

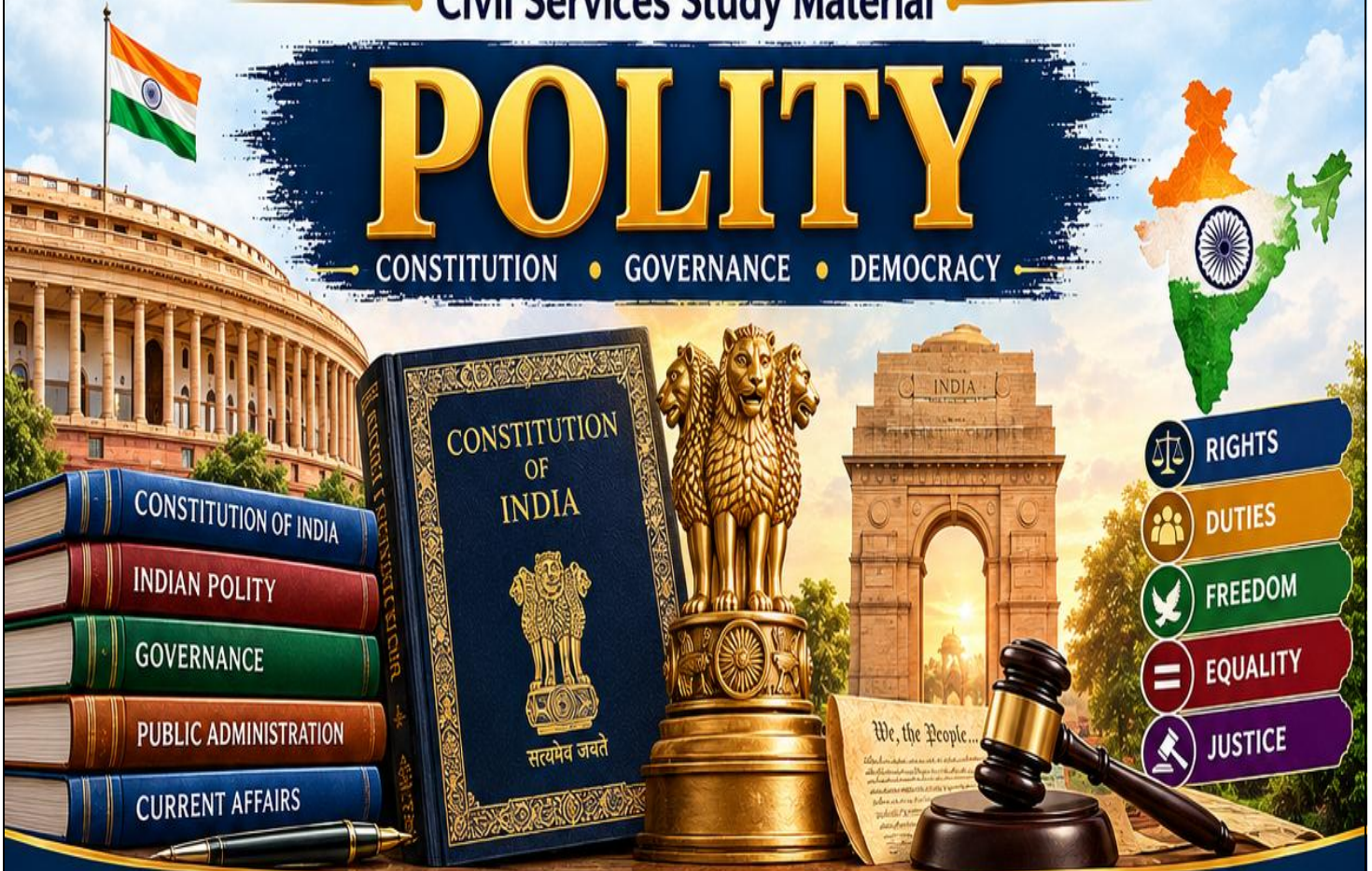


P.L. RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Civil Services Study Material

POLITY

CONSTITUTION • GOVERNANCE • DEMOCRACY



INDIAN CONSTITUTION

- Preamble
- Fundamental Rights & Duties
- Directive Principles



GOVERNANCE & POLITY

- Union & State Government
- Panchayati Raj
- Local Governance



POLITICAL SYSTEM

- Legislature
- Executive
- Judiciary



PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

- Bureaucracy
- E-Governance
- Ethics



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- India's Foreign Policy
- Global Institutions
- Bilateral & Multilateral



CURRENT AFFAIRS & EXAM FOCUS

- Govt. Schemes
- Reports & Committees
- Latest Developments

UPSC Prelims Current Affairs

(June 2026)

MONTHLY COMPILATION



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1. Supreme Court's Suo Motu Cognizance

Indian Supreme Court's increasing use of Suo motu cognizance in individual criminal cases sparking intense constitutional debate. Between 2020–2024, SC registered 35 Suo motu matters exceeding total 31 cases in entire preceding 15 years. Critics argue court prioritizing high-profile media-driven cases over long-term subordinate judiciary reforms. Risk – SC becoming reactive constitutional actor rather than driver of structural judicial reform

1. Recent Key Findings and Conceptual Concerns

Rising Trends in Suo Motu Jurisdiction

1. Sharp multi-fold increase in cases taken up by SC on own initiative
2. 2020–2024 – 35 Suo motu matters registered
3. Exceeding total 31 cases recorded in entire preceding 15 years
4. Disproportionate increase raising concerns about selection criteria

The "Media Trigger" Sequence

1. Repetitive cycle emerged – Sustained primetime media attention → immediate apex court intervention
2. Legal scholars argue this renders selection criteria temporal, media-driven rather than purely legal
3. Creates perception of justice determined by media coverage not legal principles

The Galanter–Ram Dilemma

1. Academic studies highlight higher judiciary tendency to favour singular heroic interventions in individual cases
2. Over systemic structural overhauls
3. This reflex unintentionally mirrors historic disdain for capability of lower/trial courts

