

# FINDER

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## FORTUNE IAS NEWS DAILY EXPLAINER

### The continued pursuit of the perfect election

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies. Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

#### 1. Context

- Elections in India are regular due to constitutional requirements.
- Recent Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal are distinct in context.
- They **follow a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which has reduced and updated voter lists.**
- This **revision has heightened political tensions between Opposition-ruled States and the Central government.**

#### 2. Scale, Accessibility, and Management of Elections in India

- **Conducting elections across vast and remote areas** highlights the extraordinary scale of India's electoral process.
- **Around 25 lakh officials manage 17.4 crore voters,** ensuring large-scale election administration.
- **Officials are bound to the Representation of the People Act,** ensuring neutrality under the Election Commission of India.
- The **ECI deploys observers and reshuffles officials to ensure free and fair elections,** though it faces criticism.
- Fewer polling phases, like in West Bengal, reflect improving election management and governance.

#### 3. Four 'M' Challenges in Elections

- The **Election Commission of India focuses on tackling the 4Ms: Money, Muscle, Misinformation, and Model Code of Conduct (MCC) violations.**
- **Muscle power has reduced, but political violence and post-poll tensions** remain concerns.
- Electoral bribes like cash, freebies, and pre-poll transfers distort fair competition.
- **Misinformation, fake news, and deepfakes increasingly influence** voter perception.
- **Frequent violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) through religion, caste, or community-based appeals create divisions** among voters and affect free and fair elections.

#### 4. Measures, Reforms, and Voter Participation

- Election Commission of India **uses surveillance teams and observers to prevent malpractice.**
- **Seizures of cash and liquor** help curb electoral bribery.
- **Ad rules and digital monitoring** control misinformation.
- **Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)** improves awareness.
- Inclusive steps like home voting and **better Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) increase accessibility.**

#### 5. Role of the Voter

- Voters **must make informed and moral choices, protecting the value of their vote.**
- **Citizens should resist fake narratives, provocations, and misleading campaigns.**
- **Rejecting bribes, freebies, and false promises** is essential for fair elections.
- **Responsible voting strengthens democracy** and upholds the Constitution of India.

## A flame the state cannot guarantee

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

### 1. Context

- **India's LPG crisis (March 2026) was triggered by disruptions in West Asia**, especially the Strait of Hormuz, exposing import dependence.
- Common reasons like supply disruption and low storage ignore the real problem: weak welfare support systems.
- The **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana expanded LPG access to over 10 crore poor households, increasing national coverage.**
- **Despite wide coverage, the scheme failed to protect households** during supply shocks.

The **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** is a flagship scheme of the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** launched in **May 2016** to provide clean LPG cooking fuel to poor households.

It offers financial support for LPG connections along with a free first refill and stove to beneficiaries.

### 2. Shift from State Supply to Market Dependence

- The issue is not LPG expansion but the replacement of the earlier kerosene-based Public Distribution System (PDS).
- **Transition to LPG reduced direct state control over fuel supply** and distribution.
- **Many states became kerosene-free**, making households dependent on global LPG markets.
- **India relies heavily on imports**, with most LPG passing through the vulnerable Strait of Hormuz.
- **Lack of sufficient reserves and backup systems makes the welfare system fragile** during supply disruptions.

### 3. Gaps in Sovereign Responsibility

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana **showed state support, but supply depends on global markets.**
- Crises **expose lack of backup infrastructure.**
- **Poor households struggle with high refill costs, forcing many to revert to traditional fuels like biomass.**
- **Social inequalities (caste, rural access) and gender burdens worsen the impact**, with women facing the worst effects of supply failures.
- Solutions include **building LPG reserves, diversifying import routes, and promoting alternatives like the GOBARdhan scheme** to ensure reliable and resilient energy access.

### 4. Conclusion

- **Welfare success focused on connections**, not reliability during crises.
- **Lack of buffers, plans, and alternatives weakens** the system.
- **True welfare must ensure supply** even during disruptions.

