



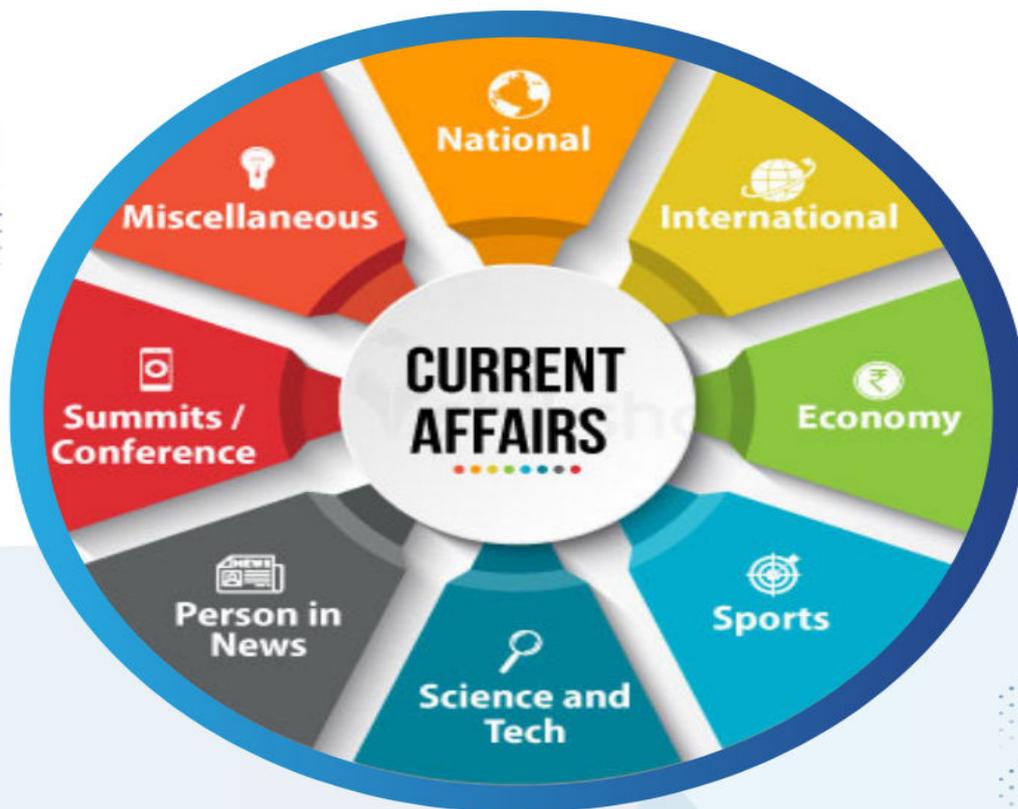
“ We help you reach for the star ”

VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 10/10/2025 (FRIDAY)



9972258970 & 9740702455

#317/A SKB Arcade, D. Subbaiah Road,
Ramaswamy Circle, Mysuru-570004



Table of Contents

1. India–U.K. £350-Million Defence & Strategic Cooperation Deal.....	2
2. Rajasthan’s Stand on ‘No Horizontal Quota’ Policy for Transgender Persons	3
3. Karnataka Approves Menstrual Leave Policy – 2025	5
4. Israel–Hamis Ceasefire Agreement under U.S.-Brokered Plan (2025)	7
5. Supreme Court Halts Aravalli Jungle Safari Project – Ecological and Legal Implications	9
6. Can a Joint Parliamentary Committee Function Without the Opposition? – Constitutional and Political Implications.....	12
7. India to Prepare National ‘Red List’ to Assess Extinction Risk of 11,000 Species (2025–2030).....	14
8. Kerala Passes ‘Right to Public Service Bill’ – Ensuring Time-Bound, Accountable Governance.....	16
9. Supreme Court Upholds Reproductive Autonomy in Surrogacy: Age Bar Not Retrospective	18
10. PM to Launch Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana & Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses 20	
11. India’s Worsening Mental Health Crisis – A Public Health and Governance Challenge.....	23
12. Election Commission’s Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls – Ensuring Clean and Credible Voter Lists	25
13. Judicial Officers with Seven Years’ Bar Experience Eligible for District Judge Posts: Supreme Court Ruling	28



1. India–U.K. £350-Million Defence & Strategic Cooperation Deal

1. Key Highlights of the Agreement

- **Defence Procurement:**
India signed a **£350-million deal** with the **United Kingdom** for the procurement of **Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMM)** for the **Indian Army**.
- **Manufacturing Base:**
The missiles will be **U.K.-manufactured in Belfast**, supporting the U.K.'s domestic defence industry and India's modernisation drive.
- **Naval Collaboration:**
A separate **£250-million collaboration** has been agreed upon for **electric-powered engines** for **Indian Naval ships**, promoting sustainable defence technologies.



2. Investment & Economic Cooperation

- **Indian Investments in the U.K.:**
Around **64 Indian companies** have committed **£1.3 billion (≈ ₹15,430 crore)** in investments in the U.K., indicating robust bilateral trade confidence.
- **Trade and Business Expansion:**
These investments align with the ongoing **India-U.K. Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** negotiations, fostering mutual economic growth and job creation.

3. Educational Partnership

- **Foreign Universities in India:**
The **University of Lancaster** and the **University of Surrey** have received approval to establish **campuses in India** under the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** framework.
- **Significance:**
This marks the beginning of direct **foreign higher education presence** in India, addressing the growing demand for global academic exposure among Indian students.

4. Strategic and Defence Significance

- **Towards a Complex Weapons Partnership:**
The missile deal serves as a **precursor to a broader defence collaboration** termed a “**Complex Weapons Partnership**,” currently under negotiation between the two nations.
- **Defence Diplomacy:**
Strengthens **India's defence ties with a key NATO member** and promotes joint R&D, technological exchange, and industrial linkages.

5. Legal & Institutional Context

- **Constitutional & Policy Framework:**
 - Guided by **Article 73 & Article 246 (List I – Entry 13)** of the Constitution empowering the Union Government to manage foreign affairs and defence agreements.



- Governed by **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020** and **Strategic Partnership Model**, encouraging co-development and co-production with foreign partners.
- **Alignment with National Missions:**
 - Supports ‘**Atmanirbhar Bharat**’ through technology infusion and defence indigenisation.
 - Complements ‘**Make in India**’ and ‘**Defence Production & Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020**’.

6. Broader Geopolitical Implications

- Enhances **Indo-U.K. strategic partnership** under the “**Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2021)**” framework.
- Counters increasing **China’s naval influence** in the Indo-Pacific through enhanced maritime cooperation.
- Supports the vision of a **Free, Open, and Secure Indo-Pacific**, aligning with **QUAD principles**.

Definition of Key Term

- **Lightweight Multirole Missile (LMM):**
A **precision-guided, short-range missile** capable of being deployed from land, sea, or air platforms, designed for high mobility and quick reaction in modern combat.

Conclusion

This defence and economic cooperation signifies **deepening strategic, technological, and educational linkages** between India and the U.K. It reflects a shift towards **comprehensive bilateral engagement**, encompassing security, innovation, and human capital development.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** International Relations – India and U.K. bilateral ties.
- **GS Paper III:** Defence Technology, Indigenisation, and Economic Development.
- **Essay Paper:** “Technology as the new pillar of diplomacy” / “Defence self-reliance and global partnerships.”
- **Prelims Focus:** LMM missile, Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020, Foreign University Campuses under NEP 2020.