4. Perpetuates cycle of subordinate court neglect

Limited Impact on Expediting Justice

1. Apex court monitoring does NOT guarantee faster convictions
2. Prominent cases (Lakhimpur Kheri, Manipur video incidents) – Long-term trials remain delayed
3. Actual heavy work (evaluating hundreds of witnesses, delivering convictions) ultimately performed by local trial courts
4. SC monitoring creates optics of action without structural improvement

2. The Two Paths

The Easier Path – Individual Suo Motu

1. Requires only bench's internal decision to list high-profile matter based on news reports
2. Relies on judicial persuasion, moral weight
3. Rather than systemic legal tools (formal media postponement orders under Sahara v. SEBI doctrine)
4. Immediate, visible, but limited long-term impact

The Harder Path – Institutional Reform

1. Demands slow, long-term collaboration across multiple organs –
 - i. **Cohesion with High Courts** – Strict case management, administrative supervision of subordinate courts under Article 235
 - ii. **Coordination with State Governments** – Adequately funding trial-court infrastructure
 - iii. **Cooperation with Executive** – Judicial appointments, National Judicial Academy for judge training
2. Less visible but transformative long-term impact

3. Relevant Constitutional Provisions

Articles 32, 136, 142

SC intervention generally rooted in –

- i. **Article 32** – Writ jurisdiction (enforcement of fundamental rights)
- ii. **Article 136** – Special leave to appeal (appellate jurisdiction)
- iii. **Article 142** – Extraordinary power to do complete justice

Such powers must operate within broader constitutional architecture of High Court supervision over subordinate courts

Article 235 – Control over Subordinate Courts

1. Vests power of control, administration over district and subordinate courts in respective High Courts (NOT Supreme Court)
2. Covers – Postings, promotions, transfers, disciplinary matters
3. Ensuring independence, efficiency of subordinate judiciary
4. Frequent SC direct intervention in local criminal trials may weaken normal constitutional chain of High Court supervision under Article 235

Sahara India Real Estate Corp. v. SEBI (2012)

1. Five-judge Constitution Bench established courts have strict legal authority to pass postponement orders against media publications
2. When "real and substantial risk of prejudice" to administration of justice exists
3. Provides formal legal tool for managing media trials
4. Currently underutilized compared to Suo motu interventions

Arguments Supporting Suo Motu Cognizance

1. Protecting fundamental rights (Article 21 – life, liberty) when state machinery fails
2. Ensuring accountability in cases involving powerful accused
3. Public confidence in judiciary during egregious violations
4. Preventing miscarriage of justice in cases of negligent investigation/prosecution

Arguments Against Overuse

1. Media determines judicial agenda (democratic concern)
2. Bypasses High Courts undermining Article 235 constitutional hierarchy
3. Creates false optics of swift justice without structural improvement
4. Selective attention favouring visible cases over systemic reforms

5. Judicial overreach into executive functions

4. Way Forward

1. SC prioritizing structural reforms – Fast-track court expansion, infrastructure funding, judge–population ratio improvement
2. High Courts strengthening Article 235 supervision over subordinate courts
3. Formal criteria for Suo motu intervention (beyond media triggers)
4. Proactive use of Sahara doctrine postponement orders managing media trials
5. National Judicial Academy strengthening judge training at all levels
6. Executive–judiciary cooperation on judicial appointments, infrastructure

5. Conclusion

Supreme Court's Suo motu cognizance increasing sharply (35 cases 2020–24 exceeding preceding 15 years' 31 cases) raises constitutional concerns about media–driven judicial agenda replacing principled selection criteria. The Galanter–Ram dilemma highlights higher judiciary's preference for individual heroic interventions over systemic structural reforms; Lakhimpur Kheri–Manipur cases demonstrating SC monitoring not guaranteeing faster convictions while trial courts perform actual adjudicatory work. Two paths diverge – easier Suo motu (bench decision, moral weight, high visibility) versus harder institutional reform (Article 235 High Court supervision coordination, state funding, executive cooperation, judge training). Constitutional framework—Articles 32/136/142 granting SC jurisdiction, Article 235 vesting subordinate court control in High Courts, Sahara 2012 providing formal media postponement tools—requires SC balancing reactive individual interventions with proactive structural judicial reform ensuring justice delivery system transformed holistically rather than episodically driven by primetime media cycles.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/the-apex-court-rings-its-own-chain/article71033214.ece>

2. Right To Be Forgotten- Delhi High Court's Landmark Digital Privacy Ruling

The Delhi High Court recently ruled that the Right to Be Forgotten (RTBF) is part of the Article 21 right to privacy and issued a judicial framework for de-indexing court records and masking personal details online in absence of parliamentary law. The court heard over 30 petitions from individuals acquitted of criminal charges, parties to matrimonial disputes, and people whose cases were quashed or settled — all sharing a common grievance that name-based searchability causes continuous harm to reputation, dignity, and life prospects. Significantly, the court declared that its de-indexing orders will operate globally, requiring search engine intermediaries to remove links across all global domains.

1. About the Right to Be Forgotten (RTBF)

Concept and Definition

1. Enables individuals to seek deletion, de-indexing, or restriction of access to personal data from digital platforms
2. When information becomes outdated, irrelevant, disproportionate, or harmful to privacy-reputation
3. Reflects core principle of **informational self-determination** — individuals controlling their digital footprint

Open Justice vs. Personal Dignity

1. "Open justice" means court processes must be transparent
2. However, does NOT mandate private person's name functioning as permanent commercial search keyword on Google
3. Balance required between transparency and individual dignity

Global Impact of Indian Orders

1. Delhi High Court's de-indexing orders operate globally
2. Search engine intermediaries must remove links from all global domains (not just India)
3. Significant jurisdictional assertion

2. Key Findings of the Judgement

Entitlement of the Acquitted

1. Persons acquitted, discharged, or whose proceedings quashed are fully entitled to have final legal determination reflected in their digital identity
2. Past legal troubles should not define digital identity permanently

