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# **VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY** & **STUDY CENTRE**

## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION**

**DATE: 18/11/2025 (TUESDAY)**



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## 1. Supreme Court's Directions on Human-Wildlife Conflict as a Natural Disaster

### • SC Order on Natural Disaster Status

- The Supreme Court directed all States to **consider notifying 'human-wildlife conflict' as a 'natural disaster'**, enabling victims to receive financial assistance under existing disaster relief mechanisms such as the **State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)**.
- Victims of human-wildlife conflict must receive **₹10 lakh ex gratia compensation** under the **Centrally Sponsored Scheme — Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (CSS-IDWH)**.

### • Compensation & Inter-Agency Coordination

- States must adopt **comprehensive compensation policies** covering *crop damage, injury, loss of human/cattle life* without delays.
- The Supreme Court emphasized **effective inter-departmental coordination** for timely conflict resolution between departments like Forest, Revenue, Agriculture, and Disaster Management.



### • Corbett Tiger Reserve Case

- The judgment stemmed from a PIL alleging **illegal tree felling and construction** in **Corbett Tiger Reserve**.
- **Uttarakhand held liable** for ecological damage and ordered to:
  - Submit a **restoration plan** in 2 months.
  - **Demolish illegal structures** in 3 months.
  - File compliance report in 1 year after consultation with the **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)**.

### • Core and Buffer Zone Notification

- States directed to **notify core and buffer areas** of tiger reserves **within 6 months** under Wildlife Protection Act norms.

### • Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 48A (Directive Principles)**: Protect and improve the environment, safeguard forests and wildlife.
- **Article 51A(g) (Fundamental Duty)**: Citizens' duty to protect the environment including forests, lakes, and wildlife.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**: Legal framework for wildlife conservation in India, including protected areas.
- **Disaster Management Act, 2005**: Provision for financial assistance in case of notified 'natural disasters'.



- **Key Definitions**

- **Human-wildlife conflict:** Situations where wild animals pose a threat or cause harm to humans, leading to loss of life, injury, or property damage.
- **Buffer zone:** A peripheral area around core wildlife habitat allowing regulated human activity.
- **Core area:** The most protected zone of a wildlife reserve or sanctuary, where human activities are restricted.

- **Conclusion**

- The SC's proactive stance on human-wildlife conflict reflects urgent need for **integrating disaster management with conservation policies**. Ensuring compensation and ecological restoration will strengthen grassroots wildlife governance.

- **UPSC Relevance**

- **GS Paper 3:** Environment, Conservation, Disaster Management; Wildlife Protection policies; Human-Wildlife Conflict.
- **Prelims:** Wildlife Acts, Tiger Reserves, SC directives, CSS-IDWH.
- **Ethics/Essay:** Issues of development vs conservation, environmental justice, intergenerational equity.

## 2. SC Issues Notice on Rajasthan's Anti-Conversion Law

- **Supreme Court Notice**

- The Supreme Court has issued a notice to the **Rajasthan government** on a petition challenging the constitutional validity of the **Rajasthan Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2025**.
- Petition filed by the **Jaipur Catholic Welfare Society**, alleging legislative overreach and violation of constitutional principles.



- **Petitioner's Arguments**

- The plea challenges the **legislative competence** of the State to enact such a law.
- It argues the Act imposes **excessive restrictions** violating constitutional rights such as **freedom of conscience and religion** guaranteed under **Article 25**.
- The petition claims the Act oversteps constraints on reasonable restrictions and amounts to discrimination.

- **SC's Observations and Proceeding**

- A Bench of **Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta** acknowledged similar petitions are pending before the court but agreed to notify the respondents and tag the case with related matters.