2. Rajasthan’s Stand on ‘No Horizontal Quota’ Policy for Transgender Persons

1. Background of the Case

- The **Rajasthan High Court (Jodhpur Bench)** is hearing a petition filed by **Ganga Kumari**, challenging the **2023 State circular** that classified **transgender persons under the OBC category** for reservation purposes.
- The petitioner contends that this move ignores the **distinct social and educational backwardness** of transgender persons and fails to ensure **true representational justice**.
- The demand is for a **separate horizontal reservation**, akin to the quotas for **women, PwDs, and ex-servicemen**, which cut across all vertical categories.



2. Government's Argument

- The **Rajasthan government** defended its stance, stating that **formulating or restructuring reservation policy** lies within **executive and legislative competence**, not judicial domain.
- The **Additional Advocate General (AAG) Praveen Khandelwal** argued that the petitioner failed to provide **empirical or statistical evidence** showing that horizontal reservation would enhance proportional representation.
- The government maintained that transgender inclusion within the **OBC list** already provides access to reservation benefits under the **existing vertical framework**.



3. Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 14:** Equality before law and equal protection of laws.
 - **Article 15(1) & (2):** Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes **gender identity** as per judicial interpretation.
 - **Article 15(4) & 16(4):** Allow the State to make **special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes (SEBCs)**.
 - **Article 16(1):** Guarantees equality of opportunity in public employment.
- **Judicial Reference:**
 - **NALSA v. Union of India (2014):** Recognized transgender persons as the **“third gender”** and directed the government to treat them as **socially and educationally backward classes (SEBCs)** to provide reservation in education and employment.
 - However, **NALSA did not specify** whether such reservation should be **horizontal or vertical**, leading to interpretational ambiguity among States.

4. Conceptual Clarification: Vertical vs. Horizontal Reservation

- **Vertical Reservation:** Applies to specific caste-based categories like SC, ST, and OBC.
- **Horizontal Reservation:** Cuts across vertical categories, applicable to special groups like women, PwDs, ex-servicemen, etc.
- **Issue in Rajasthan:** The government included transgender persons **vertically under OBC**, but activists demand **horizontal reservation across all castes**, recognizing them as a distinct socio-legal category beyond caste.

5. Wider Implications and Policy Concerns

- **Judicial vs. Executive Domain:** The case raises the question of **judicial overreach** versus **policy discretion** in defining reservation structures.
- **Representation and Inclusion:** Without horizontal quota, **transgender individuals from upper castes** or non-OBC backgrounds may remain **excluded** from reservation benefits.
- **National Precedents:**



- **Tamil Nadu (2021) and Karnataka (2022)** have implemented **horizontal reservations for transgender persons**, setting important precedents for inclusive governance.

6. Definition of Key Term

- **Horizontal Reservation:** A system where certain categories (e.g., women, PwDs, transgender persons) receive reservation **across all social groups (SC/ST/OBC/General)** to ensure inclusivity irrespective of caste or class.

Conclusion

The Rajasthan government's defence highlights the **constitutional tension between equality and affirmative action design**. While inclusion under OBC ensures some access, the absence of horizontal reservation may limit **effective representation** of transgender persons. The outcome of this case could significantly influence **India's evolving jurisprudence on gender justice and reservation policy**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Indian Constitution – Equality, Reservation Policies, and Judicial Review.
- **GS Paper I:** Social Issues – Gender Identity and Social Justice.
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics):** Issues of empathy, inclusiveness, and administrative sensitivity toward marginalized groups.
- **Prelims Focus:** NALSA Judgment (2014), Articles 14, 15, and 16, Vertical vs. Horizontal Reservation Concept.

3. Karnataka Approves Menstrual Leave Policy – 2025

1. Key Highlights of the Policy

- The Karnataka Cabinet has approved the **Karnataka Menstrual Leave Policy – 2025**, providing **one day of paid leave per month** for women employees.

- **Coverage:**

- Applies to **both government and private sectors**, making Karnataka the **first State in India** to ensure universal coverage.
- In comparison, **Odisha and Bihar** provide menstrual leave only for government employees, while **Kerala** has implemented it in **universities**.



- The policy represents a **landmark step toward workplace inclusivity** and recognition of **women's health rights**.

2. Objectives and Rationale

- **Primary Aim:** To recognize **menstrual health as a legitimate workplace concern** and promote gender-sensitive employment practices.
- **Specific Objectives:**
 - Reduce **stigma and absenteeism** associated with menstruation.



- Encourage **women's workforce participation** by improving comfort and health conditions.
- Promote **awareness of menstrual hygiene** as part of employee welfare.

- **Global Context:**

- Similar policies exist in **Japan, Spain, South Korea, and Indonesia**, reflecting a global trend of integrating reproductive health into labor rights.

3. Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Relevant Constitutional Provisions:**

- **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws.
- **Article 15(3):** Allows the State to make **special provisions for women and children**, legitimizing gender-based welfare measures.
- **Article 42 (Directive Principles):** Directs the State to ensure **humane work conditions** and **maternity relief**, extending its spirit to menstrual health.
- **Article 21:** Protects the **right to dignity and health**, interpreted to include **reproductive and menstrual health**.

- **Supporting Legal Frameworks:**

- **Factories Act, 1948** and **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961** ensure women's welfare but do not cover menstrual leave, making this policy a **progressive administrative expansion**.
- Aligns with India's obligations under the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**.

4. Policy Significance and Administrative Impact

- **Progressive Governance:**

- Positions Karnataka as a **pioneer State** in gender-inclusive labor welfare.
- Encourages **corporate participation** in gender-sensitive human resource reforms.

- **Implementation Mechanism:**

- To be jointly monitored by **Labour, Health, and Women & Child Development Departments**.
- Requires employers to **record and report compliance** within their HR policies.

- **Expected Outcomes:**

- Improved **employee well-being and productivity**.
- Enhanced **public awareness and normalization** of menstrual health discussions.

5. Socio-Economic and Gender Implications

- **Gender Justice Perspective:**

- Recognizes **biological differences** without compromising the principle of equality.
- Advances the idea of **substantive equality**, moving beyond formal equality under Article 14.



- **Workplace and Economic Impact:**
 - Reduces **health-related absenteeism** and supports **employee retention**.
 - Encourages **inclusive work environments**, particularly in labor-intensive and service sectors.
- **Social Empowerment:**
 - Validates **reproductive health rights** as integral to **human dignity and social justice**.
 - Helps dismantle **social taboos** and promotes menstrual literacy among working populations.

6. Definition of Key Term

- **Menstrual Leave:**
 - A **workplace entitlement** allowing menstruating employees to take leave during their menstrual cycle without loss of pay.
 - Aimed at ensuring **health, comfort, and gender-sensitive employment practices**.

Conclusion

- Karnataka's Menstrual Leave Policy – 2025 marks a **transformative step toward inclusive labor rights** in India.
- It bridges the gap between **public health, gender equity, and workplace welfare**, integrating **empathy with administrative policy**.
- The initiative may serve as a **model framework** for other States and private sectors to replicate under the broader goal of **gender-just governance**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections, Role of State Policies.
- **GS Paper I:** Social Issues – Women Empowerment and Gender Equality.
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics):** Empathy, Workplace Sensitivity, and Administrative Ethics.
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Article 15(3), Article 42, Article 21.
 - Karnataka as the first State covering both government and private sectors under menstrual leave.
 - Comparative examples: Odisha, Bihar, Kerala.

4. Israel– Hamas Ceasefire Agreement under U.S.-Brokered Plan (2025)

1. Key Highlights of the Ceasefire Agreement

- **Ceasefire Approval:** Israel's Cabinet, led by Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu**, approved the **Donald Trump–brokered ceasefire plan** to end the two-year Israel– Hamas conflict in Gaza.
- **Implementation Timeline:** The ceasefire is to **begin within 24 hours**, with Israel starting **withdrawal of forces** and Hamas **releasing all living hostages** within days.