Commercial Search Engines Restricted

1. Search engines cannot indefinitely link individuals to past legal troubles through name-based searches
2. Once case ended in acquittal or involves purely private disputes

Two-Tier Taxonomy (May 2026 New Standard)

Who CAN ask for de-indexing-

1. People fully acquitted or discharged
2. Individuals whose cases quashed or settled
3. Parties to private/matrimonial disputes
4. Names mentioned incidentally inside larger judgments

Who CANNOT ask (strict exceptions)-

1. Individuals convicted of crimes
2. Individuals involved in serious offences against women, children
3. Individuals involved in breach of public trust (corruption by public servants, politicians, fiduciary duty holders)

3. Global Evolution of RTBF

European Union

1. Modern concept emerged from 2014 Google Spain case (Court of Justice of EU)
2. Forced search engines to remove links to personal data that is "inadequate or no longer relevant"
3. Codified under Article 17 of GDPR as formal "right to erasure"
4. Subject to exceptions- Public interest, freedom of expression

Other Jurisdictions

1. **United States**– California Online Eraser Law (2015) protecting minors; DELETE Act (2023) allowing adults to delete data held by commercial data brokers
2. **Canada**– Federal Court of Appeal (2023) ruled search engines fall under PIPEDA; Privacy Commissioner (2025) upheld limited right to de-indexing in harm-based cases
3. **UK, Argentina, Japan**– Evolved similar protections based on native enforcement models

4. RTBF in India– Constitutional and Statutory Position

Constitutional Basis

1. Flows from Right to Privacy under Article 21
2. Recognized in K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)
3. Derivative right– Not absolute; balanced against–
 1. Freedom of Speech Article 19(1)(a)
 2. Transparency
 3. Legal/archival requirements

Statutory Position

1. **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023**– Recognizes right to erasure when data's purpose is served
2. Statutory ambiguity persists regarding public court records, media archives, publicly available data
3. **IT Intermediary Guidelines (2021)**– Mandates intermediaries to remove privacy-violating content within strict timelines

5. Evolution of Judicial Approach in India

1. **R. Rajagopal (1994)**– First recognized "right to be let alone"; public records like court judgments open to publication
2. **Dharamraj Dave v. State of Gujarat (2017)**– Gujarat HC denied removal of acquittal record prioritizing judicial transparency

3. **Orissa High Court (2020)**– Highlighted need for legal framework protecting women in cyber-crimes (revenge porn)
4. **SC (2022) and Delhi HC (2021)**– Pro-privacy shift; directed removal of names in sensitive matrimonial disputes, livelihood cases
5. **Kerala High Court (2023)**– Refused RTBF in ongoing cases protecting open justice
6. **Himachal Pradesh High Court (2024)**– Ordered name redaction in rape case post-acquittal eliminating social stigma
7. **Delhi HC May 2026**– Settled variations creating clear two-tier taxonomy

6. Way Forward

1. Parliament enacting comprehensive RTBF legislation addressing public records, media archives
2. Clear guidelines for search engine compliance with Indian de-indexing orders
3. Balancing RTBF with journalists', researchers', historians' legitimate access needs
4. Grievance redressal mechanism for expeditious processing of de-indexing requests

7. Conclusion

Delhi High Court's May 2026 ruling on RTBF as Article 21 derivative right, creating globally applicable de-indexing framework with clear two-tier taxonomy, marks significant step in balancing digital privacy with open justice principles in absence of comprehensive parliamentary legislation.

Source– <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/delhi-hc-recognises-right-to-be-forgotten-directs-search-engines-to-disable-name-based-search-in-court-orders-news/article71048040.ece>

3. FRA And PESA Implementation

The constitution of a task force in Chhattisgarh to fast-track implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 and Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) 1996 has triggered significant controversy. Critics argue these task forces subvert the basic democratic structure of FRA and PESA implementation by moving

decision-making power away from village institutions toward administrative and technical mechanisms. Adivasi and forest rights groups have called for dissolution of task forces on FRA and PESA in both Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, asserting they undermine Gram Sabha centrality that both laws deliberately establish.

1. About the Task Force

Constitution and Purpose

1. Task force constituted to –
 1. Map potential areas for community forest resource rights claims under FRA
 2. Review pending claims
 3. Design strategies for PESA-related matters
 4. Assist district authorities with FRA implementation

Controversy

1. Critics argue task forces subvert basic democratic structure of FRA, PESA implementation
2. Decision-making power moving away from village institutions toward administrative, technical mechanisms
3. Adivasi, forest rights groups calling for dissolution in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh

2. Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006

Full Name and Purpose

1. Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006
2. Introduced to recognize rights of forest-dwelling communities over forest resources traditionally used

Recognition of Rights

1. **Individual rights** – Self-cultivation, habitation, grazing, fishing, access to water bodies in forests

2. **Community rights** – Habitat rights for PVTGs (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups), traditional seasonal resource access for nomadic-pastoral communities, access to biodiversity, community intellectual property, traditional knowledge

Allocation of Forest Land

1. Provides rights to allocation of forest land for developmental purposes
2. Fulfilling basic infrastructural needs of community
3. In conjunction with Right to Fair Compensation Act 2013 – Protects tribal population from eviction without rehabilitation, settlement

Role of Gram Sabha

1. Act enjoins Gram Sabha and rights holders with responsibility of conservation, protection of forests
2. **Gram Sabha = highly empowered body** under Act
3. Enables tribal population to have decisive say in determination of local policies, schemes impacting them
4. Central democratic institution in FRA framework

3. PESA Act, 1996

Definition

1. Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996
2. Extends provisions of Part IX of Constitution (relating to Panchayats) to 5th Scheduled Areas in modified form
3. **Fifth Schedule** – Regions with predominantly tribal populations categorized as 'Scheduled Areas' recognizing customary rights of Scheduled Tribes

How PESA Boosts Forest Conservation

1. **Control over natural resources** – Grants tribal communities' control over management, utilization of land, water, forests
2. **Decentralized decision-making** – Decentralizes to Gram Sabha, Panchayats enabling localized, contextually relevant governance

