THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 18 OCTOBER 2026

TODAY'S COVERAGE

Table of Contents

10	4	10
ARTICLES	GS PAPERS	MCQS & MAINS QS

GS Paper 1: Modern Indian History — Page 1

1. Teja Singh Samundri at 100: The Gurdwara Reform Movement GS1 · Modern Indian History: Freedom Struggle 1

GS Paper 2: Polity, Governance & IR — Page 2

2. Children Have a Fundamental Right to Access the Internet: SC GS2 · Fundamental Rights & Judiciary 2
3. Can an OCI Cardholder Be Told to Leave India? GS2 · Citizenship & Fundamental Rights 4
4. Ladakh: The Centre's Two-Stage Plan and Article 240 GS2 · Federalism & Special Provisions 5
5. Trump Waives Russian-Oil Sanctions: Relief for India GS2 · International Relations: India and the U.S. 6

GS Paper 3: Economy, Health, Space & Environment — Page 9

6. FSSAI Moves to Ban Added Sugar in Infant Food, Sets Tea Pesticide Limits GS3 · Food Processing & Food Safety 9
7. Trade Margins Capped on 137 Cancer Drugs GS3 · Pharma Regulation & Health Economics 10
8. Aditya-L1 and Proba-3: First Joint View of Solar Eruptions GS3 · Space Technology 11
9. Saving India's Only Ape: Canopy Bridges for the Hoolock Gibbon GS3 · Conservation & Biodiversity 13

GS Paper 4: Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude — Page 15

10. Gifts, Favours and Conflict of Interest in Public Office GS4 · Probity in Governance 15

PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

1. **Veer Bal Diwas (26 December)** — marks the martyrdom of Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru.
2. **Asian Para Games, Nagoya** — Manasi Joshi and Thulasimathi Murugesan assured India a medal in women's doubles SL3-SU5 badminton for the second successive edition, at the Games in Nagoya, Japan.
3. **AgingHallmarksDB** — free database built by researchers in Chennai and Mumbai that brings together 3,111 genes linked to 11 core biological processes of ageing.
4. **MonoRace** — AI system that flies a racing drone with one camera and a basic motion sensor; it beat three human world champions at the 2025 Abu Dhabi Autonomous Drone Racing Competition.
5. **Elephant carcasses** — a Kruger National Park study found they first create a biodiversity 'coldspot' and then a grazing 'hotspot' of nutrient-rich leaves, with effects lasting over seven years.

HOW TO READ THIS BRIEF

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

GS PAPER 1: MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

Teja Singh Samundri at 100: The Gurdwara Reform Movement

Why in news: The centenary of Teja Singh Samundri's death in Lahore Central Jail (1926) is being marked this year; he was a key organiser of the Gurdwara Reform (Akali) Movement and helped found the SGPC.

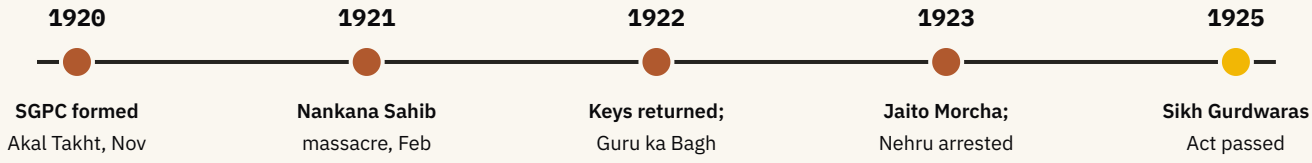
Key Details:

- **Who he was:** Born in 1882 to a farming family, he briefly served in the British Indian Army, then became a principal organiser of the Akali agitations of 1920-25.
- **Refused release:** He turned down a conditional release from British custody and died in jail at 43; Teja Singh Samundri Hall in the Golden Temple complex is named after him.
- **The morchas:** He took part in the Chabian da Morcha (1921-22), the Guru ka Bagh Morcha (1922) and the Jaito Morcha (1923), among others.
- **Why it matters:** The movement won control of gurdwaras from hereditary mahants through mass non-violent protest, linking religious reform with the national movement.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Chabian da Morcha:** Over the keys to the Golden Temple treasury held by the British; when they were returned in January 1922, Gandhi wired: 'First decisive battle for India's freedom won.'
- **Guru ka Bagh (Ajnala):** Akali volunteers were beaten for cutting firewood on gurdwara land; C.F. Andrews's account of their non-violence drew national attention.
- **Jaito Morcha:** Against the forced abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha; Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested at Jaito in 1923.

The Gurdwara Reform Movement: key milestones



Source: standard histories of the Akali Movement (1920-25).

The Akali Movement and the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925

- **Origin:** Grew out of the Singh Sabha revival; aimed to free gurdwaras from corrupt, British-backed hereditary mahants.
- **Organisations:** The SGPC (November 1920) managed shrines; the Shiromani Akali Dal (December 1920) organised volunteer jathas.
- **Nankana Sahib (20 Feb 1921):** Mahant Narain Das's men killed peaceful Akalis at Guru Nanak's birthplace, turning the movement into a mass struggle.
- **Outcome:** The Punjab Legislative Council passed the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, placing shrines under an elected SGPC.
- **Not to confuse:** Singh Sabha (1873, Amritsar) = educational and religious revival; Akali Movement (1920-25) = mass agitation for control of gurdwaras.