- The matter is to be heard after four weeks, with notices issued to all concerned parties including the State government.
- **Context: Similar Cases in Other States**
  - Several States like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Haryana have enacted **anti-conversion laws**, which are also under judicial scrutiny.
  - On earlier occasions, the Supreme Court has **sought responses from state governments** regarding the constitutionality of such laws.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**
  - **Article 25:** Guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion.
  - **Article 14 and 15:** Ensure equality before law and protect against discrimination.
  - **Entry 1 of State List:** Public order is a State subject, often cited as basis for such laws.
  - **Doctrine of Proportionality:** Restrictions on fundamental rights must be reasonable and balanced.
- **Key Definitions**
  - **Unlawful conversion:** Conversion through force, fraud, coercion, allurement, or by misrepresentation of facts.
  - **Legislative competence:** Constitutional authority of a legislature to enact laws within a particular subject domain.
- **Conclusion**
  - The Supreme Court's intervention opens a critical constitutional debate on the **balance between religious freedom and public order**. The verdict could set precedent for religious rights and State intervention in personal faith.
- **UPSC Relevance**
  - **GS Paper 2:** Constitution, Judiciary, Fundamental Rights, Legislative powers.
  - **Prelims:** Articles 25, 14, 15; Doctrine of Proportionality.
  - **Ethics/Essay:** Religious freedom vs State control; Unity in diversity; Constitutional morality.

### 3. Kadalekai Parishe – Cultural and Socio-Religious Significance

- **Overview of Kadalekai Parishe**
  - Kadalekai Parishe is a **traditional groundnut festival** held annually in **Basavanagudi, Bengaluru**.
  - It marks the **first groundnut harvest** of the season and is dedicated to **Lord Basava (Nandi)**, symbolizing gratitude and protection for livestock and crops.
- **Cultural and Religious Significance**
  - Traditional worship practices include offering the **first groundnut harvest to Lord Nandi**, believed to safeguard crops.



- Known for fostering **community participation**, devotional music, and local arts.
- It reflects the **syncretic culture and agrarian traditions** of Karnataka.

- **Economic Importance**

- Acts as a **rural-urban marketplace** for farmers to directly sell groundnuts, boosting local livelihoods.
- Helps preserve **traditional trade practices** and cultural tourism.



- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions**

- **Article 29 and 30**: Protect cultural and educational rights of minorities and cultural heritage.
- **Article 51A(f)**: Fundamental duty to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.
- **Protection of cultural festivals** as part of India's **intangible cultural heritage** under the **UNESCO conventions**.

- **Key Definitions**

- **Nandi**: The sacred bull, often seen as the keeper or vehicle (**Vahana**) of Lord Shiva.
- **Intangible Cultural Heritage**: Traditions or living expressions inherited from ancestors, such as festivals, rituals, and practices.

- **Conclusion**

- Kadalekai Parishe is more than a festival – it is a **celebration of agrarian roots, cultural identity, and communal harmony**. Its continuity reflects the importance of protecting regional traditions within India's diverse cultural spectrum.

- **UPSC Relevance**

- **GS Paper 1**: Indian culture – key festivals, heritage, and traditions.
- **Prelims**: Cultural festivals, intangible heritage, traditional practices.
- **Essay/GS 4**: Cultural continuity, respect for diversity, rural-urban linkage through heritage.

#### 4. Ladakh Groups Submit Draft Proposal to MHA on Statehood and Sixth Schedule

- **Draft Proposal Submitted**

- The **Leh Apex Body (LAB)**, representing various social, religious, and political groups in Ladakh, submitted a **29-page draft proposal** to the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
- The proposal emphasizes the **demand for Statehood** for Ladakh and **inclusion under the Sixth Schedule** of the Constitution to protect land and cultural rights of indigenous communities.

- **Key Demands**

- **Statehood** for Ladakh to ensure greater autonomy, administrative efficiency, and democratic representation.



- **Sixth Schedule Status** under Article 244 to grant **autonomous district councils** and safeguard tribal rights over land and resources.
- **General amnesty** for those arrested or facing cases related to the **September 24 violence in Leh**; similar precedence of amnesty exists in other parts of the country.

