THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 3 NOVEMBER 2026

TODAY'S COVERAGE

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PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

1. **Youth Olympic Games 2026** — held in Dakar, Senegal, the first Olympic event in Africa; Dhinidhi Desinghu won India's first global swimming medal (100m freestyle bronze).
2. **Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD)** — the Indian Navy's apex annual international conference, organised with the National Maritime Foundation; 2026 edition at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.
3. **India International Trade Fair (IITF)** — organised by ITPO under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry; 45th edition on 13–27 Nov 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
4. **U.S. Congress** — House: 435 members on two-year terms; Senate: 100 members on six-year terms, with about one-third elected every two years (midterms on 3 Nov).
5. **ISSF World Championship, Doha** — first qualification event for the LA 2028 Olympics, with three quota places in each of the 12 individual Olympic shooting events.

HOW TO READ THIS BRIEF

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

GS PAPER 1: GEOGRAPHY

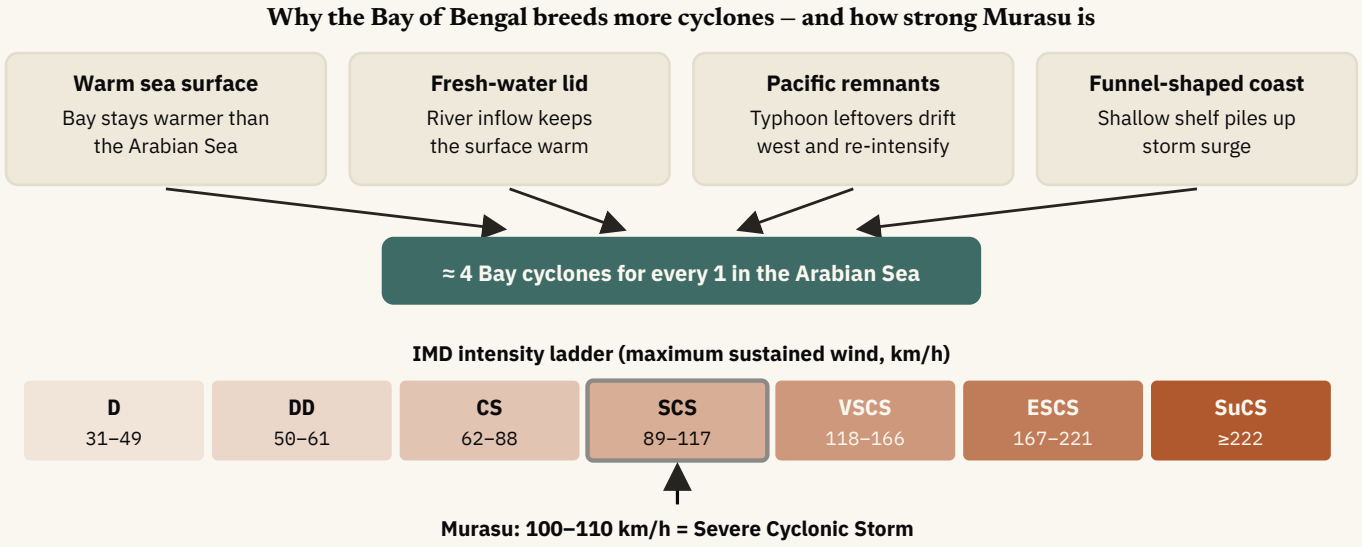
CONCEPT NOTE

Why the Bay of Bengal Breeds More Cyclones (Cyclone Murasu)

In the news: Severe Cyclonic Storm Murasu was forecast to cross the south Andhra Pradesh coast near Ongole with 100–110 km/h winds, less than a week after Cyclone Arnab hit the same coast.

Background Concept: Cyclones of the North Indian Ocean

- **Basic recipe:** Tropical cyclones need warm sea water (about 26.5°C or more), moist air, low wind shear and the Coriolis force to spin.
- **Bay vs Arabian Sea:** The Bay of Bengal records roughly four cyclones for every one in the Arabian Sea.
- **Warm, layered sea:** Fresh water from the Ganga–Brahmaputra forms a light surface layer that blocks cooler water from mixing up, keeping the sea warm.
- **Pacific link:** Remnants of typhoons from the South China Sea drift west and re-intensify over the Bay.
- **Deadly surge:** The funnel-shaped Bay, flat deltaic coast and shallow shelf pile water into high storm surges (Odisha, Bangladesh).
- **Two seasons:** Cyclones peak in April–May (pre-monsoon) and October–December (post-monsoon); the post-monsoon season dominates in the Bay.
- **Prelims traps:** Northern Hemisphere cyclones spin anticlockwise; none form within about 5° of the equator, where the Coriolis force is too weak.



How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 answers on the distribution of cyclones and in GS3 disaster-management answers; back-to-back Arnab and Murasu show why the east coast needs permanent shelters and early warning.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY

Q. Consider the following statements about tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean:
1. The Bay of Bengal records more tropical cyclones than the Arabian Sea.
2. Tropical cyclones in the Northern Hemisphere rotate clockwise.
3. Tropical cyclones generally do not form within about 5° of the equator.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: the Bay sees about four times as many cyclones. Statement 2 is incorrect: they rotate anticlockwise in the Northern Hemisphere (clockwise in the Southern). Statement 3 is correct: the Coriolis force is too weak near the equator.

- **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** IMD: India Meteorological Department

CONCEPT NOTE

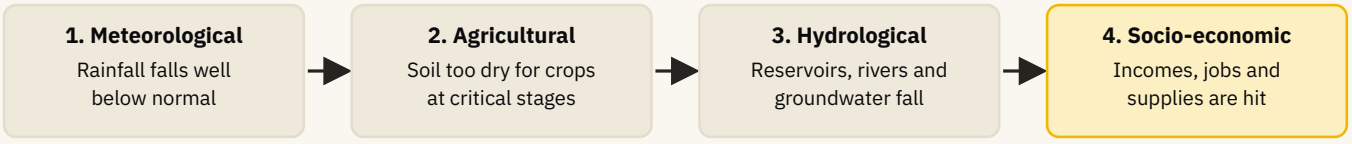
Types of Drought and How IMD Measures Rainfall Deficit (Maharashtra's Orchards)

In the news: Maharashtra recorded an 18% rainfall deficit (1 June–26 September); drought was declared in 304 of 358 talukas, and orange, sweet-lime and pomegranate orchards in Vidarbha and Marathwada dried up.

Background Concept: Types of Drought

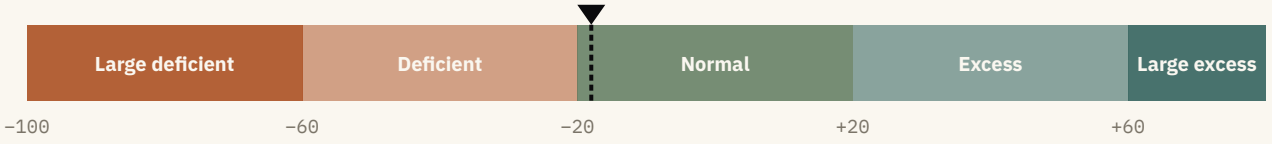
- **Meteorological:** Rainfall over an area falls well below its normal (long-period average).
- **Agricultural:** Soil moisture is too low for crops at critical stages; it can occur even when the season's total rain looks near normal.
- **Hydrological:** Rivers, reservoirs and groundwater fall; it usually lags rainfall shortfall by weeks or months.
- **Socio-economic:** Shortage spills into incomes, jobs, prices and supplies of goods.
- **IMD categories:** For a State or sub-division: Normal −19% to +19%; Deficient −20% to −59%; Large deficient −60% to −99%.
- **Declaration:** States declare drought under the Manual for Drought Management (2016, updated 2020), using rainfall triggers plus crop, vegetation and water indicators.
- **Why orchards suffer:** Perennial trees take years to bear fruit, so one drought can wipe out several years of income — unlike a single field crop.