- **Prisoner Exchange:** As part of the deal, Israel will release **about 2,000 Palestinian prisoners**, while Hamas will free remaining **Israeli hostages**, both alive and deceased.
- **Humanitarian Access:** The agreement includes **reopening border crossings** and allowing **large-scale humanitarian aid**, food, and medical supplies into Gaza.

2. Role of the United States and International Actors

- **U.S. Involvement:** The **United States will deploy around 200 troops** to Israel as part of a **multinational monitoring team**, but no American troops will enter Gaza.
- **Coordination Mechanism:** The **U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)** will establish a **civil-military coordination center** to supervise aid, logistics, and ceasefire compliance.
- **Multinational Support:** **Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, and the UAE** will participate in monitoring and mediation, marking a **regional consensus** on conflict de-escalation.
- **U.S. Diplomacy:** President Trump described the deal as a **“great day for the world”** and is expected to visit the region to reinforce diplomatic engagement.

3. Nature and Terms of the Agreement

- **Ceasefire Phases:**
 - *Phase I:* Immediate cessation of hostilities and release of hostages.
 - *Phase II:* Gradual Israeli military withdrawal and re-entry of humanitarian convoys.
- **Hamas Response:** Senior Hamas leader **Khalil al-Hayya** confirmed receiving **guarantees from the U.S. and mediators** that “the war is over.”
- **Peace Commitments:** Hamas pledged to pursue **Palestinian self-determination and statehood**, while Israel agreed to **limit operations to defensive positions** during the transition.



4. Context and Humanitarian Impact

- **Conflict Background:** The conflict began after the **October 7, 2023 Hamas attack**, which killed **1,200 Israelis**, triggering Israel’s large-scale offensive.
- **Casualties:** Over **67,000 Palestinians** have been killed according to Gaza’s Health Ministry, with entire neighborhoods destroyed and mass displacement.
- **Current Conditions:** Civilians are sheltering in tents amid severe shortages of water, food, and medicine; rescue teams have begun retrieving bodies from previously inaccessible areas.
- **International Repercussions:** The war has **isolated Israel diplomatically** and strained its relations even with the **U.S.**, as Trump pressured Netanyahu to finalize the deal.

5. Legal and Geopolitical Implications

- **International Law Dimensions:**
 - The ceasefire aligns with **UN Charter Article 33** (peaceful settlement of disputes) and **Geneva Conventions** governing protection of civilians in war zones.



- It could serve as a **precedent for monitored ceasefires** under multinational supervision in protracted conflicts.
- **Regional Stability:**
 - The agreement could reduce tensions involving **Iran, Yemen, and Hezbollah in Lebanon**, preventing further escalation in West Asia.
 - It reasserts the **U.S. as a central peace broker** in the Middle East amid shifting regional alliances.
- **India's Perspective:**
 - India has consistently supported a **two-state solution** and humanitarian relief in Gaza, balancing its ties with **Israel and the Arab world**.

6. Definition of Key Terms

- **Ceasefire:** A temporary or permanent suspension of hostilities between conflicting parties, often negotiated as a prelude to peace talks or humanitarian relief operations.
- **Hostage Exchange:** A diplomatic and humanitarian mechanism where conflicting parties release captives to build trust and facilitate conflict de-escalation.

Conclusion

The U.S.-mediated Israel– Hamas ceasefire represents a **major diplomatic breakthrough** after two years of devastating conflict. While humanitarian relief and prisoner exchanges mark a positive start, **long-term peace will depend on political reconciliation, governance of Gaza, and guarantees against future hostilities**. The agreement demonstrates the **continuing relevance of U.S. mediation** and the need for **multilateral oversight** to ensure durable stability in the region.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** International Relations – Middle East Conflicts, India's Foreign Policy and Global Governance.
- **GS Paper III:** Internal Security and Global Conflict Resolution Mechanisms.
- **Essay Paper:** Topics such as “*War and Diplomacy in a Multipolar World*” or “*Humanitarian Imperatives in Modern Warfare*.”
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Israel– Hamas Conflict Timeline (2023–2025).
 - Role of U.S. CENTCOM.
 - Geneva Conventions and Ceasefire Monitoring.
 - India's stance on the Two-State Solution.

5. Supreme Court Halts Aravalli Jungle Safari Project – Ecological and Legal Implications

1. Background and Supreme Court's Intervention



- The **Supreme Court (Bench: CJI B.R. Gavai and Justice K. Vinod Chandran)** has ordered the **Haryana government** to halt all work on the **Aravalli Jungle Safari Project** until the next hearing on **October 15, 2025**.
- The petition was filed by **five retired IFS officers** and the environmental collective **‘People for Aravallis’** as part of the ongoing forest conservation case – *T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad vs Union of India & Others (1995)*.
- Petitioners argue that the **10,000-acre project** prioritizes **commercial and tourism interests** over **ecological restoration**, in violation of **environmental protection principles** and **forest conservation laws**.

2. Project Overview and Scope

- **Project Objective:** Announced in **2022**, the Aravalli Jungle Safari aims to be the **“world’s largest zoo-safari park”** in **Gurugram and Nuh districts**, inspired by models like **Sharjah Safari (UAE)** and **Gir Sanctuary (Gujarat)**.
- **Planned Features:**
 - Four wildlife zones for **big cats**, herbivores, and exotic species.
 - **Aviary, herpetarium, botanical gardens, nature trails, underwater exhibits**, and theme-based zones (equatorial, desert, tropical, coastal).
 - Development under **‘Aravalli Foundation’** with international consultants.
- **Phase 1:** To cover **2,500 acres**, including “international-level” enclosures and a **‘Matri Van’** initiative planting **20,000 native trees**.
- **Estimated Cost:** Between **₹500 crore – ₹1,000 crore**, possibly through **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)** for sustainable financing.



3. Environmental and Ecological Concerns

- Petitioners describe the **Aravallis** as the **“ecological lungs of Delhi-NCR”**, serving as:
 - **Barrier against desertification** advancing from the Thar Desert.
 - **Groundwater recharge zone** vital for Delhi, Gurugram, and Faridabad.
 - **Air pollution sink and climate regulator** moderating NCR’s microclimate.
 - **Critical wildlife corridor** connecting Sariska, Ranthambore, and Delhi Ridge ecosystems.
- Critics argue that large-scale **construction of roads, hotels, animal enclosures, cable cars, and entertainment zones** will lead to **massive deforestation, habitat fragmentation, and ecological degradation**.
- Environmentalists stress the contradiction between **“eco-tourism”** and **“commercial exploitation”** in an **eco-sensitive zone (ESZ)** already suffering from **urbanization, mining, and encroachment**.

4. Legal and Constitutional Framework



- **Forest Conservation Act, 1980:** Restricts diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes without prior central approval.
- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986:** Mandates environmental impact assessments (EIA) before large-scale projects.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Protects wildlife habitats and prohibits destruction of ecological corridors.
- **Supreme Court Precedents:**
 - *T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad Case (1995)* – expanded the definition of “forest” and mandated judicial oversight of forest diversion.
 - *M.C. Mehta vs Union of India* – emphasized protection of the **Aravalli ecosystem** as an environmental priority.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 48A (DPSP):** Obliges the State to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
 - **Article 51A(g):** Fundamental duty of citizens to protect the natural environment.

5. Policy and Governance Dimensions

- The safari park was a **2024 election manifesto promise** of the Haryana government, projecting it as a “**green tourism**” initiative to generate revenue and employment.
- **Administrative Framework:** Creation of an **Aravalli Foundation** for planning and technical guidance, but the **lack of transparency in EIA clearance and funding** has raised concerns.
- **Critics’ Standpoint:** The project undermines India’s commitment to **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 13 & 15)** and violates **precautionary and intergenerational equity principles** under environmental jurisprudence.
- **Alternative Vision:** Petitioners advocate for **restoration and reforestation-based eco-restoration**, not **infrastructure-heavy eco-tourism**, to revive Aravalli’s natural ecosystem.