Prelims angle: The Babbar Akalis (1921-25) were a militant offshoot that rejected the Akali Movement's non-violent methods.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 (freedom struggle, regional movements, socio-religious reform) answers on how religious reform fed mass nationalism.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	The Akali Movement (1920-25) was a mass, non-violent struggle to free gurdwaras from mahant control.
BODY	Phases: SGPC and Akali Dal (1920); Nankana Sahib (1921); Keys affair and Guru ka Bagh (1922); Jaito (1923); 1925 Act; links with Non-Cooperation; role of leaders like Samundri.
CONCLUSION	It showed disciplined satyagraha working at scale and drew Punjab's peasantry into the national movement.

Mains value-add: Gandhi's telegram to Baba Kharak Singh on the return of the keys (1922) — 'First decisive battle for India's freedom won' — cite it to show how the Akali struggle was seen as part of the national movement.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. Consider the following pairs:
1. Chabian da Morcha : Keys of the Golden Temple treasury
2. Jaito Morcha : Removal of the Maharaja of Patiala
3. Guru ka Bagh Morcha : Gurdwara land near Ajnala, Amritsar
How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

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

Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation: Pair 1 is correct: the morcha was over the toshakhana keys held by the British. Pair 2 is incorrect: the Jaito Morcha was against the forced abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, not Patiala. Pair 3 is correct: Guru ka Bagh is in Ajnala tehsil of Amritsar.

- **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SGPC: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee

GS PAPER 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE & IR

Children Have a Fundamental Right to Access the Internet: SC

Why in news: A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Vinod K. Chandran held that children, like all individuals, have a fundamental right to access and use the Internet under Article 21 read with Article 19(1)(a).

> **Story so far:** The 10 Oct Brief covered the SC's 'regulation, not prohibition' view on Delhi's blanket transit ban. New today: the same logic is applied to blanket curbs on children's online access.

Key Details:

- **The holding:** Denying children this right would be 'absurd' — akin to saying people below a certain age have no conscience worth protecting or speech worth expressing.
- **Blanket bans:** The court called them 'unproven measures of proven disproportionality': no jurisdiction has shown children are safer because of them.
- **Unsafe side-effect:** Children keep using the Internet without parents' knowledge, move to unregulated platforms, and stop reporting abuse for fear of reprisal — defeating the object of the POCSO Act.
- **What it favours:** 'Intelligent restraints': parental consent and supervision, a dedicated 'child mode', and measures proportionate to safety; age-based restrictions as such are not ruled out.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Shared duty:** The Bench said safety needs effort from intermediaries, law enforcement, MeitY and the courts — not merely keeping children offline.

- **Proportionality:** Applies the test from *Puttaswamy* (2017) and *Anuradha Bhasin* (2020): a restriction must be lawful, necessary, the least restrictive option and balanced.
- **Dimensions:** Rights: speech, education, information; safety: grooming, sextortion, harmful content; regulatory: platform design, age assurance; family: digital literacy of parents.

The Internet and Fundamental Rights: Key Rulings

- ***Faheema Shirin* (Kerala HC, 2019):** Held that the right to access the Internet is part of the right to education and the right to privacy under Article 21.
- ***Anuradha Bhasin* (SC, 2020):** Speech and trade through the Internet are protected under Arts 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g); shutdown orders must be published and reviewed.
- ***Shreya Singhal* (SC, 2015):** Struck down Section 66A of the IT Act as vague and overbroad.
- **Children's data:** The DPDP Act, 2023 treats anyone under 18 as a child and requires verifiable parental consent to process their data.
- **Not to confuse:** Access to the Internet as a facet of Arts 19 and 21 vs a free-standing right to Internet infrastructure, which courts have not created.

Prelims angle: India acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) in December 1992.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (fundamental rights, vulnerable sections, role of the judiciary) and GS3 (cyber security) answers on children's online safety.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	The SC has held that children have a fundamental right to access the Internet under Arts 21 and 19(1)(a).
BODY	Benefits: learning, expression, information; risks: abuse, addiction, harmful content; limits of blanket bans; proportionality; roles of platforms, parents, State.
WAY FORWARD	Child-safe design by default, age-appropriate safeguards, digital literacy in schools, quick grievance redress and POCSO enforcement.

Mains value-add: UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 25 (2021): children's rights apply in the digital environment — cite it to argue for safety by design rather than exclusion.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. In *Anuradha Bhasin* (2020), the Supreme Court held that freedom of speech and expression through the medium of the Internet is protected under Article 19(1)(a).
2. In *Faheema Shirin* (2019), the Kerala High Court linked the right to access the Internet with the right to education.
3. Under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, a 'child' means a person below 16 years of age.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: *Anuradha Bhasin* protected speech and trade over the Internet under Arts 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g). Statement 2 is correct: the Kerala HC tied Internet access to the rights to education and privacy. Statement 3 is incorrect: the DPDP Act defines a child as a person below 18.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2018: "Right to Privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Which of the following in the Constitution of India correctly and appropriately imply the above statement?" — Answer: (c) Article 21 and the freedoms guaranteed in Part III.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SC: Supreme Court | POCSO: Protection of Children from Sexual Offences | MeitY: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology | HC: High Court | IT: Information Technology | DPDP: Digital Personal Data Protection

Can an OCI Cardholder Be Told to Leave India?

Why in news: Actor Imran Khan, a U.S. citizen with an OCI card, moved the Bombay HC against a 'leave India' notice issued after he joined a protest; the FRRO has now also asked why his OCI card should not be cancelled.

Story so far: The 5 Oct Brief covered the Delhi HC ruling that a visa gives no enforceable right of entry, and the 16 Oct Quick Facts flagged the notice to Imran Khan. New today: his writ petition and the OCI-cancellation notice.