3. **Land rights and preventing alienation** – Any transfer of land in Scheduled Areas must be approved by Gram Sabha providing legal safeguards against tribal land alienation

Other PESA Provisions

1. Gram Sabha's consent mandatory for mining, acquisition, displacement
2. Traditional practices governing community resources recognized
3. Tribal communities' customary law preserved

4. Why Task Forces Are Controversial

Undermining Constitutional Intent

1. Both FRA and PESA deliberately place decision-making authority in Gram Sabhas
2. Task forces shifting power to administrative bodies contradicts legislative design
3. Technocratic governance replacing participatory democracy

Accountability Deficit

1. Task forces accountable to state administration, not tribal communities
2. Bypasses organic, bottom-up implementation envisioned by laws
3. Creates parallel structure diluting Gram Sabha authority

Historical Context

1. Forest rights in India historically denied to tribal communities (colonial forest laws)
2. FRA and PESA enacted precisely to correct this historical injustice
3. Task forces risk perpetuating administrative dominance over tribal rights

5. Way Forward

Strengthen Gram Sabha-Centric Governance

1. FRA, PESA implementation must remain rooted in Gram Sabha authority
2. Task forces playing facilitative role rather than decision-making role
3. Administrative support without administrative dominance

Institutionalize Participatory Decision-Making

1. Include tribal community representatives, traditional forest dwellers, women's groups, civil society in advisory, monitoring mechanisms

2. Meaningful participation beyond tokenism

Enhance Transparency and Accountability

1. Publish regular reports on claims processed, rights recognized, implementation status
2. Establish independent grievance redressal mechanisms accessible to tribal communities

Cooperative Federal and Constitutional Approaches

1. States framing rules, implementation strategies consistent with Fifth Schedule constitutional protections
2. Respecting spirit of tribal self-governance
3. Centre monitoring state compliance with FRA, PESA provisions

6. Conclusion

Effective implementation of FRA and PESA requires balancing administrative efficiency with constitutional principles of tribal self-governance. Strengthening Gram Sabhas, ensuring community participation, and making task forces accountable to local institutions can achieve both development and democratic empowerment in Scheduled Areas.

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/congress-slams-rss-linked-task-forces-for-pesa-fra-implementation-in-mp-chhattisgarh/article71052300.ece>

4. Ordinance Power and Parliamentary Decline

The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026 was promulgated to increase the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court, reviving intense debate on India's increasing executive reliance on ordinances and the declining role of Parliament in legislative decision-making. The Constituent Assembly envisaged ordinance-making as an extraordinary mechanism for genuine emergencies when Parliament is not in session — not as a substitute for normal

legislative process. Critics argue frequent ordinance use disturbs constitutional balance between Executive and Legislature, weakens parliamentary supremacy, and normalizes governance by executive decree.

1. Constitutional Framework of Ordinances

Article 123 – Ordinance-Making Power of the President

1. Empowers President to promulgate Ordinance when both Houses of Parliament are NOT in session
2. Circumstances requiring immediate legislative action
3. Ordinance has same force and effect as Act of Parliament (temporary law)
4. **Must be laid before Parliament** when it reassembles
5. Must receive Parliamentary approval within **six weeks from date of reassembly**
6. If Parliament does not approve within prescribed period – Ordinance ceases to operate automatically

Enactment Process

1. Decision taken by Union Government (President acts on aid and advice of Council of Ministers)
2. Proposal submitted to President based on Union Cabinet recommendation
3. President may return recommendation for reconsideration
4. If Council of Ministers reiterates advice – President **constitutionally bound to promulgate** regardless of modification

Withdrawal and Invalidity

1. President may withdraw Ordinance at any time before expiry on Council of Ministers' advice
2. Ceases to operate if both Houses pass resolutions disapproving before six-week expiry
3. **Void ab initio** if legislating on subject outside Parliament's legislative competence
4. Subject to judicial review like any Act of Parliament

2. Article 213 – Governor's Ordinance Power (State Level)

1. Empowers Governor to promulgate Ordinance when State Legislature NOT in session
2. Same force and effect as Act of State Legislature
3. Governor exercises on aid and advice of Council of Ministers
4. **Conditions** – Legislative Assembly not in session; Governor satisfied immediate action necessary
5. Must be laid before State Legislature when it reassembles
6. Ceases after **six weeks** from reassembly unless approved
7. Governor may withdraw before expiry

3. Judicial Safeguards on Ordinance-Making Power

Case (Year)	Key Principle Established
R.C. Cooper (1970)	Ordinances subject to constitutional limitations and judicial review
A.K. Roy (1982)	Ordinances should be used only in situations of genuine urgency
D.C. Wadhwa (1987)	Re-promulgation of Ordinances is a fraud on the Constitution
Krishna Kumar Singh (2017)	Ordinance-making subject to judicial review; cannot become routine legislative practice

4. Concerns Raised by Frequent Use of Ordinances

Executive Overreach

1. Excessive use strengthening Executive's law-making role at expense of Legislature
2. Disturbs constitutional balance between Executive and Parliament
3. Means of avoiding legislative resistance, political scrutiny

Weakening Parliamentary Supremacy

1. Parliament risks becoming body merely approving Executive decisions
2. Legislative branch's role in policy formulation, law-making diminished
3. Weakens spirit of responsible government envisaged by Constitution

Reduced Public Accountability and Transparency

1. Parliamentary debates allow citizens to assess proposed laws' merits, implications

2. Ordinances bypass this public process limiting transparency, democratic accountability
3. Citizens deprived of observing how different viewpoints are debated, reconciled

Precedent for Governance by Executive Decree

1. Frequent promulgation risks normalizing executive law-making
2. Exceptional constitutional powers gradually becoming routine governance instruments
3. Weakens democratic institutions, erodes constitutional conventions