- **Release of Detained Activist**

- The draft calls for the unconditional release of climate activist **Sonam Wangchuk**, detained under the **National Security Act (NSA)** in September after a hunger strike demanding Statehood and environmental protections for Ladakh.



- **Background of Tensions**

- Talks between Ladakh representatives and the MHA stalled following violent protests on September 24, after delays in resuming dialogue.
- Four people were killed and nearly 90 injured in the clashes. Talks resumed on October 22 with delegation participation from **LAB**, **Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA)**, and Lok Sabha MP **Haji Haneefa Jan**.

- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**

- **Article 244(2) and Sixth Schedule**: Provide for autonomous councils in tribal areas for self-governance.
- **Statehood Demand**: Roots in **Article 3**, which permits the creation of new States by Parliament.
- **National Security Act (NSA), 1980**: Allows preventive detention if a person is deemed a threat to national security or public order.

- **Key Definitions**

- **Sixth Schedule**: Constitutional provision for the administration of tribal areas of the Northeast, offering legislative and administrative autonomy.
- **General Amnesty**: Legal forgiveness for offenses, typically granted to groups involved in political or civil unrest.

- **Conclusion**

- The LAB's proposal underscores the urgent need to address Ladakh's political aspirations and cultural concerns. The gravity of unrest highlights political marginalization and environmental anxieties in the region, demanding a balanced solution that upholds democratic and constitutional guarantees.

- **UPSC Relevance**

- **GS Paper 2**: Federalism, Centre-State relations, Constitutional provisions for Autonomous Councils.
- **GS Paper 3**: Tribal issues, Internal security challenges (NSA usage), Climate activism context.



- **Prelims:** Sixth Schedule areas, NSA provisions, Articles 3 and 244.
- **Essay/Optional (PSIR):** Regional autonomy, grassroots movements, constitutional rights vs. national security.

## 5. COP30 – Key Outcomes, Challenges, and India’s Stand

### • Agenda of COP30

- Held in **Brazil’s Amazon rainforest** during 10-21 November, focusing on commitments to limit global temperature rise.
- Key goals: **Lower emissions**, ensure **finance and technology transfer** from developed nations to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation.
- Emphasis on **historic climate responsibilities** and climate justice.

### • Major Agreements So Far

- Launch of the **Tropical Forest Forever Facility**: A Brazil-led initiative with **\$5.5 billion committed** to incentivize forest conservation; 20% reserved for indigenous communities.
- Over **35 global philanthropies pledged \$300 million** for tackling climate-driven public health challenges like heatwaves and air pollution.
- Discussions underway on funds for **loss and damage**, as well as future financing mechanisms.



### • Climate Finance – A Key Bottleneck

- Transitioning to low-carbon pathways depends heavily on finance; COP29 raised only **\$300 billion**, far from the estimated need of **\$1.3 trillion/year by 2035**.
- Under the **Paris Agreement (2015)**, developed countries are obligated to support developing countries—but fulfillment has fallen short.
- India highlighted that **climate finance remains a critical barrier** to raising mitigation ambition globally.

### • Fossil Fuel Phase-out Debate

- Calls led by **Brazil, Colombia, Kenya, Germany, and the UK** for a global roadmap to phase out fossil fuels post-COP28’s pact to “transition away” from coal, oil, and gas by 2050.
- Fossil fuel lobbying persists: **1,600+ lobbyists** at COP30; roadmap discussions not on the **formal agenda**.

### • India’s Position at COP30

- India's stance: **Developed nations must honor financial commitments** before demanding higher emission cuts from developing nations.
- Advocates for **15x increase in adaptation finance**, **affordable access to clean technologies**, and warns against climate action being used as a **trade barrier**.



- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions (India)**
  - **Article 48A:** Mandate to protect and improve the environment.
  - **Article 51A(g):** Fundamental duty of citizens to protect natural environment.
  - India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) includes missions on solar energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable agriculture.
- **Key Definitions**
  - **Climate Finance:** Financial support for mitigation, adaptation, and resilience to climate impacts in developing nations.
  - **Loss and Damage:** Compensation for irreversible climate impacts (e.g., sea level rise).
  - **Mitigation vs Adaptation:** Mitigation reduces greenhouse gas emissions; adaptation addresses climate impact risks.
- **Conclusion**
  - COP30 marks a pivotal moment with several innovative climate funds but large-scale actions hinge on **credible finance flows** and actionable commitments. India's emphasis on equity and climate justice remains vital in global negotiations.
- **UPSC Relevance**
  - **GS Paper 3:** Climate change, international agreements, environmental conservation, fossil fuel transition.
  - **GS Paper 2:** India's foreign policy, multilateral agreements, global governance.
  - **Prelims:** COP mechanisms, UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, climate finance terminology.
  - **Essay/Interview:** Climate justice, role of developed nations, India's sustainable development commitments.

## 6. India's Record Low Retail Inflation – A Broad-Based Analysis

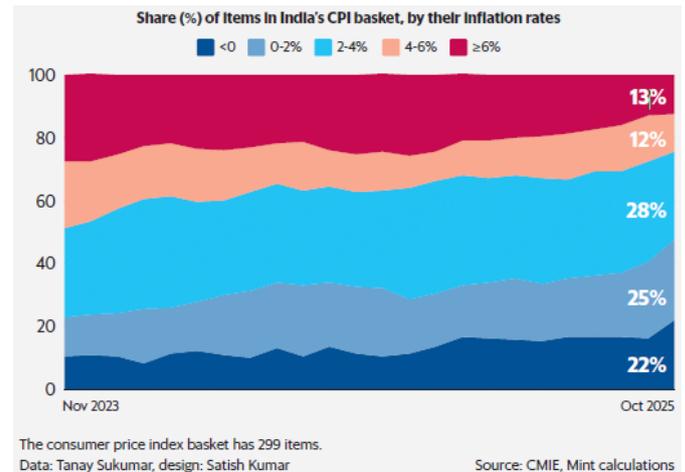
- **Historic Inflation Dip**
  - India's retail inflation (CPI-based) fell to **0.25% in October 2025**, the lowest on record.
  - Only **1 in 8 items (about 12%)** in the CPI basket recorded above **6% inflation** — the threshold for concern under the monetary policy framework.
  - Nearly **50% of items registered inflation below 2%**, indicating broad-based price stability across categories.
- **CPI Basket Composition and Item-Level Trends**
  - The **Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket consists of 299 items**, spanning food, fuel, clothing, housing, services, etc.
  - Over the last two years (Nov 2023 to Oct 2025), there has been a significant shift toward lower inflation bands:
    - Items with inflation **below 2%** increased from **22% to 28%**.



- Items in the 2–4% range rose from 25% to 40%, indicating stable price movement.

### • Macroeconomic and Policy Implications

- The record-low inflation reflects effective **monetary policy measures**, stable **commodity prices**, and improved **supply chain management**.
- A low-inflation environment could provide room for **monetary easing** or policy reorientation to spur investment and growth, without risking overheating.
- However, persistent low inflation may raise concerns about **demand slowdown** or deflationary pressures if consumption weakens.



### • Constitutional & Legal Framework

- Under the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**, monetary policy targets inflation at **4% ±2%**.
- **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** is mandated to maintain inflation within this band.
- **Article 39(c)** (Directive Principles): Ensures that economic policies do not lead to concentration of wealth but promote welfare.

### • Key Definitions

- **Retail Inflation (CPI-based)**: Measures change in prices of a basket of consumer goods and services.
- **Deflation**: Continuous decline in price levels; harmful to growth and consumption.
- **Inflation Targeting**: Framework wherein central banks aim to keep inflation at a set benchmark.

### • Conclusion

- India's record-low retail inflation appears **broad-based and stable**, reflecting macroeconomic resilience.
- Vigilance is needed to ensure this does not translate into demand contraction; targeted fiscal and monetary measures can support balanced growth.

### • UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 3**: Indian Economy – Inflation trends, Monetary policy, Price stability.
- **Prelims**: CPI vs WPI, Inflation target framework, MPC structure.
- **Essay/Interview**: Inflation vs Growth, RBI's role in macroeconomic stability, structural reforms and inflation dynamics.



## 7. Jobless Rate Steady in October – Rural Gains Offset Urban Pressure

### • Current Unemployment Trend

- According to the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, India's unemployment rate for individuals aged 15 years and above was **5.2% in October 2025**, unchanged from September.
- The stability in the overall rate reflects a balancing act between improving rural employment and rising urban joblessness.

### • Rural-Urban Divergence

- **Rural unemployment** dropped from **4.6% to 4.4%**, likely driven by seasonal agricultural employment and schemes like MGNREGA during the post-monsoon period.
- **Urban unemployment increased** from **6.8% to 7%**, indicating stress in sectors like services, manufacturing, and formal employment, possibly affecting youth and educated job seekers disproportionately.

### • Key Economic and Policy Implications

- The contrasting rural-urban job market reinforces the need for **urban employment policies**, such as skill development, startup incentives, and MSME support.
- A steady unemployment rate masks underlying structural issues such as **underemployment and informal work proliferation**.
- PLFS data guides targeted interventions and informs policy reforms in labour, education, and industry sectors.



### • Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 41 (DPSP)**: Mandates the State to secure the right to work and public assistance in cases of unemployment.
- **MGNREGA Act, 2005**: Provides right to work for rural households, influencing rural unemployment trends.
- **Code on Wages, 2019** and **Code on Social Security, 2020**: Part of labour reforms impacting employment conditions and worker protections.

### • Key Definitions

- **Unemployment Rate**: Percentage of unemployed individuals in the labour force actively seeking work.
- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)**: Proportion of the working-age population engaged in or seeking work.
- **Underemployment**: When workers are employed below their skill level or desire more working hours.



- **Conclusion**

- The stable unemployment figure conceals divergent rural-urban realities, calling for **structural labour reforms and regional employment strategies** to enhance job quality and productivity.

- **UPSC Relevance**

- **GS Paper 3:** Employment generation, skill development, rural-urban divide, labour reforms.
- **Prelims:** PLFS, MGNREGA, Labour Codes.
- **Essay/Interview:** Demographic dividend, jobless growth, informal sector challenges, inclusive labour policy.

## 8. 16th Finance Commission Submits Report for 2026–31

- **Report Submission to President**

- The **16th Finance Commission**, chaired by **Dr. Arvind Panagariya**, submitted its recommendations for the period **2026–2031** to **President Droupadi Murmu**.
- The report will be tabled in Parliament and released publicly thereafter.

- **Mandate of the Finance Commission**

- Constituted under **Article 280 of the Constitution**, Finance Commissions recommend:
  - **Distribution of tax revenues** between the Centre and States.
  - **Devolution shares**, grants-in-aid, and fiscal consolidation measures.
  - Measures to enhance **fiscal federalism and macroeconomic stability**.
- The 16th Commission's recommendations will impact **intergovernmental fiscal transfers** for the next five years.



- **Likely Focus Areas of the 16th FC**

- Balancing **vertical (Centre-State)** and **horizontal (inter-State)** equity.
- Addressing regional disparities, incentivizing States for **fiscal discipline**, and sustainable development.
- Possible introduction of performance-linked grants for **healthcare, education, climate resilience**, and **public finance reforms**.

- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**

- **Article 280:** Mandates the President to constitute a Finance Commission at five-year intervals.
- **Article 275:** Provides for grants in aid of revenues to States in need.