## On the implications of euthanasia

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Current events of national and international importance

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

### 1. Context

Active euthanasia involves a **direct, deliberate act** to end a patient's life, such as administering a lethal injection.

**Passive euthanasia** involves **withdrawing or withholding** life-sustaining treatment (like ventilators or feeding tubes) to allow a natural death.

- The **Supreme Court** in *Harish Rana v. Union of India* (2026) allowed, for the first time, the withdrawal of **Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH)**, raising **ethical, legal, and social implications (ELSI)** of passive euthanasia.

- The **right to die with dignity** has been recognised as part of **Article 21 (Right to Life)** in *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2018).
- The Court also linked the right to die with dignity to the **right to receive quality palliative care**.
- **Passive euthanasia** and **Advance Medical Directives (living wills)** were first recognised in *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India* (2011).
- The *Common Cause* (2023) judgment simplified procedures by removing the requirement of **two medical boards** and **mandatory judicial oversight** in every case.
- The Court clarified that the term “**passive euthanasia**” is **obsolete and misleading**, as it creates confusion between **acts and omissions**.

## 2. Ethical Implications

- **Birth and death as natural processes** suggest that human interference in ending life may be seen as unethical.
- However, life is also **sociological**, where **dignity** is central, making a **dignified death** equally important.
- The **principle of autonomy** allows patients or their families to decide on refusal of **life-sustaining treatment**.
- The **principle of beneficence** requires doctors to act in the **best interest of the patient**, including relief from suffering.
- The **principle of non-maleficence** ensures that no harm is caused; prolonged suffering due to futile treatment may itself be harmful.
- The **principle of justice** ensures fairness and prevents misuse or discrimination.
- The **Theory of Double Effect (St. Thomas Aquinas)** justifies the act, as withdrawal of life support leads to both **death and relief from suffering**, and if the intention is relief, it is ethically acceptable.

## 3. Legal Framework

- The **right to die with dignity** is recognised as a **fundamental right under Article 21**.
- **Living wills (Advance Directives)** enable individuals to refuse **life-prolonging treatment** in advance.
- The Court simplified procedures by removing **multiple medical boards** and reducing **judicial intervention**.

- **Withdrawal or withholding of treatment** is not considered **abandonment of the patient**.
- **Palliative and end-of-life care** must continue even after withdrawal of life support.

## 4. Social Implications

- The judgment reflects a shift from **rigid moral traditions** to a **rights-based and compassionate approach**.
- It prioritises **quality of life** over mere **prolongation of life**.
- Long-term life-support treatment creates significant **economic burden on families**, especially among **middle- and lower-income groups**.
- There is a risk of **misuse**, particularly for **vulnerable groups** like the elderly, disabled, and poor.
- Decisions may be influenced by **financial stress, social neglect, or family pressure**.
- Critics argue that it may lead to **disguised abandonment** of patients.
- There is a need to balance **accessibility with safeguards** to prevent misuse.

## What the Meta-YouTube ruling means for social media

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Current events of national and international importance

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

## 1. Context

- A **Los Angeles Superior Court jury (March 25, 2026)** held **Meta Platforms** and **Alphabet's YouTube** liable for designing platforms that **foster addiction and harm mental health**.
- The case involved a **20-year-old woman (Kaley)** who developed **social media addiction from a young age**.
- The jury awarded **\$3 million in compensatory damages** (70% Meta, 30% YouTube) and **up to \$3 million in punitive damages**, pending judicial confirmation.
- The **final judgment is yet to be formalised**.

- **Snapchat and TikTok** settled with the plaintiff before trial; terms remain undisclosed.

## 2. Key Findings and Evidence

- The plaintiff used **YouTube at age 6** and **Instagram at age 9**, influenced by **addictive design features**.
- Features like **infinite scroll, autoplay, and algorithm-driven notifications** were designed to **“hook” users**.
- This led to **depression, anxiety, and body dysmorphia**.
- The case framed platforms as **“defective products”**, focusing on **design rather than content**, bypassing **Section 230 immunity**.
- Evidence included **internal documents, expert testimony, and user data**, including the **“Facebook Files” (2021)** showing **32% of teen girls felt worse due to Instagram**.
- **YouTube’s algorithm** was criticised for promoting increasingly engaging content to maximise **watch time**.