5. Arguments Supporting the Ordinance Route

1. **Immediate action needed** - Urgent legislative intervention when Parliament not in session
2. **Administrative efficiency** - Ensures governance continuity addressing pressing issues without legislative delay
3. **Time-sensitive challenges** - Rapid response to judicial directives, economic developments, public health emergencies, national security
4. **Constitutionally sanctioned** - Article 123 expressly authorizes; legitimate when genuine necessity exists
5. **Subject to Parliamentary approval** - Temporary measures requiring approval within constitutional timeframe preserving Parliamentary supremacy

6. Declining Role of Parliament - Emerging Trends

Centralisation of Decision-Making

1. Major policy decisions increasingly originating within Cabinet, party leadership, PMO
2. Parliament often involved only at final approval stage

Decline in Committee Scrutiny

1. Increasing Bills enacted without referral to Department-Related Standing Committees
2. Restricts expert consultation, stakeholder participation, evidence-based assessment

Compressed Legislative Debates

1. Several Bills passed with limited discussion, shortened debate durations
2. MPs receiving fewer opportunities to scrutinize provisions, propose amendments

Disruptions and Political Polarisation

1. Frequent disruptions reducing effective working time
2. Legislative proceedings reflecting partisan confrontation rather than constructive deliberation

Erosion of Question Hour

1. Key instrument of executive accountability witnessing reduced effectiveness
2. Weakening Parliamentary oversight of government actions

7. Significance of Parliament in Democracy

1. **Deliberative democracy** – Primary forum for debate, negotiation, consensus-building; transforms public preferences into legitimate laws
2. **Executive accountability** – Scrutinizes government through Question Hour, Zero Hour, Parliamentary Committees, Adjournment Motions, No-Confidence Motions
3. **Representative character** – Platform for diverse social, regional, linguistic, cultural, political interests
4. **Source of legitimacy** – Laws deriving legitimacy from public reasoning, debate, scrutiny, consultation
5. **Guardian of constitutional democracy** – Prevents power concentration in Executive
6. **Financial oversight** – Control over public purse through Budget, Demand for Grants, PAC
7. **Link between citizens and state** – MPs articulating constituents' aspirations, grievances at national level

8. Way Forward

1. **Mandatory committee scrutiny** – For significant, complex Bills ensuring thorough examination
2. **Regulate ordinance use** – Detailed justification demonstrating urgency, necessity for invoking Article 123

3. **Guaranteed debate periods** – Major legislation with minimum debate time
4. **Revitalise Question Hour** – Protect from suspension, dilution strengthening ministerial accountability
5. **Improve legislative research** – Professional support enabling MPs to engage effectively in scrutiny
6. **Review Anti-Defection provisions** – Greater legislative freedom balancing stability with independent judgment
7. **Pre-legislative consultation** – Institutionalize stakeholder, civil society, expert engagement in law-making

9. Conclusion

The Supreme Court Judges Ordinance 2026 raises fundamental questions about Indian parliamentary democracy's health — while ordinances remain constitutionally legitimate for genuine emergencies, their routine use risks undermining Parliament as the central institution of democratic deliberation and weakening the constitutional balance between Executive and Legislature.

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/chief-justice-of-india-surya-kant-new-judges-to-supreme-court/article71050982.ece>

5. Inner Line Permit System

The Union Home Ministry tightened visa registration rules under the Immigration and Foreigners Rules, 2025 for national security, while Arunachal Pradesh witnessed protests demanding a stricter Inner Line Permit (ILP) system to prevent demographic changes and protect indigenous tribal rights. Key concerns driving the agitation include fraudulent acquisition of APST (Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe) certificates for government job quotas, contentious ILP guidelines allowing unrestricted-duration work permits, mega-project loopholes enabling bulk sponsorship of 200 laborers for infrastructure projects worth ₹500 crore+, and inadequate digital tracking of migrant workers after permit expiry.

1. Key Concerns Fuelling the Agitation

Fraudulent Tribal Certificates

1. Non-locals illegally acquiring APST certificates to wrongfully claim quotas in government jobs, education, land ownership
2. Undermining reservation system designed exclusively for indigenous tribal communities

Contentious ILP Guidelines

1. New rules allowed Secretary (Political) to issue work permits to any person for unrestricted duration
2. Creating loophole enabling permanent settlement disguised as temporary work

Mega-Project Loopholes

1. Infrastructure projects worth ₹500 crore+ can bulk-sponsor up to 200 laborers for up to two years
2. Threatening local demographics through large-scale temporary worker influx
3. Inadequate exit monitoring after project completion

Tracking Deficit

1. Enforcement agencies lacking digital tracking mechanisms
2. Failing to monitor whether migrant laborers exit after permit expiry
3. No real-time database of overstaying non-locals

Communal Anxieties

1. Local youth groups conflating domestic migrant workers with foreign illegal immigrants
2. Sparking protests over religious structures
3. Tensions between indigenous communities and migrants

2. Government Response and Institutional Action

Four High-Powered Committees Formed:

1. **ILP Framework Restructuring:** Review contentious guidelines; recommend stricter evaluation metrics; explore digital tracking tools identifying overstaying non-locals

2. **APST Certificate Audit:** Comprehensive re-verification drive of APST documents; identify, cancel fraudulently obtained certificates
3. **Matrilineal Rights Evaluation:** Examine legal-socioeconomic status including property, reservation rights of children born to APST mothers and non-APST fathers
4. **Anti-Infiltration Strategy:** Border-focused committee investigating "illegal infiltration"; coordinating with central security agencies assessing border vulnerabilities along international frontier (Myanmar, Bhutan, Tibet borders)

3. About the Inner Line Permit (ILP) Regime

Definition

1. Official travel document issued by concerned state governments
2. Regulates entry and stay of Indian citizens from other states
3. Applies to Indian nationals (NOT foreigners — who require Protected Area Permit)

Historical Context

1. Originates from British-era Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act, 1873
2. Originally sought to protect British commercial interests (tea gardens, forests)
3. Post-independence: Repurposed to protect indigenous tribal cultures, traditions, land ownership