- The Finance Commission is an integral part of **cooperative federalism** and **Centre-State relations**.
- **Key Definitions**
  - **Vertical Devolution:** Sharing of Central tax revenues with States.
  - **Horizontal Devolution:** Allocation of funds among States based on criteria like population, income distance, area, etc.
  - **Grants-in-Aid:** Transfers from Centre to States for specific purposes or to supplement their resources.
- **Conclusion**
  - The 16th Finance Commission's report will shape India's fiscal architecture and resource allocation for the next five years, influencing developmental priorities and federal balance.
- **UPSC Relevance**
  - **GS Paper 2:** Federalism, Centre-State relations, constitutional bodies.
  - **GS Paper 3:** Fiscal policy, resource mobilization, public finance management.
  - **Prelims:** Articles 280, 275; role and composition of the Finance Commission.
  - **Essay/Interview:** Fiscal federalism, inter-State disparities, cooperative governance.

## 9. Phase-1 of India-US Trade Deal Nearing Closure

- **Status of the Trade Deal**
  - India and the United States are close to concluding the **first phase of their bilateral trade agreement (BTA)**.
  - This phase aims to resolve issues related to **reciprocal tariffs**, including the **50% tariffs imposed by the Trump administration** on several Indian products.
- **Key Objectives of Phase-1**
  - **Reduction or elimination** of high US tariffs on Indian exports such as steel, aluminium, and agricultural items.
  - Addressing **market access barriers** for US exports to India, possibly involving agricultural products, medical devices, and digital services.
- **Structure of the Agreement**
  - The BTA includes **two parts**:
    - **Tariff package** targeting mutual reduction of duties (**nearing closure**).
    - A more complex phase involving structural issues, domestic regulation concerns, which may take longer to finalize.





- **Significance and Broader Implications**

- A successful Phase-1 deal could revitalize **India-US economic ties** strained since 2018.
- Boosts India's export competitiveness and counters protectionist measures while strengthening cooperation in **strategic sectors like technology, pharmaceuticals, and defense**.
- Could be a stepping stone to a full **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** in future if both sides reconcile broader interests.

- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**

- **Article 253**: Parliament has the power to make laws for implementing international agreements.
- **Foreign Trade Policy and Customs Act** govern India's external trade regulations.
- **WTO principles** apply to bilateral trade negotiations to the extent they don't violate multilateral obligations.

- **Key Definitions**

- **Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)**: A trade pact exclusively negotiated between two countries, focusing on customs tariffs, intellectual property, labor standards, etc.
- **Reciprocal Tariffs**: Mutual duty impositions on imports between countries, often retaliatory.
- **Market Access**: The ability of a country's goods and services to enter another country's market with minimal trade barriers.

- **Conclusion**

- The advancing India-US trade deal underscores both nations' commitment to tackle tariff disputes pragmatically and foster deeper economic ties. Phase-1 may pave the way for broader agreements addressing strategic and technology trade.

- **UPSC Relevance**

- **GS Paper 2**: International relations, India-US strategic partnership.
- **GS Paper 3**: External sector, trade policy, WTO issues, protectionism.
- **Prelims**: Trade terminology, relevant articles (253), WTO-GATT basics.
- **Essay/Interview**: India-US economic cooperation, trade diplomacy challenges, protectionism vs globalization.

## 10. Provisional Anti-Dumping Duty Recommended on Low-Ash Metallurgical Coke

- **DGTR's Recommendation**

- The **Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)** has recommended imposing a **provisional anti-dumping duty on low-ash metallurgical coke**, a critical input in steel production.
- The recommendation was formalized via an official notification dated **14 November**, following preliminary findings during an ongoing investigation.