**Section 230** of the 1996 Communications Decency Act is a foundational U.S. law protecting online platforms from liability for **user-generated content**.

## 3. Legal Significance

- The verdict **shifts liability from content to platform design**, marking a major legal shift.
- It challenges **Section 230 protections**, which traditionally shield platforms from liability.
- In **Gonzalez v. Google (2023)** and **Twitter v. Taamneh (2023)**, courts refused to hold platforms liable for **algorithmic amplification of content**.
- The present ruling departs from this trend by targeting **addictive design and algorithmic systems**.

## 4. Implications and Regulation

- A **New Mexico jury (2026)** also found Meta liable for exposing children to **harmful content and predators**.
- The ruling may force **redesign of engagement-driven features** and increase **algorithmic transparency demands** (e.g., **Algorithmic Accountability Act**).
- With **1,600+ pending lawsuits**, it may trigger **copycat litigation**.

- As per **Pew Research Center**, **half of American teens use YouTube/Instagram daily**, highlighting scale.
- **California** and the **U.S. federal government** are considering stricter **child-safety and transparency laws**.
- Countries like **Australia** and the **U.K.** are exploring **restrictions on minors’ social media use**.
- If upheld, it could mark a shift where **algorithmic design is judged for societal and psychological impact**.

## KEYWORDS

### GOBARdhan scheme

- The Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan) scheme was **launched in 2018 under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase II for rural waste management**.
- The **nodal ministry is the Ministry of Jal Shakti**, and it is **implemented by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation**.
- The scheme **aims to convert organic waste such as dung and crop residue into biogas, compressed biogas (CBG), and organic manure**.
- It promotes rural income, clean energy, sanitation, and a circular economy.
- The scheme is implemented through household, community, cluster, and commercial CBG models.
- A **Unified Registration Portal has been introduced to facilitate** the registration of biogas and CBG plants.
- Recent measures include setting up new plants, promoting CBG blending targets, and providing fiscal incentives.

### Systematic Voters’ Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)

- Systematic Voters’ Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) is a **flagship programme of the Election Commission of India launched in 2009**.
- It **aims to promote voter awareness, education, and informed participation** in elections.

- The programme is designed **based on socio-economic, cultural, and demographic factors and past voting trends.**
- It operates at multiple levels: booth, district, state, and national for wider outreach.
- SVEEP **uses print, electronic, and social media platforms to disseminate voter awareness materials.**

### Six Sigma Process

- Six Sigma is a data-driven methodology used to **improve quality by reducing defects** and variations in processes, aiming for **zero-defect production.**
- It follows a structured approach called **DMAIC—Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control**—to systematically solve problems and improve processes.
- The main goal of Six Sigma is to achieve **near-perfect performance** and **enhance customer satisfaction** through consistent, **error-free quality.**
- In India, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has linked government incentives with adherence to Six Sigma and quality design standards.

## Places in News

### Kharg Island

- Kharg Island is a small coral island in the Persian Gulf, located about 25 km off Iran's coast.
- It is Iran's **main oil export terminal**, handling around **90% of the country's crude oil exports.**
- The island has **large oil storage facilities** (about 30 million barrels) and can load multiple supertankers.
- Its **deep-water location** allows very large oil tankers to dock easily, unlike much of Iran's shallow coastline.
- It is connected by pipelines to major oil fields such as **Ahvaz, Marun, and Gachsaran**, making it central to Iran's energy network.
- Due to heavy dependence on this single hub, it is considered Iran's **key economic and strategic vulnerability.**
- Amid escalating US–Iran tensions in 2026, Donald Trump **threatened to “obliterate” Iran's key oil hub Kharg Island** if a deal is not reached and the Strait of Hormuz is not reopened.

