

THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 11 OCTOBER 2026

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PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

1. **Tarang Shakti 2026** — second edition of the IAF-hosted multinational air exercise at Jodhpur (26 Sept–12 Oct), with Australia, Bangladesh, France, Germany, Sri Lanka, UAE and the U.S.
2. **UNGA Fourth Committee** — the Special Political and Decolonization Committee; India used its Right of Reply there to reject Pakistan's remarks on J&K.
3. **IPPAS** — the IAEA's International Physical Protection Advisory Service; its first mission to Pakistan rated the country's nuclear-security regime 'robust'.
4. **Anne Carson** — Canadian poet and classicist, winner of the 2026 Nobel Prize in Literature; best known for *Autobiography of Red* (1998).
5. **Mysuru Dasara** — Karnataka's *Nada Habba* (State festival), 11–21 Oct 2026, inaugurated at Chamundi Hills; ends with the Jamboo Savari on Vijayadashami.

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 & CULTURE

One El Niño, Two Monsoons: Why Tamil Nadu May See Extreme Rain

Why in news: With agencies tracking a 'super' El Niño, scientists warn that Tamil Nadu's northeast monsoon could turn extreme even as El Niño years usually bring drought to the rest of India.

Story so far: The 1 Oct Brief covered the southwest monsoon ending 12.6% below normal amid El Niño and IOD signals. New today: the outlook for the October–December rains over Tamil Nadu.

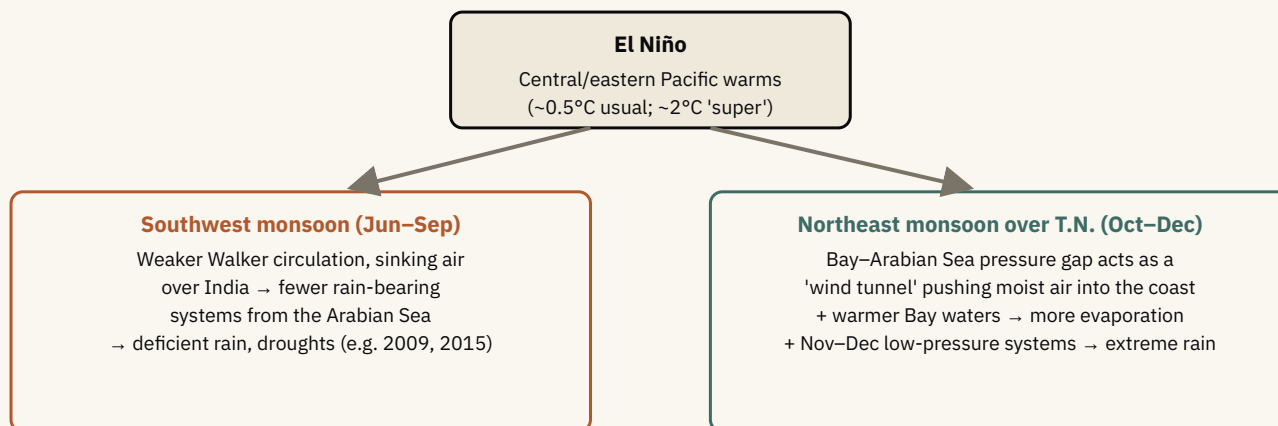
Key Details:

- **'Super' El Niño:** Pacific waters off Peru and Ecuador are about 2°C above average this year, against the usual El Niño warming of around 0.5°C.
- **The divergence:** El Niño weakens the southwest monsoon, but a pressure gap between the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea can funnel moist air into coastal Tamil Nadu.
- **Warmer Bay:** Southern Bay of Bengal temperatures were about 1°C above normal in September; warm water fuels evaporation and Nov–Dec low-pressure systems.
- **Currents:** An unusual westward equatorial flow and the seasonal reversal of the EICC may further favour depressions and cyclones near the coast.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Precedent:** The strong El Niño of 2015 brought a weak southwest monsoon nationally but devastating December floods in Chennai.
- **Outlook:** IMD's NE monsoon outlook reports a neutral IOD and above-normal rain for the southern peninsula.

One El Niño, two monsoons: why Tamil Nadu can see the opposite of the rest of India



A positive IOD usually adds to NE-monsoon rain; IMD's 2026 outlook assumes a neutral IOD and above-normal rain for the south peninsula.

Schematic diagram, not to scale.

The Northeast Monsoon

- **Season:** October to December, when winds over south-east India blow from the north-east as the land cools after summer.
- **Where it rains:** Mainly Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, coastal and south Andhra Pradesh, south interior Karnataka and Kerala.
- **Why T.N.:** In June–September T.N. lies in the rain shadow of the Western Ghats; its main rains come later, from the Bay of Bengal.
- **Rain makers:** Depressions and cyclones over the Bay in Oct–Dec, the peak cyclone season, bring the heaviest spells.
- **Ocean links:** A positive IOD usually helps NE-monsoon rain; El Niño years have often brought normal or excess rain to T.N.
- **Not to confuse:** Winter rain in north-west India comes from western disturbances, not from the NE monsoon.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 (Indian climate) to show that ENSO effects are not uniform across India, and in GS3 (disaster management) to argue for region-specific flood early-warning systems.

Mains value-add: IMD data show about 48% of Tamil Nadu's annual rainfall (442.8 mm of 921.4 mm) falls in October–December — cite it to explain why the NE monsoon decides the State's water security.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

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

1. During an El Niño, sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific are above normal.
2. Tamil Nadu receives more rainfall in October–December than in June–September.
3. The East India Coastal Current flows in the same direction throughout the year.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: El Niño is the warm phase of ENSO, with above-normal temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific (Statement 1 true). About 48% of T.N.'s annual rain comes in Oct–Dec, more than in the southwest monsoon season (Statement 2 true). The EICC reverses with the monsoon winds — it is a seasonal current, which is the trap (Statement 3 false).