6. Definition of Key Term

- **Eco-Tourism:** Environmentally responsible travel to natural areas that **conserves the environment, sustains local communities, and educates visitors**, ensuring **minimal ecological footprint**.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court’s intervention underscores the **judicial commitment to environmental sustainability** and the need to reconcile **development with ecological preservation**. The Aravalli Safari case highlights the broader conflict between **economic ambitions and environmental prudence**. A balanced approach must prioritize **eco-restoration, legal compliance, and intergenerational environmental justice** to safeguard one of India’s most fragile ecosystems.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Role of Judiciary, and Environmental Regulation.
- **GS Paper III:** Environment and Ecology – Forest Conservation, Sustainable Development, Eco-Tourism.



- **Essay Paper:** “Balancing Development with Ecological Integrity” / “Judicial Activism in Environmental Governance.”
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Forest Conservation Act, 1980; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
 - *T.N. Godavarman Case (1995)* and *M.C. Mehta Judgments*.
 - Aravalli Range: ecological importance and threats.
 - Concept of Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs).

6. Can a Joint Parliamentary Committee Function Without the Opposition? – Constitutional and Political Implications

1. Background of the Issue

- The controversy surrounds the **Joint Committee of Parliament (JCP)** set up to examine three key Bills introduced in August 2025 —
 - **The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025**
 - **The Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2025**
 - **The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2025**
- These Bills propose **automatic dismissal of any minister (Union or State)**, including the Prime Minister or Chief Ministers, if detained for **30 consecutive days** on charges carrying a minimum **five-year imprisonment**.
- The **Opposition parties** have **not nominated members** to the JCP, raising a constitutional and procedural debate over whether a **Joint Committee can exist without Opposition representation**.



2. Current Developments and Government's Options

- Despite **multiple reminders** from the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the Opposition has not clarified whether they will **join or boycott** the JCP.
- The government is considering forming a **committee with members from the NDA, smaller parties, and Independents**.
- **Speaker Om Birla** has not yet nominated members, as doing so without proportional representation of Opposition parties may **breach parliamentary convention**.
- The **Opposition's division** within the INDIA bloc complicates the matter — while **Congress and Left** are open to joining, parties like the **TMC and SP** have termed the committee a “farce” and refused participation.

3. Constitutional and Legal Provisions Involved

- **Article 118(1):** Empowers Parliament to make rules for its own procedure, including the creation of committees.



- **Rules 125–331C of the Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure:** Govern formation, composition, and functioning of **Parliamentary Committees**, including Joint Committees.
- **Composition Principle:** Representation on such committees is based on **proportional strength of political parties** in both Houses, ensuring **non-partisan scrutiny**.
- **Convention and Precedent:**
 - No **Joint Committee of Parliament** has ever functioned **without Opposition members**.
 - A committee constituted solely with ruling party MPs would not qualify as a **parliamentary committee**, but rather as a **party-led advisory body**.

4. Expert Opinions and Institutional Concerns

- Former Lok Sabha Secretary-General **P.D.T. Achary** emphasized that forming a committee without Opposition would be “**unprecedented and unconstitutional in spirit**”, undermining **legislative credibility**.
- He suggested the **Speaker convene an all-party meeting** to achieve consensus and avoid “a procedural vacuum.”
- Legal experts argue that **bypassing Opposition participation** violates the **principle of parliamentary oversight and accountability**, which are central to **Article 75’s collective responsibility** framework.
- A one-sided committee would also risk **judicial scrutiny**, as it contradicts **parliamentary conventions** and the **basic structure principle of democracy**.

5. Political and Democratic Implications

- The move exposes **deepening legislative polarization** and weakening of **parliamentary deliberation norms**.
- If the JCP proceeds without Opposition, its recommendations may **lack legitimacy and bipartisan trust**.
- The issue also reflects tensions between **executive dominance and parliamentary scrutiny**, key features of **India’s semi-parliamentary democracy**.
- The Bills themselves raise important debates on **ministerial accountability, criminal jurisprudence**, and the **principle of presumption of innocence**, making inclusive discussion essential.

6. Definition of Key Term

- **Joint Committee of Parliament (JCP):**
A **bicameral committee** constituted with members from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to examine and report on a particular Bill or issue of national importance. It functions to ensure **detailed, cross-party scrutiny** of proposed legislation.

Conclusion

The ongoing impasse over the Joint Committee reflects a **constitutional dilemma between procedure and politics**. While the Speaker has the authority to constitute committees, **exclusion of the Opposition undermines democratic consultation and checks on executive power**. To uphold **parliamentary**



integrity and legislative legitimacy, consensus-based representation across political lines is vital. The outcome will test the resilience of **India's parliamentary conventions and institutional neutrality**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Indian Constitution – Parliamentary Procedures, Role of Speaker, Legislative Oversight.
- **GS Paper II:** Governance – Accountability, Checks and Balances in Democratic Institutions.
- **Essay Paper:** “Parliamentary Committees and the Spirit of Bipartisanship in Democracy.”
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Article 118 (Parliamentary Procedure)
 - Rules 125–331C, Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure
 - Joint Committee of Parliament – Composition and Functions
 - Principle of Collective Responsibility under Article 75.

7. India to Prepare National ‘Red List’ to Assess Extinction Risk of 11,000 Species (2025–2030)

1. Background and Objective of the Initiative

- The **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has launched a **five-year National Red List Assessment (2025–2030)** to evaluate the **extinction risk of about 11,000 species** — including **7,000 flora** and **4,000 fauna** — across India.
- This is **India's first-ever comprehensive national assessment** of species' conservation status, aligned with **IUCN global standards**.
- The initiative was unveiled by **Union Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh** at the **World Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** in Abu Dhabi.
- The aim is to establish a **nationally coordinated, participatory, and upgradable “Red Listing” system** that will reflect the **true conservation status of India's biodiversity** and guide policy action.



2. Global Context and International Commitments

- The project fulfills India's obligations under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and the **Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF)** adopted in **December 2022 at COP15**.
- It also aligns with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** — particularly **SDG 14 (Life Below Water)** and **SDG 15 (Life on Land)**.
- The **IUCN Red List** serves as the **global benchmark** for species conservation, categorizing species into groups such as *Extinct*, *Critically Endangered*, *Endangered*, *Vulnerable*, *Near Threatened*, *Least Concern*, *Data Deficient*, and *Not Evaluated*.



- India's National Red List will contribute data to IUCN's global database, thereby strengthening **biodiversity monitoring and conservation accountability** at international forums.

3. Current Status of India's Biodiversity Assessments

- India hosts **55,726 plant species** (including algae, fungi, and microbes), of which only **3,501 plants (6.33%)** and **27 fungi species** have been globally assessed by IUCN.
- Out of **1,04,561 faunal species**, only **7,516 (7.2%)** have been assessed so far.
- Alarmingly, **1,012 species (13.4%)** fall under the **"threatened" category**, and **289** are **near threatened**.
- Additionally, **13.8% of assessed species are data deficient**, indicating significant research gaps.
- Of the **8,658 Indian species assessed globally**, **1,582 are endemic**, with high endemism seen in **amphibians (79%)** and **reptiles (54.9%)** — reflecting India's ecological uniqueness and vulnerability.

4. Institutional Framework and Implementation Strategy

- The project will be **jointly implemented** by:
 - **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** – assessing plant diversity.
 - **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** – assessing faunal species.
 - **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** – providing technical, field, and data support.
- It will adopt a **participatory and multi-stakeholder approach**, engaging **taxonomists, conservation biologists, NGOs, and academic experts**.
- The initiative will create a **centralized biodiversity database**, improving decision-making for conservation, habitat protection, and species recovery programs.
- The National Red List will be **updated periodically**, ensuring it remains dynamic and scientifically validated.