Post-Independence Objective

1. Preserve culture, traditions, indigenous identities of north-eastern tribes
2. Safeguard tribal land ownership, resources from outsider encroachment
3. Maintain demographic balance in sensitive border regions

Geographical Coverage

1. Currently operational in four north-eastern states:
 1. Arunachal Pradesh
 2. Nagaland
 3. Mizoram
 4. Manipur (added 2020 via Presidential Order)

4. Protected Area Permit (PAP)

1. Entire Arunachal Pradesh falls under Protected Area regime under Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958
2. Every **foreign national** must obtain PAP from Union Home Ministry to enter
3. PAP rules temporarily relaxed for Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur (2010–2024) but remained strictly enforced in Arunachal Pradesh due to sensitive borders (Myanmar, Bhutan, Tibet)
4. Neighbouring states like Manipur pushing for stricter reimposition due to political instability in neighbouring countries

5. India's Similar Issues and Earlier Actions

Assam and NRC

1. Assam facing severe demographic anxieties regarding cross-border migration from Bangladesh
2. Led to Assam Accord (1985) and Supreme Court-monitored update of National Register of Citizens (NRC)
3. Identifying illegal immigrants through citizenship documentation

Sixth Schedule Protections

1. Meghalaya, Mizoram, Assam: Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) empowered by Constitution
2. Enact laws regulating land transfers, local trade licensing, inheritance
3. Keeping non-tribal economic dominance in check

Manipur's ILP Induction (2020)

1. Central government extended ILP to Manipur via Presidential Order
2. Following civil society protests anticipating cross-border instability from Myanmar
3. Insulating indigenous population from demographic change

6. Global Best Practices for Border and Migration Management

Biometric Entry–Exit Tracking (Schengen and US Models)

1. **Europe's Entry/Exit System (EES):** Logs biometric data (fingerprints, facial scans) upon entry; automatically flags overstayers when authorized period expires

2. **US-VISIT program:** Similar biometric entry-exit tracking
3. **Application for Arunachal:** Digital ILP system linked to Aadhaar eliminating tracking deficit; real-time overstayer alerts

Sponsorship and Escrow Bonds (GCC Framework)

1. Gulf nations: Companies importing large labor forces must post monetary guarantees
2. **Application for Arunachal mega-projects:** Contractors made legally, financially accountable via compliance bonds ensuring workers exit after permit lapse
3. Financial incentive for employers to ensure worker departure

Tribal Land and Registry Governance (New Zealand Model)

1. **Māori Land Court:** Manages indigenous land registries under strict traditional mandates
2. Land cannot be alienated to outsiders
3. **Application for Arunachal:** Digitalizing APST database; routing through specialized tribal land board eliminating fraudulently acquired tribal certificate loophole

7. Way Forward

1. **Digital ILP system:** Aadhaar-linked real-time tracking of permit status, entry-exit monitoring
2. **APST database digitalization:** Blockchain-based certificate verification preventing fraud
3. **Mega-project compliance bonds:** Financial accountability for contractors sponsoring migrant workers
4. **Stricter exit verification:** Mandatory departure confirmation linked to digital work permits
5. **Community policing:** Engaging local panchayats, tribal councils in monitoring demographic changes
6. **Fast-track courts:** For fraudulent certificate cases ensuring deterrence

8. Conclusion

Arunachal Pradesh's ILP protests reflect deeper tensions between development imperatives and indigenous demographic protection — requiring strengthened digital tracking through Aadhaar-linked ILP systems, APST certificate re-verification, mega-project compliance bonds, and coordination with central security agencies to balance tribal rights protection with necessary economic integration.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/political-pulse/why-illegal-immigration-spectre-is-now-resonating-in-arunachal-pradesh-10722939/>

6. Immigration And Foreigners Rules 2025

The Union Home Ministry notified amendments to the Immigration and Foreigners Rules, 2025, tightening visa registration deadlines for foreign nationals to enhance national security and streamline border management. The most significant change removes the previous 14-day grace period after visa expiry — foreigners on visas of 180 days or less must now register for extended stay before their visa expires. These amendments come alongside Arunachal Pradesh protests demanding stricter ILP enforcement, reflecting India's broader focus on immigration control across both external borders and internal demographic protection.

1. Key Changes in Immigration and Foreigners Rules, 2025

Strict Registration Deadline

1. Foreigners on visa of 180 days or less wanting to extend stay must register before visa expires
2. Previous 14-day grace period after expiry removed entirely
3. Eliminates exploitation of grace period for unauthorized overstaying

Emergent Restrictions

1. Long-term visas with "180-day stay limit per visit" clause: Registration for extended stay must be done before 180 days end
2. Extension now granted only under emergent circumstances

3. Closing loophole for indefinite stay through repeated extensions

Exemption for Mixed-Citizenship Children

1. Parents no longer needed to report birth of child within 30 days if one parent is Indian citizen wishing to retain child's Indian citizenship
2. Simplifying compliance for mixed-nationality families

Foreign Citizenship Declaration

1. If child born in India later chooses foreign citizenship: Parents must inform registration officer within 30 days
2. Ensuring citizenship records remain accurate

Medical Compliance

1. Revised reporting requirements for all hospitals and nursing homes providing lodging or medical care to foreign nationals
2. Strengthening institutional monitoring beyond hotels, landlords

2. About Immigration and Foreigners Rules, 2025

Primary Legal Framework

1. Primary legal framework regulating entry, stay, exit of foreign nationals in India
2. Administered by Ministry of Home Affairs
3. Implements statutory provisions of newly passed Immigration and Foreigners Act

Core Objective

1. Balance tourism, ease of travel with robust internal security
2. Digitalize monitoring through online portals
3. Track visa compliance, regulate foreign regional registration
4. Prevent illegal stay, overstaying

Key Provisions

1. **Mandatory Registration (FRRO Framework):** Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) as nodal authority; foreign nationals exceeding specified stay thresholds must register digitally