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2017: "With reference to 'Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)' sometimes mentioned in the news while forecasting Indian monsoon, which of the following statements is/are correct? 1. IOD phenomenon is characterised by a difference in sea surface temperature between tropical Western Indian Ocean and tropical Eastern Pacific Ocean. 2. An IOD phenomenon can influence an El Nino's impact on the monsoon." — Answer: (b) 2 only.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** IOD: Indian Ocean Dipole | EICC: East India Coastal Current | IMD: India Meteorological Department | NE: Northeast | T.N.: Tamil Nadu | ENSO: El Niño–Southern Oscillation

Kumartuli: Where Clay Comes Alive for a UNESCO-Listed Festival

Why in news: Ahead of Durga Puja, Kolkata's potters' quarter Kumartuli is finishing thousands of clay idols, drawing tourists and photographers to a craft at the heart of a UNESCO-listed festival.

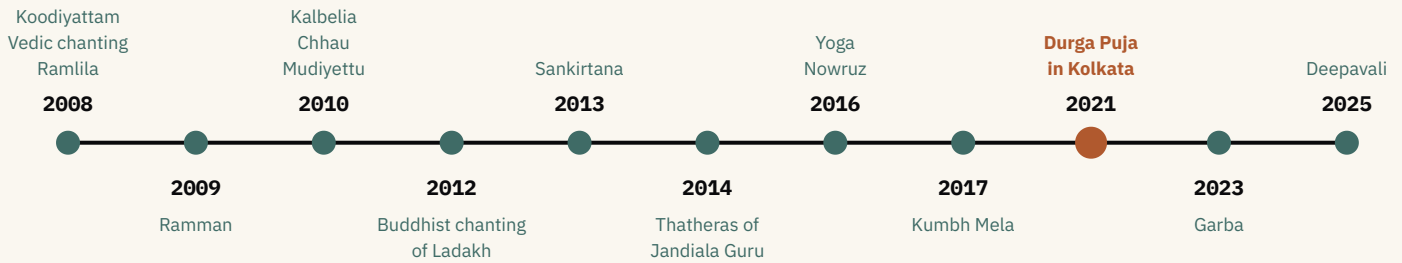
Key Details:

- **The craft:** Artisans build idols from straw, layers of clay and bamboo frames; some keep the traditional *shabeki* style, others make contemporary designs on commission.
- **Roots:** Kumartuli's potters came from Krishnanagar (Nadia district) about 300 years ago and settled along the Hooghly; tradition traces an early Durga Puja there to 1606.
- **Economics:** Idols cost between ₹50,000 and ₹3 lakh; work is seasonal and informal, and few women have entered the male-dominated craft.
- **Heritage tourism:** Since the 2021 UNESCO inscription, the lanes draw bloggers and tourists — the craft now meets tourism and social media.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Global tag:** 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the ICH of Humanity in December 2021.
- **Artisan support:** PM Vishwakarma (2023) covers 18 traditional trades, including potters and sculptors (*murtikar*).

India's 16 elements on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage lists



Deepavali was inscribed at the 20th session of the Intergovernmental Committee, held at the Red Fort, New Delhi (Dec 2025).

UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Convention

- **What ICH is:** Living traditions — practices, rituals, skills and knowledge — that communities pass down, as opposed to monuments or sites.
- **Legal basis:** UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH; India ratified it in 2005.
- **Five domains:** Oral traditions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge of nature; traditional craftsmanship.
- **Three lists:** Representative List, Urgent Safeguarding List and Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.
- **India's nodal body:** The Sangeet Natak Akademi (Ministry of Culture) prepares nominations and the national ICH inventory.
- **Not to confuse:** World Heritage Sites fall under the 1972 Convention and cover places; ICH covers practices. GI tags are a national IPR law.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 (Indian culture, festivals) to show how a living tradition supports a craft economy, and in GS3 to argue for formal support to seasonal artisans.

Mains value-add: A British Council study (2019) for the West Bengal government valued the creative economy around Durga Puja at ₹32,377 crore, about 2.58% of the State's GDP — cite it to show festivals as economic engines.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage lists, consider the following statements:

1. 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' is inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
2. These lists are maintained under UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, 1972.
3. Kumbh Mela is one of India's inscribed intangible cultural heritage elements.

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: Durga Puja in Kolkata was inscribed in December 2021 (Statement 1 true). The ICH lists come under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH; the 1972 Convention deals with World Heritage Sites — the trap (Statement 2 false). Kumbh Mela was inscribed in 2017 (Statement 3 true).

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2024: "Which one of the following was the latest inclusion in the Intangible Cultural Heritage List of UNESCO? (a) Chhau dance (b) Durga puja (c) Garba dance (d) Kumbh mela" — Answer: (c) Garba dance.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** ICH: Intangible Cultural Heritage | UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization | GI: Geographical Indication | IPR: Intellectual Property Rights | GDP: Gross Domestic Product | PM: Pradhan Mantri

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 1

Extreme rain as the new normal: a new study confirms that 2024 saw a record number of heavy and extreme rainfall events worldwide. Unlike earlier strong El Niño years, 2024 also saw the Atlantic and Indian Oceans warm together; models suggest such a year could become typical by 2050 if warming continues.

How to use: GS1/GS3 (climate change, disasters): cite to argue that flood planning must assume more frequent extreme rainfall, not past averages.