How drought cascades — and why an 18% deficit can still be 'normal'



Each stage usually lags the one before it by weeks to months

IMD categories for a State / sub-division (% departure from long-period average)



▲ Maharashtra, 1 Jun–26 Sep: −18% → 'Normal' band
yet drought was declared in 304 of 358 talukas: dry spells and timing mattered

'Normal' covers −19% to +19%; 'Deficient' starts at −20%

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1/GS3 answers on drought and agrarian distress; the 'normal deficit, yet drought' paradox shows why rainfall distribution and dry spells matter more than seasonal totals.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to drought in India, consider the following statements:
1. An agricultural drought can occur even when seasonal rainfall is within the normal range.
2. Hydrological drought usually sets in before meteorological drought.
3. For a State, a seasonal rainfall departure of −18% from the long-period average is classified by IMD as 'deficient'.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: poorly timed rain or long dry spells can parch crops despite a near-normal total. Statement 2 is incorrect: hydrological drought lags meteorological drought. Statement 3 is incorrect: −19% to +19% is 'normal'; 'deficient' begins at −20%.

- **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** IMD: India Meteorological Department

GS PAPER 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE & IR

Independents Who Join a Party: The Tenth Schedule Test

Why in news: The BJP announced that two Independent MLCs elected in Bihar's 23 Oct Council polls had joined it, and the JSP, RJD and Congress want them disqualified; in Punjab, an AAP MLA joined the BJP without resigning his seat.

> **Story so far:** The 14 Oct Brief covered the Madras HC ruling on resignations and Speaker delay under the Tenth Schedule. New today: the rarely tested Para 2(2), on Independents joining a party, is now before the Bihar Council's Chairman.

Key Details:

- **Para 2(2):** An Independent is disqualified if he joins any political party after election; the test is the act of joining, not merely backing a government.
- **The defence:** Both MLCs say they only 'offered support' to the NDA; photos of them with BJP membership slips and scarves are the Opposition's evidence of joining.
- **Who decides:** Under Para 6 the Council's Chairman decides; since Kihoto Hollohan (1992) he acts as a tribunal whose ruling is open to judicial review.
- **Resign or defect:** In Punjab, two AAP MLAs resigned before switching and so avoid a disqualification finding; the third joined without resigning and has been served a notice by the Speaker.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **No deadline:** The Schedule fixes no time limit; in Keisham Meghachandra Singh (2020) the SC said pleas should ordinarily be decided within three months.
- **Legal evolution:** Added by the 52nd Amendment (1985); the 91st Amendment (2003) deleted the one-third 'split' exception, leaving only a two-thirds merger (Para 4).

Who loses the seat, and when

Member type	Disqualified if	Provision
Elected on a party ticket	Voluntarily gives up party membership, or defies the party whip (unless condoned within 15 days)	Para 2(1)(a), (b)
Elected as Independent	Joins any political party after election	Para 2(2)
Nominated member	Joins a party after six months of taking the seat	Para 2(3)
Exception	Two-thirds of the legislature party agree to a merger	Para 4

The Tenth Schedule: Independents, Nominated Members and Merger

- **Origin:** Inserted by the 52nd Amendment (1985) to end the 'Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram' floor-crossing that toppled State governments after 1967.
- **Coverage:** Applies to members of both Houses of Parliament and of State Legislatures, including Legislative Councils.
- **Deciding authority:** The Chairman or Speaker of the House (Para 6); Para 7's bar on courts was struck down in Kihoto Hollohan (1992).
- **91st Amendment (2003):** Deleted the 'split' clause and barred defectors from ministerial office until re-elected (Arts 75(1B), 164(1B)).
- **Grey zones:** The Schedule does not define 'joining'; conduct outside the House, such as attending party events, is weighed by the presiding officer.
- **Not to confuse:** Resignation under Art 190(3)(b), accepted if voluntary and genuine, is separate from disqualification under the Tenth Schedule.

Prelims angle: Para 5 exempts a member elected Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chairman or Deputy Chairman who gives up party membership on taking that office.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on anti-defection law, the neutrality of presiding officers and legislative ethics; Para 2(2) shows how 'support' versus 'joining' becomes a factual grey zone that partisan arbiters can exploit.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	The Tenth Schedule (1985) protects the voter's mandate by penalising floor-crossing.
BODY	Legal: Para 2(2) 'joining' test, Para 6 tribunal role; institutional: no deadline, partisan arbiters; political: resign-and-rejoin route; democratic: mandate vs conscience.
WAY FORWARD	Time-bound rulings per Keisham (2020); a neutral arbiter as urged by the Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990).

Mains value-add: The Dinesh Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms (1990) recommended that disqualification be decided by the President or Governor on the ECI's advice, not by the presiding officer — cite it to argue for a neutral arbiter.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:
1. An Independent member of a House is disqualified if he joins a political party after his election.
2. A nominated member is disqualified if he joins a political party at any time after taking his seat.
3. The decision of the Chairman of a Legislative Council on a disqualification petition is final and cannot be questioned in any court.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) 1 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct under Para 2(2). Statement 2 is incorrect: a nominated member may join a party within six months of taking the seat (Para 2(3)). Statement 3 is incorrect: Kihoto Hollohan (1992) struck down Para 7 and held the presiding officer's decision subject to judicial review.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2022: "With reference to anti-defection law in India, consider the following statements: 1. The law specifies that a nominated legislator cannot join any political party within six months of being appointed to the House. 2. The law does not provide any time-frame within which the presiding officer has to decide a defection case. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?" — Answer: (b) 2 only.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** MLC: Member of Legislative Council | JSP: Jan Suraaj Party | RJD: Rashtriya Janata Dal | AAP: Aam Aadmi Party | NDA: National Democratic Alliance | SC: Supreme Court | HC: High Court | ECI: Election Commission of India

No Right to Protest for OCI Cardholders: Bombay HC

Why in news: Accepting actor Imran Khan's unconditional apology and undertaking not to protest, the Bombay HC held that OCI cardholders cannot be put on par with citizens and have no right to join political agitations.

Story so far: The 18 Oct Brief explained OCI status (Sections 7A–7D) and the FRRO's Leave India Notice to Khan. New today: the HC's view that OCIs have no right to protest, with the notice kept in abeyance till 7 Dec.

Key Details:

- **Facts:** Khan, a U.S. citizen, was detained at an anti-CEC protest in Mumbai on 10 Oct; the FRRO issued him a Leave India Notice on 14 Oct.
- **HC's reasoning:** OCI is a status the State grants; in its sovereign capacity it may deport a non-citizen, so an OCI's protest cannot be equated with a citizen's dissent.
- **Rights divide:** Art 19 freedoms of speech and assembly belong to citizens only; non-citizens enjoy Arts 14, 20, 21 and 25, which carry no right to agitate.
- **Rule-based curbs:** An MHA notification (2021) requires OCIs to obtain special permission for journalism, research, missionary or Tabligh work, and visits to protected areas.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Court's directions:** The notice is in abeyance till the next hearing on 7 Dec; the Centre must file an affidavit clarifying OCIs' rights and its stand.
- **Statutory limits:** S.7B(2) of the Citizenship Act denies OCIs equal opportunity in public employment, voting rights, legislative seats and constitutional posts such as President or judge.

Fundamental Rights of Non-Citizens

- **Available to all persons:** Arts 14, 20, 21, 21A, 22, 23–24 and 25–28 protect anyone on Indian soil, citizen or foreigner.
- **Citizens only:** Arts 15, 16, 19, 29 and 30 are reserved for citizens.
- **Enemy aliens:** Art 22's arrest and detention safeguards do not extend to enemy aliens (Art 22(3)).
- **Power to expel:** Hans Muller of Nurenberg (1955): the Centre's power to expel foreigners is absolute and not limited by Art 19.
- **OCI basics:** Registration under S.7A; S.7D lets the Centre cancel an OCI card for fraud, disaffection to the Constitution or violating any law (added in 2019).
- **Not to confuse:** OCI is not dual citizenship — Art 9 ends Indian citizenship on voluntarily acquiring another; OCI is a lifelong visa-like status.