5. Constitutional, Legal, and Policy Framework

- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 48A (Directive Principles of State Policy):** The State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
 - **Article 51A(g) (Fundamental Duties):** Every citizen must protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife.
- **Legal Framework:**
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** – provides legal protection to threatened species.
 - **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** – ensures conservation, sustainable use, and equitable sharing of benefits from biological resources.
 - **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980** – restricts diversion of forest land for non-forest use.
- **Policy Linkages:**



- Supports **National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP)** and India's commitment to the **30x30 global biodiversity conservation target** (protecting 30% of land and marine areas by 2030).

6. Definition of Key Term

- **Red List (IUCN Red List):** A scientifically validated inventory that evaluates the **extinction risk of species** globally, categorizing them based on population trends, habitat quality, and threats. It serves as an essential tool for **biodiversity conservation and policy prioritization**.

Conclusion

India's National Red List Assessment (2025–2030) represents a **milestone in scientific biodiversity management**, integrating global conservation norms with local ecological realities. It will help identify **vulnerable species, data gaps, and conservation priorities**, enabling evidence-based policymaking. As biodiversity loss intensifies globally, this initiative reflects **India's leadership in fulfilling its international biodiversity commitments** and promoting **ecological stewardship for sustainable development**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Environment, Biodiversity Conservation, and International Environmental Agreements.
- **GS Paper II:** Government Policies and Interventions for Environmental Governance.
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF).
 - IUCN Red List Categories.
 - National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP), Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
 - Role of BSI, ZSI, and WII in species conservation.

8. Kerala Passes 'Right to Public Service Bill' – Ensuring Time-Bound, Accountable Governance

1. Key Features of the Kerala Right to Public Service Bill, 2025

- The **Kerala Legislative Assembly** has passed the **Kerala Right to Public Service Bill**, which mandates **time-bound delivery of government services** and penalizes officials responsible for undue delays.
- Every **government office** must publicly display:
 - The **list of services** provided.
 - The **maximum number of days** for delivery.
 - The **designated officer** responsible for the service.
 - The **appellate authority** for grievance redressal.
- The law seeks to institutionalize **transparency, accountability, and citizen-centric governance**, aligning with the principles of **good governance** under the Indian Constitution.



2. Provisions for Accountability and Penalty



- The Bill empowers the state to **levy fines on officials** who fail to deliver services within the prescribed time frame without valid justification.
- A **Right to Public Service Commission** will be established with powers to:
 - Take **suo motu cognizance** of delays or lapses.
 - **Recommend disciplinary or financial action** against erring officers.
- The Commission will be chaired by a **retired bureaucrat** of at least **Additional Secretary rank**, ensuring administrative expertise and neutrality.

3. Citizen-Centric Governance Measures

- Citizens will receive **acknowledgment receipts** for all applications (including online submissions).
- If a service request is **rejected**, the **reason must be communicated in writing** to the applicant.
- The Bill directs officials to **procure required documents internally** through inter-departmental coordination, minimizing the burden on citizens.
- These provisions collectively aim to reduce **bureaucratic red tape**, encourage **digital governance**, and promote **efficient public service delivery**.

4. Constitutional and Legal Framework

- **Constitutional Backing:**
 - **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before law, implying equal access to public services.
 - **Article 21:** Protects the right to life and dignity, encompassing **timely and efficient service delivery**.
 - **Article 38 & 39 (Directive Principles):** Mandate the State to ensure **justice, transparency, and public welfare**.
- **Comparable Legislations:**
 - **Madhya Pradesh (2010)** was the first state to enact a **Public Service Guarantee Act**, followed by **Bihar, Delhi, and Karnataka**, which inspired similar legislation.
 - At the Union level, the **Right to Service Bill (2011)** was proposed but not enacted nationally.
- **Legal Significance:** The Bill enhances **administrative accountability**, operationalizing the concept of **Right to Public Services** as part of **citizens' charter mechanisms** under the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)** recommendations.

5. Governance and Administrative Implications

- The law marks a shift from **rule-based to performance-based administration**, ensuring that **officials are answerable for delays**.
- It institutionalizes **service standards**, enabling citizens to monitor and demand delivery of essential public services.
- By empowering citizens with grievance redressal mechanisms, it strengthens **participatory and responsive governance**.



- The **Commission's quasi-judicial powers** ensure independence in investigating complaints and recommending penalties, enhancing administrative discipline.

6. Definition of Key Term

- **Right to Public Service:** A **statutory right** ensuring citizens receive public services from government offices within a **stipulated time period**, failing which responsible officials face **penalties or disciplinary action**. It operationalizes the concept of **administrative accountability** within the public sector.

Conclusion

The **Kerala Right to Public Service Bill, 2025** represents a landmark in **citizen empowerment and administrative reform**, institutionalizing **timeliness, transparency, and accountability** in governance. It strengthens the social contract between citizens and the State, aligning with the broader vision of **Good Governance, Digital India, and Minimum Government – Maximum Governance**. Successful implementation will depend on **inter-departmental coordination, grievance tracking, and capacity building** among public officials.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Polity and Governance – Citizen Charters, Transparency and Accountability in Governance, E-Governance.
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics):** Public Service Values, Integrity, and Accountability.
- **Essay Paper:** “Time-bound Service Delivery as the Foundation of Good Governance.”
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Kerala Right to Public Service Bill, 2025.
 - Article 14, 21, and 38.
 - Role of Public Service Commissions and Citizens' Charters.
 - Comparative Acts – Bihar and Madhya Pradesh Public Service Guarantee Acts.

9. Supreme Court Upholds Reproductive Autonomy in Surrogacy: Age Bar Not Retrospective

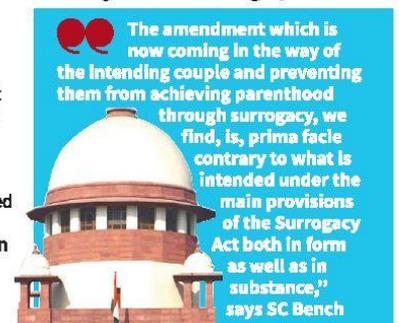
1. Background of the Case

- The **Supreme Court** clarified that the **age restrictions under the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021** would **not apply retrospectively** to couples who had **initiated the surrogacy process before the Act came into force on January 25, 2022**.
- The judgment was delivered by a **Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and K.V. Viswanathan** while hearing petitions from **three couples** who had begun surrogacy procedures prior to the enforcement of the Act but were later disqualified due to **new age limits** introduced under the law.

Easing the path

On March 14, 2023, government notified amendments to the law to ban the use of donor gametes, saying ‘intending couples’ must use their own gametes for surrogacy

■ Supreme Court says the amendment cannot contradict Rule 14(a), which specifically recognises the absence of a uterus or any allied condition as a medical indication necessitating gestational surrogacy





- The Court emphasized that **the law cannot operate retrospectively** to take away vested rights or frustrate ongoing legitimate reproductive procedures.

2. Key Provisions and Judicial Interpretation

- **Section 4(iii)(c)(I)** of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 mandates that intending couples must obtain an eligibility certificate confirming:
 - They are **legally married**;
 - The woman is **23–50 years old**, and the man is **26–55 years old**.
- The Court held that these conditions apply **only prospectively** from January 25, 2022.
- Couples who had already **commenced surrogacy procedures**, such as **creation and freezing of embryos or extraction of gametes**, would **not be disqualified** by the subsequent enforcement of the Act.
- The ruling reaffirmed the **principle against retrospective application of statutes**, protecting ongoing lawful activities from being invalidated by new legislation.