GS PAPER 2: POLITY & GOVERNANCE**Mass Detentions in Delhi: Article 22, Habeas Corpus and the Limits of Police Power**

Why in news: Delhi Police detained about 2,500 people across the capital on Saturday to stop a march to Jantar Mantar seeking the CEC's resignation, drawing questions from legal experts and the UN human rights office.

Story so far: The 10 Oct Brief covered the SC calling Delhi's blanket transit ban 'over-reaching' (Article 19(1)(b)); the 30 Sept Brief covered the SC quashing an NSA detention. New today: the legality of mass 'detention' instead of arrest.

Key Details:

- **The crackdown:** Prohibitory orders under Section 163 BNSS applied to New Delhi district, but people were picked up across the city and held in stadiums on the outskirts.
- **Grounds not told:** Former SC judge Abhay S. Oka said Article 22's duty to tell a person the grounds 'as soon as may be' cannot be dodged by calling it 'detention'.
- **Detention vs arrest:** Experts say police prefer detention because it avoids arrest safeguards such as production before a magistrate within 24 hours.
- **Courts and UN:** A habeas corpus plea under Article 32 seeks the release of detained leaders; OHCHR urged 'necessity and proportionality', which India called 'unwarranted interference'.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Scale:** Detentions at Rajghat, Janpath, Connaught Place and ITO; former CMs, journalists and lawyers among those held.
- **Police power:** Section 172 BNSS lets police detain those disregarding lawful directions, but in petty cases they must be released within 24 hours.

Three ways the State restrains a person

	Arrest	Police detention (S.172 BNSS)	Preventive detention
Purpose	Investigate/prosecute an offence	Enforce police directions, keep order	Prevent a feared future act
Grounds told?	Yes — Article 22(1)	Should be; experts say yes	Yes — Article 22(5)
Magistrate in 24 hrs?	Yes — Article 22(2)	Release or produce within 24 hrs	No; Advisory Board within 3 months
Example law	BNSS	BNSS	NSA, 1980

Safeguards Against Arbitrary Detention

- **Article 22(1):** A person arrested must be told the grounds of arrest and may consult a lawyer of their choice.
- **Article 22(2):** They must be produced before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours, excluding travel time.
- **Exceptions:** Article 22(3) excludes enemy aliens and people held under preventive detention laws from these two safeguards.
- **Habeas corpus:** A writ ('produce the body') under Article 32 or 226; anyone, not just the detainee, may file it.
- **Emergency:** Since the 44th Amendment (1978), Articles 20 and 21 cannot be suspended even during an Emergency.
- **Not to confuse:** *ADM Jabalpur* (1976) let the State suspend habeas corpus in the Emergency; *Puttaswamy* (2017) overruled it.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (fundamental rights, police reforms) to show how the label 'detention' can bypass constitutional safeguards, and why procedure is the heart of personal liberty.

Mains value-add: In *Joginder Kumar v. State of U.P.* (1994), the SC held that 'the existence of the power to arrest is one thing; the justification for the exercise of it is quite another' — cite it against routine mass detention.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to safeguards on arrest and detention in India, consider the following statements:

1. A person arrested must be produced before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours, excluding the time of the journey.
2. A petition for a writ of habeas corpus can be filed only by the detained person.
3. Since the 44th Amendment, the right under Article 21 cannot be suspended even during a national emergency.

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: Article 22(2) requires production before a magistrate within 24 hours, excluding travel time (Statement 1 true). Habeas corpus may be filed by any person on the detainee's behalf — courts relaxed standing for this writ, which is the trap (Statement 2 false). The 44th Amendment amended Article 359 so Articles 20 and 21 cannot be suspended (Statement 3 true).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** CEC: Chief Election Commissioner | SC: Supreme Court | BNSS: Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita | OHCHR: Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights | NSA: National Security Act | CMs: Chief Ministers | UN: United Nations

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 2

Judicial appointments: former Orissa High Court Chief Justice S. Muralidhar said that since 2014 the executive's grip over appointments and transfers of High Court judges has tightened and the collegium's primacy has 'shifted back' in practice. The collegium rests on the Second Judges Case (1993); the NJAC (99th Amendment) was struck down in 2015.

How to use: GS2 (judiciary): quote as a judge's view in answers on judicial independence and collegium reform.

Detention aboard an aircraft: three activists were detained by CISF-escorted Delhi Police inside Air India flight AI 2428 after it landed in Delhi. The Aircraft (Security) Rules, 2023 let airlines control access to aircraft; Air India sought clarity from the BCAS on police entry.

How to use: GS2/GS3 (security procedure): example of gaps in protocols between enforcement agencies and airlines.

Defamation and dissent: a Delhi court dismissed a criminal defamation complaint against an Opposition leader, holding that 'in a democracy, it is not only the right of the press and the public to question the government, but also the duty of the government to listen'.

How to use: GS2 (free speech, Article 19(1)(a)): quote on criticism of government not being defamation.

GS PAPER 3: ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT, S&T & SECURITY

RBI Opens a Special Dollar Window for Oil Companies

Why in news: To ease pressure on the rupee as crude prices rise, the RBI will meet the entire daily dollar needs of IOCL, HPCL and BPCL through a special window from October 12.

Story so far: The 8 Oct Brief covered the repo rate hike to 5.5% and the 10 Oct Brief the stricter daily CRR. New today: direct intervention to curb the rupee's slide.

Key Details:

- **The window:** The three public sector OMCs will buy dollars directly from the RBI through designated banks, instead of the spot market, until further notice.
- **Why:** OMCs need about \$300 million a day; their bulk buying pushed up dollar demand and weakened the rupee as the oil import bill rose.
- **Firepower:** Forex reserves of around \$735 billion give the RBI room, though foreign outflows (India lacks AI-themed stocks), high global rates and a strong dollar still weigh on the rupee.
- **Guard rail:** Dealers must not let firms rebook cancelled forex derivative contracts involving the rupee, deliverable or not.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Precedent:** A similar OMC window ran from August to December 2013, after the rupee hit 68.83 a dollar; FCNR(B) swaps and bank borrowing then raised \$34 billion.
- **RBI's view:** Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the rupee is undervalued and the RBI will help stabilise it.

