

THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 16 OCTOBER 2026

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PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

- Sukhna wetland & Sauj Jheel** — wetlands in Chandigarh and Uttar Pradesh designated Ramsar sites; India's tally is now 103, and Sukhna is Chandigarh's first.
- GSAT-7C** — dedicated communication satellite for the IAF, contracted from NSIL; GSAT-7 ('Rukmini', 2013) serves the Navy and GSAT-7A (2018) the IAF.
- Varunastra** — indigenous ship-launched heavyweight anti-submarine torpedo designed by DRDO's NSTL, Visakhapatnam, and built by Bharat Dynamics Ltd.
- Coal Bed Methane** — natural gas held within coal seams, unlike conventional gas stored in reservoir-rock pores; new CBM blocks lie in Raniganj, Godavari Valley and Singrauli.
- World Food Day (16 Oct)** — marks FAO's founding in 1945; the WFP won the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize; IFAD is the UN agency that finances smallholder farming.

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: INDIAN SOCIETY

Women's Property Rights: From Welfare to Women-Led Development

Why in news: The NCW held a consultation on women's right to property and their access to social and economic justice.

Key Details:

- **Constitutional base:** Art 300-A protects the property of men and women alike; Arts 38, 39 and 46 commit the State to distributive justice.
- **Legal reform:** The HSA 1956, amended in 2005, made daughters coparceners by birth; *Vineeta Sharma* (2020) held the right does not depend on the father being alive in 2005.
- **The gap:** Ownership on paper rarely becomes control: family pressure to 'relinquish' shares, low legal awareness and weak access to justice keep women from claiming land.
- **Paradigm shift:** Distributive justice treats women as claimants of assets, not passive welfare beneficiaries — the core of 'women-led' rather than 'women-based' development.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Land data:** Women held only about 14% of operational holdings in Agriculture Census 2015-16 (about 13% in 2010-11).
- **Judicial backing:** *Air India Statutory Corp. v. United Labour Union* (1996): distributive justice is a constitutional goal; *CERC v. UoI* (1995): socio-economic justice is part of Art 21.
- **Fixes proposed:** Gender-sensitive digitised land records, simple mutation with automatic recording of women's shares, SHG-led legal-literacy drives and free legal aid.

Milestones in women's property rights

Schematic timeline, not to scale.

Daughters as Coparceners: HSA 2005 and Vineeta Sharma

- **What a coparcenary is:** The group in a Hindu joint family that gets an interest in ancestral property by birth; before 2005 only sons qualified under Mitakshara law.
- **2005 amendment:** Amended Section 6 of the HSA from 9 Sept 2005: daughters get the same rights and liabilities in coparcenary property as sons.
- **Vineeta Sharma (2020):** A three-judge Bench held the right flows from birth, so it applies even if the father died before 2005, overruling *Prakash v. Phulavati* (2015) on this point.
- **Saved transactions:** Partitions and dispositions made before 20 Dec 2004 are not reopened.
- **Who the HSA covers:** Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs; Muslims follow personal law, while Christians and Parsis follow the Indian Succession Act, 1925.
- **Not to confuse:** Coparcenary (ancestral, by birth) vs self-acquired property, which an owner may freely bequeath by will.

Prelims angle: The Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937 gave widows only a limited estate; Section 14 of the HSA 1956 turned a Hindu woman's limited estate into absolute ownership.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 (role of women, empowerment) and GS2 (vulnerable sections, rights) answers on why legal equality has not yet delivered economic agency.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Law grants equality (HSA 2005, Art 300-A), yet women hold only ~14% of operational holdings.
BODY	Legal: coparcenary, <i>Vineeta Sharma</i> ; social: patriarchy, relinquishment; economic: collateral, credit, bargaining power; institutional: records, mutation, legal aid.
WAY FORWARD	Gender-sensitive DILRMP records, automatic recording of shares, SHG legal literacy, NALSA free legal aid.

Mains value-add: The G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (2023) committed members to 'women-led development' — cite it to show India itself frames women as drivers, not recipients, of growth.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY-MODERATE

Q. With reference to women's property rights in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 made a daughter a coparcener by birth in the same manner as a son.
2. A daughter's coparcenary right depends on her father being alive on the date the 2005 amendment came into force.
3. The right to property is a fundamental right under Part III of the Constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: amended Section 6 treats daughters as coparceners by birth. Statement 2 is incorrect: *Vineeta Sharma* (2020) held the right flows from birth, irrespective of whether the father was alive on 9 Sept 2005. Statement 3 is incorrect: the 44th Amendment (1978) removed property from Part III; it is now a constitutional right under Art 300-A.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NCW: National Commission for Women | HSA: Hindu Succession Act | CERC: Consumer Education and Research Centre | UoI: Union of India | SHG: Self-Help Group | DILRMP: Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme | NALSA: National Legal Services Authority | G20: Group of Twenty

GS PAPER 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE & IR

Conversion Does Not Carry Backward-Class Status: Supreme Court

Why in news: The Supreme Court dismissed Tamil Nadu's appeal and held that a backward-class Hindu who converts to Islam cannot automatically claim Backward Class Muslim benefits under Art 16(4).

Story so far: The 8 Oct Brief noted (Quick Facts) that the ST Order, 1950 has no religion bar. New today: the Court holds that backward-class status does not travel with a convert into a new religion.

Key Details:

- **Core holding:** Backwardness rooted in the Hindu social order cannot be 'carried' into a religion whose basic theology does not recognise caste; conversion severs that legal foundation.
- **Proof of membership:** A Jamath may certify conversion, but that does not prove membership of a notified Backward Class Muslim community; social membership must be shown separately.
- **The GO:** TN's March 2024 order treating converted BC, MBC, DNC and SC persons as Backward Class Muslims had been struck down by the Madras HC; the Court upheld that.
- **Reconversion:** Returning to Hinduism does not automatically revive earlier backward status; entitlement must be assessed afresh.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Case:** *Secretary to Govt v. Sameer Ahamed N* (Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Shree Chandrashekhar), 15 Oct 2026; the respondent converted in 2015 and sought a 'Muslim Lebbai' certificate.
- **Related ruling:** *Chinthada Anand v. State of AP* (March 2026): a Madiga pastor who converted to Christianity lost SC status.