- **Reason for the Duty**
  - The move aims to **protect domestic industry** from **injurious dumping**—selling imported goods below normal value, hurting local producers.
  - It is likely targeted at cheaper imports, potentially from countries such as China or Australia, which are major exporters of metallurgical coke.
- **Impact on the Steel Sector**
  - Low-ash met coke is essential for producing high-quality steel, and dumping affects domestic production, price stability, and industrial competitiveness.
  - Anti-dumping measures aim to **level the playing field**, ensuring fair competition and strengthening India's steel value chain.
- **Legal and Policy Context**
  - Anti-dumping duties are imposed under **Section 9A of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975** and in line with **WTO Agreement on Anti-Dumping**.
  - DGTR conducts investigations based on applications from local industries, examining import volumes, price disparities, and economic injury.
- **Key Definitions**
  - **Anti-dumping Duty:** Special tariff imposed to counteract the sale of imported goods at unfairly low prices.
  - **Low-ash Metallurgical Coke:** A carbon-rich industrial fuel used in blast furnaces for iron and steel production; lower ash content improves efficiency.
  - **DGTR:** A government body responsible for recommending trade remedies like anti-dumping, countervailing, and safeguard duties.
- **Conclusion**
  - This recommendation aligns with India's broader strategy of **trade defense** to shield domestic industries while conforming to WTO norms. The final decision will depend on further review by the Ministry of Finance.
- **UPSC Relevance**
  - **GS Paper 3:** Indian economy, trade policy, steel industry, WTO-related issues.
  - **Prelims:** DGTR, anti-dumping measures, Customs Tariff Act.
  - **Essay/Interview:** Protectionism vs. free trade, industrial competitiveness, trade remedy mechanisms

## 11. Lower Judiciary – Litigation, Pendency, and Systemic Stagnation

- **Stagnation and Case Pendency in Lower Judiciary**
  - The subordinate judiciary faces **stagnation and overload**, contributing to a case backlog of **4.69 crore cases in district courts**.



- Supreme Court observations highlight that procedural delays and administrative burdens occupy much of subordinate judges' time, delaying justice delivery.
- **Systemic Issues – Clerical Burden and Procedural Delays**
  - Subordinate judges spend significant time on **ministerial tasks** like issuing summons, receiving legal documentation, and calling cases.
  - Suggestions include creating a **dedicated court officer or judicial officer** to manage such administrative tasks, freeing judges to focus on trials and judicial reasoning.
- **Judge Competency and Training Gaps**
  - Increase in recruitment of judges with **limited or no professional experience** leads to inefficiency; many struggle to pass basic orders.
  - Recommendation is for **mandatory training under High Court judges**, observing court procedures, advocacy, and order drafting.
- **Legislative and Procedural Hindrances**
  - Certain legal provisions like:
    - **Section 12(a), Commercial Courts Act** (mandatory pre-suit mediation): often leads to delays.
    - **Cooling-off period in mutual divorce cases under marriage laws**: causes unnecessary wait time and procedural falsification.
    - **Ambiguities in Rent Act provisions**: conflicts between oral and registered leases.
  - Archaic provisions in the **Code of Civil Procedure (CPC)** (e.g., dual decree system, lengthy execution process under Order XXI) provide loopholes for delay.
- **Reform Recommendations**
  - **Simplify civil procedures**: eliminate unnecessary preliminary and final decrees, automate proceedings after decree.
  - **Streamline execution process**: reduce rules, promote fast-track mechanisms, ensure declaration of assets early.
  - **Improve criminal justice administration**: implement time-bound trial and appeal structures.
- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions**
  - **Article 39A**: Ensures equal justice and free legal aid.
  - **Article 50**: Separation of judiciary from executive.
  - **Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**: Governs civil procedural law; needs reform for efficiency.
  - **Judicial Officers Training Institutes**: Governed by respective High Courts for capacity-building.

Year	District/ subordinate courts	High courts	Supreme Court
July 2023	4.4 crore	60.6 lakh	69,766
April 2021	3.8 crore	56.6 lakh	67,279
March 2020	3.2 crore	46.4 lakh	60,603
Dec 2018	2.9 crore	49.8 lakh	56,994

➤ Note: The figures above are total pending cases in courts on given dates  
➤ Source: Law ministry/National Judicial Data Grid





- **Key Definitions**

- **Pendency:** Cases yet to be disposed of in courts.
- **Ministerial tasks:** Routine court functions like issuing notices, scheduling hearings, not requiring judicial reasoning.
- **Execution proceedings:** Enforcement of court decrees or judgments; often delayed due to procedural loopholes.