Prelims angle: OCI was created by the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003 and launched in 2005; the PIO card was merged into it in 2015.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on citizenship, the scope of Fundamental Rights and diaspora policy; balance the State's sovereign power over non-citizens with Art 21's guarantee of fair, non-arbitrary procedure.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	OCI gives the diaspora a lifelong link with India but not citizenship.
BODY	Constitutional: Art 19 citizen-only, Art 21 for all; legal: S.7B limits, S.7D cancellation; executive: 2021 permission regime; diplomatic: diaspora goodwill vs sovereignty.
WAY FORWARD	Clear notified guidelines on OCI conduct; hearing before cancellation, as Art 21 fairness demands.

Mains value-add: Louis De Raedt v Union of India (1991): a foreigner's Fundamental Rights are largely confined to Art 21, while the right to reside and settle (Art 19(1)(e)) belongs only to citizens — cite it to explain why OCIs' political activity can be restricted.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY–MODERATE

Q. With reference to Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, consider the following statements:
1. An OCI cardholder can be registered as a voter in India.
2. An OCI cardholder needs special permission from the Government of India to undertake journalistic activities in India.
3. The freedoms under Article 19 of the Constitution are available to OCI cardholders as they are to citizens.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect: S.7B(2) of the Citizenship Act bars OCIs from voter registration. Statement 2 is correct under the MHA's 2021 notification. Statement 3 is incorrect: Art 19 freedoms are available only to citizens; non-citizens rely mainly on Arts 14, 20, 21 and 25.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2021: "With reference to India, consider the following statements: 1. There is only one citizenship and one domicile. 2. A citizen by birth only can become the Head of State. 3. A foreigner once granted citizenship cannot be deprived of it under any circumstances. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?" — Answer: (a) 1 only.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** OCI: Overseas Citizen of India | HC: High Court | FRRO: Foreigners Regional Registration Office | CEC: Chief Election Commissioner | MHA: Ministry of Home Affairs | PIO: Person of Indian Origin

RERA at Ten: Homebuyers Say the Regulator Wears Two Hats

Why in news: A homebuyers' forum, the FPCE, wrote to the PM that ten years after RERA its objectives are 'far from being achieved', blaming regulators' twin duty of promoting the sector and protecting buyers.

Key Details:

- **Core complaint:** RERAs must both promote real estate and protect homebuyers; the FPCE says this built-in conflict tilts enforcement towards developers.
- **Proposed fix (FPCE):** Leave sector promotion with the Housing Ministry and shift buyer protection to the Department of Consumer Affairs.
- **Paper compliance:** Projects are registered without scrutiny of documents, promoters' declarations or sale agreements; registration and disclosure alone don't stop violations.
- **Judicial backing:** In Newtech Promoters (2021) the SC held RERA applies to ongoing projects without completion certificates and that buyers have an unqualified right to a refund with interest on delay.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Coverage:** Projects above 500 sq m or eight apartments must register (S.3); 70% of buyers' money must sit in a separate project account (S.4).
- **Buyer safeguards:** Sale on carpet area; advance capped at 10% before an agreement; five-year developer liability for structural defects.

- **Appeal filter:** A promoter must deposit at least 30% of a penalty, or the full amount due to buyers, before appealing (S.43(5)), as upheld in Newtech.

The RERA Act, 2016

- **Enactment:** Passed in 2016; all its provisions came into force on 1 May 2017.
- **Constitutional basis:** Rests on Concurrent List Entries 6 (transfer of property) and 7 (contracts), not on 'housing' as a State subject.
- **Structure:** A Real Estate Regulatory Authority and an Appellate Tribunal in each State/UT; further appeal lies to the HC (S.58).
- **Registration:** Both projects and real estate agents must register before advertising or selling.
- **Penalties:** Promoters face up to three years' imprisonment for not complying with Appellate Tribunal orders.
- **Not to confuse:** RERA and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 are parallel remedies; Imperia Structures (2020) held buyers can still go to consumer commissions.

Prelims angle: S.32 of RERA expressly tasks the Authority with promoting the real estate sector — the 'promotion' function the FPCE wants separated.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on regulatory design, consumer protection and urban housing; the 'two hats' critique illustrates conflict of mandate, echoing debates on separating regulation from promotion in other sectors.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	RERA (2016) sought transparency and accountability in a sector notorious for delays and diverted funds.
BODY	Legal: escrow, registration, refund rights; institutional: dual mandate, weak scrutiny; economic: stalled projects, trust deficit; social: middle-class savings at risk.
WAY FORWARD	Separate promotion from regulation; audit-backed project scrutiny; time-bound execution of RERA orders.

Mains value-add: FPCE v State of West Bengal (2021): the SC struck down West Bengal's parallel law (HIRA, 2017) as repugnant to RERA under Art 254 — cite it to show Parliament's law gives homebuyers one uniform floor of protection.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, consider the following statements:
1. A promoter must deposit 70% of the amounts realised from allottees in a separate account to be used only for that project.
2. Homebuyers are barred from approaching consumer commissions once a project is registered under the Act.
3. The Act applies only in those States that have adopted it by resolution under Article 252.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct under S.4. Statement 2 is incorrect: Imperia Structures (2020) held the consumer remedy survives RERA. Statement 3 is incorrect: RERA rests on Concurrent List entries and applies across India; Art 252 is used only for State List subjects.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** RERA: Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 / Real Estate Regulatory Authority | FPCE: Forum for People's Collective Efforts | SC: Supreme Court | HC: High Court | HIRA: West Bengal Housing Industry Regulation Act | UT: Union Territory

Allahabad HC Seeks Criminal Contempt Against Lawyers: Dissent vs Disruption

Why in news: The Allahabad HC recommended criminal contempt proceedings and FIRs against lawyers who allegedly assaulted court staff and vandalised a courtroom on 28 Oct.

Key Details:

- **The Bench's line:** 'Anarchy is not a species of dissent'; freedom of speech at the Bar is not the freedom to slander the Bench, the Bench said.

- **Process:** The Bench asked the CJ to launch criminal contempt and the Registrar General to get FIRs filed, including against those spreading 'false information' online.
- **Bar's version:** The HC Bar Association alleged a judge humiliated an advocate; the Bench called it a 'total falsehood', noting no detention order existed on record.
- **Why it matters:** Contempt power protects the administration of justice, not judges' reputations; the line between fair criticism and obstruction is the core debate.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Punishment:** Up to six months' simple imprisonment, a fine up to ₹2,000, or both (S.12); a bona fide apology can discharge the contemnor.
- **Defence of truth:** Since the 2006 amendment, truth is a valid defence if the publication was in public interest and bona fide (S.13).
- **Bar discipline:** Contempt power cannot suspend an advocate's licence; that lies with Bar Councils under the Advocates Act, 1961 (SCBA, 1998).

Two kinds of contempt under the 1971 Act

	Civil contempt — S.2(b)	Criminal contempt — S.2(c)
Core act	Wilful disobedience of a court's order, decree or undertaking	Words or acts that scandalise, prejudice or obstruct justice
Purpose	Enforce a litigant's rights	Protect public confidence in courts
Typical example	Not paying ordered dues; breaching an undertaking	Disrupting proceedings; scurrilous attacks on judges

Contempt of Court: Constitutional and Statutory Basis

- **Courts of record:** Arts 129 and 215 make the SC and HCs courts of record with power to punish contempt of themselves.
- **Art 142(2):** Gives the SC power to punish contempt, subject to any law made by Parliament.
- **Legislative entries:** Contempt of the SC is in Entry 77, Union List; contempt of other courts is in Entry 14, Concurrent List.
- **The 1971 Act:** Enacted on the H.N. Sanyal Committee's (1963) report; defines and limits contempt powers.
- **Free speech link:** Art 19(2) lists contempt of court as a ground for reasonable restrictions on speech.
- **Not to confuse:** Contempt (a court's power over conduct) differs from professional misconduct, which Bar Councils punish under the Advocates Act.