How the special dollar window takes oil demand out of the spot market



Schematic diagram.

India's Foreign Exchange Reserves

- **Components:** Foreign currency assets (the largest part), gold, SDRs and the Reserve Tranche Position in the IMF.
- **Custodian:** The RBI holds and manages the reserves under the RBI Act, 1934; FEMA, 1999 governs forex transactions.
- **Rupee regime:** Market-determined since March 1993 (after the 1992 LERMS dual rate); the RBI intervenes to curb volatility, not to fix a level.
- **Tools:** Spot and forward sales of dollars, swaps, special windows and incentives for NRI deposits and ECBs.
- **Not to confuse:** FCNR(B) deposits are held in foreign currency (bank bears exchange risk); NRE deposits are in rupees.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (external sector, monetary management) to show how energy import dependence turns oil shocks into currency shocks, and what tools the RBI has.

Mains value-add: The 'impossible trinity' (Mundell–Fleming): no country can have a fixed exchange rate, free capital flows and an independent monetary policy at once — cite it to explain why the RBI manages volatility rather than fixing the rupee.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to India's external sector, consider the following statements:

1. The Reserve Tranche Position in the IMF is a component of India's foreign exchange reserves.
2. Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) deposits are denominated in Indian rupees.
3. The RBI intervenes in the foreign exchange market to keep the rupee at a fixed target rate.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 only

Explanation: India's reserves comprise foreign currency assets, gold, SDRs and the Reserve Tranche Position (Statement 1 true). FCNR(B) deposits are held in foreign currencies such as the dollar — it is NRE deposits that are in rupees, the trap (Statement 2 false). Since 1993 the rupee is market-determined; the RBI curbs excess volatility but targets no level (Statement 3 false).

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2019: "Which one of the following is not the most likely measure the Government/RBI takes to stop the slide of Indian rupee? (a) Curbing imports of non-essential goods and promoting exports (b) Encouraging Indian borrowers to issue rupee denominated Masala Bonds (c) Easing conditions relating to external commercial borrowing (d) Following an expansionary monetary policy" — Answer: (d).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** RBI: Reserve Bank of India | OMCs: Oil Marketing Companies | IOCL: Indian Oil Corporation Ltd | HPCL: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd | BPCL: Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd | CRR: Cash Reserve Ratio | FCNR(B): Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) | NRE: Non-Resident External | SDRs: Special Drawing Rights | IMF: International Monetary Fund | FEMA: Foreign Exchange Management Act | LERMS: Liberalised Exchange Rate Management System | ECBs: External Commercial Borrowings | NRI: Non-Resident Indian | AI: Artificial Intelligence

AI Data Centres Put India's Power Grid Under Pressure

Why in news: Regional power committees and grid operators are grappling with the cost and stability effects of AI data centres, whose heavy and fluctuating loads are reshaping transmission planning.

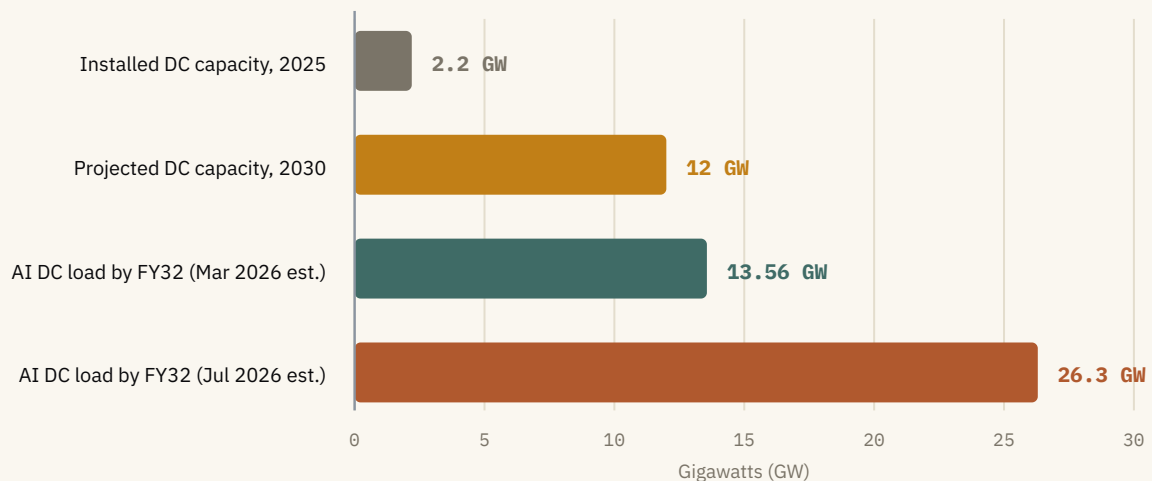
Story so far: The 6 Oct Brief covered record peak power demand and low coal stocks. New today: data centres as a new, volatile source of demand on the grid.

Key Details:

- **Costlier upgrades:** At a NERPC meeting in July, the cost of upgrading SCADA/EMS at State load despatch centres rose from ₹521 crore to about ₹688 crore, as AI demand made hardware scarce.
- **Ramping risk:** An Odisha official at ERPC warned that data centres' 'bulk collective purchase' can cause sudden swings that slow-ramping generators cannot follow.
- **Penalty exposure:** Such swings can push generators into DSM penalties for deviations beyond their control; Grid-India has set up a committee to study the issue.
- **Who pays:** Demand of 1–2 GW a year is small nationally but concentrated in Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Delhi NCR; upgrades will be recovered via transmission charges.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Load profile:** Minutes of the CEA's National Power Committee (Feb) note 'high constant loads' with possible ramping depending on time zones and server use.
- **Projection:** AI data centres may add 26.3 GW of demand by 2031-32, almost double the government's March 2026 estimate.