3. Constitutional and Legal Foundations

- **Article 21 of the Constitution:** The Court reaffirmed that the **right to reproductive autonomy** — including the right to make decisions regarding procreation and parenthood — is a **fundamental right** under the ambit of **right to life and personal liberty**.
- **Law Commission's 228th Report (2009):** Recognized surrogacy as a legitimate means for infertile couples to exercise their reproductive rights, deserving of **constitutional protection**.
- **Doctrine of Non-Retroactivity:** The Court invoked this interpretive rule to preserve **vested rights and legitimate expectations** of couples who had started lawful medical procedures prior to the enactment of the law.
- **Purpose of the Act:** The Court noted that the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021** aims to **regulate surrogacy and prevent commercial exploitation**, not to **invalidate or obstruct legitimate and ethical surrogacy arrangements**.

4. Broader Implications on Reproductive Rights and Autonomy

- The judgment expands the **jurisprudence on reproductive autonomy**, aligning it with prior rulings recognizing **decisional privacy and bodily integrity** as integral to **Article 21** (e.g., *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, 2017).
- The Court underscored that **reproductive choice** — whether to conceive naturally, adopt, or pursue surrogacy — forms part of **individual liberty and family life** protected under the Constitution.
- It recognized that **regulatory mechanisms** must not **disproportionately infringe** upon these fundamental rights under the guise of moral or procedural constraints.
- The decision balances **state regulation** with **individual autonomy**, ensuring that protective legislation does not become **restrictive in effect**.

5. Definition of Key Terms

- **Surrogacy:** A legal and medical arrangement where a woman (the surrogate) agrees to carry and give birth to a child on behalf of an intending couple.



- **Reproductive Autonomy:** The right of individuals or couples to make informed decisions regarding reproduction, including access to fertility treatments, contraception, and surrogacy, without coercion or discrimination.
- **Non-Retroactivity Principle:** A legal doctrine stating that laws apply prospectively unless explicitly stated otherwise, thereby protecting pre-existing rights and actions from retroactive penalization.

6. Significance of the Judgment

- Reinforces the **constitutional status of reproductive rights** as part of the **right to life and personal liberty**.
- Protects the **legitimate expectations** of couples who began surrogacy before the Act's commencement.
- Ensures **interpretive consistency** in applying laws in harmony with **fundamental rights jurisprudence**.
- Highlights the Supreme Court's proactive role in **safeguarding human dignity and personal choices** against overbroad statutory restrictions.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's ruling on the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, reaffirms India's commitment to **protecting reproductive autonomy and personal liberty** under Article 21. By ensuring that the Act does not operate retrospectively, the Court preserved the **rights and dignity of intending couples** who pursued surrogacy in good faith. This judgment strikes a crucial balance between **ethical regulation and individual freedom**, setting a precedent for interpreting social legislation in line with **constitutional morality** and **human rights principles**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Indian Constitution – Fundamental Rights, Judicial Review, and Social Legislation.
- **GS Paper II:** Government Policies – Health, Family Welfare, and Gender Issues.
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics):** Dignity, Autonomy, and Moral Responsibility in Lawmaking.
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 – Key Provisions and Objectives.
 - Article 21 and Reproductive Rights.
 - Law Commission of India 228th Report.
 - Doctrine of Non-Retroactivity.

10. PM to Launch Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana & Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses

1. Overview of the Initiatives

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will launch two major agricultural schemes — the **Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)** and the **Mission for Aatmanirbharta in**



Pulses — on **October 11, 2025**, commemorating the birth anniversary of **Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan**.

- Both schemes, announced in the **Union Budget 2025–26** and approved by the **Union Cabinet**, will be implemented from the **Rabi season of 2025–26** and continue till **2030–31**.
- The primary objective is to achieve **self-reliance in pulses**, enhance **agricultural productivity**, and reduce India's **import dependency** on key food crops, particularly **pulses and oilseeds**.



2. Objectives and Key Features of the Schemes

- **Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY):**
 - Aims to strengthen the **agricultural value chain** by integrating **production, processing, storage, and marketing**.
 - Focus on **crop diversification**, soil health management, and the use of **climate-resilient technologies**.
 - Will support the **creation of infrastructure** for storage, irrigation, and post-harvest management to reduce wastage.
- **Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses:**
 - A national program to increase **domestic pulse production**, reduce **imports**, and promote **research and innovation** in high-yielding pulse varieties.
 - Encourages **crop intensification, intercropping**, and **use of improved seed varieties** suited to diverse agro-climatic zones.
 - Will ensure **minimum support price (MSP) assurance**, efficient procurement, and support for **processing units** to add value and enhance farmers' income.

3. Associated Developmental Projects and FPO Empowerment

- During the launch event at the **Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), Pusa (New Delhi)**, the PM will inaugurate **over 1,100 agricultural projects worth ₹42,000 crore** across sectors such as **animal husbandry, fisheries, food processing, and allied industries**.
- The PM will also **interact with beneficiaries** of Central schemes and **felicitate members of successful Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs)**.
- India had set a target to form **10,000 FPOs by 2020**, which has been achieved. Over **52 lakh farmers** are now shareholders in these FPOs.
- About **1,100 FPOs** recorded a **turnover exceeding ₹1 crore annually** in FY 2024–25, contributing to a **combined turnover of ₹15,000 crore** — marking a significant step toward **collective and cooperative farming success**.

4. Broader Economic and Policy Context

- India has achieved **self-sufficiency in rice and wheat**, but continues to rely on **imports of pulses and edible oils**, affecting food security and trade balance.
- These schemes align with the **vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India)** and aim to:



- Boost **domestic production** of pulses and oilseeds.
- Strengthen **agri-infrastructure** through public and private investment.
- Promote **agri-entrepreneurship** and **value addition** through FPOs.
- The programs are also expected to help India meet commitments under **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)** and **SDG 12 (Sustainable Production and Consumption)**.

5. Constitutional and Legal Framework

- **Constitutional Backing:**
 - **Article 38 & 39(b):** Promote economic welfare and equitable distribution of resources.
 - **Article 48:** Directs the State to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines.
- **Relevant Legislations and Policies:**
 - **National Food Security Act, 2013** – ensures food availability through efficient agricultural systems.
 - **Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020** – regulates key agricultural produce to maintain availability and affordability.
 - **National Policy for Farmers (2007)** – emphasizes income security, diversification, and access to technology.

6. Definition of Key Terms

- **Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO):** A collective of farmers registered under the Companies Act or Co-operative Societies Act to enhance collective bargaining, improve market access, and share profits.
- **Aatmanirbharta (Self-Reliance):** A policy approach emphasizing domestic capability, resilience, and reduced dependence on imports through innovation and local production.

Conclusion

The launch of **PMDDKY and Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses** marks a major step toward **agricultural transformation and food sovereignty** in India. By integrating innovation, infrastructure, and institutional reform, the schemes aim to empower farmers, strengthen agri-value chains, and ensure sustainable productivity. This initiative reinforces the **goal of doubling farmers' income** and achieving **nutritional and economic self-reliance**, aligning with the broader vision of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Government Policies and Interventions for Agricultural Development.
- **GS Paper III:** Issues in Agriculture – Food Security, Crop Diversification, and Self-Reliance.
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics):** Commitment to Rural Development and Social Justice.
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY).
 - Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses.