2. **Visa Categorization and Compliance:** Clearly defines parameters, scope, duration for tourist, business, employment, medical, student visas; strict non-compliance penalties
3. **Digitalization (M-Visa and Portals):** All immigration workflows integrated into online portal, mobile application; paperless processing for visa extensions, exit permissions, address updates
4. **Deportation and Enforcement:** Civil authorities empowered to identify, detain, penalize overstaying foreign nationals or those engaging in activities inimical to national security
5. **Institutional Reporting:** Hotels, landlords (Form C), medical institutions must electronically report accommodation of foreign nationals within strict timelines

3. About Immigration

Definition

1. Movement of individuals from home country to another nation where they are neither natives nor citizens
2. For permanent settlement, naturalization, employment, or temporary work
3. **Immigrants:** Those migrating to another country
4. **Emigrants/Outmigrants:** Same individuals from perspective of home country

Causes of Immigration

1. **Economic factors:** Better jobs, wages, living standards; poverty pushing migration (Indians to Gulf for construction)
2. **Political instability and conflict:** Wars, persecution, oppressive regimes forcing flight (Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar to Bangladesh)
3. **Environmental and climate change:** Natural disasters, rising sea levels, droughts making areas uninhabitable (Satyabhama village, Kendra Para, Odisha — coastal erosion forcing migration)
4. **Globalization and connectivity:** Improved transportation, communication; expanding global job markets (Indian IT professionals to Silicon Valley)

Impact of Immigration

1. **Economic growth:** Boosts labour supply, fills skill gaps, drives entrepreneurship (Indian IT in US tech industry)
2. **Pressure on infrastructure:** Strains housing, healthcare, public services (European cities, refugee influx)
3. **Remittances and home country development:** India is world's top recipient of remittances; Indian migrants in Gulf, US sending billions annually boosting household incomes, national GDP
4. **Security and social challenges:** Concerns over crime, assimilation, national identity (US-Europe border security debates)

4. Immigration Provisions in India

Citizenship Act, 1955

1. Governs acquisition, renunciation, termination of Indian citizenship
2. **Five ways to become Indian citizen:** Birth, descent, registration, naturalization, incorporation of territory

Foreigners Act, 1946

1. Controls entry, stay, exit of foreigners in India
2. Empowers government to detect, detain, deport illegal immigrants
3. Establishes tribunals with civil court powers to determine foreigner status
4. **2019 Amendments:** District magistrates across all States, UTs empowered to set up tribunals identifying illegal foreigners

Visa Regulations (Under Passport Act, 1920)

1. Defines entry conditions for foreign nationals through visa categories
2. Regulates extensions, restrictions, violations of visa norms

Refugee Policies

1. India is NOT a signatory to 1951 Refugee Convention
2. Provides asylum on case-by-case basis: Tibetans, Sri Lankan Tamils, Rohingyas
3. No comprehensive national refugee law

5. Role of International Organizations in Immigration

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

1. Global organization dedicated to people forced to flee homes due to conflict, persecution
2. Protects, assists refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people
3. Provides emergency aid, legal support, resettlement assistance
4. Example: Led relief efforts for Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

1. Manages migration policies ensuring safe, orderly migration
2. Combats human trafficking
3. Assists with voluntary repatriation, resettlement, integration programs
4. Example: Helped Rohingya refugees relocate; humanitarian aid in Bangladesh

6. Global Practices in Immigration Laws

United States

1. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA): Immigrant = individual seeking Lawful Permanent Resident status
2. Allows judicial review of deportation orders

European Union

1. Foreigners have right to appeal deportation decisions before independent authority
2. **EU Blue Card:** Allows highly skilled non-EU nationals to work, live in member states

Australia

1. Migration Strategy includes humanitarian exceptions, due process guarantees
2. 2025 immigration changes balancing economic needs with migration fairness

7. Way Forward

1. Strengthen Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRROs) with adequate staffing, technology
2. Expand biometric tracking at all entry points preventing fraudulent documentation

3. Formulate comprehensive national refugee policy aligning with international humanitarian standards
4. Enhance inter-agency coordination between MHA, state police, intelligence agencies for seamless enforcement
5. Develop digital overstay alert system automatically flagging expired visas
6. Fast-track bilateral agreements on deportation with key source countries

8. Conclusion

Immigration and Foreigners Rules 2025 amendments removing the 14-day grace period, mandating pre-expiry registration, tightening long-stay extensions, and strengthening hospital-reporting requirements reflect India's holistic approach to balancing ease of travel with robust national security — digitalizing enforcement through FRRO framework while addressing demographic vulnerabilities highlighted by Arunachal Pradesh's ILP protests.

Source: <https://newsonair.gov.in/mha-revises-immigration-rules-allows-flexible-registration-timeline/>

7. Ai In Courts 2026

The Supreme Court's AI Committee released draft Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Courts, 2026, establishing a comprehensive governance framework for responsible AI adoption in India's judiciary. The regulations categorically prohibit AI-based adjudication — AI cannot decide verdicts, determine sentences, assess bail eligibility, evaluate flight risk, or predict recidivism. Human judicial judgment must remain supreme, with AI functioning only in an assistive capacity. A permanent apex AI regulatory body under the Supreme Court and AI committees in all High Courts are proposed to oversee responsible adoption.

