

# FORTUNE Prelims Precise Compilation Volume I

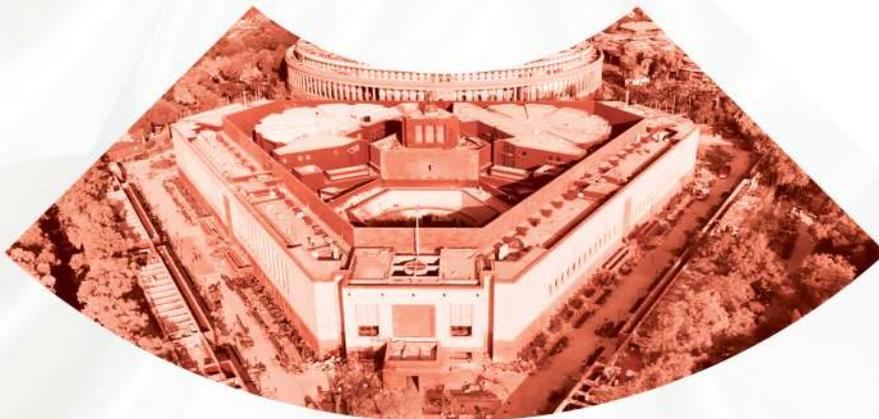


## **POLITY & GOVERNANCE**

January 2025 - December 2025



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# FORTUNE IAS

## Toppers in Top 100



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## Doctrine of pith and substance

- The Supreme Court recently invoked the **Doctrine of Pith and Substance** in a case relating to service tax on lottery distributors.
- SC held that the **Centre cannot impose service tax** on the distributors engaged in lottery business, as only the state governments have the power to do so.
- The Supreme Court ruled that **lotteries are a form of gambling, not a service**, and therefore, the relationship between states and lottery distributors is that of a **buyer and seller**, not a principal-agent, making service tax inapplicable.
- It emphasized that the power to tax betting and gambling, including lotteries, lies exclusively with **state legislatures under Entry 62 of List II**.
- This prevents Parliament from imposing service tax through its **residuary powers under Entry 97 of List I**.

The Doctrine of Pith and Substance originated in **Canada** and was later adopted in India through the **Government of India Act, 1935**.

It helps courts determine the **true purpose of a law**, even if it overlaps with another jurisdiction.

It applies when a law's legislative authority is in **question due to jurisdictional ambiguities**.

While minor overlaps are permitted, the doctrine ensures that the law's core objective remains within the enacting legislature's domain.

## Rarest of Rare Doctrine

- The Kolkata R.G. Kar Medical College and Sharon murder (Kerala) cases reignited debates on the '**rarest of rare**' doctrine in India.
- The death penalty is given in India for "**rarest of rare**" cases, including **terror** cases, as per the Supreme Court's guidelines.

- The Supreme Court upheld the death penalty's constitutionality in **Jagmohan Singh vs. State of U.P. (1972)**.
- SC said that the death penalty imposed after trial in accordance with the procedure established by law is not unconstitutional under Article 21.
- The **rarest of rare doctrine** was introduced in the **Bachan Singh case (1980)** and later provided a framework in **Machhi Singh vs. State of Punjab (1983)**.
- The court identified **five categories of crimes** where such a punishment is justified.
  - ☞ Brutal manner, depraved motive, social abhorrence, crime magnitude, and victim vulnerability.
- In **Mithu vs. State of Punjab (1983)**, the SC struck down Section 303 of the IPC, which prescribed **mandatory death penalty** for anyone who commits murder while serving a life sentence.
- The court ruled that it was against Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

## Article 371 & Rat Hole Mining in Meghalaya

- Demands from Meghalaya indicated that **bringing the State under the purview of Article 371** could help resume rat-hole coal mining in the state.
- Article 371 of the Indian Constitution provides **special provisions for certain states** based on their unique social, cultural, economic, and political conditions and Meghalaya is not covered as of now.
- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** banned rat-hole mining in Meghalaya in 2014 which was also upheld by the Supreme Court, was extended to other areas of the northeast.
- The demand for special provisions in Meghalaya comes from the **example of Nagaland**
  - ★ Specific to Nagaland, **Article 371A has special provisions** guaranteeing the protection of land and its resources apart from the Naga customary law and procedure.

- This makes it **difficult for the government to effectively regulate** small-scale mining operations like rat-hole mining, especially when conducted by individual landowners on their land.
- Coupled with the scattered nature of coal deposits in the state, further encourages the practice despite its hazardous nature

## Doctrine of eminent domain

- The Supreme Court ruled that **transferring land** acquired by the government for **public purposes back to the original owner** through **private agreements** constitutes a **fraud** on the state's power of eminent domain.
- The **doctrine of eminent domain** is a legal principle that grants governments the authority to acquire private property without the owner's consent for public use, provided that just compensation is offered.
- In India, this power is governed by **Article 300A** of the Constitution, which states that no person shall be deprived of their property except by the authority of law.
- Additionally, **Article 31A** protects laws related to property acquisition from being invalidated on the grounds of violating fundamental rights.
- The **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013** has created a due process for operationalising this doctrine.

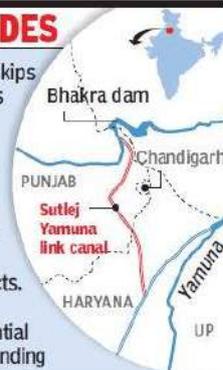
## Doctrine of Prospective Overruling

- The Supreme Court recently clarified on the correct application of the **doctrine of prospective overruling in judicial verdicts**.
- The doctrine of prospective overruling is a **principle that allows a court to overturn a previous legal interpretation** but declare that the new ruling will apply only to future cases and not to past actions or pending litigation
- However, the Supreme Court now says that when a **new judgment overrules** an old one, it is **by default retrospective** — meaning it applies to past and pending cases **unless** the Court **explicitly states** that it is to apply **prospectively only**.

- The Court noted that when an earlier precedent is overruled, it does not amount to laying down a new law, rather, the Court is **merely interpreting the law correctly or refining the existing law to better reflect the true intent and objective** envisioned by the legislature.
- In India, the doctrine was first applied in the landmark case of **Golak Nath v. State of Punjab (1967)**.
- The Supreme Court draws its authority to invoke this doctrine from **Article 142** of the Constitution, which empowers the Court to pass any order required to ensure complete justice in a case before it.

## Punjab-Haryana Water Dispute

**DRAGGING ON FOR DECADES**



- ▶ **1966** | Reorganisation of Punjab; it is decided that Haryana will get share of Sutlej water
- ▶ **1977** | Land acquisition starts for 214km Sutlej Yamuna link - 122km of it in Punjab and 92km in Haryana
- ▶ **1980** | Haryana completes its portion. Punjab skips deadlines, moves SC repeatedly
- ▶ **2004** | SC orders Punjab to complete canal. State gov't passes Act terminating water-sharing pacts. Matter referred to SC for presidential reference. Still pending

- The Supreme Court has come down heavily on Punjab state for its failure to follow its directions to complete the **Sutlej Yamuna link canal** to share waters with Haryana.
- Waters of **Sutlej, Ravi and Beas** are allocated to India under the Indus Waters Treaty.
- However, once the states of Punjab and Haryana were created the water sharing became a problem with a **water deficient Haryana** seeking more water for its irrigation.
- Based on a 1976 central government decision to allocate waters from Sutlej to Haryana from Punjab via a **Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal**.
- This would carry waters of Ravi and Beas via Sutlej to Yamuna, helping Haryana.
- In 1981 the states of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan signed an agreement to implement this but the increasing need for water for irrigating the growing agricultural lands of Punjab forced Punjab to delay and even pass a law in **Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004** to rescind the 1981 water-sharing agreement.

- However, SC in 2002 and even after a **presidential reference in 2016** had maintained that **Punjab has to follow through with the agreement** and construct its share of the SYL canal.
- SC has now told Punjab that if there is no resolution to the dispute then it will be taken up again in August this year.
- If the Prime Minister or a Chief Minister is in custody, they must resign by the 31st day, failing which they are **automatically removed**.
- However, the Bill allows reappointment of such individuals once released from custody.

## Total Revolution

- The 51st anniversary of **Jayaprakash Narayan's "Total Revolution"** was observed, marking its lasting impact on Indian politics.
- On **June 5, 1974**, JP launched the movement from **Gandhi Maidan, Patna**, against the then **Congress regime's corruption, price rise, and misgovernance**, eventually demanding **Indira Gandhi's resignation**.
- This led to the imposition of the **Emergency on June 25, 1975** by the Indira Gandhi government under Article 352 citing internal disturbance.
- JP's **"Total Revolution" (Sampoorna Kranti)** called for deep, moral and non-violent transformation at both personal and societal levels.
- It emphasized **decentralisation of power** and included seven adaptable components: **social, economic, political, cultural, ideological, intellectual, educational, and spiritual**.

## 130th Constitution (Amendment) Bill

- The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, was introduced in the Lok Sabha and later referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee.
- The bill seeks to amend **Articles 75, 164, and 239AA** to mandate removal of the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, or any Union/State/UT Minister if they face arrest in a serious criminal case.
- A **Minister will cease to hold** office if charged with an offence punishable by **at least five years' imprisonment and detained for 30 consecutive days**.
- At the Union level, the President will remove such a Minister on the advice of the Prime Minister; at the State level, the Governor will act on the Chief Minister's advice; and for Delhi, the President will act on the advice of its Chief Minister.

## Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC):

- A Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) is a **temporary** body set up by Parliament for detailed **scrutiny** of a subject or Bill, with members from both Houses, ruling and opposition
- A JPC is set up after **one House of Parliament has passed a motion** and the other has agreed to it.
- Members of the JPC are decided by the Parliament & the number of members can vary.
- The JPC dissolves once its task is complete, and while its recommendations carry weight, they are **not binding** on the government

## Constitution 131st Amendment Bill

- The Central Government withdrew the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill 2025 that sought to bring UT of **Chandigarh** under **Article 240 of the Constitution**.
- Chandigarh is a **Union Territory** with Legislature and the **joint capital of Punjab and Haryana** (since Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966).
- The **Governor of Punjab** currently holds additional charge as the **Administrator** of Chandigarh.
- The Article 240 of Indian Constitution **empowers the President** to make regulations for "peace, progress and good government" of specified UTs.
- This **includes** Union territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Lakshadweep; Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu; and Puducherry when its Legislative Assembly is dissolved or suspended.
- Such regulations have the **same force as an Act of Parliament** and can repeal/amend existing laws.

- Including Chandigarh would enable **appointment of a separate full-time Administrator/Lieutenant Governor** (like Delhi, Puducherry, J&K, etc.).
- Historically, Chandigarh was created as a joint capital after Haryana was carved out of Punjab in 1966.
- **Rajiv-Longowal Accord (1985):** Promised transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab in lieu of Hindi-speaking areas in Punjab to Haryana (remained unfulfilled).

## SC on Presidential Reference

- A five-judge Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court gave its opinions to the **16th Presidential Reference** under **Article 143**.
- It held that courts **cannot impose fixed timelines** on the President or Governors for disposing of State Bills, **nor assume “deemed assent”** after a court-set deadline.
- On **April 8, 2025**, a 2-member Supreme Court bench in the **State of Tamil Nadu vs Governor of Tamil Nadu** ruled the Governor’s delay on 10 state bills unconstitutional, declaring them deemed assented and giving future 3-month timelines.
- This led to a **Presidential Reference** questioning the court’s power to impose such timelines through 14 questions to the Court on May 15, 2025.

### Key points:

- **Governor’s powers (Art. 200):** SC opined that a Governor cannot keep a Bill pending indefinitely; if assent is withheld, it **must be returned** to the State Legislature.
- **Discretion:** Governors have **discretion in assenting** to Bills and are **not bound by Cabinet** advice under Article 200, since binding advice would make it impossible for a Governor to return a Bill for reconsideration.
- **After reconsideration,** the Governor must either grant assent or reserve the Bill for the President.
- **Deemed Assent:** SC opined that ‘deemed assent’ is unconstitutional, as the Constitution does not provide for automatic approval of Bills

## Judicial review:

- While the Governor has **immunity under Article 361**, Courts can review **prolonged and unexplained inaction** by a Governor.
- **Decisions** of the President under Article 201 and of the Governor on assent are **not justiciable**, but their inaction is.
- Courts cannot review **Bills**, only enacted laws.
- **Timelines:** No “one-size-fits-all” deadlines; Article 200’s “**as soon as possible**” cannot be judicially fixed.
- **Article 143:** The President need not seek SC’s opinion every time a Bill is reserved.
- **Opinion overruling the Judgment:** The advisory opinion can “overrule, if necessary”, according to an earlier Presidential Reference in **Special Courts Bill (1978)**.