- **Dimensions:** Constitutional: Art 16(4) targets a 'backward class of citizens' as a social group; ethical: curbs misuse, yet converts who still face discrimination remain outside protection.

Status after religious conversion: where the law stands

Category	Rule after conversion
SC	Only Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists can be SCs (para 3, Constitution (SC) Order, 1950)
ST	The ST Order, 1950 has no religion bar; status rests on continuing tribal identity
BC / OBC	Not automatic: membership of a group notified for the new religion must be proved (Oct 2026)
Reconversion	No automatic revival of earlier status; assessed afresh (Oct 2026)

Religion and Reservation: The Legal Map

- **Art 16(4):** Lets the State reserve public posts for any 'backward class of citizens' not adequately represented; it enables quotas but creates no right to one.
- **Arts 341 & 342:** The President notifies SCs and STs for each State/UT; only Parliament can change the lists.
- **Para 3, SC Order:** Originally limited SC status to Hindus; Sikhs were added in 1956 and Buddhists in 1990.
- **OBCs:** Identified as social groups irrespective of religion; *Indra Sawhney* (1992) accepted backward classes among non-Hindus, and many Muslim and Christian groups are on OBC lists.
- **Pending question:** The Justice K.G. Balakrishnan Commission was set up in 2022 to examine SC status for Dalits who converted to other religions.
- **Not to confuse:** Ranganath Misra Commission (2007) recommended delinking SC status from religion; the Sachar Committee (2006) studied Muslims' socio-economic status — neither is law.

Prelims angle: Art 16(4A), added by the 77th Amendment (1995), enables reservation in promotion for SCs and STs; 'consequential seniority' was added by the 85th Amendment (2001).

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (reservation, secularism, judiciary) to show courts tie reservation to social membership, not personal faith.

Answer skeleton

INTRO Reservation remedies group-based social disability; the Oct 2026 ruling ties it to proven membership of that group.

BODY Legal: Art 16(4), para 3 SC Order; social: caste persists among converts; federal: State BC lists; ethical: misuse vs genuine disadvantage.

WAY FORWARD Empirical findings of the Balakrishnan Commission; evidence-based State lists; periodic revision as *Indra Sawhney* requires.

Mains value-add: C. Selvarani (2024): converting without genuine faith, only to secure reservation, is a 'fraud on the Constitution' — cite it to argue reservation must follow social reality, not paper declarations.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements regarding reservation and religious conversion in India:

1. Under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, a person professing Buddhism can be deemed a member of a Scheduled Caste.
2. A certificate of conversion issued by a religious body is by itself sufficient proof of membership of a notified Backward Class Muslim community.
3. The Scheduled Tribes Order, 1950 excludes persons who profess Christianity from ST status.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) 1 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: Buddhists were added to para 3 of the SC Order in 1990. Statement 2 is incorrect: the Court held a Jamath certificate proves conversion, not membership of a notified backward community. Statement 3 is incorrect: unlike the SC Order, the ST Order has no religion clause.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SC: Scheduled Caste | ST: Scheduled Tribe | BC: Backward Class | MBC: Most Backward Class | DNC: Denotified Communities | OBC: Other Backward Classes | GO: Government Order | TN: Tamil Nadu | HC: High Court | AP: Andhra Pradesh

Gram Sabhas, PESA and the Freedom of Religion

Why in news: Gram sabhas in Chhattisgarh's Scheduled Areas are barring pastors and converts under PESA, as the State's new FORA tightens rules on conversion.

Story so far: The 8 Oct Brief covered the Madras HC's FCRA ruling on conversion and Art 25. New today: the conflict moves to tribal village councils using PESA powers.

Key Details:

- **New law:** The Chhattisgarh FORA, 2026 (passed March, notified August) replaces the 1968 Act; it needs prior declarations to the DM/ADM and allows up to life imprisonment for mass conversion.
- **PESA claims:** Gram sabhas cite Art 244(1), the Fifth Schedule, PESA and the 2022 PESA Rules to bar outside pastors, prayer meetings and community land for Christian burials.
- **Courts so far:** The HC (*Digbal Tandi*, Oct 2025) held cautionary hoardings against forced conversion not unconstitutional per se, pointing to PESA Rule 14; the SC dismissed the appeal (Feb 2026).
- **Burial disputes:** In *Ramesh Baghel* (Jan 2025) a split SC Bench ordered burial at a designated site in another village; Kanker still has no allotted Christian burial ground.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Art 25:** Protects freedom to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality and health; *Rev. Stainislaus* (1977) held propagation excludes conversion by force, fraud or inducement.
- **Limits on gram sabhas:** Their powers flow from statute and cannot override Part III rights: equality (Art 14), movement (Art 19(1)(d)) and dignity, including in death (Art 21).
- **Social-economic:** Petitioners allege social boycotts and denial of MGNREGA work and forest produce to converts; on 7 Oct 2026 the HC sought the State's reply to a FORA challenge.

Where a gram sabha's power sits – and ends

Constitution – Part III

Arts 14, 19, 21, 25 bind every authority

PESA Act, 1996 (Parliament)

S.4(d): gram sabha may safeguard customs & resources

Chhattisgarh PESA Rules, 2022

Procedure; Rule 14 grievance route

Gram sabha resolution

Valid only if consistent with all layers above

Each lower layer must conform to every layer above it. Schematic diagram.

The PESA Act, 1996

- **Origin:** Enacted on the Bhuria Committee's advice to extend Part IX (Panchayats) to Fifth Schedule areas, as Art 243M allows Parliament to do with modifications.
- **Coverage:** Scheduled Areas in 10 States: AP, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, HP, Jharkhand, MP, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana.
- **Gram sabha's core role:** Every gram sabha is 'competent to safeguard and preserve' people's traditions, customs, cultural identity, community resources and customary dispute resolution.
- **Specific powers:** Mandatory consultation before land acquisition; ownership of minor forest produce; control over village markets, money-lending and sale of intoxicants.
- **Chhattisgarh:** Notified its PESA Rules only in 2022, 26 years after the Act.
- **Not to confuse:** PESA (Fifth Schedule, panchayats) vs the Sixth Schedule (autonomous district councils in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram).