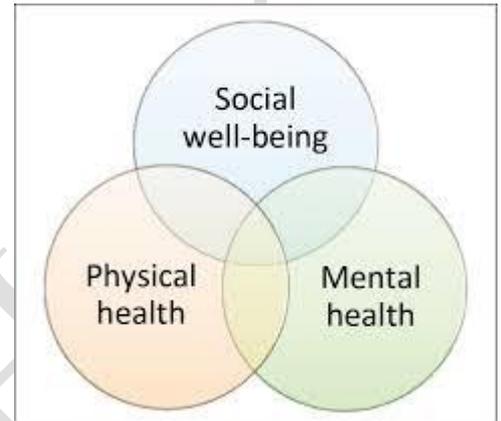


- Role of FPOs in India's Agricultural Economy.
- Articles 38, 39(b), and 48 – Directive Principles of State Policy.

11. India's Worsening Mental Health Crisis – A Public Health and Governance Challenge

1. Scale and Nature of India's Mental Health Crisis

- India is facing an **alarming mental health emergency**, cutting across **rural and urban populations, students, farmers, homemakers, and professionals**.
- According to the **National Crime Records Bureau (ADSI 2023)**, India recorded **1,71,418 suicides**, marking a **0.3% increase** from 2022. Despite this, the **suicide rate per lakh fell slightly** due to population growth.
- **Men accounted for 72.8%** of all suicides, with **family issues (31.9%), illness (19%), and relationship/marriage-related distress (10%)** as major causes.
- **Farmer suicides** stood at **10,786 (6.3%)**, mainly in **Maharashtra and Karnataka**, while **urban youth suicides** linked to educational stress (e.g., Kota) are rising sharply.
- **Nearly 230 million Indians** live with mental disorders such as **depression, anxiety, and substance-use conditions**, with **treatment gaps between 70%–92%** due to stigma, lack of access, and cost.



2. Institutional and Systemic Gaps

- India has only **0.75 psychiatrists per 1,00,000 population**, far below the **WHO minimum of 1.7** and ideal of 3 per lakh. There is also a severe shortage of **psychologists, nurses, and social workers**.
- Despite progressive laws like the **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017** (which decriminalized suicide and recognized mental healthcare as a right), **implementation remains weak**.
- The **National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2022)** aimed to reduce suicides by 10%, but suicide numbers have continued to rise.
- **Manodarpan**, the school-based psychosocial support scheme, remains largely inactive, and **mental health budgets (₹270 crore)** remain underutilized.
- In many institutions, “counselling” is **tokenistic**, handled by part-time teachers without professional training.

3. Technological Dependence and Emerging Ethical Challenges

- Due to social stigma and lack of access to professional care, **millions of Indians are turning to AI platforms (like ChatGPT)** for emotional support.
- This growing dependence highlights the **collapse of institutional mental health systems** and a **trust deficit in human social support structures**.



- The absence of **data privacy laws and ethical frameworks** in mental health-related AI tools poses serious **confidentiality and safety risks**.
- The government must urgently **regulate digital mental health platforms**, ensuring **mandatory disclaimers, crisis redirection features, and integration with licensed professionals**.

4. Policy, Legal, and Constitutional Framework

- **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017:**
 - Decriminalizes suicide (Section 115) and guarantees **right to affordable, accessible mental health care**.
 - Mandates establishment of **Mental Health Review Boards** and **community-based care infrastructure**.
- **National Suicide Prevention Strategy, 2022:**
 - Seeks to reduce suicide mortality by 10% by 2030.
 - Emphasizes inter-sectoral coordination between health, education, and agriculture ministries.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 21:** Protects the **Right to Life and Personal Liberty**, interpreted to include **mental well-being and dignity** (as per SC judgments in *Puttaswamy (2017)* and *Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)*).
 - **Directive Principles (Article 38, 47):** Direct the State to promote health, social welfare, and human dignity.

5. Way Forward and Structural Reforms Needed

- Treat **mental health as a national emergency**, establishing a **cross-ministerial task force** integrating Health, Education, Agriculture, and Women & Child Welfare ministries.
- Increase mental health funding and target **3–5 professionals per 1,00,000 people** within five years through training, scholarships, and rural incentives.
- Institutionalize **counselling as public infrastructure**—mandate full-time counsellors in every school, college, and district hospital.
- Launch **nationwide awareness campaigns** to reduce stigma and promote help-seeking behavior, focusing on **farmers, homemakers, students, and survivors of abuse**.
- Integrate **debt relief, livelihood support, and counselling** for farmers; create **community therapy networks** for women and **preventive care** in coaching hubs.

6. Definition of Key Terms

- **Mental Health:** A state of well-being in which individuals realize their potential, can cope with life stresses, work productively, and contribute to society (as per WHO).
- **Reproductive Autonomy (contextually linked):** The right of individuals to make personal decisions about reproduction and bodily autonomy without coercion.
- **Treatment Gap:** The percentage of individuals with mental disorders who do not receive adequate professional care.



Conclusion

India's mental health crisis reflects a **deep social and institutional failure** that cannot be solved by technology alone. Despite legal frameworks and progressive policies, implementation gaps, stigma, and underfunding persist. Mental health must be recognized as a **core component of public health, human rights, and social justice**, not as a peripheral concern. Building a compassionate, accessible, and accountable care system is essential to safeguard India's **youth, workforce, and national productivity** — and, above all, its **human dignity**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Government Policies, and Issues in Health Sector.
- **GS Paper I:** Social Issues – Health, Education, and Gender.
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics):** Compassion, Empathy, and Emotional Intelligence in Public Administration.
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Mental Healthcare Act, 2017; National Suicide Prevention Strategy, 2022.
 - Article 21 and Right to Mental Health.
 - NCRB's Accidental Deaths and Suicides Report (ADSI 2023).
 - Manodarpan initiative and WHO standards.

12. Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls – Ensuring Clean and Credible Voter Lists

1. Background and Context

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** has completed a **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of the **electoral rolls in Bihar**, the first of its kind, and plans to extend it to **other States in phases**.
- The revision gains importance as **Bihar Assembly elections are due in November 2025**, making it necessary to update voter lists and ensure accuracy before the polls.
- The SIR was conducted under **Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 (RP Act)**, which empowers the ECI to **prepare, revise, and conduct special updates** of electoral rolls at any time.
- The process involved submission of **enumeration forms**, verification of **citizenship documents**, and publication of **draft and final rolls**.

2. Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 324:** Empowers the Election Commission to supervise, direct, and control elections in India.
 - **Article 326:** Guarantees **universal adult suffrage**, ensuring every citizen aged 18 years and above has the right to vote.
- **Statutory Framework:**



- **Representation of the People Act, 1950:** Deals with **delimitation and preparation of electoral rolls** (especially Section 21).
- **Representation of the People Act, 1951:** Governs **election conduct and disputes**.
- **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 (RER):** Prescribes detailed procedures, forms, and verification methods for inclusion, correction, or objection in voter rolls.
- The **Supreme Court**, in an interim order during the Bihar SIR case, directed the EC to **accept Aadhaar as one of the valid identity documents** for verification, ensuring inclusion and transparency.

3. SIR Process and Mechanism

- The **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** process included:
 - Submission of **enumeration forms** by all voters (existing and new).
 - Submission of **citizenship proof** (mandatory for those registered after 2003).
 - Publication of **draft electoral rolls** based on submitted forms.
 - Allowing citizens to **file claims and objections** within a prescribed period.
 - **Verification and disposal** of claims by **Electoral Registration Officers (EROs)**.
 - Final publication of **updated rolls** (Bihar’s final roll was released on **September 30, 2025**).
- The EC will replicate this process **state by state**, in sync with upcoming **Assembly elections** across India.