## Assam Accord

- The **Supreme Court** has sought the Centre’s response on whether a recent government order allowing **persecuted religious minorities** from **Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh** safe passage to India violates the **Assam Accord, 1985**.
- The **Immigration and Foreigners (Exemption) Order, 2025** issued under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) permits such minorities who entered India **before December 31, 2014** to be eligible for citizenship.
- The **Assam Accord (1985)**, signed to end the Assam agitation against illegal migration, was implemented through **Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955**, which classified migrants from Bangladesh into three categories:
  - Those who entered **before 1966** (regularised as citizens),
  - **1966–25 March 1971** (disenfranchised and regularised after 10 years)
  - **After 25 March 1971** (to be detected and expelled).
- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** is the nodal agency, and Assam set up a dedicated department in **1986** to implement the Accord.

### US President Inaugurated

- Donald Trump took oath as the **47th president of the United States** winning both electoral and popular votes.
- The US has a unique electoral system where **elections happen in November**, but the **new President takes office in January** as per the constitution.
- The **U.S President and Vice President are elected together** on a joint ticket.
- Voters cast a single vote (popular vote) for a presidential candidate, who runs with a chosen vice-presidential candidate.
- The **Electoral College** then formally elects both based on the outcome of the popular vote in each state
- A candidate can win the popular vote but lose the electoral vote, as happened in 2016.
- Interestingly, the **President in India is also elected by members of an electoral college** consisting of elected members of both Houses of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies of the states
- The Indian president is elected through a system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote unlike in the US.

- Further renewals are **allowed up to three years** under specific conditions, such as a declared **National Emergency** in the country or that particular state or **Election Commission certification** of election difficulties.
- During **President's Rule**, the state legislature is **dissolved or suspended**, with its powers exercised by **Parliament**.
- The **Governor administers** the state and receives advice from the Chief Secretary and advisors appointed by the President,

### SC Ruling on Governor's Assent to Bills

- A Division Bench of the Supreme Court in **State of Tamil Nadu v The Governor of Tamil Nadu**, ruled that Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi's act of withholding 10 state bills without action was **illegal and erroneous**.
- SC used its **special powers under Article 142** while setting certain timelines while clarifying key aspects of **Article 200** of the Constitution (powers of the Governor regarding assent to bills passed by the State Legislature):
  - **No Pocket Veto:** The Governor **cannot indefinitely withhold** assent without returning the bill. A bill lapses only if the legislature chooses not to act.
  - **No Reservation After Reconsideration:** If a bill is returned, and the legislature **re-passes it without new provisions**, the Governor **cannot reserve** it for the President. Only if new, **unrecommended amendments** are introduced can it be reserved.
  - **Judicial Review Allowed:** The Court held that the Governor's decision to reserve a bill **can be judicially reviewed**, overturning the 2019 **B.K. Pavitra** view.
  - **Timelines for Assent:** Drawing from the **Keisham Meghachandra Singh** case, the Court said **delays by the Governor are subject to review**, and reasons must be provided.
  - **President's Decision Timeline:** Though **Article 201** (deals with bills reserved by the Governor for the President's consideration) lacks a timeline, the Court directed that the **President must act within 3 months** on reserved bills. Otherwise, the state can seek a **writ of mandamus**.

### President's Rule in Manipur

- Following **Manipur** Chief Minister N Biren Singh's resignation, President's Rule was imposed under **Article 356** of the Constitution.
- This transfers state governance to the Centre, except for High Court functions.
- The process begins when the **President**, based on the Governor's report (not mandatory), determines that the state government cannot function per the Constitution.
- A **proclamation** is issued for up to **two months** and must be meanwhile approved by both Houses of Parliament to extend up to six months.

Action	Timeline
If the Governor withholds assent or reserve the Bill for the President, on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers,	Sent back to legislature in one month
Governor withholds assent contrary to the advice of the Council of Minister	Sent back to legislature in three months
Governor reserves the Bill for the President contrary to advice	Reserve bill within three months
If the legislature re-passes and re-presents the Bill	Assent within one month

There has been only one instance of this: M. Hidayatullah, the then-CJI, became the acting President in 1969 after President Zakir Husain's death and Vice President V.V. Giri's resignation

## Vice president resignation

- Vice President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** resigned citing health reasons.
- Unlike the President, there's **no automatic succession** for a Vice President.
- The Vice President, who holds office for **five years**, may **resign** by writing to the President, as per Article 67(a).
- When a Vice President's office becomes vacant, the **Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha** takes on the VP's duties as the Chairperson of the Upper House (Article 65).
- **Article 67(c)** states that a VP can **continue in office even after their term expires** until a successor takes over, but this does **not apply in cases of resignation**.
- **Article 68(2)** mandates that an election to fill the vacancy must be held "as soon as possible."
- The VP is elected by an **electoral college** comprising all members of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- The election of the Vice President is conducted through a system of **proportional representation** using a **single transferable vote** by secret ballot.

↪ The members are not bound by any party whip.

The Constitution provides for the Vice President to become the Acting President in case of a presidential vacancy.

In a unique scenario where both the President and Vice President's offices are vacant, the President (Discharge of Functions) Act, 1969, comes into play. According to this Act, the Chief Justice of India would discharge the functions of the President.

## CEC Removal Process

- The Opposition is considering an impeachment motion against **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar** accusing the Election Commission of India (ECI) of large-scale "**vote theft**".
- The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India can be removed **only in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Supreme Court judge**, as laid down in **Article 324(5)** read with **Article 124(4)** of the Constitution.
- A motion for removal may be introduced in **either House of Parliament** with the support of at least 100 members of the Lok Sabha or 50 members of the Rajya Sabha.
- Once admitted, the procedure under the **Judges Inquiry Act, 1968** applies:
  - ↪ A **three-member inquiry committee** is formed consisting of a Supreme Court judge, a Chief Justice of a High Court, and a distinguished jurist (appointed by the presiding officer of the House where the motion was introduced).
- The committee investigates the charges and gives the CEC an opportunity to respond.
- If the charges are upheld, the motion must then be **passed in both Houses by special majority** (i) a majority of the total membership and (ii) a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.
- After this the **President is bound to order removal**.
- Other Election Commissioners (ECs) can be removed **only on the recommendation** of the CEC, but otherwise follow the same procedure.

## Nominations to J&K Assembly

- The Union Home Ministry informed the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) High Court that the **Lieutenant Governor (L-G) can nominate five members** to the J&K Assembly **without** the elected government's advice.
- Under the **J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019**, the L-G can nominate **2 women** if underrepresented.
- A **2023 amendment** added **3 seats** (2 for Kashmiri migrants, including a woman, and 1 for the Pakistan occupied JK community (PoJK)), raising the Assembly strength to **119** (24 seats kept vacant for PoJK).
- However, a question arose whether the nomination must be with or without UT's council of ministers advice.
- The MHA cited the **K. Lakshminarayanan (2019)** ruling (Puducherry nominations need no Council's advice), though SC rulings in the **Delhi services cases (2018, 2023)** had held L-Gs must generally follow elected governments' advice.
- In India, besides elected representatives, some members are nominated.
  - **Rajya Sabha (Art. 80):** President nominates 12 experts in literature, science, art, or social service.
  - **State Legislative Councils (Art. 171):** Governor nominates 1/6th members with expertise in similar fields, including the cooperative movement.
  - **Puducherry Assembly:** Up to 3 nominated members under the UT Act, 1963 (not government servants).
  - **Delhi Assembly:** No provision for nomination.

## AFSPA extended

### WHAT IS ARMED FORCES SPECIAL POWERS ACT?

➤ **Introduced in 1958**, AFSPA confers on members of the armed forces special powers to rein in suspects in areas declared "disturbed" on account of insurgent activities or similar threats. It has been in **force in Manipur since 1980**, and the alleged **excesses committed under it are the reasons why activist from Sharmila has been on a hunger strike since 2000.**

#### WHAT ARE SPECIAL POWERS?

AFSPA allows any commissioned officer, warrant officer and non-commissioned officer – or any other



person of equivalent rank – to:

➤ Fire upon or use force against any person acting 'in contravention of any law for the time being in force in the disturbed area'

➤ Arrest suspicious people without warrant

➤ Destroy any structure suspected to house an arms dump, shelter from which armed attacks are made or are likely to be made

➤ Conduct searches without warrants for evidence, to recover a wrongfully confined person or property or arms or explosives

➤ **AFSPA bars prosecution or proceedings – except with Centre's nod – against personnel for action committed while exercising powers under the Act**

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has extended the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** for another six months in parts of **Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland.**
- AFSPA was first issued as an ordinance in **1942 during the Quit India Movement**, and later enacted in **1958** to tackle the **Naga insurgency in Assam and Manipur.**
- It grants the armed forces **special powers and legal immunity** in areas declared "disturbed."
- The Act was **extended in 1972** to cover **Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh.**
- A **separate version was passed for Punjab and Chandigarh** in 1983, during the Khalistan movement and for **Jammu and Kashmir in 1990.**
- In **Mizoram**, AFSPA was imposed in 1966 (then a district of Assam, later a UT) to counter the Mizo National Front insurgency and was effectively lifted in 1987 after the Mizo Accord ended the insurgency and Mizoram attained statehood.
- AFSPA has since been **repealed** in **Punjab (1997), Tripura (2015), and Meghalaya (2018).**
- Under Section 3, the **Centre or Governor can declare an area "disturbed,"** and as per the Disturbed Areas Act (1976), such status must continue for at least three months.
- Currently, AFSPA is applicable in parts of **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland**, as well as the entire Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir.**

## Ad-Hoc judges

- To address the backlog of criminal appeals, the **Supreme Court has eased conditions for appointing retired judges as ad hoc judges** in High Courts.
- SC modified the Lok Prahari verdict of 2021 in this case as a way to tackle pendency.
- Around **sixty-two lakhs cases** were **pending** before the high courts in India as of January 25, 2025, of which more than eighteen-lakhs cases were criminal cases.
- Under **Article 224A**, retired High Court judges can be appointed as ad hoc judges.
  - 📌 The **chief justice of a high court**, with the **previous consent of the President**, may request a former judge of a high court to sit and act as a judge of the high court for that State.
  - 📌 Every person so requested is **entitled to such allowances as the President may by order determine** and have all the jurisdiction, powers, and privileges of, but shall not otherwise be deemed to be, a judge of that high court.
- The latest order allows each High Court to appoint **2-5 ad hoc judges**, not exceeding **10% of its sanctioned strength**.
- The Bench also said that **ad-hoc judges would sit in a Bench presided over by a sitting high court judge** to decide pending criminal appeals.

## Marital Rape Exception (MRE)

- A **Private Member's Bill** was introduced in the Rajya Sabha to remove the marital rape exception (MRE) in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.
- A "private member" refers to a Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of Legislative Assembly who is not a minister.
- The MRE stems from the colonial "**doctrine of coverture**," which treated husband and wife as a single legal entity.

- Exception 2 of **Section 63 of BNS** (formerly Section 375 IPC) excludes forced intercourse with a wife over 18 from the definition of rape.
- The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (Amendment) Bill, 2024 by the private member, proposes removing this exception, stating that **marriage should not be a mitigating factor in rape cases**.
- Past Law Commission reports (42nd and 84th) recommended its removal, and the **Prevention of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**, recognizes marital rape as domestic violence but not a criminal offense.
- The **Chhattisgarh High Court** had also recently ruled that a husband cannot be charged with rape or unnatural sex with wife.

## Supreme Court Stays Lokpal Order on HC Judge

- The Supreme Court is hearing a case against a **Lokpal order that took up a corruption complaint** against a High Court judge.
- **Section 14 of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**, outlines the **jurisdiction** of the Lokpal, the national ombudsman, specifying which individuals and entities are subject to its investigation.
- This **includes** the Prime Minister (with certain restrictions), Union Ministers, Members of Parliament, and group A, B, C and D union officials.
- Section 14 of the Lokpal Act allows it to probe **bodies created by Acts of Parliament**.
- Lokpal argued **High Courts fall under this**, unlike the Supreme Court, which is constitutionally created under article 124
- However, the SC, invoking **Article 32**, took suo motu cognisance, warning of the executive probing the judiciary.
- It noted all High Court judges take oath under the Constitution and thus fall outside Lokpal's ambit.
- **Section 15 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** states that **a judge cannot be charged with an offence** if the allegation is related to the exercise of her official duties.