Prelims angle: Under para 5 of the Fifth Schedule, the Governor may direct that any Act of Parliament or the State Legislature shall not apply, or apply with modifications, to a Scheduled Area.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (devolution, Fifth Schedule, fundamental rights) and GS1 (secularism, tribal identity) answers on balancing cultural autonomy with individual liberty.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	PESA lets gram sabhas protect customs; Art 25 protects individual conscience — Chhattisgarh tests where one ends.
BODY	Legal: Art 25, <i>Rev. Stainislaus</i> , Part III supremacy; governance: PESA Rules, DM's role; social: boycotts, burials; tribal identity; economic exclusion.
WAY FORWARD	Designated burial grounds as the SC directed; PESA Rule 14 grievance route; impartial policing; dialogue via Tribes Advisory Councils.

Mains value-add: Justice Chinnappa Reddy in *Bijoe Emmanuel* (1986): 'Our tradition teaches tolerance; our philosophy preaches tolerance; our Constitution practices tolerance; let us not dilute it' — cite it against majoritarian local bans.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY-MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, consider the following statements:

1. It extends Part IX of the Constitution to the Scheduled Areas covered by the Fifth Schedule.
2. It applies to the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram administered under the Sixth Schedule.
3. It makes the gram sabha competent to safeguard the customs and cultural identity of the people.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: PESA extends Part IX, with modifications, to Fifth Schedule areas. Statement 2 is incorrect: Sixth Schedule areas have autonomous district councils and are outside PESA. Statement 3 is correct: Section 4(d) makes the gram sabha competent to safeguard customs and cultural identity.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2013: "The Government enacted the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act in 1996. Which one of the following is not identified as its objective?" (a) To provide self-governance (b) To recognize traditional rights (c) To create autonomous regions in tribal areas (d) To free tribal people from exploitation — Answer: (c).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** PESA: Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act | FORA: Freedom of Religion Act | DM: District Magistrate | ADM: Additional District Magistrate | HC: High Court | SC: Supreme Court | FCRA: Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act | MGNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act | AP: Andhra Pradesh | HP: Himachal Pradesh | MP: Madhya Pradesh

PAC Grills Centre, States over Leaks in SC Scholarships

Why in news: Parliament's PAC questioned Union and State governments on 'fraud markers' and delays in pre- and post-matric scholarships for SC students flagged by the CAG in 2025.

Key Details:

- **Audit findings:** The CAG found 40.75 lakh beneficiaries in 14 States paid late (1-90 months), over 3.5 lakh never paid, and double, short and excess payments.
- **Targeting errors:** Over 6,000 non-SC students got scholarships and over 5,700 awards skipped income checks — inclusion errors that drain a scheme meant for the poorest.
- **Accountability:** The Centre called implementation the States' burden; the PAC gave the Social Justice Ministry a month for an ATR and may move privilege notices after six States sent no officials.
- **DBT paradox:** The PAC noted the shift to DBT coincided with significant drops in beneficiaries — raising exclusion-error concerns alongside leakages.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Scheme design:** Revamped PMS-SC (Cabinet, Dec 2020): ₹59,048 crore for 2020-21 to 2025-26; Centre:State 60:40; DBT; family-income ceiling ₹2.5 lakh a year.
- **Stated goal:** Bring about 1.36 crore of the poorest SC students into higher education within five years — late payments push exactly these students out.
- **Ethical lens:** Delayed or diverted aid to SC students is a failure of probity in the use of public funds, not merely an administrative lapse.

CAG's findings on SC scholarships (2025 report)

Finding	Scale
Beneficiaries paid late (1–90 months)	40.75 lakh, in 14 States
Beneficiaries never paid	Over 3.5 lakh
Awards disbursed without income checks	Over 5,700 cases
Non-SC beneficiaries paid	Over 6,000 cases

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC)

- **Origin:** Set up in 1921 under the Government of India Act, 1919; India's oldest financial committee.
- **Composition:** 22 members — 15 from the LS and 7 from the RS — elected every year by proportional representation; Ministers cannot be members.
- **Chair:** Appointed by the Speaker from among LS members; by convention since 1967 an Opposition MP chairs it.
- **Work:** Examines the Appropriation and Finance Accounts and the CAG's audit reports — a post-mortem of spending, not a pre-budget check.
- **Teeth:** Its recommendations are advisory; the government reports back through Action Taken Notes.
- **Not to confuse:** Estimates Committee (30 LS members, suggests economies in estimates) and COPU (examines public undertakings) are its sister financial committees.

Prelims angle: CAG reports on Union accounts are submitted to the President, who lays them before Parliament (Art 151); reports on a State's accounts go to the Governor.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (parliamentary committees, welfare of SCs, accountability) and GS4 (utilisation of public funds) answers.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	The PAC turns CAG audit into political accountability; SC scholarship leaks show why it matters.
BODY	Institutional: PAC, ATRs, privilege; federal: Centre-State blame-shifting in CSS; social: late aid causes dropouts; technological: DBT exclusion vs leakage; ethical: probity.
WAY FORWARD	Real-time PFMS tracking, time-bound disbursement, grievance-backed DBT, social audits, publication of ATRs.

Mains value-add: The CAG is often called the 'friend, philosopher and guide' of the PAC — cite it to show audit bites only when a parliamentary committee follows it up.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Critically examine whether Direct Benefit Transfer has reduced, or merely shifted, the problem of leakages in centrally sponsored scholarship schemes for Scheduled Caste students. (150 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2013: "Consider the following statements: The Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts 1. consists of not more than 25 Members of the Lok Sabha 2. scrutinizes appropriation and finance accounts of Government 3. examines the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?" — Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** PAC: Public Accounts Committee | SC: Scheduled Caste | CAG: Comptroller and Auditor General | ATR: Action Taken Report | DBT: Direct Benefit Transfer | PMS-SC: Post-Matric Scholarship for SCs | LS: Lok Sabha | RS: Rajya Sabha | COPU: Committee on Public Undertakings | CSS: Centrally Sponsored Schemes | PFMS: Public Financial Management System

India vs Tajikistan: The Contest for a 2028-29 UNSC Seat

Why in news: With Tajikistan already in the race for the Asia-Pacific seat, India faces its first contested UNSC election since 1996; the UNGA votes in June 2027.

Story so far: The 30 Sept Brief covered UN reform and the UNSC. New today: India's bid for a non-permanent seat faces a head-to-head contest.