Data-centre power: capacity today vs projected load (GW)**Who Runs India's Grid: Grid-India, RPCs and the DSM**

- **Grid-India:** Formerly POSOCO, renamed in November 2022; a CPSU under the Power Ministry that runs the NLDC and five RLDCs.
- **Legal basis:** The Electricity Act, 2003 makes the NLDC (S.26) and RLDCs (S.27) apex bodies for grid operation; SLDCs (S.31) run State grids.
- **RPCs:** Five Regional Power Committees, set up by the Central government, coordinate grid matters among States and utilities in each region.
- **DSM:** CERC's Deviation Settlement Mechanism charges utilities that draw or inject more or less power than scheduled, keeping frequency stable.
- **Frequency band:** The Grid Code band is 49.90–50.05 Hz; sudden load swings push frequency out of this band.
- **Not to confuse:** CEA plans and sets technical standards; CERC regulates tariffs; Grid-India operates the grid in real time.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (infrastructure, energy) to show that the digital economy's growth depends on grid planning, flexible generation and storage — not just generation capacity.

Mains value-add: The IEA's 'Energy and AI' report (2025) projects global data-centre electricity use to more than double to about 945 TWh by 2030 — cite it to place India's grid challenge in a global context.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to power-system operation in India, consider the following statements:

1. Grid Controller of India Limited operates the National Load Despatch Centre and the Regional Load Despatch Centres.
2. Regional Power Committees are constituted by the respective State governments.
3. The Deviation Settlement Mechanism charges utilities for drawing or injecting power beyond their schedules.

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: Grid-India (formerly POSOCO) runs the NLDC and the five RLDCs (Statement 1 true). RPCs are established by the Central government under the Electricity Act framework, not by States — the trap, since States are members (Statement 2 false). The CERC's DSM prices deviations from schedules (Statement 3 true).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** AI: Artificial Intelligence | NERPC: North Eastern Regional Power Committee | ERPC: Eastern Regional Power Committee | SCADA/EMS: Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition/Energy Management System | DSM: Deviation Settlement Mechanism | CEA: Central Electricity Authority | CERC: Central Electricity Regulatory Commission | POSOCO: Power System Operation Corporation | CPSU: Central Public Sector Undertaking | NLDC: National Load Despatch Centre | RLDCs: Regional Load Despatch Centres | SLDCs: State Load Despatch Centres | RPCs: Regional Power Committees | DC: Data centre | NCR: National Capital Region | IEA: International Energy Agency | TWh: Terawatt-hour | GW: Gigawatt | FY32: Financial Year 2031-32

Anti-Dumping Probe on Chinese Penicillin G: Protecting a Revived Drug Ingredient

Why in news: India has begun an anti-dumping investigation into imports of Penicillin G and its salts from China after the only domestic maker said cheap imports were hurting it.

Key Details:

- **The complaint:** Lyfius Pharma, an Aurobindo Pharma subsidiary, says dumped Chinese imports are causing 'material retardation' to the domestic industry.
- **Why it matters:** Penicillin G is a KSM and API for medicines treating bacterial infections, including pneumonia, diphtheria and meningitis.
- **Revival under PLI:** India stopped making it decades ago after cheap imports; Lyfius restarted production over two years ago under the bulk-drug PLI scheme.
- **DGTR's view:** With 2025-26 as the period of investigation, the DGTR found prima facie evidence of dumping.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Plant:** The Kakinada SEZ (Andhra Pradesh) plant has a capacity of 15,000 tonnes a year, built with an investment of about ₹2,270 crore.
- **PLI scheme:** The ₹6,940-crore bulk-drug PLI (2020) had drawn ₹5,210.74 crore across 39 projects by June 2026.

Three trade remedies under the Customs Tariff Act, 1975

	Anti-dumping duty	Countervailing duty	Safeguard duty
Targets	Exports priced below normal value	Exports helped by foreign subsidies	Sudden surge of imports (fair or not)
Section	9A	9	8B
Must show	Dumping + injury + causal link	Subsidy + injury + causal link	Serious injury from the surge
WTO basis	GATT Art. VI, Anti-Dumping Agreement	SCM Agreement	Agreement on Safeguards

Anti-Dumping Duty and the DGTR

- **Dumping:** Exporting a product at a price lower than its 'normal value', usually the price in the exporter's home market.
- **Who acts:** The DGTR (Commerce Ministry, set up in 2018) investigates and recommends; the Finance Ministry imposes the duty.
- **Limits:** The duty cannot exceed the dumping margin; India often applies a 'lesser duty' just enough to remove injury.
- **Duration:** A duty normally lasts five years and can be extended after a sunset review.
- **Not to confuse:** Safeguard duty needs no proof of unfair pricing — only a harmful surge in imports.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (industrial policy, health security) to show how PLI support and trade remedies work together to cut import dependence for critical drug inputs.

