Digital General Services (farmer-facing applications built on them).
- **Design philosophy:** modelled on the 'India Stack' approach (as with Aadhaar/UPI) -- shared, interoperable digital registries that other schemes and private players can build on.
- **Governance caveat:** as with any DPI, exclusion errors and consent safeguards matter as much as coverage numbers.

Prelims angle: Distinguish the Digital Agriculture Mission's own components (Farmer ID, village maps, crop registry) from pre-existing schemes (PMFBY, PM-KISAN) that merely use this infrastructure.

Pair the scale achievement with the governance caveat: an ID that gates welfare access must be matched by equally robust grievance-redress and consent safeguards under the DPDP Act's Section 7(b).

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Farmer ID functions as a digital public infrastructure layer for agriculture.
BODY	(a) What it unlocks -- credit, insurance, relief, reduced paperwork; (b) Architecture -- AgriStack's registries; (c) Risk -- exclusion error, privacy, consent under DPDP S.7(b).
CONCLUSION	Grievance-redress and data-protection safeguards must scale together with ID coverage, not lag behind it.

Mains value-add: Cite the exact outlay (₹2,817 crore, approved September 2024) paired with the Brief's 23 Oct caution on data-governance/leakage risk -- inviting a balanced Mains answer on the opportunity and risk of ID-gated welfare delivery.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY-MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Digital Agriculture Mission, consider the following statements:
1. It was approved by the Union Cabinet in September 2024.
2. The Farmer Registry (Farmer ID) is one of its core components.
3. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is a scheme created under the Digital Agriculture Mission.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statements 1 and 2 are correct. Statement 3 is incorrect -- the trap: PMFBY is a pre-existing, separately administered crop-insurance scheme that merely draws on the Mission's digital infrastructure (such as Farmer ID) for implementation; it was not created under the Mission.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** DPI: Digital Public Infrastructure | PMFBY: Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

India Holds Just 0.5% of a Booming Global Shipbuilding Order Book

Why in news: Indian shipyards' order book stood at 1.1 million CGT as of September 2026 -- only 0.5% of a record 203.2 million CGT global order book -- underlining the scale of the challenge facing India's ambition to rank among the world's top 10 shipbuilding nations by 2030.

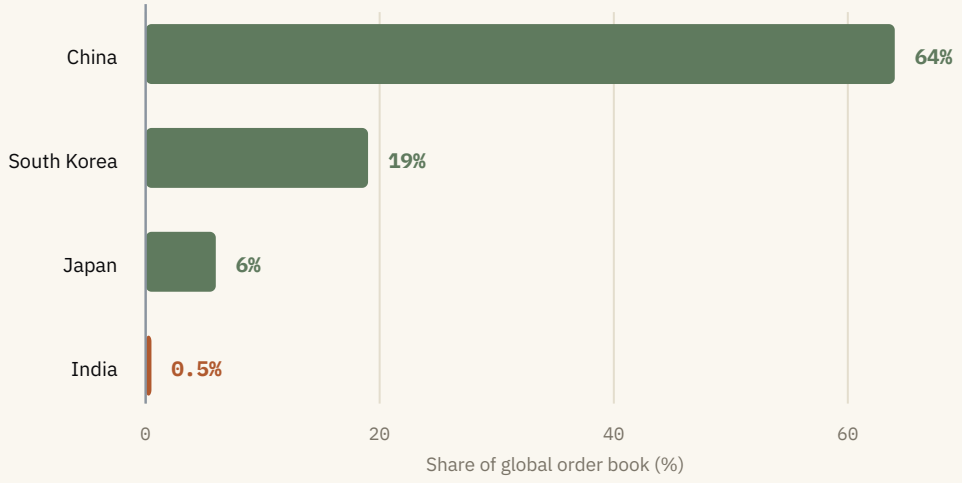
Key Details:

- **Global order book:** hit a record 203.2 million compensated gross tonnage (CGT) on 1 September 2026, up 13% year-on-year; China captured 74% of tonnage contracted over the past year and now holds 64% of the total order book.
- **The field:** South Korea (19%) and Japan (6%) follow China; India ranks 12th globally, behind China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Russia, France, Vietnam, Germany, the Philippines and the U.S.
- **India's policy response:** a ₹69,725-crore shipbuilding financial-assistance package aims to lift India into the world's top 10 shipbuilding nations by 2030 and top 5 by 2047.
- **A structural opening:** China's dominance now spans every major cargo segment and is straining its own yard capacity -- an opening analysts say India, South Korea and others could partly capture if domestic capacity and financing scale up in time.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **India's order book:** 1.1 million CGT as of 1 September 2026 -- 0.5% of the 203.2 million CGT global total.
- **Delivery pipeline:** global deliveries scheduled for 2026-2030 are nearly double the tonnage delivered during 2021-2025.