- In **K. Veeraswamy v. Union of India (1991)**, a five-judge Constitution Bench held that **judges are public servants** under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.
- It also ruled that **no criminal complaint** can be registered against a High Court or Supreme Court judge without **prior consultation with the Chief Justice of India**.

### Supreme Court In-House Inquiry Process

- CJI Sanjiv Khanna has initiated a **three-member in-house inquiry** into a former Delhi HC judge following allegations that wads of cash were found at their residence after a fire incident.
- This internal judicial process is **separate from impeachment** under Article 124(4).
- It **begins with a complaint** received by the CJI (either directly or forwarded by the HC Chief Justice or the President).
- If found serious, the CJI may seek a **preliminary report** from the concerned HC CJ.
- If a **deeper investigation** is needed, the CJI forms a three-member committee.

This in-house committee **typically comprises two Chief Justices from other High Courts and one High Court judge**.

In cases involving a **High Court Chief Justice**, the committee may include a Supreme Court judge and two Chief Justices.

In case of a complaint against a **Supreme Court judge**, the committee would consist of three Supreme Court Judges.

### SC Ruling on Maternity Benefits in India

- The Supreme Court passed a significant ruling recently allowing **'maternity benefit'** to a Tamil Nadu-based teacher for **her third child**.
- The Supreme Court noted that the **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017**, does not bar maternity leave for women with more than two children, and **only limits the duration of leave** — 26 weeks for those with up to two children, and **12 weeks for those with more**.
- The SC said that **Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees the right to health**, and that maternity benefits and reproductive rights are an integral part of this.

### Making It Easy For Mothers

The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 amends the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 to provide the following

**26 weeks** maternity leave for the first two children

**12 weeks** maternity leave for children beyond the first two

**12 weeks** leave for mothers adopting a child below the age of three months



The Act makes it mandatory for employers in establishment with 30 women or 50 employees, whichever is less, to provide creche facilities either in office or in any place within 500-meters.

**Working mothers** will be permitted to make four visits

during working hours to the creche

**The employer** may permit a woman to work from home if it is possible to do so

**Every establishment** will have to make these benefits available from the time of appointment

### Judicial Backlog

- In August, the **Supreme Court's case filings exceeded disposals**, pushing pendency to an all-time high of 88,417 cases, as per the **National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)**.
- Of these, 69,553 are civil and 18,864 are criminal.
- The court disposed of 5,667 cases—only 80% of new filings—despite operating with its **full strength of 34 judges**.
- Earlier, the CJI had re-named the summer holidays this year as **'partial court working days'** as a measure to reduce pendency.

**National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)** is part of the **e-Courts project** by the Government of India, tracking pendency and disposal in High Courts and Subordinate Courts. It provides **public access** to case data, orders, and judgments, and is recognized as an Ease of Doing Business innovation by the Government of India.

### National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

- President Droupadi Murmu nominated Justice Vikram Nath, the second senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, as Executive Chairman of the **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)**, while Chief Justice of India Surya Kant nominated Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheshwari as Chairman of the **Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC)**.

- This was in keeping with the **established convention** that these posts are held by the second and third senior-most judges respectively.
- **NALSA** is the apex body for providing free legal services to weaker sections, organising Lok Adalats, and promoting legal awareness in India.
- Constituted under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987** to give effect to **Article 39A** of the Constitution (which mandates free legal aid to ensure equal access to justice).
- It is **headquartered at the Supreme Court** and headed by the **CJI as Patron-in-Chief**.
- The **hierarchical structure** comprises State Legal Services Authorities (headed by the Chief Justice of the High Court as Patron-in-Chief, with the senior-most High Court judge as Executive Chairman), District Legal Services Authorities (chaired by the District Judge), and Taluk-level committees.

## Special Leave Petition (SLP)

- The J&K and Ladakh High Court held that **dismissal of a Special Leave Petition (SLP)**, the High Court's order **remains as it is** and does **not become** a Supreme Court-approved order.
- A **Special Leave Petition (SLP)** is a request made to the Supreme Court under **Article 136** asking for permission to appeal against a judgment or order of any court or tribunal in India, used only in exceptional situations to prevent injustice.
- It is an **extraordinary discretionary power** only available for SC in India..
- This is different from the **regular appeals** provided under Articles **132–134** from High Court decisions.
- Article 136 is not a matter of right but a tool used sparingly to prevent **grave injustice**.
  - 👉 In **civil cases**, SLP is allowed only when there is a **substantial question of law** or an issue of **general public importance**.
  - 👉 In **criminal cases**, SLP is granted only in **special and exceptional circumstances** showing **grave injustice**.
- In the current case, the High Court noted that when the SC dismisses an SLP, it simply means the **SC chose not to examine the lower court's order**, and such dismissal cannot be treated as the Supreme Court approving the High Court's decision.

## Juvenile Justice Boards

- The India Justice Report (IJR), released by Tata Trusts in collaboration with civil society organizations highlights major gaps in the juvenile justice system.
- Under **Section 4 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015**, every district must have a **Juvenile Justice Board (JJB)**, a quasi-judicial body established to deal with children in conflict with law.
- JJB can direct reformative measures, counselling, probation, or placement in **Child Care Institutions (CCIs)**.
- For **children below 16**, the JJB always decides the outcome (rehabilitative measures, probation, or CCI placement).
- For **children aged 16–18** accused of heinous offences, the JJB first assesses whether the child can be tried as an adult:
  - 👉 If yes, the case is transferred to an adult court.
  - 👉 If not, the JJB decides the verdict and rehabilitation.
- JJB will be composed of a **Principal Magistrate** and **two social workers (at least one woman)**
- IJR findings show **one in four JJBs** operate without full benches, and **55% of cases remain pending**.
- Despite the mandate for every JJB to have an attached legal services clinic, 30% of the 437 responding boards reported having none.

## Contempt of Court

- The **Supreme Court** observed that the power to punish for criminal contempt is **not a “personal armour” for judges** to stifle legitimate criticism
- In India, ‘contempt of court’ is a **reasonable restriction on freedom of speech** under Article 19(2), but the Constitution provides no guidelines for initiation.
- The **Supreme Court (Article 129) and High Courts (Article 215)** are courts of record, inherently empowered to punish for contempt.
- This power is codified in the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, which classifies contempt as:

- ➔ **Civil Contempt** (Section 2(b)): Wilful disobedience to any court judgment, order, writ, or undertaking given to the court.
- ➔ **Criminal Contempt** (Section 2(c)): Publication or act that (i) scandalises or lowers the authority of the court; (ii) prejudices or interferes with ongoing judicial proceedings; or (iii) obstructs the administration of justice.
- Proceedings can be **initiated suo motu** by the Supreme Court/High Courts or on a **petition with prior consent of the Attorney General** (for SC) or **Advocate General** (for HC).

## Narco Test

- The Supreme Court in *Amlash Kumar v. State of Bihar* (2025) held that any **forced or involuntary narco test is unconstitutional**, reiterating the guidelines laid down in *Selvi v. State of Karnataka* (2010).
- A **narco test** involves **administering drugs** like Sodium Pentothal to lower inhibitions and

extract information, and is often grouped with polygraph and brain-mapping tests.

- In *Selvi v. State of Karnataka*, the Court ruled that compulsory narco-analysis, polygraph and BEAP tests **violate Article 20(3)** (protection against self-incrimination), as narco-analysis amounts to compelled testimonial evidence.

**Note: A polygraph test** measures various physiological responses (respiration, blood pressure, blood flow etc.) during questioning, and makes determinations about the truth or falsity of the subject's statements, based on the changes in those responses.

**The Brain Electrical Activation Profile (BEAP) test** measures responses within the brain, in order to ascertain whether or not the subject has recognised the stimuli to which she has been exposed.

- Out of these three tests, only narco-analysis involves "testimony" in the classic sense: communicating information through words, written or spoken. One of the central issues in the case, therefore, was whether recording physical stimuli amounted to compelling a person to be a "witness against himself".

## PARLIAMENT, LEGISLATIVE PROCESS & COMMITTEES

### The Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0

- The Central government is set to **decriminalise** over 100 outdated legal provisions under Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 to **boost Ease of Doing Business**.
- This **follows the 2023 Jan Vishwas Act**, which replaced 183 criminal provisions with civil penalties across 19 Ministries.
- The move **aims to ease business operations**, cut judicial backlogs, and attract more investment.
- The **Joint Parliamentary Committee** had recommended extending the exercise to further acts and the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** has been tasked with it.

Recently, **Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy**, an independent think-tank, mapped **882 central laws**, revealing 370 laws with criminal provisions covering 7,305 offences.

Of these, **5,333 attract jail terms**, 982 have

mandatory minimum sentences, 433 allow life imprisonment, and 301 carry the death penalty.

Notably, **only 25% fall under criminal justice laws**; the rest cover everyday matters like child care and public gatherings.

### Dramatic Performances Act of 1876

- The Prime Minister highlighted the **need to eliminate outdated laws** curbing individual freedoms, such as the Dramatic Performances Act (DPA) of 1876.
- Enacted by the British to **suppress nationalist sentiment** after the 1875 visit of Prince Albert Edward, the DPA allowed **authorities to ban plays deemed scandalous or seditious** and permitted warrantless searches with penalty.
- Though the **Allahabad High Court** ruled the DPA unconstitutional in 1956, it remained on the books in some states.
- It was **formally repealed in 2018** as part of efforts to scrap obsolete laws.

**Article 372 of the Constitution** states that laws in operation at the time of Independence would continue to be in operation.

However, colonial laws do not enjoy the **presumption of constitutionality** – which means that when a colonial law is challenged, the government must defend the law for it to be valid.

## Business Advisory Committee

- Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar recently left a Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting due to **alleged lack of decorum by the Opposition**.
- The BAC's role is to **recommend time allocation for government legislation and private members' bills/resolutions**.
- **Members** are nominated proportional to their representation in the houses.
- First formed on July 14, 1952, the **Rajya Sabha's BAC has 11 members**, including the Chairman (who presides, or the Deputy Chairman if the Chairman is absent), with a quorum of five.
- In contrast, the **Lok Sabha's BAC has 15 members**, chaired by the Speaker (ex-officio), with members nominated annually.
- The LS Speaker **also invites unrepresented Opposition party leaders** (with five or more members) as special invitees.

## Official Secrets Act, 1923

- A travel blogger from Haryana, has been charged under **Sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act** for allegedly passing sensitive information to Pakistani intelligence operatives during 'Operation Sindoor'.
- **The Official Secrets Act of 1923** is a colonial-era legislation enacted in India to counter espionage and **safeguard sensitive information** related to national security.

- The Act criminalises **spying, unauthorised sharing** of confidential government information, and the **withholding of sensitive data** that could potentially threaten the safety or interests of the state.
- It applies to **all Indian citizens**, including government servants, both within and outside the country.
- **Section 3:** It targets **acts of espionage or activities prejudicial to the safety** or interests of the state.
  - It **criminalises actions such as approaching, inspecting, or entering** prohibited places (like, military bases, arsenals) for purposes harmful to the state.
  - It also includes **making sketches, plans, models, or notes** that could, directly or indirectly, be useful to an enemy.
- **Section 5:** deals with the “**wrongful communication**” or handling of official secrets by individuals who possess or **control such information due to their official position** or relationship with the government.

## Estimates Committee of Lok Sabha

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla inaugurated the **75th Anniversary of the Estimates Committee** in Mumbai.
- Formed in **1950**, the Estimates Committee is **exclusive to the Lok Sabha** and consists of **30 members**, elected **annually** by proportional representation using the **single transferable vote**.
- The **Speaker appoints the Chairperson**.
- **Ministers cannot be members**, and if a member is appointed as a minister, they **cease to be on the committee**.
- The **term is one year**, and members **can be re-elected**.
- The committee suggests **economies, administrative reforms, and alternative policies** to improve efficiency, ensures money is spent as per policy, and recommends the format of estimates.
- It **does not examine Public Sector Undertakings**, which are handled by a separate committee.

## Income Tax Bill 2025 to access digital space

- The recently tabled Income Tax Bill 2025 in parliament allows **tax authorities to access “virtual digital space”** and override passwords on platforms like social media, email, and encrypted platforms like WhatsApp.
- This provision is criticised for directly contradicting **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India Supreme Court judgment (2017)**, which upheld the right to privacy as a fundamental right and the proportionality test (see below) to validate state action.
- **Search and Seizure:** The bill expands the powers under Section 132 of the Income-Tax Act, 1961, which was previously limited to physical spaces to now include digital space.
- **Anonymous Donations:** The bill proposes a 30% tax on anonymous donations for all Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) except for those that are exclusively religious.