Various forms with respect to **electoral rolls** as per RER

Form Number	Description
Form 6	Application to be submitted by new voters to be registered as an elector. As per section 19 of the RP Act, the qualifying dates for completion of 18 years of age, are 1st day of January, April, July and October of the year in which the electoral roll is prepared or revised.
Form 6A	Form for inclusion by an Overseas Elector. Non-Resident Indians who have shifted out of India, on account of education, employment or otherwise, can register as an elector in the constituency in which their address as per passport is located.
Form 7	Objection for proposed inclusion/deletion of name from existing roll. This form can be filed by a registered elector in a constituency in respect of any other registered elector or proposed inclusion in the roll or for deletion of applicant’s own name.
Form 8	Form for shifting residence/correction of entries. This form can be filed by a registered elector for shifting of residence or correction of entries.
Form 5	Notice of publication of draft electoral roll by the ERO.
Form 9	List of applications for inclusion of names received in Form 6.
Form 10	List of applications for objection to inclusion of names received in Form 7.
Form 11	List of objections/applications for correction of entries received in Form 8.
Form 11A	List of applications for shifting of address within the constituency received in Form 8.
Form 11B	List of applications for shifting of address outside the constituency received in Form 8.

*Forms 9 to 11B are prepared and published by the ERO



Field work: A Booth-Level Officer checks documents during the special intensive revision of the electoral roll, Araria district, Bihar, on July 8. Shashi Shekhar Kashyap

4. Important Electoral Forms (as per Registration of Electors Rules, 1960)

- **Form 6:** Application for inclusion of name in the electoral roll for first-time voters or migrants.



- **Form 6A:** Application for registration of **Overseas Electors** (Non-Resident Indians).
- **Form 7:** Used to raise **objections** or request **deletion of a name** from the roll.
- **Form 8:** Application for **correction of entries** in the existing voter list.
- **Form 8A:** Application for **shifting an elector's name** from one part of a constituency to another.
- Citizens are encouraged to verify the **draft electoral rolls**, use the correct forms for necessary updates, and ensure their names are correctly listed.

5. Significance and Public Responsibility

- **Clean and accurate electoral rolls** are crucial for **free and fair elections**, a cornerstone of India's democracy.
- Citizens should actively **verify their details**, especially if they have changed residences or reached voting age (18+).
- Political parties and civil society organizations should **assist marginalized and rural populations** to ensure no eligible voter is excluded.
- The EC is expected to **expand the timeframes** and **simplify verification procedures** in future SIR exercises to promote hassle-free participation.
- Inclusion of **Aadhaar linkage**, with appropriate data privacy safeguards, will further enhance transparency while preventing duplication.

6. Definition of Key Term

- **Special Intensive Revision (SIR):**
A **comprehensive voter roll verification exercise** undertaken by the Election Commission to update electoral rolls through physical verification, enumeration forms, and document validation to ensure that only eligible citizens are included and inaccuracies are corrected.

Conclusion

The **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** marks a proactive step by the Election Commission to uphold the **integrity of electoral rolls**—the foundation of India's democratic process. By combining **citizen participation, technological integration, and legal safeguards**, the exercise reinforces **voter inclusion, transparency, and electoral credibility**. It also underlines the shared responsibility of both **citizens and institutions** in preserving the sanctity of elections.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Polity – Election Commission, Representation of the People Act, Electoral Reforms.
- **GS Paper II:** Governance – Citizen Participation and Accountability.
- **Prelims Focus:**
 - Article 324 and Article 326 of the Constitution.
 - Representation of the People Act, 1950 and 1951.
 - Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 (Forms 6, 6A, 7, 8, 8A).
 - Supreme Court directives on Aadhaar use for electoral verification.



13. Judicial Officers with Seven Years' Bar Experience Eligible for District Judge Posts: Supreme Court Ruling

1. Background and Core Judgment

- A **Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court**, led by **Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai**, ruled that **judicial officers with seven years of experience as advocates before joining the judicial service** are eligible for appointment as **District Judges or Additional District Judges**.
- Earlier, **only practising advocates** with at least **seven years of continuous experience at the Bar** were eligible for **direct recruitment** to these posts under **Article 233(2)** of the Constitution.
- The Court's decision seeks to **infuse young and meritorious talent** into the **district judiciary**, which serves as the foundation of India's judicial system.



2. Key Highlights of the Supreme Court's Observations

- The Bench held that **“a lawyer does not cease to be one”** upon joining judicial service, and hence, prior experience at the Bar should count toward eligibility for promotion or appointment.
- It clarified that **Article 233(2)** does not prohibit judicial officers with prior advocacy experience from being considered for the post of District Judge.
- The Court further directed that the **minimum age** for consideration and appointment as **District or Additional District Judge** (for both advocates and judicial officers) should be **35 years** as of the date of application.
- This interpretation is aimed at addressing the **vacancy crisis** and enhancing the **quality of judicial leadership** in the district courts, which are often plagued by **case pendency and shortage of experienced judges**.

3. Constitutional and Legal Provisions Involved

- **Article 233 of the Constitution of India:**
 - **Clause (1):** Empowers the Governor of a State to appoint District Judges in consultation with the State's High Court.
 - **Clause (2):** States that a person **not already in the service of the Union or the State** shall be eligible for appointment as a District Judge **if they have been an advocate or pleader for at least seven years** and are recommended by the High Court.
- **Judicial Interpretation:**
 - The Court interpreted Article 233(2) **liberally** to include judicial officers with **combined service experience** (as advocate + judicial officer) of seven years or more.
 - It ensures **parity** between **serving judicial officers** and **members of the Bar**, preventing discrimination based on career transitions.
- **Significance of District Judges:**



- District Judges form the **highest tier in the subordinate judiciary** and are eligible for **elevation to the High Court**, making this ruling critical for judicial career progression.

4. Rationale and Broader Impact of the Judgment

- The Supreme Court observed that excluding in-service judicial officers who had prior advocacy experience was **counterproductive** and led to a **demotivated lower judiciary**.
- Allowing such officers to be considered promotes **merit-based advancement**, encourages **professional mobility**, and **strengthens institutional capacity** at the district level.
- The ruling is expected to **expedite the appointment process**, reduce **vacancies**, and improve the **efficiency of case disposal** in trial courts.
- It aligns with the **principles of equality and fairness under Article 14**, preventing arbitrary exclusion of experienced officers.

5. Definition of Key Terms

- **District Judge:** The head of the district judiciary who exercises both original and appellate jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters and also supervises the functioning of subordinate courts.
- **Judicial Service:** Refers to the subordinate judiciary including Civil Judges (Junior/ Senior Division), Magistrates, and other officers governed by State Judicial Service Rules.
- **Advocate:** A person enrolled under the **Advocates Act, 1961**, authorized to practice law before courts and tribunals in India.
- **Article 233(2):** A constitutional provision governing eligibility criteria for appointment to the position of District Judge.

6. Significance for Judicial Reforms and Governance

- This judgment reflects the Court's intent to **modernize judicial appointments** by recognizing **hybrid professional experience**.
- It addresses a long-standing anomaly and may **encourage high-performing lawyers** to enter judicial service earlier, knowing their prior experience will count.
- It also complements ongoing efforts to **reduce pendency**, enhance **judicial efficiency**, and ensure a **competent and motivated district judiciary**, which handles over **70% of India's total case load**.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's ruling on **eligibility for District Judge appointments** represents a major step toward **judicial modernization and equitable career progression**. By recognizing prior Bar experience of judicial officers, the Court has upheld the **principles of fairness, inclusivity, and institutional competence** within the judiciary. The decision not only promotes **judicial efficiency** but also strengthens the **pipeline for High Court appointments**, thereby enhancing the overall health of the judicial ecosystem.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Indian Constitution – Separation of Powers, Judiciary, and Constitutional Bodies.
- **GS Paper II:** Governance – Judicial Reforms, Transparency in Appointments.
- **Prelims Focus:**



- Article 233 – Appointment of District Judges.
 - Structure of the Subordinate Judiciary.
 - Advocates Act, 1961.
 - Eligibility criteria for judicial appointments.
-

VIDHVATH IAS