Global Shipbuilding Order Book Share by Country, Sept 2026 (%)



MARITIME INDIA VISION 2030 & THE SHIPBUILDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

- **Maritime India Vision 2030 / Amrit Kaal Vision 2047:** the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways' long-term roadmap, including shipbuilding-rank targets.
- **Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy (SBFAP):** a subsidy on contract price for domestic shipbuilders, enhanced in a ₹69,725-crore package.
- **Complementary infrastructure:** planned shipbuilding clusters and MRO (maintenance, repair & overhaul) zones to build an ecosystem, not just yard capacity.
- **Strategic rationale:** merchant-fleet and shipbuilding self-reliance also bear on energy-import security and naval-industrial capacity.

Prelims angle: Know that CGT, GT and DWT are three distinct tonnage measures used for different purposes (shipbuilding effort, registry/regulatory size, and cargo capacity respectively).

Distinguish Compensated Gross Tonnage (CGT, which adjusts for build complexity/labour) from plain Gross Tonnage (GT) or Deadweight Tonnage (DWT, a cargo-carrying-capacity measure) -- these are different units and are easy to conflate.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Shipbuilding is a strategic, high-value manufacturing sector lagging India's broader 'Make in India' gains.
BODY	(a) Current scale gap -- 0.5% share, 12th rank; (b) China's concentration -- both competition and a capacity-constrained opening; (c) India's policy response -- SBFAP, Maritime Vision 2030/2047.
CONCLUSION	Sustained, de-risked financing -- not a one-time package -- is needed to convert stated targets into actual yard capacity.

Mains value-add: Cite the statistic 'India held just 0.5% of a 203.2-million-CGT global order book (Sept 2026), ranking 12th worldwide' as a ready figure for a Mains answer on India's maritime/manufacturing competitiveness gap.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY-MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Compensated Gross Tonnage (CGT) is a measure that adjusts a ship's gross tonnage for the labour and equipment required to build different ship types.
2. As of September 2026, China accounted for the largest share of the global shipbuilding order book.
3. India ranks among the world's top five shipbuilding nations by order-book tonnage.
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: Statements 1 and 2 are correct. Statement 3 is incorrect -- the trap: India ranks 12th globally, holding just 0.5% of the global order book, far outside the top five.

- **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CGT: Compensated Gross Tonnage

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER III

A New Mexico court finalised a $25-billion civil penalty against Meta for data-privacy and content-moderation violations -- reduced from a jury-exposed $219 billion but still the largest fine Meta has faced, and five times the US FTC's own 2019 $5-billion Facebook fine.

How to use: *Use this as a comparative statistic contrasting the scale of global Big-Tech data-protection enforcement with India's own, still-emerging DPDP Act regime in an Economy or Governance answer.*

Ferrari reports Indian orders have more than doubled in anticipation of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (expected in force 'early 2027'), under which import duty on European luxury CBU cars falls from ~110% to 30-35% in year one, eventually to 10% in a phased manner.

How to use: *Cite this as a live example of anticipatory trade-liberalisation effects for an Economy answer on FTA impact and tariff phase-down design.*

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER IV

A ₹1.5-Crore Price for an Exam Paper: Probity and the Civil Servant

Why in news: Karnataka's Chief Minister has sanctioned the prosecution of a suspended IAS officer accused of leaking a State recruitment exam's question paper and collecting up to ₹1.5 crore in bribes -- a civil servant who was meant to safeguard the exam instead monetised it.

Key Details:

- **The allegation:** as Controller of Examinations of the Karnataka Public Service Commission, the officer allegedly leaked the Veterinary Officers' recruitment exam's question paper and 'correct answers' through a middleman the day before the test.
- **Scale:** about ₹1.5 crore in alleged illegal gratification; ₹1.3 crore is said to have reached the officer directly, the remainder reportedly spent on gold.
- **Process so far:** the officer was earlier suspended from service and remanded to central-agency custody; the s.19 sanction for prosecution is a precondition for trying a public servant under anti-corruption law.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Bribe amount:** ₹1.5 crore total alleged collection; ₹1.3 crore allegedly reaching the officer directly.
- **Legal threshold:** Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018) ordinarily requires prior approval before investigating a public servant's official decisions -- though leaking an exam paper for money falls squarely outside any legitimate official function, making this a comparatively straightforward corruption case.

Prelims angle: Know that Section 17A of the PC Act, 1988 (inserted 2018) requires prior approval to investigate a public servant's official decisions -- but conduct wholly outside official duty (like selling an exam paper) is not shielded by it.

Connect this case to the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 -- flagged in the Brief's 10 Oct coverage -- a central law meant for exactly this kind of offence, even though a State Public Service Commission would rely on its own analogous provisions, the PC Act, and the BNS.

Mains value-add: Cite Section 17A of the PC Act, 1988 (as amended 2018) and the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 as the two legal reference points this case sits between -- one a procedural safeguard for officials, the other a substantive anti-cheating law.

MAINS CASE STUDY EXERCISE

Q. As the newly appointed Controller of Examinations of a State Public Service Commission, you discover that your predecessor allegedly leaked question papers for money, and that some currently serving junior staff may have knowingly facilitated the leak under pressure. (a) What immediate institutional steps would you take to restore the integrity of the ongoing recruitment cycle? (b) How would you distinguish, in your response, between staff who were complicit and those who were coerced or merely negligent? Discuss the ethical considerations involved.

- **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** KPSC: Karnataka Public Service Commission | PC Act: Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988