Prelims angle: Under S.15 of the 1971 Act, criminal contempt of the SC or a HC can be taken up suo motu, on the AG's or Advocate-General's motion, or by others with their written consent.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 answers on judicial independence, the Bar's role and free speech; contrast disruption of courts with legitimate criticism protected by the truth defence.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Contempt power safeguards the authority and functioning of courts as constitutional institutions.
BODY	Legal: Arts 129/215, 1971 Act; institutional: Bar–Bench relations, court security; rights: Art 19(2) limits vs fair criticism; ethical: officers of the court owe restraint.
WAY FORWARD	Use contempt sparingly; strengthen Bar Council discipline; grievance redressal committees as urged in Harish Uppal (2003).

Mains value-add: Ex-Capt. Harish Uppal v Union of India (2003): the SC held lawyers have no right to strike or boycott courts — cite it to argue that the Bar's grievances must be routed through institutional channels, not disruption.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE–HARD

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Contempt of courts other than the Supreme Court is a subject in the Concurrent List.
2. Under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, truth cannot be pleaded as a defence in contempt proceedings.
3. A High Court can suspend an advocate's licence to practise as a punishment for contempt.
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: (a) 1 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: Entry 14 of the Concurrent List. Statement 2 is incorrect: S.13, as amended in 2006, allows truth as a defence if in public interest and bona fide. Statement 3 is incorrect: SCBA (1998) held suspension of an advocate's licence is for Bar Councils under the Advocates Act, not a contempt punishment.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2022: "Consider the following statements: 1. Pursuant to the report of H.N. Sanyal Committee, the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 was passed. 2. The Constitution of India empowers the Supreme Court and the High Courts to punish for contempt of themselves. 3. The Constitution of India defines Civil Contempt and Criminal Contempt. 4. In India, the Parliament is vested with the power to make laws on Contempt of Court. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?" — Answer: (b) 1, 2 and 4.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** HC: High Court | SC: Supreme Court | FIR: First Information Report | CJ: Chief Justice | AG: Attorney-General for India | SCBA: Supreme Court Bar Association v Union of India

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 2

The Supreme Court asked Rajasthan's State Election Commission to reconsider its refusal to let social activist Aruna Roy and others run a voter-awareness campaign before rural local-body polls, observing that awareness efforts cannot be a ground to stop others from undertaking similar work.

How to use: *GS2: cite on State Election Commissions (Art 243K/243ZA) and civil society's role in electoral literacy, alongside the Election Commission of India's SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) programme.*

The National Testing Agency has empanelled about 5,000 academicians, scientists, translators and moderators, after multi-layered vetting, to build its own large question bank following this year's NEET-UG paper leak.

How to use: *GS2: example of institutional reform in public examinations; pair with the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.*

By the end of the fifth plenum of the Communist Party of China's 20th Central Committee, 51 full and alternate members had been expelled, unprecedented in the post-Mao era; since 2012, disciplinary organs have punished about 79 lakh officials.

How to use: *GS2 (IR): evidence of centralisation under Xi Jinping and what it means for the predictability of China's policy.*

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri visits Nepal on 4–5 Nov to prepare for PM Balen Shah's likely India visit; energy is central to ties, with a long-term agreement (Jan 2024) for India to import 10,000 MW from Nepal within ten years.

How to use: *GS2: illustrates hydropower trade as the anchor of India–Nepal interdependence.*

GS PAPER 3: SECURITY, ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY

Eight Next-Generation Corvettes: Navy-Designed, DPSU-Built

Why in news: The MoD signed contracts worth ₹53,866.50 crore with GRSE (five ships) and GSL (three) for eight next-generation corvettes, days after the CCS cleared the project.

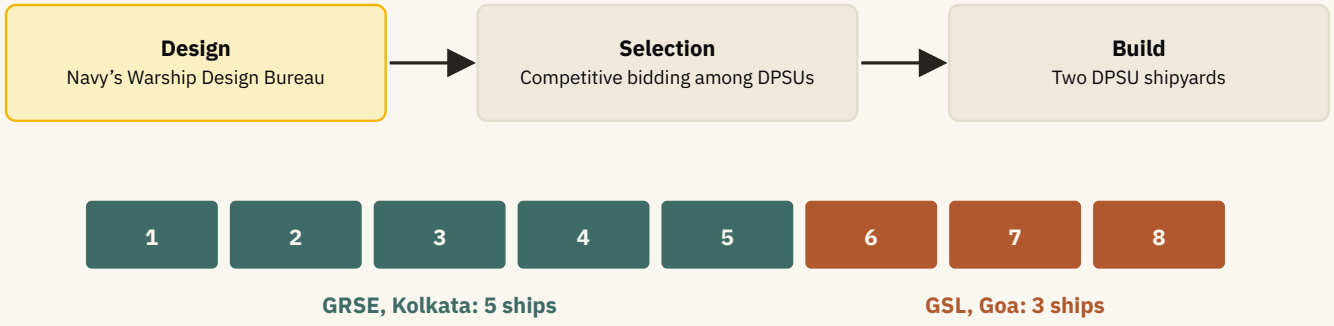
Key Details:

- **First of its kind:** First project in which ships are designed in-house by the Navy and built by DPSUs selected through competitive bidding rather than nomination.
- **Roles:** Multi-role ships for anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare, coastal defence, littoral combat and surveillance across air, surface and sub-surface domains.
- **Strategic logic:** Corvettes cover the near seas below frigates and destroyers, freeing larger ships for distant IOR missions and guarding sea lanes vital for energy imports.
- **Economic multiplier:** About 72 lakh person-days in the shipyards and 460 lakh in ancillary industries and MSMEs over ten years.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Timeline:** The DAC granted AoN in June 2022 at about ₹36,000 crore; the contracts were signed on 2 Nov 2026.
- **Design pedigree:** The Navy's design bureau delivered its 100th indigenously designed ship, Udaygiri, on 1 July 2025.

Next-Generation Corvettes: from design to delivery



Contracts worth ₹53,866.50 crore signed on 2 Nov 2026 · Schematic, not to scale

India's Warship-Building Ecosystem

- **Design:** The Warship Design Bureau under Naval HQ began in 1964 as the Central Design Office and became the Directorate of Naval Design in 1970.
- **DPSU shipyards:** MDL (Mumbai), GRSE (Kolkata), GSL (Goa) and HSL (Visakhapatnam) are under the MoD's Department of Defence Production.
- **Outside the MoD:** Cochin Shipyard, which built the aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, is under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- **Procurement path:** Under DAP 2020, the DAC grants AoN; 'Buy (Indian-IDDM)' is the top-priority category; the CCS clears large contracts.
- **Ship classes:** By size and endurance, corvettes are smaller than frigates, which are smaller than destroyers.
- **Not to confuse:** Next-Generation Corvettes are combat ships; Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels are a separate, lightly armed patrol programme.

Prelims angle: Under DAP 2020, 'Buy (Indian-IDDM)' requires at least 50% indigenous content and an Indian vendor's own design and development.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on defence indigenisation, maritime security in the IOR and the defence-industrial base; the 'Navy designs, DPSUs compete' model shows how competition can enter public-sector shipbuilding.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Atmanirbharta in defence aims to cut import dependence and build a domestic industrial base.
BODY	Security: near-seas and ASW capability; economic: MSME supply chains, jobs; institutional: competitive DPSU bidding; challenges: delays, imported engines and weapons.
WAY FORWARD	Time-bound delivery, higher IDDM content, and private-yard participation within DAP 2020.