Key Details:

- **The notices:** The first notice, under Sections 7(2)(c) and 29 of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, told him to leave by 28 October; the second gives him 15 days to explain why his OCI card should not be cancelled.
- **His challenge:** He says the notice violates Arts 14 and 21, was issued without inquiry, reasons or a show-cause notice, and followed a politically motivated complaint.
- **What the law says:** The 2025 Act does not expressly bar foreigners from rallies, but lets the Centre restrict their activities and direct them to leave India or a specified area.
- **Remedies:** A representation to the FRRO or the Centre, or a writ under Article 226; Section 7 of the Act provides no comparable appeal against a direction to leave.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Precedent:** In 2020 the Calcutta HC quashed a 'leave India' notice to Polish student Kamil Siedczynski for joining an anti-CAA rally, holding participation alone insufficient — but under the now-repealed Foreigners Act, 1946.
- **OCI privileges:** Lifelong multiple-entry visa, exemption from FRRO registration, NRI parity in buying property (except agricultural land, farmhouses and plantations) and in some professions.
- **Needs permission:** Research, missionary or tabligh work, mountaineering, journalism, and visits to protected or restricted areas.

Overseas Citizenship of India under the Citizenship Act, 1955

- **Section 7A — eligibility:** Foreign nationals of Indian origin up to great-grandchildren, minor children and foreign spouses of Indians; those with Pakistani or Bangladeshi links are excluded.
- **Section 7B — limits:** No right to vote or contest elections, no public employment reserved for citizens, and no eligibility for offices such as President, Vice-President and SC/HC judge.
- **Section 7D — cancellation:** Grounds include fraud, disaffection towards the Constitution, a jail term of two years or more within five years of registration, and India's sovereignty or security.
- **Status:** OCI is not dual citizenship; the scheme began in 2005 and absorbed the PIO card in 2015.
- **Not to confuse:** OCI (a foreign national with a lifelong visa) vs NRI (an Indian citizen living abroad, with full citizenship rights).

Prelims angle: Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (9 January) marks the date in 1915 when Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (citizenship, fundamental rights of non-citizens, diaspora) answers on balancing sovereignty with due process.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	OCI cardholders are foreign nationals; Art 19 freedoms belong only to citizens, but Arts 14 and 21 protect everyone.
BODY	Sovereign power over foreigners; limits of Art 19; due process under Arts 14 and 21; OCI privileges vs restrictions; precedent of 2020; diaspora relations.
WAY FORWARD	Reasoned orders, a hearing before adverse action, clear published guidelines on OCI cardholders' permitted activities.

Mains value-add: *Hans Muller of Nuremberg* (1955): the SC held the power to expel foreigners is 'absolute and unlimited' — cite it alongside *Louis De Raedt* (1991), which limited foreigners' rights to Arts 14 and 21.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY–MODERATE

Q. With reference to Overseas Citizens of India (OCI), consider the following statements:
1. Registration as an OCI confers dual citizenship on the person.
2. An OCI cardholder is not entitled to be registered as a voter.
3. The Central Government may cancel an OCI registration if the cardholder is sentenced to imprisonment for two years or more within five years of registration.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect: OCI is a lifelong visa-like status, not citizenship. Statement 2 is correct: Section 7B excludes OCI cardholders from voter registration. Statement 3 is correct: this is a ground for cancellation under Section 7D.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** OCI: Overseas Citizen of India | HC: High Court | FRRO: Foreigners Regional Registration Office | CAA: Citizenship (Amendment) Act | NRI: Non-Resident Indian | SC: Supreme Court | PIO: Person of Indian Origin

Ladakh: The Centre's Two-Stage Plan and Article 240

Why in news: Ladakh's Chief Secretary called for dialogue on an MHA proposal that the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance rejected within two hours, calling it a 'significant departure' from earlier assurances.

> **Story so far:** The 29 Sept Brief covered the demand for Art 371 safeguards and the Sixth Schedule, and the 17 Oct Quick Facts noted the groups' rejection of the draft. New today: the Centre's defence of its plan.

Key Details:

- **The proposal:** A 32-page, two-stage plan: a constitutional amendment, followed by a regulation under Article 240 creating a directly elected UT-level body.
- **Safeguards:** Provisions on land, natural resources and culture; the Chief Secretary said Art 371 has 'enough flexibility' for a sui generis model.
- **Open questions:** Name and composition of the body, method of election, representation of women, nominated members, delimitation, tenure and its links with the hill councils.
- **On Statehood:** He said Ladakh depends fully on the Centre to pay salaries and pensions and, unlike J&K and Delhi, has no separate public account.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Demands:** The LAB and KDA seek Statehood with a legislature and Sixth Schedule status; Ladakh has been a UT without a legislature since 2019.
- **Why Art 240:** the President already makes Ladakh regulations under Art 240 read with s.58(2), J&K Reorganisation Act; a constitutional amendment comes first.
- **Dimensions:** Democratic: elected voice; ecological: fragile high-altitude land; cultural: tribal majority; strategic: borders with China and Pakistan; fiscal: no own revenue base.

Three ways to give a region special status

Route	Constitutional basis	Example
Special provisions	Arts 371 to 371J	Art 371A: Nagaland's customary law and land
Autonomous councils	Sixth Schedule (Arts 244(2), 275(1))	Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam
Presidential regulations	Art 240	Lakshadweep; Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Article 240: Regulations for Union Territories

- **Power:** The President may make regulations for the peace, progress and good government of the UTs listed in Art 240(1).
- **Force:** A regulation may repeal or amend any Act of Parliament applying to that UT, and has the same force as an Act of Parliament.
- **Listed UTs:** Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Lakshadweep; Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu; Puducherry.
- **Puducherry exception:** The power is suspended while Puducherry's Legislature is functioning.
- **Not to confuse:** Art 239A (legislature for Puducherry) vs Art 239AA (special provisions for Delhi) vs Art 240 (law by regulation).