Key Details:

- **The arithmetic:** A winner needs two-thirds of members present and voting in the 193-member UNGA — about 129 votes if all vote.
- **India's record:** Eight terms, the latest in 2021-22; elected unopposed in 2020 with 184 of 192 votes, but lost contested races in 1975 (Pakistan) and 1996 (Japan).

- **Tajik advantages:** A first-timer pitch, Central Asian and OIC endorsement, and a UNGA mood favouring small states that have never served.
- **India's options:** Fight it out, persuade Tajikistan to withdraw (as Kazakhstan did in 2010 and Afghanistan in 2013), or step aside and return later with consensus backing.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Recent upsets:** First-timer Kyrgyzstan beat the Philippines for the Asia-Pacific seat, and Germany lost a WEOG race for the first time.
- **Strategic cost:** Tajikistan hosted Indian facilities at Ayni and a medical base at Farkhor; a bruising contest risks alienating a Central Asian partner.
- **Global South mood:** Many UNGA votes over the past year ran against big powers, so 'second turn in a decade' may cost India goodwill.

India's non-permanent UNSC terms



Terms: 1950-51, 1967-68, 1972-73, 1977-78, 1984-85, 1991-92, 2011-12, 2021-22. Lost contests: 1975, 1996.

Electing the UNSC's Non-Permanent Members

- **Charter basis:** Art 23: 15 members — 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent, elected by the UNGA for two-year terms; five seats are filled each year.
- **Expansion:** A 1963 Charter amendment (in force 1965) raised non-permanent seats from 6 to 10.
- **Seat distribution:** 5 for African and Asian States, 1 Eastern European, 2 Latin American and Caribbean, 2 Western European and Others.
- **Voting rules:** Secret ballot and a two-thirds majority; a retiring member cannot be re-elected immediately.
- **Clean slates:** Regional groups often agree candidates informally, sometimes decades ahead; when they fail, contests go to repeated UNGA ballots.
- **Not to confuse:** Non-permanent members have no veto; substantive decisions need 9 votes with no negative P5 vote (Art 27).

Prelims angle: India was an original member of the UN: it signed the UN Charter in June 1945, two years before Independence.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (important international institutions, India and the Global South) answers on UN reform and strategic autonomy.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Non-permanent terms are India's main UNSC platform while permanent membership remains elusive.
BODY	Institutional: Art 23, two-thirds rule; geopolitical: OIC, Central Asia, Global South mood; strategic: Tajik ties; reputational: big-power image vs fairness.
WAY FORWARD	Negotiate a consensus slot; push reform via G4/L.69 in the IGN; deepen outreach through Voice of Global South Summits.

Mains value-add: Japan has served a record 12 non-permanent terms — cite it to argue frequent tenures build influence but also invite 'fairness' pushback from first-time aspirants.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY-MODERATE

Q. With reference to the election of non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, consider the following statements:

1. Non-permanent members are elected by the Security Council itself for a term of two years.
2. A retiring non-permanent member is eligible for immediate re-election.
3. A candidate needs a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly members present and voting.

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) 3 only

Answer: (d) 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect: the General Assembly, not the Council, elects non-permanent members under Art 23. Statement 2 is incorrect: a retiring member is not eligible for immediate re-election. Statement 3 is correct: the election requires a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2015, GS2: "Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UN Security Council." (200 words, 12.5 marks)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** UNSC: UN Security Council | UNGA: UN General Assembly | OIC: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation | WEOG: Western European and Others Group | P5: Permanent Five | G4: Brazil, Germany, India, Japan | L.69: Group of developing countries seeking UNSC reform | IGN: Intergovernmental Negotiations | UN: United Nations

Lancet Commission Flags 17 Interlinked Catastrophic Health Threats

Why in news: A Lancet Commission launched at the World Health Summit in Berlin listed 17 threats that could each cost at least 1 billion DALYs by 2100, urging leaders to tackle them together.

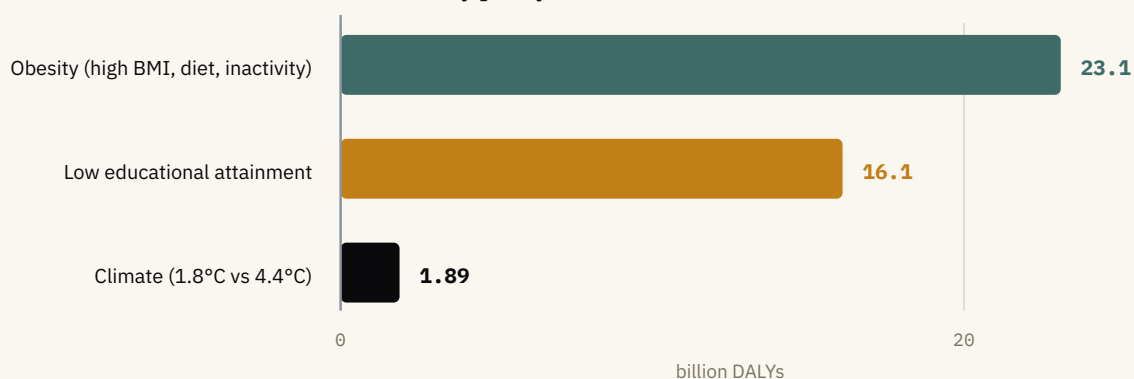
Key Details:

- **Top tier:** Nuclear conflict and malicious use of AI carry extinction potential; climate change, AMR, pandemics, obesity, poor mental health and 10 others make up the rest.
- **Interlinkage:** Threats amplify one another: climate change worsens child malnutrition, air pollution, AMR and mental-health stress, so siloed policy fails.
- **Unequal burden:** Rich countries face NCD losses such as obesity and mental ill-health; poor regions bear malnutrition and aid collapse — sub-Saharan Africa ~70% of the aid-cut burden.
- **Critique:** The report skirts geopolitics: rising intolerance and the breakdown of international cooperation, which itself blocks timely outbreak information-sharing.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Commission:** The Lancet Commission on 21st Century Global Threats to Health, chaired by Christopher Murray (IHME) and Natalia Kanem (ex-UNFPA); 204 countries modelled.
- **Climate:** Limiting warming to about 1.8°C rather than 4.4°C would avert 1.89 billion DALYs, a figure the report calls conservative.
- **India angle:** An AIIMS-Harvard study found Indians with sustained high socio-economic status had 1.8 times the odds of heart failure — NCDs no longer spare the affluent.