Mains value-add: India's defence production reached a record ₹1,50,590 crore in 2024–25 and defence exports ₹23,622 crore — cite them to show indigenisation translating into scale.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. Consider the following shipyards:
1. Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited
2. Goa Shipyard Limited
3. Cochin Shipyard Limited
4. Hindustan Shipyard Limited
How many of the above are Defence Public Sector Undertakings under the Ministry of Defence?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four

Answer: (c) Only three

Explanation: GRSE, GSL and HSL are DPSUs under the MoD's Department of Defence Production, so 1, 2 and 4 count. Cochin Shipyard (3) is the trap: although it built INS Vikrant, it falls under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

▪ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** MoD: Ministry of Defence | GRSE: Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd | GSL: Goa Shipyard Ltd | CCS: Cabinet Committee on Security | DPSU: Defence Public Sector Undertaking | IOR: Indian Ocean Region | MSME: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises | DAC: Defence Acquisition Council | AoN: Acceptance of Necessity | MDL: Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd | HSL: Hindustan Shipyard Ltd | DAP: Defence Acquisition Procedure | IDDM: Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured | ASW: Anti-Submarine Warfare | HQ: Headquarters

Why Collared Cheetahs Can't Be Live-Tracked: Lessons from KNG-22

Why in news: A male cheetah, KNG-22, found shot outside Kuno NP died after surgery; the STF arrested two brothers, and Kuno's director explained that satellite collars cannot give live locations.

Key Details:

- **How collars work:** Collars send a fix about every six hours; one missed fix stretches the gap to 12 hours, two to 18, while a cheetah may cover 6–8 km a day.
- **Probe so far:** Pellets matched a muzzle-loading gun; the STF says the accused were hunting, with no link to wildlife trade; six forest officials were suspended.
- **Beyond the fence:** Cheetahs range far outside Kuno into farmland and territorial forests, where hunting and conflict risks rise — the central challenge of reintroduction.
- **Response:** The MoEFCC set up a three-member team with NTCA and WII officials to review the incident and security for cheetahs moving outside protected areas.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Tracking toolkit:** About 15 cheetahs at Kuno are monitored with satellite collars costing ₹4–5 lakh each, backed by VHF radio tracking on the ground.
- **Legal shield:** The cheetah is in Schedule I of the WPA, 1972, which carries its highest penalties; the case is registered under its hunting provisions.

Project Cheetah: key milestones



Kuno NP (Sheopur) and Gandhi Sagar WLS are both in Madhya Pradesh

Project Cheetah

- **Background:** The cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952 — the only large carnivore lost since Independence.
- **Legal nod:** In January 2020 the SC allowed African cheetahs to be introduced on an experimental basis.
- **Launch:** On 17 Sep 2022, eight cheetahs from Namibia were released at Kuno NP; 12 from South Africa followed in Feb 2023.
- **Agencies:** The NTCA implements the project with technical support from the WII and the MP Forest Department.
- **Second home:** Gandhi Sagar WLS in Mandsaur–Neemuch received its first cheetahs in April 2025.
- **Not to confuse:** India's cheetahs are African (IUCN: Vulnerable); the Asiatic subspecies survives only in Iran and is Critically Endangered.

Prelims angle: The Kuno river, a tributary of the Chambal, flows through Kuno NP in Sheopur district.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on species reintroduction, human–wildlife interface and limits of technology in conservation; KNG-22 shows that collars give data, not protection.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Project Cheetah (2022) is the world's first intercontinental translocation of a large wild carnivore.
BODY	Ecological: grassland restoration, prey base; technological: collar gaps; social: community buy-in outside parks; institutional: NTCA–State coordination.
WAY FORWARD	Landscape-level management with Gandhi Sagar, village 'cheetah mitras', faster telemetry and swift WPA prosecution.

Mains value-add: In Centre for Environmental Law, WWF-I v Union of India (2013) the SC ordered Gir lions to be moved to Kuno as a second home; that order remains unimplemented — cite it to show how 'second home' logic for species is contested.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY–MODERATE

Q. With reference to Project Cheetah, consider the following statements:
1. The cheetahs released in Kuno National Park belong to the Asiatic subspecies.
2. Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh has been developed as a second site for cheetahs.
3. The cheetah was declared extinct in India in the 1950s.
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 cheetahs came from Namibia and South Africa (African cheetah); the Asiatic subspecies now survives only in Iran. Statement 2 is correct (first releases in April 2025). Statement 3 is correct: the cheetah was declared extinct in 1952.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2012: "Consider the following: 1. Black-necked crane 2. Cheetah 3. Flying squirrel 4. Snow leopard. Which of the above are naturally found in India?" — Answer: (b) 1, 3 and 4 only (the cheetah had gone extinct in India).

▪ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NP: National Park | STF: Special Task Force | MoEFCC: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change | NTCA: National Tiger Conservation Authority | WII: Wildlife Institute of India | VHF: Very High Frequency | WPA: Wild Life (Protection) Act | SC: Supreme Court | WLS: Wildlife Sanctuary | MP: Madhya Pradesh | IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

Siang Upper Multipurpose Project: Consent Before Concrete

Why in news: Arunachal CM Pema Khandu wrote to protesting communities that 'no decision has been made' on the 11,200-MW SUMP and only a PFR is under way; the SIFF says landowners were never consulted.

Story so far: The 7 Oct Brief covered the Siang project as India's counter to China's Medog mega-dam. New today: the CM's open letter promising dialogue, transparency and public consultation amid continuing protests.

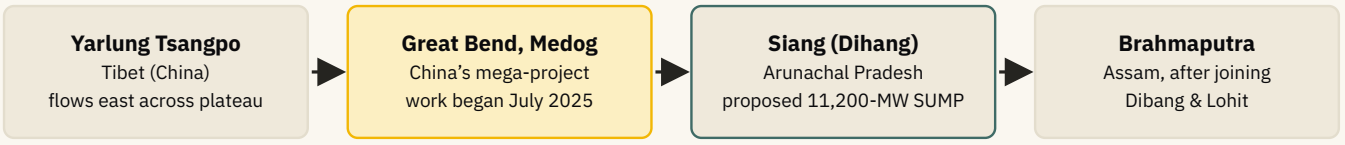
Key Details:

- **Stage:** Only the PFR, 'the first step towards establishing facts', is under way; the detailed report, clearances and public hearings lie ahead.
- **Local objection:** SIFF says private and community landowners were never approached; riverine communities fear losing farmland, livelihoods and cultural heritage.
- **Strategic case:** The Centre and State call SUMP a national-security project: storage to buffer sudden releases or lean flows from China's upstream dam.
- **Consent matters:** In Arunachal, land is largely held by communities under customary law, so community consent is central, not a formality.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Scale:** At 11,200 MW, SUMP is touted as India's biggest hydropower project.
- **Upstream:** China began building a mega-project on the lower Yarlung Tsangpo near Medog in July 2025, estimated at about 60 GW.

One river, many names: why upstream dams worry India



Upstream (China) — controls timing of flows

Downstream (India → Bangladesh, as Jamuna)

India's case for SUMP: storage to buffer sudden releases and lean-season drops from upstream projects

Schematic diagram, not to scale; no boundaries depicted

EIA Notification, 2006: Stages of Clearance

- **Legal basis:** Issued under the EP Act, 1986, replacing the EIA Notification of 1994.
- **Categories:** Category A projects, including large hydro, are appraised by MoEFCC's EAC; Category B by State-level SEIAAs.
- **Four stages:** Screening (Category B only), scoping (setting the terms of reference), public consultation and appraisal.
- **Public consultation:** A public hearing near the site, conducted by the State Pollution Control Board, plus written responses from affected people.
- **Separate clearances:** Forest diversion needs approval under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, and gram sabha consent under the FRA.
- **Not to confuse:** Environmental clearance (EIA), forest clearance and wildlife clearance (NBWL) are three distinct approvals.