Prelims angle: Ladakh's two hill councils were set up under the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Act, 1995: Leh in 1995 and Kargil in 2003.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (federalism, special provisions, UT governance) and GS3 (border areas) answers on Ladakh's constitutional future.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Six years after becoming a UT without a legislature, Ladakh seeks democratic and constitutional safeguards.
BODY	Options: Statehood, Sixth Schedule, Art 371-type provision, Art 240 regulation; trade-offs on democracy, finance, ecology and security; trust deficit.
WAY FORWARD	Time-bound dialogue, an elected body with real powers, land and job protections, and fiscal support tied to local capacity.

Mains value-add: Art 371A shows how a special provision can shield land ownership and customary law — Parliament's laws on these apply to Nagaland only if its Assembly so resolves — cite it as a model short of Statehood.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to Article 240 of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:
1. A regulation made by the President under this Article has the same force as an Act of Parliament and may repeal an Act of Parliament applicable to the Union Territory.
2. The President may make regulations under this Article for every Union Territory.
3. The President cannot make regulations for Puducherry while its Legislature is functioning.
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: Art 240(2) gives regulations the force of an Act of Parliament. Statement 2 is incorrect: the power covers only the UTs listed in Art 240(1); Delhi, J&K, Ladakh and Chandigarh are not listed. Statement 3 is correct: the power is suspended while Puducherry's Legislature functions.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** MHA: Ministry of Home Affairs | UT: Union Territory | J&K: Jammu and Kashmir | LAB: Leh Apex Body | KDA: Kargil Democratic Alliance

Trump Waives Russian-Oil Sanctions: Relief for India

Why in news: President Trump waived key provisions of a new U.S. law authorising tariffs of up to 100% on countries buying Russian oil, easing pressure on Indian refiners ahead of Secretary of State Rubio's 20-22 October visit.

Key Details:

- **The law:** The Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, signed on 18 September, authorises tariffs on major buyers of Russian oil and gas; China and India are the biggest.
- **The waiver:** Announced on Saturday, just before an 18 October Congressional deadline for a determination; it is not permanent, so tariffs could still be imposed later.
- **The diesel deal:** On 10 October Trump announced Russia would sell diesel to the U.S. and world markets; critics in both parties said it undermines the new law.

- **India's stand:** The Finance Minister said India could not stop buying Russian oil, as doing so could raise global prices while West Asian supplies are disrupted.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Diesel volumes:** Over 3 lakh tonnes 'immediately', 5 lakh tonnes in November and 1 million tonnes thereafter, per Trump's post.
- **Reverse flow:** Ukrainian strikes on refineries forced Russia to import a record 1.72 lakh tonnes of oil products in August; India supplied 70% of them (CREA).
- **Trade talks:** India-U.S. talks have run since February 2025; Rubio will visit Mumbai and Jamnagar and meet External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

India, the U.S. and Russian oil: the tariff saga



Source: The Hindu, 18 Oct 2026.

Secondary Sanctions and CAATSA

- **Primary vs secondary:** Primary sanctions bar a country's own firms from dealing with a target; secondary sanctions penalise third-country firms or states that deal with it.
- **CAATSA (2017):** U.S. law targeting Iran, North Korea and Russia; Section 231 covers significant deals with Russia's defence and intelligence sectors.
- **Precedent:** Turkey was sanctioned under CAATSA in December 2020 for buying the S-400; India's 2018 S-400 deal has not drawn sanctions.
- **India's position:** India follows sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council, not unilateral ones.
- **Not to confuse:** UN sanctions (binding on all members under Article 41 of the UN Charter) vs unilateral sanctions (binding only under the imposing state's law).

Prelims angle: Jamnagar in Gujarat hosts the world's largest single-site oil refining complex.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (India-U.S. relations, effect of policies of developed countries on India) and GS3 (energy security) answers.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	The waiver shows how U.S. sanctions policy now swings with its own energy and diplomatic needs.
BODY	India's energy security and discounted crude; secondary-sanctions risk; trade-deal leverage; the diesel deal's inconsistency; Russia-Ukraine dynamics; strategic autonomy.
WAY FORWARD	Diversify crude sources, build strategic reserves, conclude the trade deal, and insist that only UN sanctions bind India.

Mains value-add: India's long-held stance that it is bound only by UN Security Council sanctions, not unilateral ones, is a ready anchor for any answer on strategic autonomy in energy purchases.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements:
Statement-I: Secondary sanctions can penalise firms of a third country that deal with a sanctioned state.
Statement-II: Secondary sanctions are authorised by the UN Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.
Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II explains Statement-I

(b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, but Statement-II does not explain Statement-I

(c) Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect

(d) Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct

Answer: (c) Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect

Explanation: Statement-I is correct: secondary sanctions reach beyond the target to third parties that trade with it. Statement-II is incorrect: they are unilateral measures under a single state's domestic law (for example, U.S. statutes), not UN Security Council measures.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CREA: Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air | CAATSA: Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act | UN: United Nations

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 2

Protest-violence inquiry: The Supreme Court-appointed High Powered Enquiry Committee (HPEC) on violence during the July NEET paper-leak protests will prioritise the use of pellet guns, targeted violence and harassment of women protesters, and destruction of property; complaints can be filed on the portal hpec.nic.in, with identities kept confidential if sought.