Health loss avertable by policy, 2025–2100 (billion DALYs)



DALYs: Measuring the Burden of Disease

- **Definition:** One DALY is one year of healthy life lost; DALY = YLL (years lost to early death) + YLD (years lived with disability).
- **Origin:** Developed for the World Bank's World Development Report 1993 and the GBD study.
- **Who computes it:** The GBD study is now led by IHME at the University of Washington with global collaborators.
- **Why it matters:** Unlike death rates, DALYs capture non-fatal illness such as depression or blindness, so priorities are not set by mortality alone.
- **'Amenable' DALYs:** Count only the losses that policy action can still change — the Commission's yardstick.
- **Not to confuse:** DALY (burden: lower is better) vs QALY (health gained, used in cost-effectiveness) vs HALE (healthy life expectancy).

Prelims angle: India's NP-NCD (formerly NPCDCS, launched 2010) runs population-based screening for hypertension, diabetes and common cancers for people aged 30 and above.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (health, global governance) and GS3 (climate, disaster risk) answers arguing for integrated, cross-sector health policy.

Answer skeleton

INTRO The Lancet Commission names 17 interlinked threats, each able to cost ≥ 1 bn DALYs by 2100.

BODY Health: NCDs, AMR, pandemics; environmental: climate, air pollution; economic: inequality, aid cuts; security: nuclear, AI; social: education, ageing.

WAY FORWARD Health in All Policies; One Health for AMR (NAP-AMR); NP-NCD screening; NPCCHH climate-health plans; global pandemic cooperation.

Mains value-add: WHO's Helsinki Statement on Health in All Policies (2013) — cite it to argue that obesity, pollution and climate threats need finance, transport and agriculture ministries, not health alone.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ EASY

Q. With reference to Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), consider the following statements:

1. One DALY represents one year of healthy life lost.
2. DALYs count only premature deaths and ignore years lived with disability.
3. A higher DALY figure for a disease indicates a smaller burden on the population.

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: Statement 1 is correct by definition. Statement 2 is incorrect: DALYs add YLL (premature death) and YLD (years lived with disability). Statement 3 is incorrect: DALYs measure loss, so a higher figure means a larger burden.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** DALY: Disability-Adjusted Life Year | AI: Artificial Intelligence | AMR: Antimicrobial Resistance | NCD: Non-Communicable Disease | IHME: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation | UNFPA: UN Population Fund | AIIMS: All India Institute of Medical Sciences | BMI: Body Mass Index | YLL: Years of Life Lost | YLD: Years Lived with Disability | GBD: Global Burden of Disease | QALY: Quality-Adjusted Life Year | HALE: Health-Adjusted Life Expectancy | NP-NCD: National Programme for Prevention and Control of NCDs | NPCDCS: National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, CVD and Stroke | NAP-AMR: National Action Plan on AMR | NPCCHH: National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health | WHO: World Health Organization

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 2

Special Summary Revision of rolls: The ECI announced an SSR in 17 States/UTs (incl. UP, Punjab, Uttarakhand), with 1 Jan 2027 as the qualifying date and advance applications for 1 April, 1 July and 1 October 2027. Unlike the SIR, applicants need not prove citizenship or be mapped to earlier rolls, and there are no house-to-house visits.

How to use: *GS2 electoral reforms: contrast routine summary revision with intensive revision under S.21 of the RP Act, 1950, and cite the four qualifying dates added by the 2021 amendment.*

Foreigners and protest: Mumbai's FRRO asked actor Imran Khan, a foreign national, to leave India by 28 Oct for joining an anti-CEC protest, citing visa conditions and the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025.

How to use: *GS2 fundamental rights: Art 19 freedoms belong only to citizens; foreigners get Arts 14, 20 and 21 — Louis De Raedt (1991).*

Unpublished prohibitory orders: The Supreme Court asked the Centre to explain S.163 BNSS orders behind the 10 Oct mass detentions in Delhi, called them a 'ghost' as they were not public, and ordered all CCTV footage, including from detention centres, preserved.

How to use: *GS2 right to protest: restrictions must be published and reasoned — Anuradha Bhasin (2020) on orders under old S.144 CrPC.*

Food security on World Food Day: The NFSA, 2013 entitles up to 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban population (about 81 crore people) to subsidised grain; grain has been free under PMGKAY since Jan 2024, extended to 2028, with ONORC portability.

How to use: *GS2/GS3 PDS answers: India's rights-based, digitised food safety net as a model for the Global South.*

Ballots vs EVMs: Odisha's SEC will keep ballot papers for panchayat polls — about 91,000 booths would need some 3.36 lakh EVMs — while urban local bodies vote by EVM.

How to use: *GS2 local governance: SECs under Arts 243K and 243ZA are independent of the ECI and decide their own polling methods.*

GS PAPER 3: ECONOMY & AGRICULTURE**Supreme Court Upholds Quashing of Yes Bank's ₹8,415-Crore AT1 Write-Off**

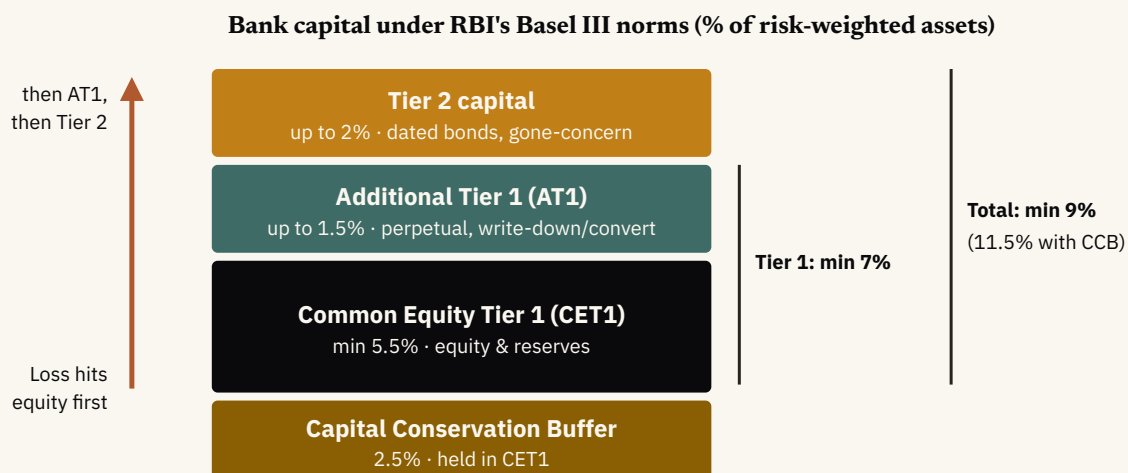
Why in news: The Supreme Court dismissed appeals by Yes Bank, the RBI and the Centre, leaving intact the Bombay HC's 2023 ruling that the 2020 write-off of AT1 bonds was illegal.