The **proportionality test** is used to determine whether a state action that infringes upon a fundamental right, such as the right to privacy, is constitutionally valid.

For a state action to be considered valid, it must satisfy four conditions:

- **Legality:** The action must be sanctioned by a law. It cannot be based on arbitrary executive fiat.
- **Legitimate Aim:** The action must have a legitimate aim, such as national security, public safety, or preventing crime.
- **Suitability:** The action must be a suitable or rational way to achieve that legitimate aim.
- **Necessity:** The action must be the least restrictive means available to achieve the legitimate aim. There should not be a less intrusive alternative.

## Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA)

- The Haryana government recently invoked the **Haryana Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA)** prohibiting strikes by government doctors for six months.
- The **Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA)** is an Act of Parliament enacted to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of essential services whose disruption would affect public welfare and normal life.
- It **covers services** such as public transport, health (doctors and hospitals), water supply, electricity, postal and telecommunication services, and banking, and **empowers the government to declare any service “essential”** if strikes are likely to cause grave hardship or threaten public safety.
- Constitutionally, ESMA falls under **Entry 33 of the Concurrent List**, allowing both the Centre and States to legislate; while the **Central ESMA, 1968** provides a uniform framework, most States have their own versions with minor variations.
- The **Act authorises the Centre or States to prohibit strikes** in notified essential services for up to six months (extendable), declares such strikes illegal, and overrides the **Industrial Disputes Act, 1947** in case of conflict.
- **Violations** can attract imprisonment up to one year and/or fine, with provisions for arrest without warrant.

## Election Rules – Form 17C

- The Supreme Court (SC) has sought responses from the Union government and Election Commission of India (ECI) on a petition challenging government amendments to Election Rules.
- Rule 93 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961** allowed public inspection of all election papers, including **CCTV footage and Form 17C** (booth level vote details).
- But recent amendments limit public access only to those “specified” excluding electronic records.
- Form 17C**, part of the Election Rules, records votes:
  - ➔ **Part 1** (poll day vote total) is filled by the **Presiding Officer** and given to polling agents.
  - ➔ **Part 2** (candidate-wise vote count) is completed by the **Returning Officer** after pressing ‘Result’ on the EVM.
- Petitioners allege that the amendment **violates the fundamental rights** under Article 19 and 21.

## D-Voter

- The plight of **D-voters or Doubtful voters**, a concept **unique to Assam**, has been in news.
- Assam, which shares a **263 km border with Bangladesh**, has witnessed decades of migration leading to nationalist insurgency.
- In **1985**, as per the **Assam accord** with protesting groups, the Indian government declared that anyone entering Assam without valid documents after **24 March 1971** would be considered a foreigner.
- In **1997**, the **Election Commission** marked people as “D” (Doubtful) voters after its officers found their citizenship **questionable**.
- Cases with “**reasonable doubt**” were referred to **Foreigners Tribunals**, where individuals had to prove citizenship with documents.
- The state still has around **97,000 people as D-voters**. With some even in detention camps.

## Caste Census

- The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA)** chaired by the Prime Minister has decided to include **caste enumeration in the upcoming census**.
- As per **Article 246 of the Constitution**, Census is a **union subject listed at 69** in the Union List in the Seventh Schedule.
- The Census was conducted by the central government under the **Census Act, 1948** and the last one was held in 2011.
- Every Census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes**.
  - ➔ During the **British period, starting from the 1881 census**, comprehensive caste data was collected for administrative purposes.
- In 2011, a separate **Socio-Economic Caste census** was conducted, but the details was not released fully citing data quality issues
- In the absence of such a Census, there is no proper estimate for the population of Other Backward Classes (OBCs), various groups within the OBCs, and others.
  - ➔ **The Mandal Commission** estimated the OBC population at 52% largely based on the 1931 census data.

## Caste Census in India



**What it means**

- 1 Caste will be enumerated for the first time in a census since Independence. **1931** The last time a caste census was conducted in India
- 2 It will likely lead to an expansion of caste-based quotas in jobs and education, especially for other backward classes
- 3 Caste-based quotas will likely breach the 50% cap set by the 1992 Indra Sawhney judgment
- 4 The data might be used to create sub-quotas in SC, ST and OBC reservations. The Supreme Court has already permitted the government to sub-divide SC, ST quotas, and the Rohini Commission's recommendations on sub-categorisation of OBCs is pending with the administration

## India's First Mobile e-Voting System

- Bihar became the first Indian state, and only the **second region after Estonia**, to use mobile-based e-voting in local elections.
- Only **pre-registered voters** who faced difficulty reaching polling booths were allowed to vote using the **Android-only E-SECBHR app** or the state election website.
  - The E-SECBHR app stands for “**e-Voting SECBHR**”, where “SEC” refers to the State Election Commission and “BHR” refers to Bihar.
- Voter ID and facial recognition ensured identity verification, and **blockchain technology** secured the votes. Each mobile number could be used by two registered voters.
- A Dry run of India's first smartphone-based e-voting was conducted in **Telangana** district in 2021.

## Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs)

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has initiated the process to **delist 345 Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs)**.
- The reason being that they have **not contested any election since 2019** and have **no traceable offices**.
- Political parties in India are registered under **Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951**.
- By registering under Section 29A as a political party, they get **certain benefits** like income tax exemptions, access to electoral rolls, common symbols (for recognised parties), star campaigners and airtime on state media during elections.
- However, they also have to **meet certain criteria**,
  - Have a memorandum or constitution that **aligns with the Indian constitution** and its **principles of socialism, secularism, integrity** etc,

➤ Give proper **donation details** (above Rs.20,000) to ECI for verification.

➤ Can receive **donations above ₹2,000** only via cheque, draft, bank transfer.

- While the ECI **cannot deregister political parties**, it can delist inactive RUPPs and recommend withdrawal of benefits like tax exemptions and election-related privileges.

In the **Indian National Congress versus Institute of Social Welfare & Ors (2002)** case Supreme Court (SC) affirmed that the ECI lacks the authority to de-register political parties, except under extraordinary circumstances such as fraudulent registration or cessation of allegiance to the Constitution

## The 16th Census of India

- The 16th Census of India will be conducted in 2027, as **notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under Section 3 of the Census Act, 1948**.
- The **Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RG & CC)**, established in 1961 under the MHA, is responsible for conducting the Census.
- Census is a **Union List subject (Entry 69, Article 246, Seventh Schedule)**.
- The 2027 Census will, for the first time, include **caste enumeration** and use a **digital data** collection system via a mobile app.
- It will follow the traditional **two-phase format**: Houselisting and Housing Census, and Population Enumeration.
- The census enumeration will end by February 28, 2027 and the census will have a **reference date** of March 1, 2027, with the exception of certain snow-bound and challenging regions.
- Specifically, the Union Territory of Ladakh, **snow-bound areas** of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand will have a reference date of October 1, 2026.

## Special Intensive Revision (SIR)



- The Election Commission of India (ECI) conducted the **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls in Bihar ahead of the 2025 Assembly elections.
- ECI stated that **SIR was necessary due to** significant changes in voter rolls since the last revision in 2003.
- These **changes are attributed to** urbanization, migration for work and education, and voters failing to delete their names from old addresses, which leads to duplicate entries.
- SIR is a time-bound, house-to-house verification by **Booth Level Officers (BLOs)** to update voter lists before major elections.
  - **BLOs** are appointed by ECI from government, semi-government, or local body employees and are directly accountable for the accuracy of the electoral roll for their assigned polling areas.
- **Legal Basis: Section 21 of the RP Act, 1950,** and **Article 324** of the Constitution empower the ECI to conduct such revisions with recorded reasons.
- **Constitutional Guarantee: Article 326** guarantees voting rights to all adult citizens (18+) unless they are disqualified by law.
- The Electoral Rolls are prepared by the ECI under Section 19 of the **Representation of the People Act (RP Act), 1950**
  - It includes citizens 18 years and older who are **ordinarily resident** in the constituency.

## Ordinarily Resident

- The Special Intensive Revision in Bihar has brought to focus the **concept of 'ordinarily resident'** as a criteria for inclusion in electoral rolls by ECI.
- **Definition:** A person is considered "ordinarily resident" if they live in a place with the intention of making it their permanent home.
- **Section 20:** This section provides clarity, stating that a person is not an ordinary resident merely by owning a house there.
- Special Cases:
  - **Temporary Absence:** A person temporarily away for work or travel is still considered an ordinary resident.
  - **Specific Roles:** Members of the armed forces, state armed police serving outside the state, government employees abroad, and certain constitutional office holders are considered "ordinarily resident" in their home constituencies.
  - **Section 20A** (amended in 2010): This provision allows Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to register and vote in the constituency where their passport address is located.

## New OCI Rules

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has tightened norms for Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) under the Citizenship Act, 1955 and Citizenship Rules, 2009.
- New rules empowering the Centre to cancel OCI registration on **new grounds** including:
  - **Conviction** with imprisonment of two years or more (in India or abroad), **fraud** or concealment in obtaining OCI, **disaffection** towards the Constitution, **aiding** enemies during war, or if required for **India's sovereignty**, security, foreign relations, or public interest.
- The OCI scheme, **launched in 2005**, allows foreign nationals of Indian origin who were citizens of India on/after 26 Jan 1950, or their children/grandchildren/great-grandchildren to visit India visa-free.

- But excludes those who are or have ever been citizens of Pakistan or Bangladesh, or their descendants.
- **Features/Benefits:**
  - Visa-free, multiple entry, lifelong stay and travel in India.
  - Exemption from registering with Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) for any length of stay.
  - Parity with NRIs in economic, financial, and educational matters (except for acquisition of agricultural/plantation property).
- **Limitations:**
  - Not dual citizenship—no political rights (voting, contesting elections, holding constitutional posts).
  - Cannot buy agricultural or plantation land.

## Foreigners Tribunals

- The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, has empowered **Foreigners Tribunals (FTs)** with the authority of **first-class judicial magistrates (criminal court)**.
- FTs are **single-member quasi-judicial bodies** appointed by the **Central Government** under the **Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964**.
- The members can be retired district judges, additional district judges, or advocates with at least seven years of experience.
- Cases are referred to them by local authorities and they decide whether a person is an Indian citizen or a foreigner under the **Foreigners Act, 1946**.
- Although the 1964 order applies nationally, these **quasi-judicial bodies** primarily function in **Assam** to address citizenship status, especially for those excluded from the NRC.
- A key feature is the **reversal of the burden of proof**: under the Foreigners Act, 1946, the person (the “proceedee”) must prove they are not a foreigner.
- **Cases must be settled within 60 days**, and those failing to prove citizenship may be sent to transit camps pending deportation.
- **Appeals** from FTs are filed in the respective **High Court**.

## EVMs to Have Colour Photos of Candidates

- Beginning with the **Bihar Assembly election**, ballot papers on the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) will display **colour photographs of the candidates**, the Election Commission of India (ECI) recently informed.
- The guidelines have been revised under **Rule 49B of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961** — pertaining to the design and printing of EVM ballot papers — to enhance their clarity and readability.
- The candidate’s face will occupy **three-fourths of the photo space** for better visibility.
- The photographs of the candidates shall be **printed in colour, unless the candidate has provided only black and white photographs**.
- The serial numbers of candidates/NOTA will be printed in the international form of Indian numerals and the font size will be 30 and in bold for clarity.
- The names of **not more than 15 candidates shall be arranged on one sheet of a ballot paper** and NOTA option will be placed after the last name of the panel.



## Delisting of Political Parties

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has **recently de-listed 474 Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs)** for failing to contest elections over the last six years.

- **Guidelines for registration of Political Parties** issued by ECI in 1994 mention that if the party does not contest elections continuously for 6 years, the party shall be taken off the list of registered parties.
- All political parties in the country are **registered with the Election Commission of India** under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act 1951.
- RUPPs are those political parties that **do not fulfill the criteria to be recognized as either a 'National Party' or a 'State Party.'**
- **The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**, says that a party can be recognised either as a national party or a state party depending on the number of votes or seats they secure in elections.
- As per the Act, any association once registered as a political party gets certain **privileges and advantages**, such as a symbol, tax exemptions, amongst others.
- Until recently, there were 2,520 RUPPs and after the de-listing exercise, 2,046 RUPPs remain.