How to use: *GS2: court-monitored fact-finding as an accountability tool when policing of protests is questioned.*

Custodial torture: The Andhra Pradesh High Court ordered a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the custodial death of 25-year-old Gade Sai Krishna, calling custodial torture 'a calculated assault on human dignity' and holding that the State must ensure an impartial inquiry even against its own officers.

How to use: *GS2: Art 21 and D.K. Basu (1997) guidelines; India has signed (1997) but not ratified the UN Convention against Torture.*

Electoral rolls: In Delhi, about 26 lakh (78.5%) of 33.12 lakh notices for 'logical discrepancies' or non-mapping to the 2002 rolls have been resolved; the final roll is due on 4 December. In Karnataka, over 1.28 lakh Form 7 deletion requests were filed in the month before the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), 45,878 of them by third parties.

How to use: *GS2 electoral reforms: Form 7 (objection/deletion) safeguards and the risk of mass, third-party deletions.*

Campus elections: Odisha held student union polls in 13 State universities after an eight-year gap, while Jamia Millia Islamia students on hunger strike seek restoration of union elections last held in 2006.

How to use: *GS2: the Lyngdoh Committee (2006) norms on student elections, endorsed by the Supreme Court, cover age limits, attendance and spending caps.*

Sri Lanka: The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka reported that militarisation of the Tamil-majority Northern and Eastern Provinces persists 17 years after the civil war, citing land appropriation and military roles in farming and pre-schools; it urged faster return of occupied land.

How to use: *GS2 India's neighbourhood: post-war reconciliation and Tamil concerns, linked to the 13th Amendment debate.*

GS PAPER 3: ECONOMY, HEALTH, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

FSSAI Moves to Ban Added Sugar in Infant Food, Sets Tea Pesticide Limits

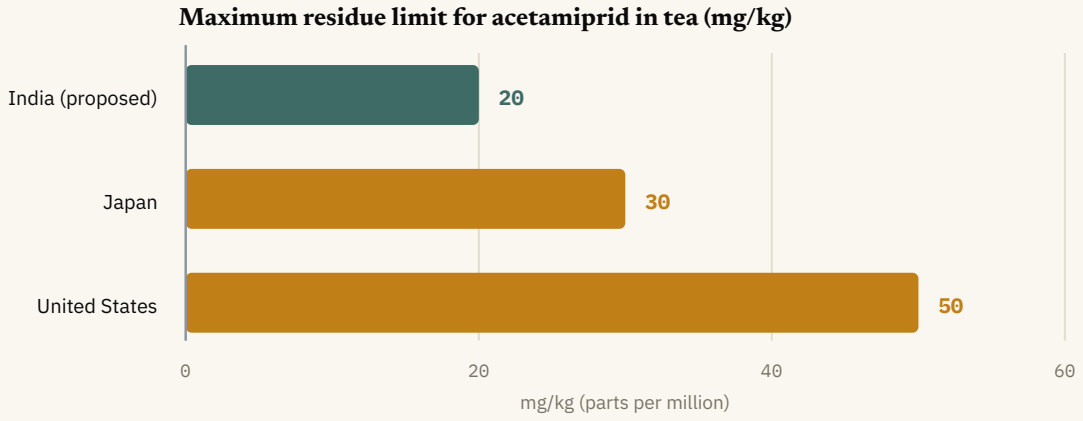
Why in news: FSSAI published two draft amendments in the Gazette: one bans adding sucrose and fructose to foods for infants up to six months; the other sets maximum residue limits for two pesticides in tea.

Key Details:

- **Infant food:** The draft Foods for Infant Nutrition Amendment Regulations, 2026 would prohibit added sucrose and fructose in products for infants up to six months, citing early sugar exposure as a public health concern.
- **Current rule:** Under the 2020 Regulations, lactose and glucose polymers are the preferred carbohydrates; sucrose and/or fructose may be added within prescribed limits.
- **Tea MRLs:** The draft Contaminants, Toxins and Residues Amendment Regulations, 2026 propose 20 mg/kg for acetamiprid and 50 mg/kg for imidacloprid in tea.
- **Why tea needed it:** Both pesticides are approved but had no notified MRL; small growers' associations had sought limits to end uncertainty and crop losses.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Benchmarks:** The acetamiprid limit is stricter than Japan's (30 ppm) and the U.S.'s (50 ppm); the imidacloprid limit follows Codex standards.
- **Pesticide use:** India uses under 0.5 kg of pesticide per hectare, against an estimated global average of 2.38 kg/ha.
- **Health logic:** Early sweet exposure shapes dietary preferences; the proposal complements advice on exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months.



FSSAI and Food Standards

- **Statute:** Set up under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which consolidated eight earlier food laws.
- **Ministry:** Functions under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **MRL:** The maximum concentration of a pesticide residue legally permitted in a food commodity.
- **Codex Alimentarius:** International food standards body set up in 1963 by the FAO and WHO.
- **Not to confuse:** FSSAI (food standards) vs CIB&RC under the Insecticides Act, 1968 (registration of pesticides).

Prelims angle: Neonicotinoids such as imidacloprid act on insects' nicotinic acetylcholine receptors; the EU banned outdoor use of three of them in 2018 over harm to bees.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (food processing, food safety, agriculture) and GS2 (health, nutrition) answers.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	FSSAI's twin drafts tackle added sugar in infant food and regulatory gaps for tea pesticides.
BODY	Child nutrition and NCD prevention; industry reformulation; labelling; tea exports and MRL harmonisation; farmer certainty; enforcement capacity and testing labs.
WAY FORWARD	Finalise quickly, strengthen testing and front-of-pack labelling, align MRLs with Codex, and promote integrated pest management.