Key Details:

- **Core issue:** The final Yes Bank Reconstruction Scheme, 2020 (under Section 45, BR Act) omitted the write-down clause considered in drafting; the administrator could not add it on his own.
- **Timeline:** Moratorium on 5 March 2020; scheme notified on 13 March; AT1 bonds written to zero on 14 March, while equity holders faced only a three-year lock-in on 75% of shares.
- **Loss hierarchy:** Wiping out bondholders while shareholders survived inverted the usual order, in which equity absorbs losses first.
- **Impact:** Repaying or reinstating the bonds will weigh on Yes Bank's capital; the ruling keeps AT1's loss-absorbing nature but insists on strict legal process.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Global parallel:** Swiss regulator FINMA wiped out about CHF 16 bn of Credit Suisse AT1 bonds in March 2023 while shareholders received UBS shares.
- **Investor protection:** SEBI (Oct 2020) limited AT1 allotment to QIBs with ₹1-crore minimum lots, after retail investors were mis-sold Yes Bank AT1s.
- **Rule of law:** Emergency resolution powers must follow the scheme's text — predictability that keeps bank-capital markets credible.



Schematic, not to scale. Yes Bank 2020: AT1 wiped out while equity survived — the order the courts questioned.

AT1 Bonds and Basel III

- **Basel III:** Framed by the BCBS in 2010 after the 2008 crisis to raise the quality and quantity of bank capital; the RBI phased it in from April 2013.
- **What AT1 bonds are:** Perpetual bonds with no maturity date and discretionary, non-cumulative coupons, counted in Tier 1 capital alongside CET1.
- **Loss absorption:** They are written down or converted into equity when capital falls below a trigger or the RBI declares the PONV.
- **Risk and return:** Because of this risk they pay higher interest than ordinary bonds.
- **Minimums in India:** CET1 5.5%, Tier 1 7%, total capital 9%, plus a 2.5% CCB in CET1.
- **Not to confuse:** AT1 bonds (perpetual, going-concern loss absorption) vs Tier 2 bonds (dated, minimum 5-year maturity, absorb losses only when the bank fails).

Prelims angle: The BCBS is hosted by the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, Switzerland; India, through the RBI, has been a member since 2009.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (banking, financial stability, investor protection) answers on bank resolution and the rule of law in markets.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	AT1 bonds exist to absorb losses — but only through due process, the Yes Bank ruling says.
BODY	Legal: scheme text, <i>ultra vires</i> action; economic: capital adequacy, cost of funds; investor protection: mis-selling, SEBI curbs; stability: resolution credibility; global: Credit Suisse.
WAY FORWARD	Statutory bank-resolution law with a clear creditor hierarchy; standardised AT1 terms; investor education; early action under RBI's PCA framework.

Mains value-add: The FRDI Bill, 2017 was withdrawn in 2018 over its 'bail-in' clause — cite it to argue India still lacks a statutory bank-resolution regime with clear loss-sharing rules.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to Additional Tier 1 (AT1) bonds issued by Indian banks, consider the following statements:

1. They are perpetual instruments with no fixed maturity date.
2. Their coupons are cumulative, so any coupon skipped in a loss year must be paid later.
3. They can be written down or converted into equity when the bank reaches the point of non-viability.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: AT1 bonds are perpetual. Statement 2 is incorrect: coupons are discretionary and non-cumulative, so a skipped coupon is lost. Statement 3 is correct: write-down or conversion at the PONV or a capital trigger is their defining feature.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2015: "'Basel III Accord' or simply 'Basel III', often seen in the news, seeks to" — Answer: (b) improve banking sector's ability to deal with financial and economic stress and improve risk management.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** AT1: Additional Tier 1 | RBI: Reserve Bank of India | HC: High Court | BR Act: Banking Regulation Act, 1949 | FINMA: Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority | SEBI: Securities and Exchange Board of India | QIB: Qualified Institutional Buyer | BCBS: Basel Committee on Banking Supervision | CET1: Common Equity Tier 1 | PONV: Point of Non-Viability | CCB: Capital Conservation Buffer | FRDI: Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance | PCA: Prompt Corrective Action

KIIFB Review: The End of Off-Budget Borrowing?

Why in news: An expert panel led by Sudha Pillai found 'no case' for KIIFB to keep raising funds and financing projects, warning of a 'significant detrimental impact' on Kerala's finances.

Key Details:

- **Rationale lost:** KIIFB's purpose — raising capital outside the State's borrowing space — 'has been extinguished', as its borrowing now counts as the State's own.
- **The Centre's rule:** Since March 2022, borrowings by State entities that are serviced from the State budget count against the State's net borrowing ceiling under Art 293(3).
- **Audit call:** The panel sought a CAG/AG performance audit of KIIFB for 2016-17 to 2025-26; its 96-page report was tabled in the Assembly.
- **Federal dispute:** Kerala's Art 131 suit against the Centre's borrowing curbs was referred to a five-judge Constitution Bench in April 2024.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Background:** KIIFB was set up under the KIIFB Act, 1999 and remodelled in 2016 as the State's main vehicle for infrastructure finance, backed by earmarked tax revenue.
- **Masala bonds:** In 2019 KIIFB raised ₹2,150 crore through masala bonds listed on the London Stock Exchange — the first such issue by an Indian sub-sovereign entity.

- **Dimensions:** Fiscal: hidden debt weakens FRBM targets; governance: dilutes legislative scrutiny; economic: future repayments crowd out other spending.