- **Conclusion**

- Judicial reforms must focus on removing outdated procedural laws, investing in **judicial training**, empowering subordinate courts, and reducing administrative burden. Efficiency in lower courts is the cornerstone of justice delivery in India.

- **UPSC Relevance**

- **GS Paper 2:** Judiciary, judicial reform, case backlog, constitutional safeguards.
- **GS Paper 4:** Ethics in justice delivery, professional competence, fairness.
- **Prelims:** Articles 39A, 50; CPC basics, Rent Act, Commercial Courts Act.
- **Essay/Interview:** Access to justice, judicial accountability, legal reform imperatives.

## 12. India-Africa Relations – A Decade After IAFS-III

- **Background & Significance of IAFS-III (2015)**

- India hosted the **third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III)** in 2015 with participation from all 54 African countries — a milestone in India's diplomacy under PM Narendra Modi.
- The past decade saw significant growth: **17 new Indian missions** in Africa, **\$100+ billion trade**, and stronger strategic ties like securing **African Union's inclusion in G20**, signaling India's support for Africa's global representation.

- **Changing Landscape & Strategic Opportunities**

- By **2050**, Africa will hold **25% of the global population**, while India will be the world's **third largest economy** — creating a major **growth corridor** in commerce, technology, and demography.
- India is among Africa's **top five investors**, with **\$75 billion cumulative investments**, expanding into sectors like ports, energy, vaccines, digital infrastructure, and co-development projects.

- **Evolution of Cooperation: Key Initiatives**

- **Maritime security cooperation:** Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) in 2025 with 10 African navies participating.
- **Development partnerships:** Exim Bank's \$40 million credit line to ECOWAS Bank; IIT Madras campus in Zanzibar; Pan-African e-Network; and ITEC training thousands across Africa.





- **People-to-people ties:** Growing **talent and cultural exchanges**, with 40,000 African students in India, African athletes and innovators engaging in Indian institutions, sports, and tech ecosystem.
  - **Challenges and Strategic Imperatives**
    - India lags behind China in trade volume; Indian firms face bureaucratic hurdles and competition in Africa's innovation hubs.
    - India must invest in **future sectors:** green hydrogen, electric mobility, digital public infrastructure — **aligning with Africa's priorities**, such as the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**.
    - Calls for reviving the **IAFS institutional mechanism** (last held in 2015), connecting finance to reality, and creating an **India-Africa digital corridor** leveraging UPI and Africa's innovation landscape.
  - **Constitutional & Policy Framework**
    - **Article 51(c):** Promotes international peace and cooperation.
    - **Development Partnership Administration** under MEA: Coordinates lines of credit, grants, and capacity building.
    - **Foreign Trade Policy** and **Act East & Africa Outreach** initiatives underpin India's trade and diplomatic engagement.
  - **Key Definitions**
    - **IAFS:** India-Africa Forum Summit, a platform for structured engagement between India and African nations.
    - **AfCFTA:** African Continental Free Trade Area, aiming to create a single African market.
    - **ITEC:** Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation program – India's flagship capacity-building initiative.
  - **Conclusion**
    - A decade after IAFS-III, India's Africa engagement has evolved into a blend of **strategic, economic, and cultural ties**. To sustain momentum, India must "connect, build, and revive" – focusing on practical cooperation, shared digital future, and revitalizing diplomatic mechanisms.
  - **UPSC Relevance**
    - **GS Paper 2:** India's foreign policy, South-South cooperation, India-Africa relations, diplomacy.
    - **GS Paper 3:** Trade and investment, technology transfer, sustainable development.
    - **Prelims:** AfCFTA, ITEC, Exim Bank, IAFS, UPI global outreach.
    - **Essay/Interview:** India-Africa partnership, global south solidarity, multilateralism and equitable development.
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