Mains value-add: WHO and UNICEF recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months — cite it to explain why products for this age must not build a taste for sugar.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India was established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
2. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India functions under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
3. The Codex Alimentarius Commission was set up jointly by the FAO and the WHO.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: FSSAI is a statutory body under the 2006 Act. Statement 2 is incorrect: it functions under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Statement 3 is correct: the FAO and WHO set up the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1963.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** FSSAI: Food Safety and Standards Authority of India | MRL: Maximum Residue Limit | ppm: parts per million | FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization | WHO: World Health Organization | CIB&RC: Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee | EU: European Union | NCD: Non-Communicable Disease | UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

Trade Margins Capped on 137 Cancer Drugs

Why in news: The NPPA capped trade margins at 30% on 137 non-scheduled anti-cancer formulations, which could cut their retail prices by up to 70%, effective 9 November.

> **Story so far:** The 9 Oct Brief covered SC concern over cancer-drug mark-ups, and the 13 Oct Brief its call for caps across drugs. New today: the government has notified the cap.

Key Details:

- **Legal route:** Trade Margin Rationalisation under Paragraph 19 of the DPCO, 2013, notified in the Gazette on Saturday.
- **Who picked the drugs:** An expert committee under the DGHS — oncologists, hospital experts and officials — recommended the list, which will be updated periodically.
- **Compliance:** Makers must publish revised price lists and keep up supply; retailers and hospitals must charge and display the new prices; State drug controllers will enforce.
- **For patients:** Prices can be checked on the NPPA website or the Pharma Sahi Daam app.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Pilot:** A 2019 pilot capped margins on 42 cancer medicines at 30% and cut MRPs by up to 90% across 526 brands.
- **Why margins matter:** Non-scheduled drugs are outside ceiling prices, so wide gaps between the price to traders and the MRP inflated bills at hospital pharmacies.
- **Dimensions:** Health: out-of-pocket spending on cancer; industry: supply and launch incentives; federal: State-level enforcement; legal: SC oversight.

Drug Price Control: DPCO, 2013

- **Scheduled drugs:** Medicines in the NLEM form Schedule I; their ceiling price is the simple average of brands with at least 1% market share.
- **Non-scheduled drugs:** Makers set the launch price but may raise the MRP by no more than 10% a year (Para 20).
- **Para 19:** Lets the government fix the price of any drug in extraordinary circumstances, in the public interest.
- **Regulator:** The NPPA, set up in 1997, is an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals.
- **Not to confuse:** Price control (NPPA, DPCO) vs quality and approval of drugs (CDSCO, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940).

Prelims angle: The National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) 2022 contains 384 medicines.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (health, affordable medicines) and GS3 (pharma sector, regulation) answers.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Capping trade margins on 137 cancer drugs targets mark-ups rather than manufacturers' prices.
BODY	Rationale: high out-of-pocket costs, 2019 pilot; benefits; risks: shortages, brand withdrawal; enforcement by States; hospital billing; Para 19 vs market pricing.
WAY FORWARD	Track supply, extend to other high-cost therapies, strengthen Jan Aushadhi and price transparency in hospitals.

Mains value-add: Article 47 makes improving public health a primary duty of the State — cite it to justify price intervention for life-saving medicines.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority is an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals.
2. Under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013, manufacturers of non-scheduled formulations can raise their MRP without any limit.
3. The Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 empowers the government to fix the price of any drug in extraordinary circumstances in the public interest.
How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: NPPA is an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals. Statement 2 is incorrect: Para 20 caps annual MRP increases on non-scheduled formulations at 10%. Statement 3 is correct: Para 19 gives this power.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NPPA: National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority | DPCO: Drugs (Prices Control) Order | DGHS: Directorate General of Health Services | MRP: Maximum Retail Price | SC: Supreme Court | NLEM: National List of Essential Medicines | CDSCO: Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation

Aditya-L1 and Proba-3: First Joint View of Solar Eruptions

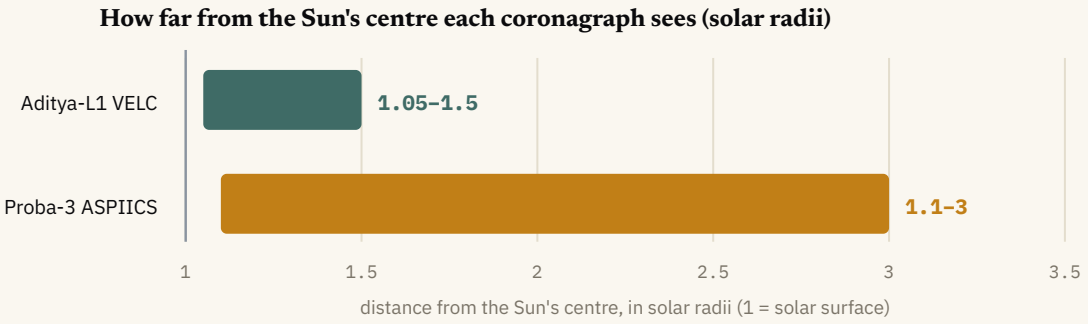
Why in news: Scientists led by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics combined coronagraph data from India's Aditya-L1 and Europe's Proba-3 to study coronal mass ejections near the Sun, in a paper in *Astronomy & Astrophysics*.