## CONSTITUTIONAL, STATUTORY & REGULATORY BODIES

### Lokpal Foundation Day

- On **January 16, 2025**, the **Lokpal of India** celebrated its **Foundation Day**, commemorating **11 years since its establishment in 2014**.
- Established under the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**, it is an independent statutory body.
- It is mandated to **investigate corruption allegations** against current and former Prime Ministers, Union Ministers, MPs, and government officials (Groups A to D).
- Its jurisdiction also covers officials in **boards, corporations, trusts**, and entities **funded by the Centre**, as well as those receiving **foreign contributions over ₹10 lakh**.
- The **Lokpal** consists of a **Chairperson** and **up to eight Members** (four Judicial, four Non-Judicial), appointed by the **President** based on recommendations from a **Selection Committee**.
- The Chairperson can be a **former Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court Judge**, while Judicial Members include **former SC Judges or Chief Justices of High Courts**.
- **Lokpal** submits an **annual report to the President**, which is laid before Parliament.

### National Dam Safety Authority

- The **Supreme Court** directed a **supervisory committee** led by the **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)** chief to address Tamil Nadu's concerns over **Mullaperiyar Dam**.
- **NDSA** is a **statutory body** that regulates, inspects, and oversees dams and was established by the Central Government under the **National Dam Safety Act, 2021**.
- The Act **applies to all dams with height more than 15 metres**, or height between 10 metres and 15 metres with certain design and structural conditions.
- **NDSA**, headquartered in **New Delhi**, is led by a chairman with **five wings**: policy & research, technical, regulation, disaster & resilience, and administration & finance.
- NDSA's function is to resolve any **issue between the State Dam Safety Organisations** of States or between a State Dam Safety Organisation and any owner of a specified dam in that state.
- According to the **National Register of Large Dams**, there are 5,264 completed large dams in the country, while 437 were under construction.

## India's First National Cooperative University

- The Parliament passed the **Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill, 2025** to establish the country's first national cooperative university.
- The law will convert the **Institute of Rural Management Anand, Gujarat (IRMA)**, currently a registered society, as the "Tribhuvan" Sahkari University.
- The headquarters will be Anand, Gujarat.
- It aims to **revolutionise education, research and training** in the cooperative sector.
  - The University is named after **Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel (1903-1990)**, an Indian independence activist, lawyer, and politician who is regarded as the father of the cooperative movement in India.
  - He founded the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union in 1946, and the Anand Co-operative movement.
- TSU will be an **institute of national importance** and will impart technical and management education and research in the cooperative sector and attain the mission of "**Sahakar se Samridhi**".
- IRMA will become one of the schools of the university.

## Quality Council of India (QCI)

- The new unified headquarters of the Quality Council of India (QCI) was recently inaugurated **at the World Trade Centre in New Delhi**.
- Quality Council of India (QCI) was established as a **National body for Accreditation** on recommendations of Expert Mission of EU through a Cabinet decision in 1996.
- QCI is a **non-profit organization** registered under the **Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860**.
- The **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry is nodal Ministry.
- QCI has been established to create a mechanism for **independent third party assessment** of products, services and processes.

- QCI was set up through a **PPP model** as an independent autonomous organization with the support of **Government of India and the Indian Industry** represented by the three premier industry associations:

1. Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM),
2. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and
3. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

## Lokpal of India



- The **Lokpal of India** has adopted a new motto: "**Empower Citizens, Expose Corruption**," replacing the earlier Sanskrit phrase "**Ma Gridhah Kasyasvidhanam**" ("Do not be greedy for anyone's wealth").
- Established under the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**, the Lokpal is India's first anti-corruption ombudsman.
- The Lokpal comprises a **Chairperson and eight Members** (including **four Judicial Members**).
- They are **appointed by the President** for **five years or until the age of 70**, whichever is earlier.
- The **Chairperson's salary** equals that of the **Chief Justice of India**, and **Members' salaries** match those of **Supreme Court Judges**.
- Its **jurisdiction** includes the **Prime Minister (with conditions)**, Union Ministers, MPs, and central government officials (Groups A to D).
- It also covers heads and officials of **government-funded or established bodies**, and **NGOs receiving foreign funds over ₹10 lakh or over ₹1 crore in government funds**.
- Anyone can file a complaint under the **Lokpal Act**, provided it pertains to offences under the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**, using the prescribed format.

## Bar Council of India

- Chief Justice of India Bhushan R. Gavai welcomed the Bar Council of India's (BCI) **decision to allow foreign lawyers and law firms to practise foreign law in India.**
- They can now **work on non-litigious matters**—legal work outside the courtroom—such as advisory services, contract drafting, international arbitration, and cross-border transactions, but cannot appear in Indian courts.
- Earlier, foreign lawyers were barred unless they met **strict rules under the Advocates Act, 1961.**
- The BCI, a **statutory body** set up under this Act, oversees the State Bar Councils (SBCs), regulates legal education and the profession in India.
- Law graduates must **register with a State Bar Council** and pass the **All India Bar Examination (AIBE)** conducted by the BCI to get a **Certificate of Practice.**
- Once certified, advocates can **practise in any court or tribunal across India**, regardless of the state where they registered.
- However, to **practise in the Supreme Court**, they must clear a separate **Advocate-on-Record (AoR) exam.**

## The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

- **The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** issued directions for better **counselling services throughout the adoption process.**
- This will enhance the **psychosocial support framework** for all stakeholders, including prospective adoptive parents, adopted children, and biological parents,
- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a **statutory body of the Ministry of Women & Child Development.**
- It functions as the **nodal body for adoption of Indian children** and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.

- It was originally an autonomous body but was given statutory status by the **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.**
- CARA is designated as the **Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions** in accordance with the provisions of the **Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993**, ratified by Government of India in 2003.
- CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies

## National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO)

- NOTTO directed that women patients and relatives of deceased donors will get priority in organ allocation, as women made up 63.8% of donors (2019–23) but men accounted for 69.8% of recipients.
- The **Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues (Amendment) Act, 2011** (principal Act in 1994) empowered the government to set up national, regional, and state-level transplant organisations.
- NOTTO was thus **created in 2014** by an executive order of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (not a statutory body).
- It has two **divisions**: National Human Organ & Tissue Removal and Storage Network and National Biomaterial Centre
- NOTTO maintains the National Waiting List, coordinates organ allocation across states, frames policies, spreads awareness, and manages the National Organ & Tissue Donation and Transplant Registry (**NOTTR**).
- **Regional** Link: 5 NOTTOs (Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Guwahati) connect NOTTO with states and handle inter-state allocation.
- **State** Level: SOTTOs (e.g., Tamil Nadu) manage state waiting lists, donor/recipient registration, and awareness drives.
- Health is a **State subject**; some states (e.g., Andhra Pradesh, Telangana) have their own transplant laws, while others are yet to fully adopt the national framework

## The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

- UPSC marked its centenary on **1 October 2025**, completing 100 years since its establishment in **1926** under the recommendations of the **Lee Commission (1924)** and provisions of the **Government of India Act, 1919**.
- Earlier, civil servants of the **East India Company** were nominated and trained at **Haileybury College, London**.
- Following **Macaulay's Report (1854)**, a **merit-based Civil Service** began with a **Civil Service Commission** in London conducting exams from **1855**.
- **Satyendranath Tagore** became the first Indian to qualify in **1864**.
- After **World War I**, simultaneous exams in India were approved.
- The **Government of India Act, 1935** made it the **Federal Public Service Commission**, and after **1950**, it became the **UPSC**.
- The **UPSC** consists of a **Chairman and other members** (number decided by the President).
- They are **appointed by the President** for a **term of six years or until the age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier.
- Members can be **removed by the President** only on the grounds of **misbehavior**, after an **inquiry by the Supreme Court**, or on specific grounds like insolvency or paid employment.

## Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)

- The RCI has made registration, renewal, and qualification updates in the **Central Rehabilitation Register** completely free for students and professionals.
- The **Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)** is a **statutory body** established under the **RCI Act, 1992** (amended in 2000).
- RCI is the watchdog that decides who can practise as a rehabilitation professional in India.
- A **rehabilitation professional** is a trained expert who helps persons with disabilities or injuries regain physical, mental, social, or vocational abilities — such as **physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, audiologists, and special educators**.

- It **standardizes training** across 16 categories (e.g., speech therapy, special education, prosthetics), approves over 540 institutes, and mandates registration in the Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR).
- Only professionals with a **valid, verifiable CRR number**—issued after completing an RCI-approved course—can legally practice; without it, providing such services is illegal.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.

## Geological Survey of India (GSI)

- The Geological Survey of India (GSI), **established in 1851** to find coal for the Railways, recently began its **175th-year commemoration**.
- Its origin traces to **Sir Thomas Oldham**, Chief of the Irish Geological Survey, who arrived in Calcutta on 4th March 1851.
- GSI's main **functions** include creating and updating national geoscientific data and assessing mineral resources through ground, airborne, and marine surveys, mineral prospecting, geotechnical and geo-environmental studies, natural hazard assessments, glaciology, and seismotectonic research.
- Headquartered in **Kolkata**, it has six regional offices (Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong, Kolkata) and State Units across India.
- GSI is an attached office of the **Ministry of Mines**.

## National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)

- NATGRID, a **Ministry of Home Affairs centralised intelligence-sharing IT platform**, is witnessing heavy use from central and state agencies.
- Conceived after the **26/11 Mumbai attacks (2008)**, NATGRID **integrates 24+ datasets** including immigration, banking, travel and telecom records to track suspects.
- Access, **earlier limited to 10 central agencies** such as IB, R&AW, NIA, ED and NCB, has **now been extended to Superintendent of Police (SP)-rank officers** of State police.

- In 2020, NATGRID signed an MoU with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to access Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS), which links about 14,000 police stations and mandates online FIR registration by State police.

## Competition Commission of India (CCI)

- CCI has taken cognisance of information filed against **IndiGo** Airlines over alleged abuse of market power amid flight disruptions.
- India's first competition law was the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act (**MRTP Act, 1969**) that had an MRTP Commission for inquiry and adjudication

- CCI was set up as a **statutory body** under the **Competition Act, 2002** (operationalised after the **2007 Amendment**) following the **Raghavan Committee (2000)** recommendations.
- CCI seeks to prevent **anti-competitive agreements**, curb **abuse of dominant position**, and regulate **combinations (M&A, acquisitions)** causing appreciable adverse effect on competition in India.
- CCI has **Chairperson + 2 to 6 whole-time Members**, appointed by the Central Government, with **minimum 15 years' expertise** in fields like economics, law, business, finance or competition policy.
- CCI also gives **opinions** on competition issues when referred by **statutory authorities** like TRAI, SEBI, RBI etc.

## RIGHTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE & PERSONAL LAWS

### Uttarakhand UCC

- Uttarakhand became the first state in independent India to roll out a **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**, ensuring uniform laws for all citizens, irrespective of gender or religion.
- UCC is a directive principle under **Article 44 of the Indian constitution**.
- **Registration:** Covers marriage, divorce, live-in relationships, wills, inheritance, and grievances, with a 15-day to one-month processing time.
- **Bans:** Prohibits polygamy, child marriage, triple talaq, nikah halala, and iddat.
- **Inheritance Rights:** Recognizes children from live-in relationships as legitimate with equal inheritance rights.
- **Gender Equality:** Uses "child" instead of son/daughter to ensure equal rights.
- **Exclusion:** Does not apply to **Scheduled Tribes** to protect their rights.
- **Live-in Relationships:** Mandatory registration, with penalties for non-compliance (up to 3 months in jail or ₹10,000 fine).

### Global Free Speech Survey 2024

- A global survey by the **U.S.-based Future of Free Speech** ranked **India 24th out of 33 countries** on support for free speech, with a score of 62.6.
- The survey noted **global declines** in free speech support since 2021, **especially in democracies** like the U.S., Israel, and Japan.
- **Norway and Denmark** topped the index, while Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan showed the most improvement.
- Some authoritarian-leaning nations like Hungary and Venezuela scored unexpectedly high.
- In India, while most value free speech, support for criticizing government policies was below average—**37% believed governments should be able to prevent such criticism**, the highest among all countries surveyed.