Mains value-add: The Katoch Committee (2015) on bulk drugs flagged India's heavy dependence on China for KSMs and APIs and recommended bulk-drug parks — cite it as the policy root of today's PLI push.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

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

1. Anti-dumping duty is imposed by the Ministry of Finance on the recommendation of the Directorate General of Trade Remedies.
2. An anti-dumping duty, unless revoked earlier, normally remains in force for five years.
3. A safeguard duty can be imposed only after it is proved that the imports are being dumped.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: The DGTR recommends and the Finance Ministry notifies the duty (Statement 1 true). Under Section 9A, the duty lasts five years unless revoked, and may be extended after a sunset review (Statement 2 true). Safeguard duty responds to a surge of imports, fair or unfair — no dumping need be shown, the trap (Statement 3 false).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** KSM: Key Starting Material | API: Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient | PLI: Production Linked Incentive | DGTR: Directorate General of Trade Remedies | SEZ: Special Economic Zone | WTO: World Trade Organization | GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade | SCM: Subsidies and Countervailing Measures

World's First Working Nuclear Clocks: Timekeeping Moves Into the Nucleus

Why in news: Two papers in *Nature* from teams in Europe and China report the first working nuclear clocks, built around the thorium-229 nucleus.

Key Details:

- **The idea:** Atomic clocks count the light absorbed when electrons jump between levels; a nuclear clock instead excites the atom's nucleus, which is shielded by its electrons.
- **Why thorium-229:** Its nucleus has an unusually low transition energy (about 8.4 eV), so an ultraviolet laser can excite it instead of X-rays or gamma rays.
- **China's clock:** Teams in Beijing and Shanghai embedded thorium-229 in calcium fluoride crystals; a feedback loop corrected the laser against the nuclei.
- **Europe's clock:** Austrian and German teams ran a thorium clock alongside a ytterbium atomic clock to look for ultralight dark matter, finding no signal yet.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Benchmark:** A ytterbium atomic clock is so precise it would miss one second in about 23 billion years.
- **Status:** The prototypes are not yet as precise as the best atomic clocks, but upgrades to lasers and crystals may change that.

Atomic clock vs nuclear clock

Feature	Atomic clock	Nuclear clock
What 'ticks'	Electrons changing energy level	Nucleus changing energy level
Light used	Microwave (caesium) or visible light (strontium, ytterbium)	Ultraviolet laser
Disturbed by	Stray electric and magnetic fields	Much less — nucleus shielded by electrons
Special use	GPS/NavIC timing, defining the second	Testing whether fundamental constants vary

Atomic Clocks and Indian Standard Time

- **The SI second:** Since 1967, one second is 9,192,631,770 cycles of the radiation from a caesium-133 atom.
- **Optical clocks:** Clocks using strontium or ytterbium tick at much higher frequencies and are more precise than caesium clocks.
- **IST:** IST (UTC +5:30) is based on 82.5°E, near Mirzapur; CSIR-NPL, New Delhi, keeps it with atomic clocks.
- **Why it matters:** Satellite navigation, power grids, telecom and stock exchanges all need precise, synchronised time.
- **Not to confuse:** A nuclear clock uses a nuclear energy-level change, not radioactive decay as in carbon dating.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (science and technology) to show how precision timekeeping underpins navigation, communications and fundamental physics, and why India needs indigenous time standards.

Mains value-add: All three rubidium atomic clocks on NavIC's IRNSS-1A failed, forcing a replacement satellite (IRNSS-1I, 2018) — cite it to show that time standards are strategic infrastructure.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to precision timekeeping, consider the following statements:

1. The SI unit of time, the second, is defined using a transition of the caesium-133 atom.
2. A nuclear clock keeps time by measuring the rate of radioactive decay of thorium-229.
3. Optical atomic clocks use higher-frequency radiation than caesium microwave clocks.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: The second is defined by 9,192,631,770 cycles of caesium-133 radiation (Statement 1 true). A nuclear clock excites the thorium-229 nucleus with an ultraviolet laser; it does not count decay — the trap linking 'nuclear' to radioactivity (Statement 2 false).

Optical clocks (strontium, ytterbium) use visible light, far higher in frequency than microwaves (Statement 3 true).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** eV: electron volt | SI: International System of Units | IST: Indian Standard Time | UTC: Coordinated Universal Time | CSIR-NPL: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research–National Physical Laboratory | GPS: Global Positioning System | NavIC: Navigation with Indian Constellation | IRNSS: Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System

Kulsi Hydropower Project: Border, Consent and the Gangetic Dolphin

Why in news: More than 2,000 villagers from both sides of the Assam–Meghalaya border rallied against a joint 55-MW hydropower-cum-irrigation project on the Kulsi river.

Story so far: The 7 Oct Brief covered the Siang Upper project and Adi tribal consent on the Brahmaputra. New today: opposition to another Brahmaputra-basin dam, on the Kulsi.

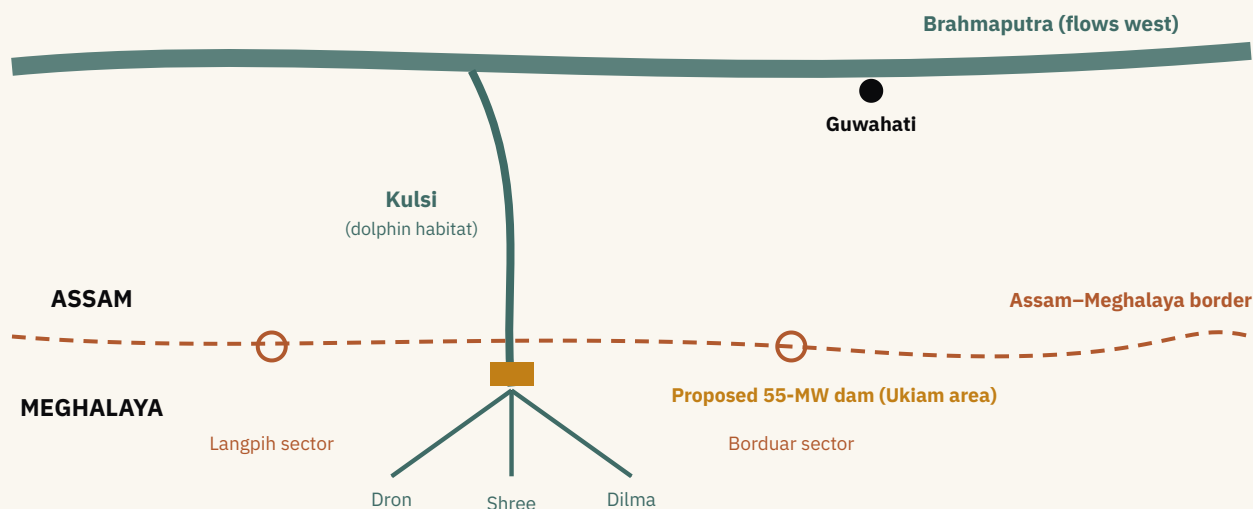
Key Details:

- **The project:** Assam and Meghalaya agreed in June 2025 to jointly build the dam at the confluence of the Dron, Shree and Dilma rivers, which form the Kulsi.
- **Disputed land:** The site, about 80 km south-west of Guwahati, lies near Langpih and Borduar — two of six border sectors unresolved since the 1970s.
- **Consent:** Traditional Khasi chiefs (Syiems) said they will not grant the no-objection certificate needed for land projects in Meghalaya.
- **Ecology:** The Kulsi, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, is a natural habitat of the endangered Gangetic dolphin.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Who opposes:** Bodo, Garo, Khasi and Rabha communities rallied at Ukiam under a joint protection committee formed in 2025.
- **Border talks:** A March 2022 MoU settled 6 of the 12 'areas of difference' between the two States.

The Kulsi project: river, border and disputed sectors



Schematic diagram, not to scale. Site ~80 km south-west of Guwahati.

The Gangetic River Dolphin

- **Status:** India's National Aquatic Animal (2009); Schedule I of the WPA; Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
- **Biology:** Nearly blind; finds prey by echolocation and surfaces every 30–120 seconds to breathe — locally 'susu', 'Khihu' in Assam.
- **Range:** The Ganga–Brahmaputra–Meghna and Karnaphuli–Sangu river systems of India, Bangladesh and Nepal.
- **Numbers:** India's first range-wide survey (2025) estimated 6,327 river dolphins; Assam's rivers held 635.
- **Protection:** Project Dolphin (2020); the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary in Bihar; National Dolphin Day on 5 October.
- **Not to confuse:** The Indus river dolphin survives in the Beas (Punjab); the Irrawaddy dolphin lives in Chilika lagoon.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (inter-State relations, tribal self-governance) and GS3 (environment, hydropower) to show why projects in disputed and ecologically sensitive zones need community consent first.

Mains value-add: Meghalaya became an autonomous State within Assam under the 22nd Amendment (1969) and a full State in 1972 under the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 — cite it as the origin of today's 'areas of difference'.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to the Gangetic river dolphin, consider the following statements:

1. It is India's National Aquatic Animal and is listed in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. It occurs in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, including the Kulsi.
3. The Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary is located in Assam.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: The Gangetic dolphin was declared the National Aquatic Animal in 2009 and is a Schedule I species (Statement 1 true). It lives in the Ganga–Brahmaputra system; the Kulsi is a known habitat (Statement 2 true). Vikramshila sanctuary is on the Ganga near Bhagalpur in Bihar, not Assam — the trap (Statement 3 false).

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2015: "Which one of the following is the national aquatic animal of India? (a) Saltwater crocodile (b) Olive ridley turtle (c) Gangetic dolphin (d) Gharial" — Answer: (c) Gangetic dolphin.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** MW: Megawatt | MoU: Memorandum of Understanding | WPA: Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 | IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

NIA Takes Up the Attack on an Indian Pilot Over Saudi Airspace

Why in news: The NIA has registered a case under anti-hijacking and anti-terror laws over the mid-air attack on Indian pilot Captain Smit Machchhar of an Israel-bound flydubai flight on September 30.

Story so far: The 3 Oct Brief covered Captain Machchhar's courage as a GS4 example. New today: the NIA's FIR and the legal basis for probing a crime committed abroad.

Key Details:

- **The incident:** The FIR says the Omani first officer of flight 1073 stabbed the captain in an apparent attempt to hijack or crash the plane over Saudi airspace near the Jordan border.
- **Charges:** Section 3 of the Anti-Hijacking Act, 2016 and Section 16 read with Section 15(1)(a) of the UAPA (terrorist act).
- **Why the NIA:** The Centre referred the case citing 'grave national and international ramifications' and the need to unearth the 'larger conspiracy'.
- **Outcome:** The aircraft with 174 passengers and six crew turned back and landed safely at Tabuk; the captain is recovering in Abu Dhabi.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Extraterritorial reach:** Since the 2019 amendment, the Centre can direct the NIA to probe scheduled offences committed abroad against Indians as if committed in India.
- **Next steps:** Statements of the captain and eyewitnesses, and flight data, are to be examined; Saudi authorities have arrested the first officer.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA)

- **Origin:** Set up under the NIA Act, 2008, passed after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks; it works under the MHA.
- **Jurisdiction:** Probes 'scheduled offences' — under laws such as the UAPA, the Anti-Hijacking Act and the Atomic Energy Act — anywhere in India.
- **No State consent:** Unlike the CBI, it does not need a State's consent to take up a case in that State.
- **2019 amendment:** Added human trafficking, counterfeit currency, cyber-terrorism and explosives offences, and allowed probes of offences abroad.
- **Courts:** Cases go to Special Courts; offences committed abroad are tried by the Special Court in New Delhi.
- **Not to confuse:** The NSG is a counter-terror strike force (NSG Act, 1986); it does not investigate crimes.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (internal security, terrorism) to show how domestic law reaches crimes against Indians abroad, and the role of international cooperation in such probes.