Off-Budget Borrowing and Article 293

- **Meaning:** Loans raised by a government-owned entity, not the government, but repaid from the budget — so the debt stays outside headline deficit figures.
- **Art 293(1):** A State may borrow within India on the security of its Consolidated Fund, within limits set by its own legislature.
- **Art 293(3):** A State that owes money to the Centre needs the Centre's consent for fresh borrowing — the hook for the NBC.
- **NBC:** The annual borrowing ceiling the Centre fixes for each State, guided by Finance Commission fiscal-deficit limits.
- **Union example:** FCI's NSSF loans for food subsidy were off-budget until the Centre brought them onto the budget in 2020-21.
- **Not to confuse:** Off-budget borrowing (debt already raised) vs contingent liabilities (guarantees that become debt only if the borrower defaults).

Prelims angle: Masala bonds are rupee-denominated bonds issued abroad, so the exchange-rate risk is borne by the foreign investor, not the Indian issuer.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (government budgeting, fiscal policy) and GS2 (fiscal federalism, Art 131 disputes) answers.

Answer skeleton

INTRO Off-budget borrowing hides debt; the KIIFB review signals the end of the model.

BODY Fiscal: sustainability, transparency; legal: Art 293(3), 2022 NBC rule; federal: Art 131 suit; governance: legislative and CAG scrutiny; developmental: infrastructure gap.

WAY FORWARD Full disclosure of extra-budgetary liabilities; independent fiscal councils (as the 15th FC urged); rule-based NBC; CAG performance audit.

Mains value-add: The FRBM Review Committee (N.K. Singh, 2017) proposed a 60% general-government debt-to-GDP ceiling (40% Centre, 20% States) — cite it to argue off-budget debt defeats such anchors.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. A State government may borrow from outside India on the security of its Consolidated Fund.
 2. A State that is indebted to the Union government needs the Union's consent to raise a fresh loan.
 3. Borrowings by a State-owned entity that are serviced from the State budget are now counted against the State's net borrowing ceiling.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect: Art 293(1) allows a State to borrow only within the territory of India. Statement 2 is correct under Art 293(3). Statement 3 is correct: the Centre's March 2022 rule counts such off-budget borrowings against the NBC.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** KIIFB: Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board | CAG: Comptroller and Auditor General | AG: Accountant General | NBC: Net Borrowing Ceiling | FRBM: Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management | FCI: Food Corporation of India | NSSF: National Small Savings Fund | FC: Finance Commission | GDP: Gross Domestic Product

WINDS: India's Hyper-Local Weather Network Runs a Year Late

Why in news: Over 96% of the automatic rain gauges and weather stations planned under the Agriculture Ministry's WINDS project are yet to be installed, a year past the deadline.

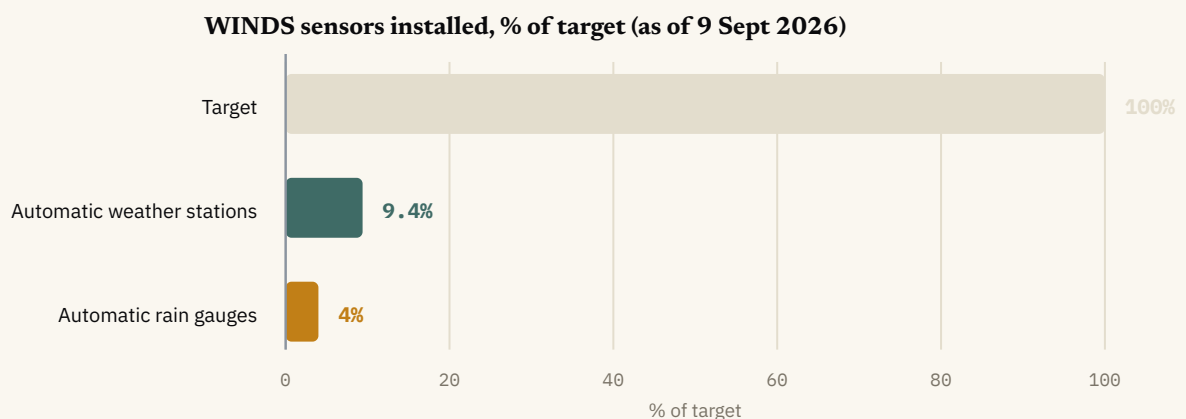
Key Details:

- **Aim:** A dense network of AWSs and ARGs down to gram-panchayat level to supply hyper-local weather data for PMFBY claims and farm advisories.

- **Status:** Of about 50,500 sensors (1,197 AWSs, 49,313 ARGs), only 113 AWSs (9.4%) and 1,730 ARGs (4%) were up by 9 Sept 2026.
- **Bottleneck:** Site selection, not hardware: UP rejected 16,478 of 27,644 sites, Odisha 5,666 of 7,720 and Keralam 524 of 946.
- **The dispute:** Firms blame a Dec 2025 amendment capping rooftop ARGs at 10% (15% in flood- or landslide-prone areas); the IMD says WMO norms need ground siting for comparable data.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Model:** A PPP: States contract private firms to install sensors; the Ministry runs it through the MNCFC, with the IMD as technical partner.
- **Why it matters:** Parametric triggers and technology-based yield estimates need dense, accurate data; gaps delay claims and invite disputes.
- **Governance lesson:** Changing siting rules after six States had issued tenders created regulatory uncertainty — a cautionary tale for PPPs.



PMFBY and Its Technology Stack

- **Launch:** PMFBY (2016) replaced NAIS and the modified NAIS; enrolment has been voluntary for all farmers since 2020.
- **Farmer premium:** 2% of the sum insured for kharif, 1.5% for rabi and 5% for commercial/horticultural crops; Centre and States share the rest (90:10 in the NE).
- **Risks covered:** Prevented sowing, standing-crop loss, post-harvest losses from cyclones and unseasonal rain, and localised calamities.
- **Tech tools:** WINDS (2023) for weather data; YES-TECH for technology-based yield estimation at gram-panchayat level.
- **RWBCIS:** Its weather-index sibling: payouts are triggered by deviations in rainfall or temperature rather than crop-cutting experiments.
- **Not to confuse:** WINDS (Agriculture Ministry, insurance data) vs the IMD's own observatory network under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Prelims angle: The Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre runs the FASAL programme, using satellite remote sensing to forecast crop output before harvest.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (crop insurance, e-technology for farmers, disaster risk) answers on data-driven farm risk management.