Prelims angle: The Siang is also called the Dihang; in Bangladesh the Brahmaputra flows on as the Jamuna before joining the Padma.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on hydropower, water security vis-à-vis China and the rights of indigenous communities; SUMP is a live test of 'consent before concrete'.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	SUMP is pitched as a strategic and energy asset on the Brahmaputra's main stem.
BODY	Strategic: buffer against upstream control; ecological: seismic zone, biodiversity, sediment; social: displacement, customary land; legal: EIA hearings, FRA consent.
WAY FORWARD	Transparent PFR findings, free prior informed consent, benefit-sharing, and data-sharing talks with China.

Mains value-add: Niyamgiri (Orissa Mining Corporation v MoEF, 2013): the SC let gram sabhas decide whether mining would affect their religious and cultural rights — cite it to argue that community consent is a constitutional value.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. The proposed 11,200-MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project is justified as a strategic response to upstream dams in China, while local communities demand prior consultation. Critically examine how India should balance water security, ecological risk and indigenous consent in such projects. (250 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2020, GS3: "How does the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2020 differ from the existing EIA Notification, 2006?"

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CM: Chief Minister | SUMP: Siang Upper Multipurpose Project | PFR: Pre-Feasibility Report | SIFF: Siang Indigenous Farmers' Forum | EIA: Environment Impact Assessment | EP Act: Environment (Protection) Act | MoEFCC: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change | EAC: Expert Appraisal Committee | SEIAA: State Environment Impact Assessment Authority | FRA: Forest Rights Act, 2006 | NBWL: National Board for Wildlife | SC: Supreme Court | GW: Gigawatt | MoEF: Ministry of Environment and Forests

Haryana Halts Its Parallel Discom Licence: Limits of Section 108

Why in news: The HERC decided on 28 Oct 'not to proceed' with Eleven Power's parallel distribution licence for Gurugram and Nuh after the Haryana government issued directions under S.108 of the Electricity Act.

Story so far: The 21 Oct Brief covered the HERC's grant of Haryana's first parallel licence to Eleven Power for 25 years. New today: the licence is frozen on the State's directions, after both State discoms objected.

Key Details:

- **State's stand:** The government cited 'grave concern' for consumers and public interest and called the licence a 'complete deviation' from State policy, without disputing HERC's findings.
- **Legal hook:** S.108(1): a SERC 'shall be guided by' State policy directions in public interest; S.108(2) makes the State's view of what is 'policy' final.

- **Competition vs cross-subsidy:** A second licensee gives consumers choice, but incumbents fear losing high-paying urban consumers who cross-subsidise farm and domestic tariffs.
- **Policy drift:** The Centre wants more players; the Draft National Electricity Policy 2026 and Draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2025 propose parallel licensing (still drafts).

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Only precedent:** Mumbai is the only area with parallel distribution licensing, served by Tata Power, BEST and Adani Electricity.
- **Statutory basis:** The sixth proviso to S.14 allows two or more distribution licensees in the same area, each through its own network.

State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs)

- **Origin:** First set up under the ERC Act, 1998; now constituted under S.82 of the Electricity Act, 2003.
- **Composition:** A Chairperson and up to two members, chosen by a selection committee headed by a former HC judge (S.85).
- **Functions (S.86):** Fix tariffs, license transmission, distribution and trading within the State, and set renewable purchase obligations.
- **Appeals:** Orders go to APTEL (S.111) and then to the SC (S.125).
- **Government's role:** States may issue policy directions to SERCs (S.108); the Centre may do so to the CERC (S.107).
- **Not to confuse:** CERC regulates central generating companies and inter-State transmission; SERCs regulate intra-State supply.

Prelims angle: The Electricity Act, 2003 replaced the Indian Electricity Act, 1910, the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948 and the ERC Act, 1998.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on power-sector reform, regulatory independence and discom finances; Haryana's move shows how State discretion can override a regulator's licensing call.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Discoms are the weakest link in India's power chain, with chronic losses and limited consumer choice.
BODY	Legal: S.14 parallel licence, S.108 limits; economic: competition vs cross-subsidy; governance: regulatory independence; consumer: reliability, tariffs.
WAY FORWARD	Cross-subsidy surcharge design, universal-service obligations, and SERC autonomy as affirmed in Jhabua (2024).

Mains value-add: Kerala SEB v Jhabua Power (2024): the SC held SERCs are 'guided', not bound, by S.108 directions, which cannot override a regulator's adjudicatory discretion — cite it on regulatory independence.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Electricity Act, 2003, consider the following statements:
1. It permits more than one distribution licence to be granted in the same area of supply.
2. A State Electricity Regulatory Commission is bound to implement every direction issued by the State Government under Section 108.
3. Appeals against orders of a State Electricity Regulatory Commission lie before the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct under the sixth proviso to S.14. Statement 2 is incorrect: S.108 says SERCs are 'guided' by directions, and Jhabua (2024) held they are not bound in adjudicatory matters. Statement 3 is correct under S.111.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2016: "Which one of the following is a purpose of 'UDAY', a scheme of the Government?" — Answer: (d) Providing for financial turnaround and revival of power distribution companies.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** HERC: Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission | SERC: State Electricity Regulatory Commission | Discom: Distribution company | BEST: Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking | ERC Act: Electricity Regulatory Commissions Act | HC: High Court | SC: Supreme Court | APTEL: Appellate Tribunal for Electricity | CERC: Central Electricity Regulatory Commission | SEB: State Electricity Board

Castle Rock–Kulem Rail Doubling: A Coal Corridor vs the Western Ghats

Why in news: Residents of Velsao in South Goa say RVNL's double-tracking work has cut off their homes, reviving the debate over a line that mainly carries coal to Mormugao Port.

Key Details:

- **The project:** Sanctioned in the 2010–11 Railway Budget, 312 km of the 363-km Hospet–Tinaighat–Vasco doubling was done by Sept 2025; the Goa sections remain pending.
- **Ecological flashpoint:** The 26-km Castle Rock–Kulem stretch runs through Western Ghats forests; in 2022 the SC set aside the NBWL standing committee's clearance, accepting the CEC's report.
- **Coal question:** About seven coal-laden goods trains pass Velsao daily; in Sept 2025 Goa said it would not allow any expansion of coal transport capacity.
- **Two sides:** Railways say a second line will ease congestion and carry more freight and passengers; residents cite blocked access, cracked walls and coal dust.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **CEC's finding:** It saw 'no justification' for the track, warning it 'will destroy the fragile ecosystem of the Western Ghats', a biodiversity hotspot and wildlife corridor.
- **Global status:** The Western Ghats were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012, as a serial property of 39 component sites.

The Central Empowered Committee (CEC)

- **Origin:** Set up by the SC on 9 May 2002 in the T.N. Godavarman forest case and notified in Sept 2002 under S.3(3) of the EP Act.
- **2023 overhaul:** The MoEFCC re-notified the CEC as a permanent body under the EP Act in 2023; the SC accepted the new structure in Jan 2024.
- **Composition:** A Chairman, a Member Secretary and three expert members (environment, forests, wildlife) on three-year terms.
- **Role:** Examines forest and wildlife matters referred by the SC, monitors compliance with its orders and reports back.
- **Concern:** Shifting appointments to the ministry raised questions about the panel's independence from the executive.
- **Not to confuse:** CEC (SC's fact-finding body) vs NGT (statutory tribunal, 2010) vs NBWL (PM-chaired wildlife board under the WPA).