## Habitual Offenders Laws

- The Union government disclosed that “habitual offender” laws **remain active in 14 States and Union Territories**, despite the Supreme Court’s recent concerns about their misuse against **denotified tribes (DNTs)**.
- These laws have **colonial origins**, notably the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871, which labeled **certain communities as inherently criminal**.
- A **habitual offender** is a person repeatedly convicted of crimes, often subject to stricter surveillance or penalties under special laws
- Although the CTA was repealed in 1952, it was succeeded by the **Habitual Offenders Act (HOA) 1952**, perpetuating biases against DNTs.
- Following the repeal, the communities previously identified as “criminal tribes” were **reclassified as “denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes” (DNTs, NTs, SNTs)**.
- The HOA, 1952 shifted the focus from classifying entire communities as prone to crime to **identifying individuals based on their criminal records**.
- Various **committees**, including the Criminal Tribes Act Enquiry Committee (1949–50) and the B.S. Renke Commission (2008), have criticized these laws for reinforcing stigma.
- In October 2024, the Supreme Court deemed such classifications **“constitutionally suspect”** and urged states to reconsider their continuation.

## Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025

- The Waqf Amendment Act, 2025 came into force amending the parent Waqf Act, 1995 and renaming it as **Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act, 1995**.
- **Waqf refers to properties dedicated exclusively to religious or charitable purposes** under Islamic law, where any other use or sale of the property is prohibited.

### Key Reforms in the Amendment Bill:

- » **Eligibility for Waqf Dedication:** Only practicing muslims (for atleast 5 years) can provide their property to Waqf.
- » **No ‘Waqf by user’:** Under the parent Waqf

Act 1995, if a property has been used as Waqf property for a considerable time, despite there being no official declaration or endowment, could be considered as ‘Waqf by user’.

- » The new law **removes this** and only recognises as waqf a property that is so declared or endowed as Waqf
- » **Protection of ‘Waqf by user’ Properties:** Already registered properties will remain with Waqf unless disputed or identified as government land.
- » **Women Rights in Family Waqf:** Women should receive their rightful inheritance before Waqf dedication by family.
  - » There is special provision for divorced women, orphans & widows.
- » **Reduced Annual Contribution:** Waqf institution’s mandatory contribution to Waqf Boards has been decreased from 7% to 5%.
- » **Government Land:** An officer **above the rank of collector** to investigate Government properties claimed as Waqf, preventing unwarranted claims.
- » **Ending Arbitrary Property Claims:** Act removes Section 40 from the parent Act, which provided the ultimate power to decide if a property is a Waqf property to the State Waqf Boards.
  - » This claim could have been only overturned by a Waqf Tribunal.
- » **Non-Muslim Representation:** 2 non-muslims to be included in both Central Waqf Council & State Waqf Boards to ensure inclusivity.
- » **Application of Limitation Act, 1963:** The Act will now apply to Waqf property claims.
  - » The Act **sets time limits (limitation periods) for filing suits**, appeals, and other legal proceedings.
- » **Annual Audits:** Waqf institutions earning over 1 lakh annually to undergo audits by State Government appointed auditors.
- » **Separation of Trusts from Waqf:** Muslim-centered trusts under any law will no longer be considered Waqf, ensuring full control over the Trusts.
- » **Technology & Central Portal:** A centralized digital portal will automate Waqf property management, improving transparency & efficiency.

## Senior Citizens Act

- The Supreme Court rejected a senior couple's attempt to evict their son under the **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**.
- The Act allows senior citizens (60+) unable to support themselves "from his own earnings or property owned by him" to seek **maintenance** from children or legal heirs..
- It places **an obligation on these children or relatives** to meet the parents' needs "so that such parents may lead a normal life".
- The Act also establishes **dedicated tribunals to hear these suits**, along with appellate tribunals to hear challenges to any orders passed.
- **Section 23** of the Act gives parents an avenue to receive maintenance even after transferring or gifting their property.
- If this condition is not met, the provision states that the transfer "shall be deemed to have been made by fraud or coercion or under undue influence" and can be **declared void if the senior citizen approaches the tribunal**.

## Surrogacy for Unmarried Women

- The Bombay High Court recently asked a 38-year-old divorced woman with estranged children to approach the Supreme Court (SC) to seek surrogacy rights
- **Surrogacy** is a method of assisted reproduction where a woman (called a **surrogate mother**) agrees to carry and give birth to a child for another person or couple (called the **intending parents**).
- Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 of India provides for only **altruistic surrogacy** —where the surrogate mother is not paid except for medical expenses and insurance.
- Only **married Indian couples** (man 26–55 years, woman 23–50 years) who do not have a surviving child can opt for surrogacy (with exceptions for seriously ill children).
- A **single Indian woman** (widow or divorcee) aged **35–45 years** without a child (biological or adopted) can also opt for surrogacy.

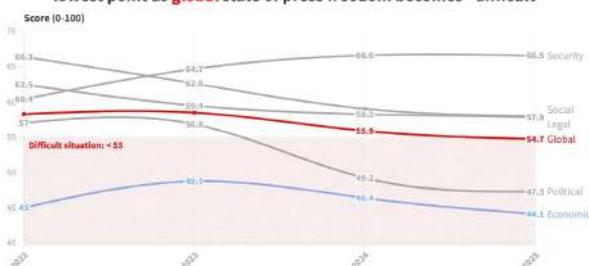
- The surrogate must be a **married woman with a child of her own, aged 25–35 years**, and can act as a surrogate **only once** in her lifetime.
- **Medical Indication Certificate** for infertility is required and a **Surrogacy Eligibility Certificate** from appropriate authority is mandatory before proceeding.
- **Single Indian men and foreigners are not allowed** to avail surrogacy in India

## Digital Access as a Fundamental Right

- The Supreme Court (SC) held in a judgment that **inclusive and meaningful digital access to e-governance and welfare delivery systems** is a part of the fundamental right to life and liberty (Article 21).
- The judgment was based on a petition filed by a group of **acid attack survivors**, who raised concerns about how **disabled persons, including acid attack victims**, find it nearly impossible to successfully complete the KYC processes, which include visual tasks.
- The SC directed revisions to **Know-Your-Customer (KYC) digital norms** invoking the **the 'principle of substantive equality'**, which not only encompasses **dignity, or equality of opportunity** but also aims for a four dimensional principle;
- To redress disadvantage;
  - ★ To address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence;
  - ★ To enhance voice and participation; and
  - ★ To accommodate differences and achieve structural change.

## World Press Freedom Index

In 2025, the **economic** indicator of the RSF World Press Freedom Index hit its lowest point as **global** state of press freedom becomes "difficult"



Source: World Press Freedom Index. Link to share:   
 ©Reporters Without Borders - Blanche Marès & Côme Notariis

- India ranked **151st with a total score of 32.96** in the recent World Press Freedom Index 2025, moving up 8 places from 159th last year.
- **The Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**, an international **non-profit and non-governmental** organization headquartered in Paris, releases the **annual World Press Freedom Index 2025**.
- Witnessing a troubling downward trend, the global landscape is being described as a **“difficult situation”** for the first time in history, according to new findings of the Index.
- **Norway led the list in 2025**, as it did last year, followed by **Estonia and then Netherlands**.
- **Eritrea is at the bottom-most** this year, followed by countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia, which experience a **worrying deterioration of 80% of the economic score** alongside persistent polarisation and repression.
- It **prevents** others from using these personal traits **without permission for profit or publicity** (for example, in ads, merchandise, or AI-generated content).
- These rights, though not defined in one law, come from the **right to privacy under Article 21** and common law principles of privacy, defamation, and publicity.
- Courts can issue **injunctions, damages, or takedown orders** against misuse in ads, merchandise, or AI-generated content.
- Relevant laws include the **Copyright Act, 1957** (which gives performers exclusive and moral rights), the **Trade Marks Act, 1999** (allowing personal identifiers to be registered), and the **tort of passing off** (which prevents false endorsements).
- The idea of personality rights in India began with the **1994 R. Rajagopal case**, where the Supreme Court linked the protection of one’s identity to the **constitutional right to privacy**.

INDEX 2025		INDEX 2024	
<b>151</b> / 180	Score : 32.96	<b>159</b> / 180	Score : 31.28
POLITICAL INDICATOR	<b>155</b> 24.30	POLITICAL INDICATOR	<b>159</b> 21.58
ECONOMIC INDICATOR	<b>132</b> 34.17	ECONOMIC INDICATOR	<b>157</b> 31.67
LEGISLATIVE INDICATOR	<b>141</b> 42.64	LEGISLATIVE INDICATOR	<b>143</b> 40.87
SOCIAL INDICATOR	<b>160</b> 32.38	SOCIAL INDICATOR	<b>156</b> 33.33
SECURITY INDICATOR	<b>155</b> 31.30	SECURITY INDICATOR	<b>162</b> 28.97

## Personality Rights

- The Delhi High Court recently upheld the **personality rights** of Bollywood celebrities.
- Personality right is the **right of an individual to control the commercial use of their identity** — including their name, image, voice, likeness, or signature.

## Sikh Anand Marriage Act

- The Supreme Court has directed 17 states and 8 UTs to frame rules for registering Sikh marriages under the **Anand Marriage Act, 1909** within four months.
- The **Anand Karaj** (“blissful union”) is the Sikh marriage ceremony, where couples circle the **Guru Granth Sahib** four times as **laavan** hymns (4 sacred hymns from the holy book) are recited.
- The 1909 Act recognised this distinct Sikh ceremony but lacked registration provisions, which were added through the **Anand Marriage (Amendment) Act, 2012**.
- States were then tasked with framing registration rules.
- While the Act provides a **framework for registration**, it **does not include provisions for divorce** or other matrimonial disputes.
- As a result, Sikhs seeking divorce must turn to the **Hindu Marriage Act 1955** to dissolve their marriage.
- The Anand Karaj takes place in the **presence of Guru Granth Sahib** and this makes it imperative for an individual to uphold his marital ties all his/her life as per Sikh preachers.

## The Hindu Succession Act, 1956

- The Supreme Court is carefully reviewing parts of the **Hindu Succession Act, 1956** that decide how a **Hindu woman's property is inherited if she dies without a will (intestate)**
- Unlike **men, whose property passes equally** to wife, children, and mother, a **woman's property** first goes to her children and husband, and if none exist, to her husband's heirs before her own parents—often **excluding her natal family**.
- This structure, meant to **preserve the Hindu family system**, has been criticised for gender bias.
- The effect is that **even a woman's self-acquired assets may bypass her parents** and siblings in favour of her in-laws.
- Before this Act, Hindu succession law was largely governed by two traditional schools of law—the **Mitakshara and the Dayabhaga**.
  - The **Mitakshara school**, followed in most of India, says that **sons get a birthright** in ancestral property — the family property is **jointly owned by all male members**.
  - The **Dayabhaga school**, followed mainly in **Bengal and Assam**, says that **sons inherit property only after the father's death**. It allows more **freedom to make a will**, and property is treated as **individual**, not joint family property.

## Stray Dog Menace

- The Supreme Court gave directions to control stray dog menace under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and Animal Birth Control Rules.

### The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (PCA Act)

- The act lists 16 acts of cruelty (beating, overloading, mutilation, phooka/doom dev, etc.).
- It **restricts exhibition** of trained animals; bears, monkeys, tigers, panthers, lions banned in circuses since 1998; 2017 notification banned all circus animals except dogs & horses (with conditions).
- It established the **Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)** in 1962 (under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying), and the **Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA)** for regulating animal experiments.
- In **Animal Welfare Board of India vs A. Nagaraja (2014)** the Supreme Court banned Jallikattu and bullock-cart races, and read animal dignity into **Article 21** of the Constitution and **Article 51A(g)** (Fundamental Duty to have compassion for living creatures)

### **Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023**

- Issued under the PCA Act, it mandates **municipalities & panchayats** to conduct **sterilisation + vaccination** through AWBI-approved organisations.
- Follows **CNVR method (Catch-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return)** and prohibits relocation outside the original area.
- It acknowledges street dogs as **“community animals,”** requiring Resident Welfare Association (RWAs) to consult with local bodies to designate feeding spots.

**Decoding a Decade of NITI Aayog**

- January 1st, 2025 marked the 10th anniversary of the **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog)** that **succeeded the Planning Commission**.
- NITI is a **policy think tank for the government** that designs and recommends policies and welfare programs and has the **Twin mandate**:
  - ➔ To oversee **the adoption and monitoring of the SDGs** in the country and
  - ➔ To promote **competitive and cooperative federalism** among States and UTs.