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Hyper-local weather data is the backbone of crop insurance; WINDS is 96% short of target.
BODY	Agricultural: PMFBY claims, advisories; technological: AWS/ARG, YES-TECH; governance: PPP, retrospective rules; land: site availability; climate: rising extremes.
WAY FORWARD	Panchayat land banks for sensors; stable rules; IMD–State data integration; third-party data audits.

Mains value-add: Priority 1 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–30) is 'understanding disaster risk' — cite it to argue dense observation networks come first in farm risk management.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ MODERATE

Q. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), consider the following statements:

1. Enrolment under the scheme is compulsory for all loanee farmers.
2. Weather data from the WINDS network is meant to support claim assessment under crop insurance.
3. The farmer's premium for rabi food and oilseed crops is 1.5% of the sum insured.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect: PMFBY was made voluntary for all farmers, including loanees, in 2020. Statement 2 is correct: WINDS supplies hyper-local data for insurance estimates. Statement 3 is correct: the rabi premium is 1.5% (kharif 2%, commercial/horticultural 5%).

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2016: "With reference to 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana', consider the following statements: 1. Under this scheme, farmers will have to pay a uniform premium of two per cent for any crop they cultivate in any season of the year. 2. This scheme covers post-harvest losses arising out of cyclones and unseasonal rains. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?" — Answer: (b) 2 only.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** WINDS: Weather Information Network and Data System | AWS: Automatic Weather Station | ARG: Automatic Rain Gauge | PMFBY: Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana | UP: Uttar Pradesh | IMD: India Meteorological Department | WMO: World Meteorological Organization | PPP: Public-Private Partnership | MNCFC: Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre | NAIS: National Agricultural Insurance Scheme | NE: North-Eastern States | YES-TECH: Yield Estimation System based on Technology | RWBCIS: Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme | FASAL: Forecasting Agricultural output using Space, Agro-meteorology and Land based observations

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 3

Exports surge: Merchandise exports rose 23.04% in Sept 2026 to \$44.4 bn; the trade deficit narrowed to \$30.21 bn as gold imports fell 81.27%. Petroleum-product exports jumped 70.44% on high crude prices; H1 exports were \$259.89 bn (+18.51%).

How to use: *GS3 external sector: show how commodity prices inflate export values (value vs volume effect).*

Oil-import concentration: In Aug 2026, Russia (44.3%), the UAE (17.4%) and the U.S. (5.1%) together supplied over two-thirds of India's oil imports, a record; U.S. oil cost \$810.6/tonne against a \$640 average.

How to use: *GS3 energy security: the trade-off between diversification and price; link to U.S. sanctions pressure on buyers of Russian energy.*

Jobs data: The PLFS monthly bulletin put unemployment (age 15+) at 5% in Sept 2026; urban 6.9% (6.8% in Aug), rural 4.2% (4.1%).

How to use: *GS3 employment: urban joblessness persistently exceeds rural; monthly PLFS data allow high-frequency tracking.*

River ferries: A country-boat capsized in the Ganga at Raghapur (Vaishali) took Bihar's 2026 toll to 30; NCRB data show 421 boat-capsize deaths in Bihar in 2012-21, 12.2% of India's total.

How to use: *GS3 disaster management: riverine areas without all-weather roads (Kosi belt) depend on overloaded, unregulated boats.*

Conservation funding gap: Wildlife biologist Qamar Qureshi says India spends about ₹3,500 crore a year on conservation against a need of ₹9,500–10,000 crore; protected areas cover about 5% of land, averaging ~200 sq km.

How to use: *GS3 biodiversity: argue for landscape-level conservation beyond small, fenced protected areas.*

GS PAPER 4: ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE**Sonagachi's Durga Puja: Dignity Against Stigma**

Why in news: DMSC, a collective of sex workers, inaugurated its 14th Durga Puja in Kolkata's Sonagachi despite continued local opposition.

Story so far: The 11 Oct Brief covered Kumartuli's idol-makers and Durga Puja's UNESCO ICH status. New today: Sonagachi's sex workers assert their own place in the festival.

Key Details:

- **Why their own puja:** Sex workers felt unwelcome at other pujas; DMSC needed a High Court order for space, and locals still object.
- **The paradox:** Kumartuli's artisans traditionally collect clay from sex workers' courtyards for idols, yet the women are often unwelcome where those idols are worshipped.
- **Shifting attitudes:** MLAs, Ministers, students and residents now attend — contact and participation are eroding stigma.
- **GS4 concept:** A textbook case of attitude change through social influence and of 'tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections', a foundational civil-service value.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **DMSC:** Formed in 1995 out of the Sonagachi HIV-intervention project (1992); tens of thousands of members work on health, anti-trafficking and children's schooling.
- **Law:** *Budhadev Karmaskar* (2011) affirmed sex workers' right to dignity under Art 21; 2022 directions asked police to act without abuse and media to protect identities.
- **Ethical lens:** Stigma denies equal moral worth; this inclusion is rights-based and community-led, not charity.

Human Dignity in the Indian Constitution

- **Francis Coralie Mullin (1981):** Held that the right to life includes the right to live with human dignity.
- **Puttaswamy (2017):** Placed dignity at the core of the right to privacy and personal autonomy.
- **Art 51A(e):** Fundamental duty to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS4 (attitude, social influence and persuasion, compassion towards weaker sections) and GS1 (marginalised groups, social empowerment).

Answer skeleton

INTRO	Stigma is an attitude; Sonagachi's puja shows it can shift through assertion and contact.
BODY	Attitude: cognitive, affective, behavioural parts of stigma; social influence: visible participation of leaders; values: tolerance, compassion, impartiality; legal: Art 21 dignity.
CONCLUSION	Public servants must model non-judgmental service, guided by Gandhi's talisman of the poorest and weakest.

Mains value-add: Kant's 'humanity formula' — treat every person always as an end, never merely as a means — cite it to argue respect is owed to a sex worker's personhood, not conditioned on her work.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Social stigma often outlives legal protection. With reference to sex workers' community-led Durga Puja in Kolkata, examine how social influence and persuasion can change attitudes towards marginalised groups. (150 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2016, GS4: "How could social influence and persuasion contribute to the success of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan?" (150 words, 10 marks)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** DMSC: Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee | ICH: Intangible Cultural Heritage | UNESCO: UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization | HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus | MLA: Member of Legislative Assembly