Key Details:

- **Two instruments:** Aditya-L1's VELC gives spectroscopy of CME gas; Proba-3's ASPIICS gives sharp white-light images of a CME's shape, motion and mass.
- **The events:** Only two CMEs, on 14 and 16 September 2025, were caught by both between July and December 2025; VELC saw both at an early stage.
- **Fast vs slow:** The 14 September CME moved at about 645 km/s; the 16 September one at 145 km/s expanded more strongly early on.
- **Finding:** In both, magnetic energy was comparable to or greater than kinetic energy; VELC measured the CME gas at about two million degrees.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Aditya-L1:** India's first dedicated solar mission, launched on 2 September 2023 by PSLV-C57; it entered a halo orbit around L1 on 6 January 2024.
- **Proba-3:** ESA's precision formation-flying mission, launched by PSLV from Sriharikota on 5 December 2024; two craft about 150 m apart, one shading the other.
- **Why it matters:** CMEs drive geomagnetic storms that can damage satellites, power grids and navigation; better models improve space-weather forecasts.



Source: ISRO, 15 Oct 2026. Overlap (1.1–1.5) lets both observe the same CME.

Lagrange Points and Coronagraphs

- **Lagrange points:** Five positions (L1-L5) where a small body can hold its position relative to two large bodies such as the Sun and Earth.
- **L1:** About 1.5 million km from Earth towards the Sun; gives an uninterrupted view of the Sun, free of eclipses.
- **Coronagraph:** Blocks the Sun's bright disc to create an artificial eclipse so the faint corona can be studied; first built by Bernard Lyot in 1930.
- **CME:** A huge release of plasma and magnetic field from the corona; different from a solar flare, which is a sudden burst of radiation.
- **Not to confuse:** L1 (Aditya-L1, SOHO) vs L2 (James Webb Space Telescope).

Prelims angle: Aditya-L1 carries seven payloads: four remote-sensing instruments and three in-situ instruments.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (space technology, international cooperation, disaster preparedness) answers on space weather.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Joint Aditya-L1 and Proba-3 observations give the first combined view of CMEs near their source.
BODY	Science: CME energetics and early evolution; technology: formation flying, coronagraphs; cooperation: ISRO-ESA, PSLV launch; applications: space-weather alerts for grids and satellites.
WAY FORWARD	Operational space-weather services, data sharing, and follow-on missions such as an L5 observatory.

Mains value-add: The Carrington Event (1859), the strongest geomagnetic storm on record, disrupted telegraph systems worldwide — cite it to show why early CME warnings matter for a digital economy.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY–MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Aditya-L1 has been placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point L1, about 1.5 million km from Earth.
2. ESA's Proba-3 mission was launched by ISRO's PSLV from Sriharikota.
3. A coronagraph blocks the bright disc of the Sun so that its corona can be observed.
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: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: Aditya-L1 reached its halo orbit around L1 on 6 January 2024. Statement 2 is correct: PSLV-XL launched Proba-3 on 5 December 2024. Statement 3 is correct: a coronagraph creates an artificial eclipse.

▪ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** VELC: Visible Emission Line Coronagraph | ASPIICS: Association of Spacecraft for Polarimetric and Imaging Investigation of the Corona of the Sun | CME: Coronal Mass Ejection | PSLV: Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle | ESA: European Space Agency | SOHO: Solar and Heliospheric Observatory | ISRO: Indian Space Research Organisation

Saving India's Only Ape: Canopy Bridges for the Hoolock Gibbon

Why in news: Fragmentation by roads and railways is the main reason Northeast India's hoolock gibbon populations have fallen by about 90% in recent decades; canopy bridges are one answer.

Key Details:

- **Built for trees:** Adults stand about three feet tall with very long arms; they swing through canopies above 30 feet and move awkwardly on land, where wild dogs and leopards prey on them.
- **Cut off:** Gibbons mate for life and guard territories, so a road or rail line isolates groups, leading to inbreeding and decline.
- **Hollongapar:** Railway expansion into eastern Assam from 1887 split the forest; one fragment became the Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary, with only about 130 western hoolocks.
- **The fix:** Dense planting along the track joined canopies in about 15 years into a natural bridge, after earlier gantry bridges; local groups such as Aranyak led the work.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Numbers:** The sanctuary's 130 or so are part of a total of only about 3,000-5,000 western hoolock gibbons, per the article.
- **Elsewhere:** Braided rope bridges help arboreal animals from Melghat Tiger Reserve to Tamil Nadu's Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Sanctuary; lion-tailed macaques at Valparai face similar fragmentation.
- **Abroad:** The Netherlands has an animal overpass nearly a kilometre long spanning a highway, a rail yard and a golf course.

Linear Infrastructure and Wildlife

- **The problem:** Roads, railways, canals and power lines fragment habitats, cause roadkill and block gene flow.
- **Mitigation:** Underpasses, overpasses, canopy and rope bridges, fencing that guides animals, and speed limits in sensitive stretches.
- **Guidelines:** WII's 'Eco-friendly Measures to Mitigate Impacts of Linear Infrastructure on Wildlife' (2016).
- **Clearances:** Projects in protected areas need the approval of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife.
- **Not to confuse:** Wildlife corridor (habitat link between populations) vs crossing structure (a built passage across one barrier).

Prelims angle: The Bengal slow loris, Northeast India's only nocturnal primate, is also found in the Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (conservation, environmental impact assessment, infrastructure) answers on green infrastructure.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Hoolock gibbons show how linear infrastructure can push an arboreal species towards local extinction.
BODY	Ecology of arboreal species; fragmentation effects; Hollongapar case; mitigation tools; role of communities and NGOs; EIA and NBWL clearances.
WAY FORWARD	Mandatory crossing structures in project design, canopy restoration, connectivity mapping and monitoring.