Prelims angle: Dudhsagar Falls on the Mandovi lies on this rail section, inside Goa's Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 answers on linear infrastructure in fragile ecosystems, the judiciary's environmental role and coal logistics; the case pits connectivity against conservation and local livelihoods.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Linear projects through biodiversity hotspots test India's development–environment balance.
BODY	Ecological: corridor fragmentation; economic: port and freight capacity; social: displacement, dust, access; institutional: CEC, NBWL, SC oversight.
WAY FORWARD	Cumulative impact assessment, wildlife crossings, alternative routes, and coal-dust controls (covered wagons).

Mains value-add: The Kasturirangan High-Level Working Group (2013) recommended notifying about 37% of the Western Ghats (~59,940 sq km) as Ecologically Sensitive Area — cite it to frame how much of the range needs protective regulation.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Linear infrastructure through biodiversity hotspots often pits connectivity against ecological integrity. With reference to the rail doubling in Goa's Western Ghats, examine the role of institutions such as the Central Empowered Committee and the National Board for Wildlife in balancing these goals. (150 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2014: "With reference to 'Eco-Sensitive Zones', which of the following statements is/are correct? 1. Eco-Sensitive Zones are the areas that are declared under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. 2. The purpose of the declaration of Eco-Sensitive Zones is to prohibit all kinds of human activities in those zones except agriculture." — Answer: (d) Neither 1 nor 2.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** RVNL: Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd | SC: Supreme Court | NBWL: National Board for Wildlife | CEC: Central Empowered Committee | EP Act: Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 | MoEFCC: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change | NGT: National Green Tribunal | WPA: Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 | UNESCO: UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 3

Delhi's Air Quality Index rose from 117 (31 Oct) to 324, 'Very Poor' (2 Nov), triggering Stage II of the Graded Response Action Plan. Stubble burning contributed 8.5% of PM2.5 and transport 20.07% (the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology's Decision Support System). The Supreme Court allowed certified green crackers only from 6–7 am and 8–10 pm on 7–8 Nov.

How to use: *GS3: use the source split to argue that local sources dominate on many days, so stubble-only fixes will not clean Delhi's air.*

The PM said India's non-fossil capacity is 308 GW, about 55.1% of the 558.89 GW installed (Central Electricity Authority data), and that India will add 500 GW more in 10–11 years; India's NDC target of a 50% non-fossil capacity share by 2030 was met in 2025, five years early.

How to use: *GS3: energy-transition answers; note that capacity share is not generation share, which remains coal-heavy.*

India's labour force participation rate reached 59% in 2025 (age 15+, Periodic Labour Force Survey), but agriculture still employs about 43% of workers, against 21.68% in China and 25% in Vietnam; about three-fourths of non-farm workers are in informal enterprises.

How to use: *GS3: structural transformation — cite to argue that India's jobs challenge is productivity, not just participation.*

Unofficial 'grey market premiums' on IPO shares are traded through WhatsApp and Telegram outside recognised exchanges; the Small Investors Welfare Association (SIREN) urged the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on 21 Oct to act against such trading.

How to use: *GS3: investor-protection example — informal markets distort price discovery and test SEBI's mandate under the SEBI Act, 1992.*

GS PAPER 4: ETHICS & INTEGRITY

Silent Whistles: 53 of India's Top 100 Firms Skip Whistleblower Disclosures

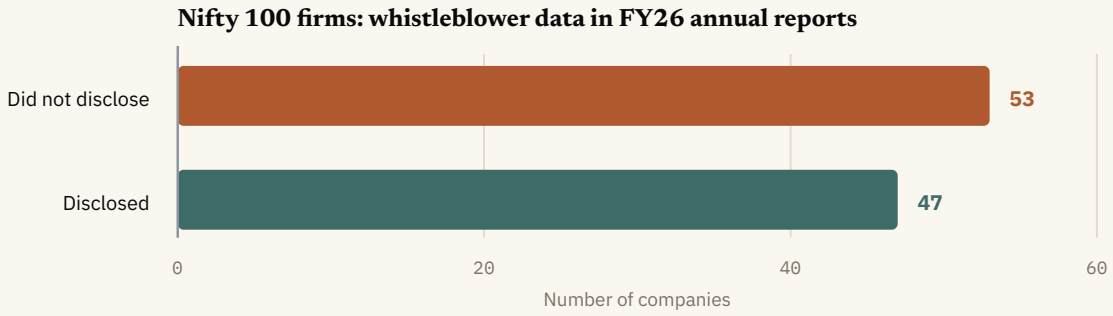
Why in news: A corporate-governance survey found 53 of India's top 100 listed companies did not disclose whistleblower-complaint data in FY26 annual reports; 13.37% of 1,129 reported complaints were unresolved at year-end.

Key Details:

- **Paper vs practice:** Governance looks robust in filings, but non-disclosure hides whether vigil mechanisms work — the gap between compliance and accountability.
- **GS4 lens:** A textbook probity problem in private institutions: transparency, accountability and protection for those who speak up are named values of ethical governance.
- **Why people stay silent:** Fear of retaliation, weak anonymity and audit committees close to management force a conflict between loyalty to the employer and conscience.
- **Stakes:** Whistleblowers flag fraud early; the Satyam collapse (2009) showed what investors and employees lose when warnings go unheard.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Survey:** The seventh Annual Corporate Governance Survey of the Nifty 100, by advisory firm Excellence Enablers (founded by former SEBI chair M. Damodaran).
- **Unresolved:** About 151 of 1,129 complaints (13.37%) remained pending at the end of FY26.



Whistleblower Protection: The Legal Framework

- **PIDPI Resolution (2004):** Made the CVC the agency for public-interest disclosures, after the SC's direction following NHAI engineer Satyendra Dubey's murder (2003).
- **WBP Act, 2014:** Covers public servants; bars anonymous complaints, sets a seven-year limit and punishes revealing a complainant's identity.
- **Status:** The 2014 Act has not been operationalised, and a 2015 amending Bill to add Official Secrets Act carve-outs lapsed.
- **Companies Act, 2013:** S.177(9)–(10): listed companies must have a vigil mechanism with direct access to the Audit Committee chair.
- **SEBI LODR, 2015:** Reg 22 requires listed entities to run a vigil mechanism and disclose it on their website and in the board's report.
- **Not to confuse:** A whistleblower is an insider exposing wrongdoing; an RTI applicant is any citizen seeking information.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS4 answers on probity in private institutions, moral courage and corporate governance; the disclosure gap illustrates 'ethics as compliance' versus 'ethics as culture'.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Whistleblowing is moral courage in action and the first line of defence against institutional wrongdoing.
BODY	Values: integrity, transparency, accountability; dilemma: loyalty vs conscience; institutional: independent audit committees; legal: S.177, Reg 22, WBP Act gaps.
CONCLUSION	Credible protection plus a speak-up culture, as the 2nd ARC urged, turns compliance into conscience.

Mains value-add: The 2nd ARC's fourth report, 'Ethics in Governance' (2007), recommended a law to protect whistleblowers — cite it to argue that protection is a precondition for disclosure, not an afterthought.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. 'Corporate governance in India often looks impressive on paper but weak in practice.' In the light of non-disclosure of whistleblower complaints by leading listed companies, examine the ethical issues involved and suggest measures to make vigil mechanisms credible. (150 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2022, GS4: "Whistle-blower, who reports corruption and illegal activities, wrongdoing and misconduct to the concerned authorities, runs the risk of being exposed to grave danger, physical harm and victimization by the vested interests, accused persons and his team. What policy measures would you suggest to strengthen the protection mechanism to safeguard the whistle-blower?"