**Composition of Niti Aayog**

- Chairperson:** The Prime Minister of India serves as the Chairperson of NITI Aayog.
- Vice Chairperson:** The Vice Chairperson is appointed by the Prime Minister.
- Governing Council:** This is the main body of NITI Aayog and includes:
  - The Prime Minister
  - Chief Ministers of all states
  - Lieutenant Governors of Union Territories
- Regional Councils:** These are formed to address specific regional issues and consist of:
  - Chief Ministers of states in the region
  - Lieutenant Governors of Union Territories in the region
  - They are chaired by the Prime Minister or his nominee.
- Full-Time Members:** Experts in various fields, such as economics, science, and other relevant disciplines, are appointed as full-time members.
- Ex-Officio Members:** Up to four members from the Union Council of Ministers are nominated by the Prime Minister.
- Special Invitees:** Experts, specialists, and practitioners from various fields are invited by the Prime Minister to contribute their knowledge and insights.
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** The CEO is appointed by the Prime Minister and manages the day-to-day operations of NITI Aayog.

Subject	Programmes/Schemes/Indices
Planning	<p><b>Vision:</b> Goals and objectives of the country for the <b>next 15 years</b>.</p> <p><b>Strategies:</b> Roadmap of development for the next <b>7 years</b>.</p> <p><b>Action Agenda:</b> Targets to be achieved in the <b>next 3 years</b>.</p> <p><b>Strategy for New India at 75</b></p>
Governance	<p><b>Aspirational Programme for Districts and Blocks</b></p> <p>Good Governance Index</p> <p>SDG India Index</p> <p>Agriculture Marketing And Farmer Friendly Reform Index</p>
Health	<p>Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital Project (<b>SATH Project</b>)</p> <p>Health Index</p> <p>District Hospital Index</p>
Education & Training	<p>School Education Quality Index</p> <p><b>Atal Innovation Mission/ Tinkering Labs/Incubation Centres</b></p> <p>India Innovation Index</p>
Women	<p>Women Transforming India Awards</p> <p>Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)</p>
Development/ Energy	<p><b>e-AMRIT</b> (Accelerated e-Mobility Revolution for India's Transportation) portal for creating awareness about <b>electric mobility</b>.</p> <p><b>'Methanol Economy'</b> Programme</p>

## Draft Rules on DPDP Act

**Highlights of draft rules**

- Breaches must be notified**
  - TO USERS**
    - Immediate notification
    - Details of breach nature and possible consequences
    - Safety measures
  - TO DATA PROTECTION BOARD**
    - Initial alert without delay
    - Detailed report within 72 hours
- Data retention and deletion obligation (for big platforms)**
  - Must delete data after 3 years of inactivity
  - 48-hour advance notice before deletion
  - Exception if retention required by law
- Parental verification for children's data must be**
  - Through reliable ID;
  - Via govt-authorized tokens
- EXEMPT FROM PARENTAL CONSENT**
  - Healthcare services, child welfare services, educational activities, school transport safety and email account creation

- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** released the draft rules to operationalise the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act)**.

### Key rights of data principals:

- Access and Correction:** Data principals (individuals to whom the personal data relates) may access their personal data held by fiduciaries (entities that handle the data and decide its purpose), verify its accuracy, and request rectification of inaccuracies.
- Erasure:** Data principals may request erasure of personal data.

### Key obligations of fiduciaries:

- Transparency and Consent:** Data fiduciaries must provide clear notices to data principals regarding data collection and processing, obtaining explicit consent.
- Compliance with Governmental Restrictions:** This includes prohibitions on the transfer of sensitive personal data outside India.
- Data Breach Notification:** Fiduciaries must notify data principals of data breaches impacting their personal data within a stipulated time frame.
- Age-gating and Parental Consent:** Verifiable parental or guardian consent is mandatory for processing the personal data of children (under 18) and individuals with disabilities.

### Compliance and enforcement:

- Grievance Redressal:** Data principals may lodge complaints regarding data handling. Data fiduciaries are required to establish grievance redressal mechanisms.
- Oversight:** The Data Protection Board will monitor compliance with the DPDP Rules by data fiduciaries.

## Access Now Report

- India recorded **84 internet shutdowns in 2024**, the highest among democratic nations, surpassed only by Myanmar, according to a report by **digital rights organisation Access Now**.
- Legal basis for internet shutdowns:** Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017, notified under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
- Orders:** It can be imposed based on **Public emergency** up to **15 days** per order issued by the **Union/State Home Secretary**.
- Review:** A **three-member Review Committee** led by the Cabinet Secretary (Centre) or Chief Secretary (State) reviews orders.
- Regional impact:** **Manipur (21)** had the most shutdowns, followed by **Haryana (12)** and **Jammu & Kashmir (12)**.
- Reasons:** Protests (41), communal violence (23), job exams (5).
- Global trend:** India, Myanmar, and Pakistan accounted for 64% of shutdowns.

## DHRUVA Initiative and DIGIPIN

- The **Department of Posts** has launched DHRUVA (Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address), a national-level **Digital Address Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) initiative**.
- It introduces **Address-as-a-Service (AaaS)**, enabling secure, consent-based address sharing across platforms. DHRUVA has two layers:
  - DIGIPIN Layer** – A 10-digit alphanumeric, geo-coded address grid (approx. 4x4 meters) developed with IIT-Hyderabad and ISRO's NRSC.

2. **Digital Address Layer** – A user-friendly system allowing generation of unique, UPI-like address labels (e.g. username@domain), eliminating the need to rewrite full addresses for services.

**mint**

## ALL ABOUT DIGIPIN

**What is DIGIPIN?**  
A 10-digit digital address code pinpointing exact locations in India, developed with IIT Hyderabad and ISRO

**How it works:**  
India is divided into 4m x 4m grids, each assigned a unique alphanumeric DIGIPIN based on latitude and longitude

**Finding your DIGIPIN:**  
Visit 'Know Your DIGIPIN' portal, use a GNSS-enabled device to get your location, and generate your code

**Difference from PIN code:**  
PIN codes cover large areas; DIGIPIN gives precise location at a 4m x 4m grid level

## Facial Recognition for POSHAN Abhiyan

- Government has officially made **facial recognition system (FRS) mandatory** for pregnant and lactating women to access **take-home rations (THR)** under the scheme POSHAN Abhiyaan
- POSHAN Abhiyaan, or National Nutrition Mission, was launched at **Junjhunu, Rajasthan in 2018**.
- It is a multi-ministerial "Jan Andolan (people's movement) with the **Ministry of Women and Child Development as nodal ministry**.
- **Early childhood education** and **Hot Cooked Meals** are provided for children aged 3-6 years who attend the Anganwadi Centres.
- The five key targets are:
  - **Reduce Stunting:** in children (0-6 years) by 6% (2% per annum).
  - **Reduce Undernutrition:** (underweight prevalence) in children (0-6 years) by 6% (2% per annum).

➤ **Reduce Anemia:** among young children (6-59 months) by 9% (3% per annum).

➤ **Reduce Anemia:** among women and adolescent girls (15-49 years) by 9% (3% per annum).

➤ **Reduce Low Birth Weight:** (LBW) by 6% (2% per annum)

- A key feature is the use of the **Poshan Tracker**, a mobile application used by Anganwadi workers (AWW) to monitor and track the health of beneficiaries.
- It's designed to improve nutritional outcomes by leveraging and strengthening the services already provided by **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**, which has been in place since 1975.

## Notary Portal

- The Government has **revamped the Notary Portal** to provide online services like applications for appointment, renewal of certificates, change of practice area, and filing annual returns.
- A Notary in India, **appointed under the Notaries Act, 1952**, is a statutory officer empowered to authenticate and attest documents, administer oaths, and note dishonour of negotiable instruments.
- They are appointed by the **Central or State Governments** through gazette notification, usually for five years.
- **Eligibility** generally requires 10 years' practice as an advocate (relaxed for SC/ST/OBC/women).
- Their **powers** include attesting signatures, certifying copies, preparing affidavits and contracts, and acting as impartial witnesses.

## Lokpal

- Despite its important role, the Lokpal has recently faced **criticism** for a sharp **decline in complaints** and for **issuing tenders to procure luxury cars**.
- The **Lokpal of India** is a **statutory body** established under the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**, to inquire into allegations of **corruption against public functionaries**.

- This fulfilled India's commitment to the **UN Convention Against Corruption**, the world's only legally binding international anti-corruption treaty, adopted in 2003.
- It consists of a **Chairperson** and up to **eight Members** (four Judicial and four Non-Judicial), appointed by the **President** on the recommendation of a **Selection Committee** comprising the Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition, Chief Justice of India (or a Supreme Court Judge), and an eminent jurist.
- The Lokpal's **jurisdiction** covers the **Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of Parliament, and Central Government officials (Groups A–D)**, as well as officials of bodies or trusts funded by the Centre or receiving **foreign contributions above ₹10 lakh**.
- However, it **cannot investigate the Prime Minister** on matters relating to **security, international relations, or atomic energy** unless a **two-thirds full Bench** approves it in camera.
- **Any person**, including non-citizens, may file a complaint, after which the Lokpal may order a **preliminary inquiry** by its Inquiry Wing or the **CBI**, to be completed within **60 days**.
- The findings are reviewed by a **three-member Bench**, which may order a full investigation, initiate departmental action, or close the case, and may act against complainants filing false cases

### Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules, 2025

- The Government has notified the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules, 2025** to implement the DPDP Act, 2023.
- The Act applies to all **digital personal data processed in India**, including data collected online or offline and later digitised, and also to processing done **outside India** if it relates to offering goods or services to individuals in India.

### What is covered under DPDP Act?

1	2	3
<b>Data principals (Individuals)</b>	<b>Indian Businesses and Organizations</b>	<b>Foreign Entities (in scope)</b>
Any natural person in India whose digital personal data is processed	Companies and entities that collect or process digital personal data inside India	Non-Indian organizations that offer goods/services to people in India or profile people in India

4	5
<b>Data Fiduciaries and Data Processors</b>	<b>Significant Data Fiduciaries</b>
Entities that decide how/why data is processed (fiduciaries) and those acting on their instructions (processors)	Large platforms or data-intensive services with extra obligations (e.g., appoint officer, conduct DIAs)

- Data Fiduciaries must give a **clear privacy notice** at the time of consent, explaining the data collected, purpose of use, rights of the Data Principal, and complaint mechanisms, available in English or any of the **22 Eighth Schedule languages**.
- They must also take **parental/guardian consent** before processing a child's or a disabled person's data, avoid processing that may cause harm, and are **prohibited from behavioural monitoring or targeted advertising towards children**.
- It introduces a **Consent Manager** which is an **entity or platform that helps manage and record the consent of Data Principals** (individuals) for the processing of their personal data to be **established or approved by the government or regulatory authority**.
- The Rules operationalise the **Data Protection Board**, to be appointed by the central government, by detailing its procedures for handling complaints, enforcing compliance, and overseeing Data Fiduciaries.
- The Rules operationalised **Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act** which amends RTI Section 8(1)(j) to remove the "larger public interest" exception regarding personal information sought under RTI.

### PRAGATI

- The Prime Minister recently chaired the 50th meeting of PRAGATI - **Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation**.
- **PRAGATI** (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) is an information and communications technology (ICT)-**enabled governance platform** chaired monthly by the **Prime Minister** to monitor projects and resolve grievances.

- Designed by the PMO team with the National Informatics Centre (NIC), it integrates **video conferencing, dashboards and geo-spatial tools**.
- Brings together **Union Secretaries and State Chief Secretaries** for real-time review, delay resolution and time-bound decisions.
- Structured at **three levels**: PMO, Union Government, and States, enabling **Centre-State coordination**.
- Integrates databases of **CPGRAMS, Project Monitoring Group (PMG)** and **MoSPI**, and aims to link platforms like **Aadhaar, DigiLocker, UMANG, and myScheme**.
- **Issues discussed** are drawn from public grievances, ongoing schemes and pending projects.
- **CPGRAMS** is a 24x7 online portal for citizens to lodge service-delivery grievances with all Ministries and States.

## LOCAL GOVERNANCE, RURAL & DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

### Devolution Index

- The comprehensive Devolution Index Report was recently released at **Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)**, New Delhi.
- The Index evaluates **six critical dimensions**: Framework, Functions, Finances, Functionaries, Capacity Building, and Accountability of the Panchayats.
- The report, last published in **2014**, shows the national average score rose from **39.92 to 43.89**, assessing Panchayat autonomy per **Article 243G** of the Constitution.
- This article empowers State legislatures to **devolve powers and responsibilities to Panchayats across 29 subjects** listed in the Eleventh Schedule.

### Key Findings:

- 🏠 **Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu** have topped the index and Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have recorded the biggest improvement.
- 🏠 **Average Rural Population per Panchayat (2024): 4,669** (up from **3,087** in 2013-14). Most densely populated: **West Bengal, Assam, Bihar** (earlier Kerala in 2013-14).
- 🏠 **Women Representatives: 46.44%** (up from **45.9%** in 2013-14).

### Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) - II

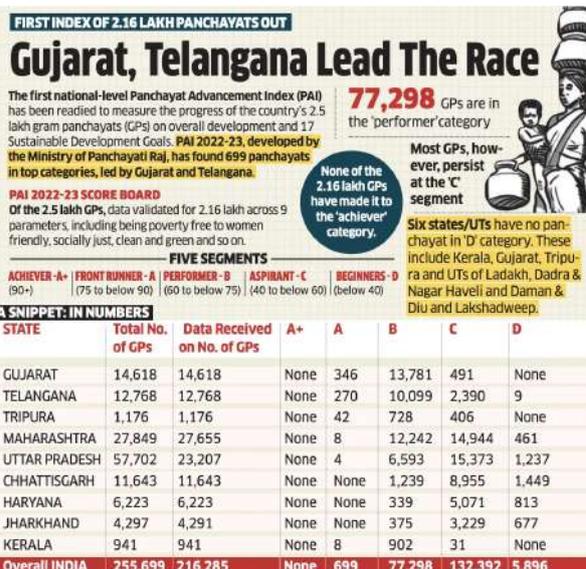
- The Union Cabinet approved the Vibrant Villages Programme -II with the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 for 'Safe, Secured & Vibrant land borders'.
- VVP-II will be a **100% Central Sector Scheme** with full funding from the Union government and implementation period **till 2028-29**.
  - 🏠 The VVP-I was aimed at **villages along the China border and was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme in 2023 till 2025**.
- It seeks to integrate border populations as the '**eyes and ears**' of security forces.
- The programme also aims to saturate all villages in such blocks under **four thematic areas**: all-weather road connectivity, telecom connectivity, television connectivity, and electrification.
- The phase 2 will be implemented in **select strategic villages** in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

## Section 19 of POCSO Act

- The Supreme Court has agreed to **examine concerns over mandatory reporting** under Section 19 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.
- The Act is a gender neutral law and raised the age of consent from **16 years to 18**.
- The Section 19 of the Act requires that **“any person”, who “has apprehension that an offence** under this Act is likely to be committed or has knowledge that such an offence has been committed, **shall provide such information” to the police.**
- A report made in good faith confers **immunity on the reporter** from any civil or criminal liability
  - ☞ But the failure to report an offence is punishable.
- This includes **doctors**, who must report even consensual acts, deterring minors from seeking safe medical help and pushing them towards unsafe options.

## The Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI)

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj** has launched the PAI, a transformative tool **to measure the progress of over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs)** across India.
- It is a **multi-dimensional index** used to assess the implementation of **Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs)** across **nine broad themes**.
  - ☞ These are **poverty-free and enhanced livelihoods** in panchayat, healthy panchayat, child-friendly panchayat, water sufficient panchayat, clean and green panchayat, panchayat with self-sufficient infrastructure, socially just and socially secured panchayat, panchayat with good governance and women-friendly panchayat.
- The panchayats were scored on a **scale of 0-100** based on these indicators and ranked in one of five categories: **Achiever (90-100)**, Front Runner (75-90), Performer (60-75), Aspirant (40-60) and **Beginner (below 40)**.



## Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

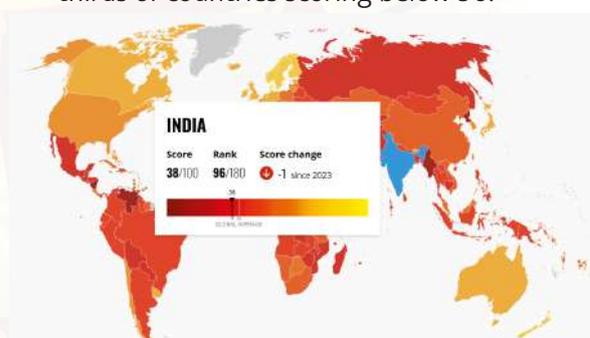
- The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)** has recently requested the **Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGI)**, to consider enumerating particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) **separately in the upcoming Census**.
- PVTGs are a **sub-category of Scheduled Tribes (STs)**, which show either a declining or stagnant population, geographical isolation, use of pre-agrarian practices (such as hunting and gathering), economic backwardness, and relatively low literacy.
- This category was created based on the **recommendations of the Dhebar Commission (1960-61)**, led by former Member of Parliament **U N Dhebar**.
- Initially, 52 groups were identified as **PVTGs (then known as Primitive Tribal Groups)** during the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-1979).
- In 2006, the Centre added 23 more tribal groups to PVTGs, taking the total to 75.
- PVTGs are currently **spread across 18 states, and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- PVTGs have **never been enumerated separately in any census**.

## Draft UGC Regulations

- Recently released **draft University Grants Commission (UGC) rules** regarding Vice Chancellor appointments have come under criticism for violating federal principles.
- Currently, the **universities formed under state law** have their VCs appointed by the Chancellor (ex-officio the Governor), based on state government recommendations.
- However, the **new regulations recommend a 3-member committee** consisting of nominees from the Visitor/Chancellor, UGC Chairperson, and the university's apex body (e.g., Senate, Syndicate) to shortlist VCs.
- The Governor will make appointments from the list provided.
- VCs Background:** Besides professors, Individuals at senior levels in industry, public policy, public administration, or public sector undertakings, can also become VCs, says the draft.
- The **UGC** is India's higher education regulator, overseeing standards, funding, and accreditation of universities and colleges.
- Established under **UGC Act, 1956**, it operates under the **Ministry of Education**.

## Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024

- India ranked **96th out of 180** in the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Berlin based Transparency International.
  - 📉 India's 2023 rank was 93.
- The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, uses a **scale of zero to 100**, where **"zero" is highly corrupt and "100" is very clean**.
- India scored 38, down from 39 in 2023 and 40 in 2022.
- Among neighbors, Pakistan ranked 135, Sri Lanka 121, Bangladesh 149, and China 76.
- Denmark topped the list, followed by Finland and Singapore with South Sudan at the bottom.
- The global average remains 43, with over two-thirds of countries scoring below 50.



## NEW FACULTY RECRUITMENT NORMS

### Highlights of the latest draft UGC regulations

**Subject Flexibility:** Candidates can teach based on their highest academic specialization, regardless of prior degree subjects or NET focus

**Expanded Vice-Chancellor Eligibility:** Professionals from fields like industry and policymaking with academic contributions are now eligible

**Inclusivity Focus:** Relaxations for EWS and PwD categories alongside SC/ST/OBC, with emphasis on Indian languages in academia

**Transparent Recruitment:** Teaching candidates will be assessed on practical teaching and research aptitude

**Fair Career Advancement:** Promotions consider leave for maternity, childcare, or study.

**Recognising Innovation:** Criteria now include teaching innovations, digital content, and community engagement

**Revised Librarian and Sports Roles:** Emphasis on digitization, indigenous sports, and public health contributions



**Professor of Practice:** Industry experts can join HEIs for teaching and research outside sanctioned posts

**Improved Leadership Selection:** Vice-Chancellor appointments ensure transparency through expert-led committees

**Strict Compliance Measures:** HEIs violating regulations risk penalties like exclusion from UGC schemes and degree programmes

## Retrospective Environmental Clearances

- The Supreme Court recently struck down a 2017 notification of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), which introduced a **regime of granting ex-post facto clearances to projects**.
- Ex-post facto or retrospective green clearances** allow industries to start projects without prior environmental clearance and seek approval later.
- These clearances violate the mandatory pre-approval system under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- ECs already granted** under the quashed notifications would remain unaffected.

## Renaming Jalalabad In Uttar Pradesh

- The Union **Home Ministry** recently approved renaming **Jalalabad** in Shahjahanpur District, UP, to **Parashurampuri**, believed to be the birthplace of Bhagwan Parshuram.
- While the **Constitution has no provision** for renaming cities, the power lies with state legislatures.
- The process begins with a **resolution in the State Assembly**, passed by a simple majority.
- The proposal is then sent to the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, which consults agencies like Railways, IB, Department of Posts, Survey of India, and Registrar General of India.
- If all approve, the **MHA issues a No-Objection Certificate**, after which the state government publishes an official notification in its Gazette

## Central Pay Commission

- The Union Cabinet approved the **Terms of Reference of the 8th Central Pay Commission**, chaired by **Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai**, former Supreme Court judge.
- The **Pay Commission** is a **non-constitutional and non-statutory advisory body** set up by the **Central Government** periodically since 1946 (about every 10 years).
- It is constituted by an **executive resolution** of the Government of India.
- The **Union Cabinet** decides its **composition, terms of reference, and tenure**.
- Typically includes a **Chairperson, Member(s)**, and a **Member-Secretary** (administrative expert).
- The Commission **examines and recommends** changes in **pay, allowances, and pensions** of Central Government employees and pensioners.
- It also suggests a **formula for Dearness Allowance (DA)** and **Dearness Relief (DR)** to neutralize inflation, based on **Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW)** data.
- The current Commission is expected to submit its report within **18 months**.

## PM SHRI scheme

- Kerala** has become the latest signatory to the centrally sponsored **Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI)**.
- Launched in 2022, the PM SHRI aims at creating 14,500 exemplary institutions across the country that showcase various aspects of the **National Education Policy 2020 (NEP)**.
- A total of 34 States/Union Territories have signed the MoU with the **Union Ministry of Education**.
  - 👉 **Only Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are yet to ink** the agreement.
- The Centre has **linked the release of funds under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to the implementation of PMSHRI**.
- Funding pattern:** 60:40 between Centre and State governments and UTs with legislature. 90:10 between Centre and Northeastern and Himalayan States, Jammu and Kashmir. 100% Central funding for UTs without legislature.

### WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT IN PM SHRI SCHOOLS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introduction of vocational education</li> <li>➤ Smart classrooms in all schools</li> <li>➤ CCTVs</li> <li>➤ Green schools with LED lights, activities promoting green schools</li> <li>➤ Digital libraries, ICT and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>digital initiatives, tablet for schools</li> <li>➤ Rainwater harvesting facility</li> <li>➤ Solar panels in schools</li> <li>➤ Science labs, language lab, social science lab</li> <li>➤ Gender equity initiative like sanitary pad vending machines, counselling for students</li> </ul>
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## Ex-Post Facto Green Clearances

- The **Supreme Court**, by a **2:1 majority**, recalled its **Vanashakti** judgment (May 2025) that had barred **post-facto environmental clearances (ECs)**.
- Ex post facto EC** is when a project **gets environmental clearance after it has already started**, instead of getting it **before starting**, to retrospectively legalise the violation.
- According to **Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2006** under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, certain categories of projects like mining, industrial expansion, and real estate need **prior EC**: Category 'A' assessed by **MoEFCC**, Category 'B' by **State EIA Authorities**.

- Due to widespread violations, a 2017 EIA notification allowed **limited ex post facto ECs** for projects violating EC requirements until 14 March 2017.
- Later a 2021 Office Memorandum (OM), provided a framework including **conditional ECs, demolition, penalties, bank guarantees, and restoration plans.**
- The **Vanashakti judgment** had held that granting retrospective clearances (ex post facto) in any form to regularise illegal constructions was clearly illegal
- However, the court now noted that strictly invalidating all ex post facto ECs and ordering mass demolitions could **create more pollution and harm public interest.**
- The Court reasoned that demolishing a large number of constructions at once may be impractical and environmentally damaging, so a **nuanced approach is needed** rather than blanket invalidation.

## Revised FDTL regulation for flight crews



Weekly rest period increased from **36 hours** to **48 hours**



Definition of night duty covers **12AM-6AM** compared to 12AM-5AM previously



Maximum of **2 landings** for night operations



Airlines to share regular **fatigue reports**



Operations encroaching into night timings: Maximum flight time **limited to 8 hours**, flight duty period **restricted to 10 hours**

**CapTable**  
A Yearly Product

Source: The CapTable research

## Flight Duty Time Limitation

- **DGCA** granted IndiGo a temporary one-time exemption from certain night operation norms under the new **Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL)** rules amid mass cancellations..
- **The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** is India's **apex regulatory body** overseeing civil aviation, established in 1946.
- **Operating under the Ministry of Civil Aviation**, the DGCA is responsible for **Licensing** (Issuing licenses to pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, and air traffic controllers), **Safety Oversight**, Regulatory Framework & Training Oversight.
- **The FDTL** are laid down by the **DGCA** to ensure **adequate rest timings for pilots and flight attendants** and prevent fatigue-related safety issues.
- Under the new FDTL rules, the weekly **rest period for pilots was increased to 48 hours from 36**, and night landings were **limited to two from six earlier.**