Mains value-add: Hollongapar's canopy bridge took about 15 years of planting to grow — cite it to argue that mitigation must be built into project design from the start, not added later.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY

Q. Consider the following statements about the hoolock gibbon:
1. It is the only ape found in India.
2. The western hoolock gibbon is found mainly to the north of the Brahmaputra river.
3. The Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary is located in Assam.
How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: hoolock gibbons are India's only apes. Statement 2 is incorrect: the western hoolock lives mainly south of the Brahmaputra (and east of the Dibang). Statement 3 is correct: the sanctuary is in Jorhat district, Assam.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2026: "With respect to the Western Hoolock Gibbons, which of the following statements is/are correct? 1. A Sanctuary in North-east India is home to this ape species listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List. 2. They have specialised brachiation and can easily swing between trees. 3. They possess a strong and heavy build like gorillas, yet are remarkably agile tree climbers." — Answer: (b) 1 and 2.

▪ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** WII: Wildlife Institute of India | NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation | EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment | NBWL: National Board for Wildlife | IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 3

Crude sourcing: As Russian imports dipped, India's Gulf crude imports rose from 1.2 to 2.4 million barrels a day in September; Iraqi supplies almost tripled and Saudi shipments rose 50-60% over August (Kpler data).
How to use: *GS3 energy security: flexible sourcing across chokepoints (Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb, Suez) as a buffer against supply shocks.*

Paramilitary ranks: The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), with about 3.25 lakh personnel, is considering reviving the Lance Naik and Naik ranks abolished in 1997, as constables now wait 22-25 years for a first promotion; it also wants to attract retiring Agniveers.
How to use: *GS3 internal security: morale and career progression in the Central Armed Police Forces.*

Aviation safety: The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) report on a 2023 Learjet crash at Mumbai by charter firm VSR Ventures found lapses in maintenance and pilot training, and said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) audits missed them.
How to use: *GS3: regulatory oversight of non-scheduled operators; the case for an independent, well-staffed safety regulator.*

Fuel storage: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Thiruvananthapuram made magnesium hydridomethylzincate, a solid that releases both hydrogen and methane when heated to 80-110°C (*Science Advances*).
How to use: *GS3 energy technology: solid-state storage as an alternative to compressed gas for hydrogen transport.*

Food safety drive: Delhi's Food Safety Department found expired products and pests at quick-commerce and retail stores; 19 of 59 desi ghee samples were declared 'unsafe' and four substandard.
How to use: *GS3: enforcement under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 in fast-growing quick-commerce supply chains.*

GS PAPER 4: ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

Gifts, Favours and Conflict of Interest in Public Office

Why in news: Kimberly Guilfoyle resigned as U.S. Ambassador to Greece after a Wall Street Journal investigation alleged she traded favours and accepted gifts; she has called the allegations 'false'.

Key Details:

- **Allegation 1:** That she asked a donor to help clear a $100,000 credit-card bill before her confirmation hearing, offering in return to influence officials in his favour.
- **Allegation 2:** That she promoted a Greek construction firm newly active in the gas business across Balkan states, and accepted gifts and services from it and others.
- **The issue:** Personal obligations to outsiders compromise a public official's independence, whatever the eventual verdict.
- **GS4 concept:** Tests integrity, conflict of interest and probity — and why perception of bias also erodes trust.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Ripples:** Greece's main Opposition party, PASOK, asked its government to clarify its position on the allegations.
- **Indian rules:** Rule 11 of the AIS (Conduct) Rules, 1968 regulates gifts to officers; UNCAC Article 8, ratified by India in 2011, calls for codes of conduct and declarations of interests.
- **Lesson:** Disclosure, recusal and refusal of gifts are the first lines of defence against capture.

Conflict of Interest

- **Actual:** A private interest already influences an official decision.
- **Potential:** A private interest could influence a future decision, such as a relative bidding for a contract.
- **Perceived:** A reasonable person might believe there is influence, even if there is none.
- **Nolan principle:** Integrity: holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outsiders.
- **Not to confuse:** Conflict of interest (a situation to manage through disclosure and recusal) vs corruption (misuse of office for gain).

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS4 (probity in governance, integrity, codes of conduct) answers and case studies.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Accepting favours creates obligations that can bend public decisions.
BODY	Stakeholders: public, government, firms, diplomatic partners; values: integrity, impartiality, transparency; tools: disclosure, recusal, gift registers, cooling-off periods.
CONCLUSION	Clear gift rules, asset and interest declarations, and leaders who model restraint.

Mains value-add: The 2nd ARC's 4th Report, 'Ethics in Governance' (2007), recommended codifying conflict-of-interest rules for ministers and officials — cite it in answers on probity.

MAINS CASE STUDY EXERCISE

Q. You head a public-sector procurement unit. A long-time family friend, now a director of a firm bidding for a large contract, offers to pay for your daughter's foreign college admission consultancy as a 'personal gesture'. The firm's bid is technically strong. (a) What ethical issues are involved? (b) What will you do, and why? (c) Suggest systemic safeguards against such conflicts. (250 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2018, GS4: "What is meant by conflict of interest? Illustrate with examples, the difference between the actual and potential conflicts of interest." (150 words, 10 marks)

▪ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** PASOK: Panhellenic Socialist Movement | AIS: All India Services | UNCAC: United Nations Convention against Corruption | ARC: Administrative Reforms Commission