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** FY: Financial Year | SEBI: Securities and Exchange Board of India | PIDPI: Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Informers | CVC: Central Vigilance Commission | SC: Supreme Court | NHAI: National Highways Authority of India | WBP Act: Whistle Blowers Protection Act | LODR: Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements | RTI: Right to Information | 2nd ARC: Second Administrative Reforms Commission

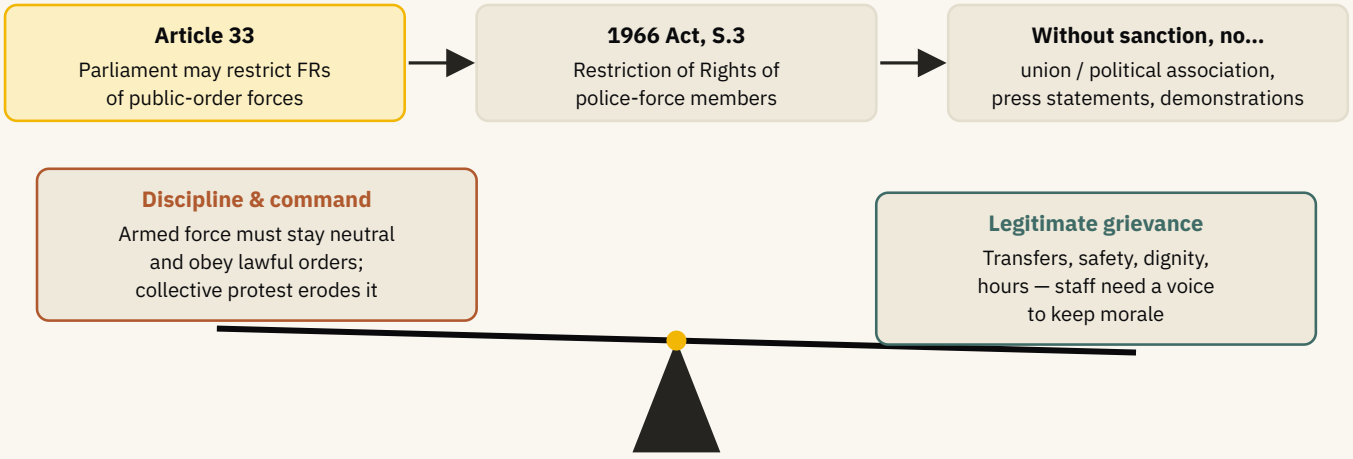
CONCEPT NOTE Can Police Personnel Protest? Discipline, Voice and Article 33

In the news: About 100 Delhi Police personnel protested outside their own headquarters against the transfer of an ACP and an SHO after a scuffle with lawyers; they dispersed after senior officers assured them their demands would be looked into.

Background Concept: Restricting Rights of Uniformed Forces

- **Article 33:** Lets Parliament (not State legislatures) restrict or abrogate Fundamental Rights of the armed forces and forces charged with public order.
- **Also covers:** Staff of intelligence and counter-intelligence bodies, and telecom systems set up for these forces.
- **The 1966 Act:** Police Forces (Restriction of Rights) Act: without sanction, no union or political association, and no talking to the press except on duty.
- **Demonstrations:** S.3(2) bars police from meetings or demonstrations organised for political or other prescribed purposes.
- **Grievance channels:** Prakash Singh (2006) ordered Police Establishment Boards to decide transfers and postings, curbing arbitrary moves.
- **Precedent:** Delhi Police personnel also protested at headquarters in Nov 2019 after the Tis Hazari clash with lawyers.
- **Ethical core:** Discipline and chain of command vs a legitimate voice; when channels fail, frustration turns into protest.

Discipline vs voice: how the law and institutions strike the balance



Fulcrum = institutional channels: Police Establishment Boards (Prakash Singh, 2006), welfare forums, grievance cells

How to use in GS4: Use in answers on discipline vs dissent, accountability and morale in uniformed services; link to police reform in GS2.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Should members of a uniformed force ever protest collectively? Examine the ethical tension between discipline and voice in the police, and suggest institutional mechanisms to address their grievances. (150 words)

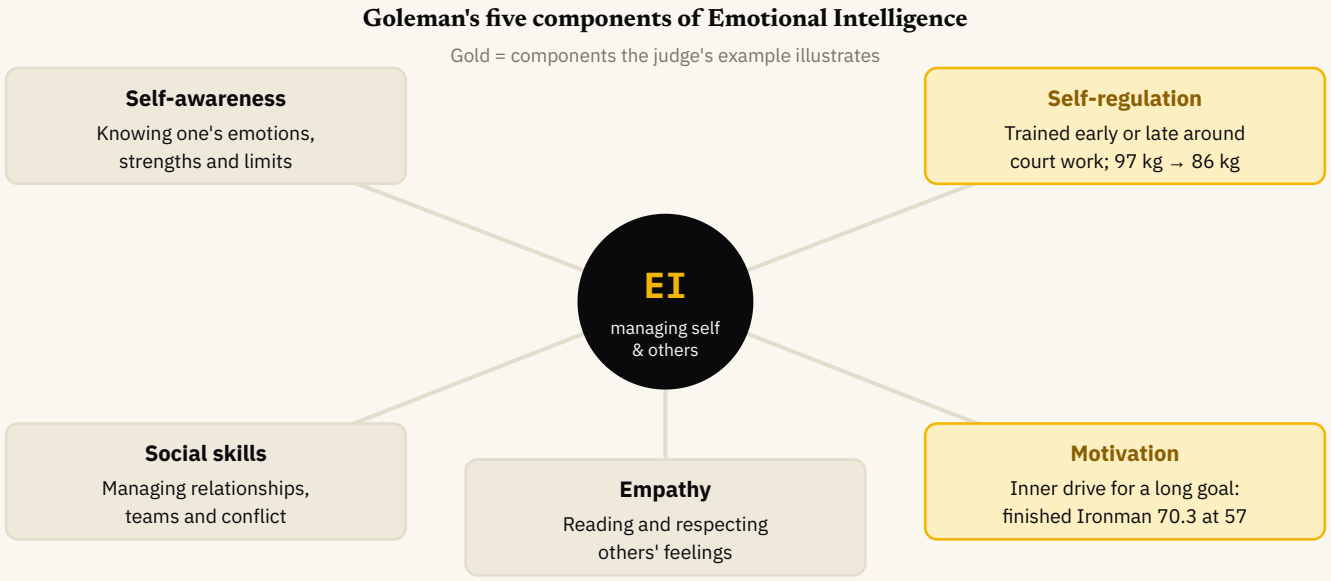
■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** ACP: Assistant Commissioner of Police | SHO: Station House Officer | FRs: Fundamental Rights

CONCEPT NOTE Emotional Intelligence in Action: A Judge's Ironman at 57

In the news: Kerala HC judge Justice Bechu Kurian Thomas, 57, completed the Ironman 70.3 in Goa (1.9-km swim, 90-km cycle ride, 21.1-km run) in 8 h 46 min, training around court work: 'Cut down on my sleep, not work.'

Background Concept: Emotional Intelligence (EI)

- **Origin:** Coined by psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990); popularised by Daniel Goleman's book Emotional Intelligence (1995).
- **Meaning:** The ability to recognise, understand and manage one's own emotions and to handle others' emotions well.
- **Five components:** Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Goleman).
- **In this example:** Disciplined training and diet show self-regulation; finishing a long, hard goal reflects intrinsic motivation.
- **For civil servants:** EI helps manage stress, public anger and team conflict, and keeps decisions calm under pressure.
- **Not to confuse:** IQ measures cognitive ability; EI (or EQ) concerns emotional skills — UPSC's GS4 syllabus names EI's use in administration.



How to use in GS4: Quote it as an example of self-regulation and motivation in questions on EI or civil servants' well-being — as balance and resilience, not as a model of overwork.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. What do you understand by 'self-regulation' as a component of emotional intelligence? How can it help a civil servant manage stress without compromising public service? (150 words)

▪ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** HC: High Court | IQ: Intelligence Quotient | EQ: Emotional Quotient