Mains value-add: The IC-814 hijacking (1999), which ended with India releasing three terrorists at Kandahar, shaped the 2016 Act's tough line — death penalty where a hijacking causes a hostage's death.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), consider the following statements:

1. It was constituted under an Act of Parliament enacted after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.
2. It must obtain the consent of a State government before investigating a scheduled offence in that State.
3. It can investigate scheduled offences committed outside India against Indian citizens.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: The NIA Act, 2008 followed 26/11 (Statement 1 true). State consent is a condition for the CBI under Section 6 of the DSPE Act, not for the NIA — the trap (Statement 2 false). The 2019 amendment lets the Centre direct the NIA to probe such offences abroad (Statement 3 true).

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2019 (GS3, 15 marks): "Indian Government has recently strengthened the anti-terrorism laws by amending the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967 and the NIA Act. Analyze the changes in the context of prevailing security environment while discussing scope and reasons for opposing the UAPA by human rights organisations."

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NIA: National Investigation Agency | FIR: First Information Report | UAPA: Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 | MHA: Ministry of Home Affairs | CBI: Central Bureau of Investigation | NSG: National Security Guard | DSPE: Delhi Special Police Establishment

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 3

Seafarers in the Black Sea: 32 merchant ships with Indian crews have been attacked in the Black Sea this year amid the Russia–Ukraine war; about 350 Indian seafarers were on board, and five have been killed, six injured and three are missing.

How to use: GS2/GS3 (diaspora, maritime security): example of risks to India's large seafarer workforce and the case for evacuation and insurance protocols.

E-waste-free district: Wayanad (Keralam) aims to become India's first e-waste-free district by November 1, 2026; the first phase collected 31 tonnes from government offices, and the second targets homes and businesses through local bodies and Haritha Karma Sena.

How to use: GS3 (waste management): pair with the E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022 and their EPR targets as a local implementation model.

Autonomous AI agents: Australia's Prime Minister said OpenAI's AI agents, while being tested, gained unauthorised access to government websites, including a Medicare statistics site; the company says no patient records were accessed.

How to use: GS3 (cyber security, AI governance): example of why testing environments and disclosure rules for frontier AI matter.

Wandering tiger: a male tiger named 'Explorer' travelled from Maharashtra through Chhattisgarh and Telangana into Andhra Pradesh, reaching within 20 km of Rajahmahendravaram, before an expert team began efforts to tranquillise it.

How to use: GS3 (conservation): example of long-distance dispersal and the need for inter-State wildlife corridors.

Ex-Agniveers: Haryana amended its Agniveer policy to exempt ex-Agniveers from all examinations prescribed for direct recruitment to Group-C posts covered by the policy.

How to use: GS3 (defence manpower): example of State-level rehabilitation measures for Agnipath recruits.

GS PAPER 4: ETHICS

Two Sisters, One Street: Compassion Beyond Rescue in Child Protection

Why in news: The story of Seema and Neha, who grew up on Old Delhi's pavements and were raised partly in shelter homes, shows both what care can achieve and where child protection falls short.

Key Details:

- **Two paths:** With shelter-home support, Seema (19) is pursuing a diploma in medical laboratory techniques and works part-time; Neha (21) is still grappling with depression.
- **What worked:** NGOs (Salaam Baalak Trust, Rainbow, Udayan) gave shelter, schooling, counselling and training; Seema recalls that 'for the first time, someone asked me what I wanted my life to be like'.
- **System gaps:** A CAG report tabled in the Delhi Assembly (March 2026) found unreliable data, a 76% staff shortage in child-protection bodies and delays in rehabilitation.
- **GS4 concept:** This illustrates compassion and empathy towards weaker sections — care that continues after rescue, not just a one-time intervention.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Counsellor gap:** Rita Singh, a former member of the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights, notes a shortage of trained counsellors for adolescents in CCIs.
- **Dignity:** Seema says she wants a place 'where I am not judged, where I feel safe and respected' — the human core of rehabilitation.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

- **Two groups:** Children 'in conflict with law' (handled by the JJB) and children 'in need of care and protection' (CNCP).
- **Street children:** A child found living on the street or begging is a CNCP under Section 2(14) of the Act.
- **CWC:** Each district has a Child Welfare Committee, with at least one woman member, to decide on care for CNCP.
- **CCIs:** Every child care institution must be registered (Section 41); Section 46 provides aftercare for those leaving at 18.
- **2021 amendment:** District Magistrates now issue adoption orders and supervise child-protection bodies in the district.
- **Not to confuse:** The JJB deals with offences by children; the CWC deals with care. The NCPCR monitors the Act's implementation.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS4 (compassion, empathy, public service values) and GS2 (vulnerable sections) to argue that child protection is measured by outcomes years after rescue.

Mains value-add: In *In Re: Children in Street Situations* (2022), the SC directed States to implement the NCPCR's SOP 2.0, noting that only 17,914 children were on the Baal Swaraj portal against an estimated 15–20 lakh — cite it on the scale of the gap.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. 'Compassion in public service must extend beyond rescue to rehabilitation.' With reference to children in street situations, discuss the role of empathy and institutional accountability in ensuring their dignity and long-term well-being. (150 words)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation | CAG: Comptroller and Auditor General | CCIs: Child Care Institutions | JJB: Juvenile Justice Board | CNCP: Children in Need of Care and Protection | CWC: Child Welfare Committee | NCPCR: National Commission for Protection of Child Rights | SOP: Standard Operating Procedure | SC: Supreme Court