1. Key Highlights of the Regulations for Use of AI in Courts, 2026

Human Judgment Must Remain Supreme

1. AI systems shall function only in assistive capacity

2. Cannot replace judicial discretion
3. Final decisions on law, facts, and justice remain exclusively with judges

Complete Ban on AI-Based Adjudication

1. AI CANNOT be used to –
 1. Decide verdicts
 2. Determine sentences
 3. Assess bail eligibility
 4. Evaluate flight risk
 5. Predict recidivism
2. Any AI-generated output on such matters remains purely advisory

Transparency and Explain ability Requirements

1. Opaque, undisclosed, unexplainable AI systems cannot be deployed in court processes
2. Particularly where they may affect rights or liberty of individuals
3. Explainable AI (XAI) mandatory for judicial applications

Safeguards Against Bias and Discrimination

1. AI tools must not perpetuate discrimination based on –
 1. Caste, religion, gender, disability
 2. Language, economic status
 3. Other constitutionally prohibited grounds
2. Regular bias audits mandatory

Judicial AI Governance Framework

1. Permanent apex AI regulatory body under Supreme Court
2. AI committees in all High Courts
3. Overseeing responsible adoption, governance of judicial AI tools

2. Role of AI in the Indian Judiciary

Enhancing Legal Research and Judicial Efficiency

1. SUPACE (Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency) –

1. Analyses case facts
2. Identifies relevant precedents
3. Accelerates legal research for judges
4. Reduces time spent on routine research tasks

Improving Accessibility Through Language Technologies

1. SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software) – Translates judgments into multiple Indian languages
2. Bhashini (BHASha Interface for India) – Enables translation of judgments, transcription of court proceedings into multiple Indian languages
3. Making justice accessible beyond English-speaking litigants

Strengthening Digital Court Administration

1. Digital Courts 2.1 –
 1. Voice-to-text transcription tools
 2. SHRUTI (Speech Recognition Utility for Transcription and Interpretation)
 3. Automated drafting templates
 4. Document management systems
 5. Smart search capabilities

Streamlining Filing and Case Management

1. AI-enabled e-filing systems –
 1. Automatically detect defects in documents
 2. Improve scrutiny processes
 3. Generate cause lists
 4. Support intelligent scheduling of cases
2. Reducing administrative burden on court staff

Promoting Integrated Justice Delivery

1. AI integrated with Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)
2. Facilitating seamless information exchange among –
 1. Police, courts, prisons, forensic institutions

3. End-to-end digital criminal justice ecosystem

3. Challenges in Adoption of AI in Judiciary

Risk of Algorithmic Bias

1. AI systems trained on historical judicial data may inherit existing social, economic, institutional biases
2. Historical judgments reflecting societal prejudices could perpetuate discrimination
3. Affecting equality before law (Article 14)

Data Privacy and Security Concerns

1. Judicial records containing sensitive personal information
2. Requiring robust cybersecurity
3. Compliance with Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023 essential

Accountability and Transparency Issues

1. Black-box algorithms making it difficult to understand, challenge AI-generated recommendations
2. Raising concerns regarding procedural fairness
3. Right to know basis of decisions (natural justice principles)

Threat to Judicial Independence

1. Excessive dependence on AI-generated outputs may indirectly influence judicial reasoning
2. Undermining exercise of independent judicial discretion
3. Risk of judges becoming rubber-stamps for algorithmic recommendations

Other Challenges

1. **Digital divide** – Unequal technology access among litigants, lawyers, courts
2. **Infrastructure gaps** – Inadequate internet connectivity in district, subordinate courts
3. **Resistance to change** – Traditional legal culture skeptical of technological intervention
4. **International comparability** – No global consensus on ethical AI standards for judiciary

4. Way Forward

Human-in-the-Loop Framework

1. AI remaining decision-support tool
2. Judges retaining complete authority over adjudication, sentencing, bail decisions
3. Technology augmenting human intelligence, not replacing it

Robust Ethical and Regulatory Standards

1. Regular audits, transparency requirements
2. Bias assessments, accountability mechanisms
3. Governing all judicial AI applications
4. Independent oversight body with civil society representation

Capacity Building and Secure Infrastructure

1. Judges, court staff, legal professionals receiving AI training
2. Supported by secure digital infrastructure
3. Strong data-protection safeguards under DPDP Act 2023

International Collaboration

1. Learn from EU Artificial Intelligence Act (risk-based regulation framework)
2. UNESCO's Recommendation on Ethics of AI (2021)
3. Develop India-specific ethical AI standards for judiciary

5. Conclusion

Supreme Court's draft AI Regulations 2026 establish a principled framework — banning AI adjudication while enabling AI assistance through SUPACE, SUVAS, Bhashini, SHRUTI, and ICJS integration — ensuring India's judiciary harnesses technology for efficiency and accessibility while preserving human judicial authority, constitutional rights, and rule of law.

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/draft-sc-rules-prohibit-use-of-ai-for-judicial-outcomes-assessing-bail-eligibility/article71060335.ece>

8. Safeguarding Parliamentary Democracy

Lok Sabha Speaker highlighted those frequent disruptions in Parliament and State Legislatures pose a serious challenge to democratic institutions threatening their constitutional effectiveness.

1. The 17th Lok Sabha (2019–2024) held only 274 sittings across 15 sessions, the lowest for any full-term Lok Sabha in Indian history reflecting declining legislative productivity.
2. During Monsoon Session 2025, Lok Sabha functioned for only 29% of its scheduled time while Rajya Sabha functioned for only 34% demonstrating severe productivity loss.

1. Fundamental Role of Legislatures in Democracy

Law-Making Authority

1. Legislatures enact laws governing the country and addressing emerging social, economic, and political challenges providing legal framework for societal governance.
2. Parliamentary law-making reflects collective will have elected representatives translating public mandates into binding legal frameworks.

Executive Accountability

1. Legislatures hold the executive accountable through debates, Question Hour, motions, and committee scrutiny ensuring checks and balances.
2. Without effective legislative functioning, executive accountability weakens creating democratic deficit and unchecked executive power.

Representation of People's Interests

1. Legislatures provide platform for elected representatives to articulate concerns and aspirations of citizens ensuring democratic voice.
2. Representative character of legislatures legitimizes laws and policies by reflecting diverse population perspectives.

Policy Deliberation

1. Legislatures facilitate informed discussions on public policies, budgets, and developmental priorities enabling quality governance.
2. Deliberative function helps identify policy gaps, unintended consequences, and improvements before legislation is enacted.

2.Understanding Parliamentary Disruptions

Definition and Scope

1. Parliamentary and legislative disruptions refer to repeated interruptions, adjournments, protests, and disorderly conduct preventing legislatures from effectively performing constitutional functions.
2. While disruptions have existed since early decades of independence, frequency and intensity have increased since 1990s with rise of coalition politics.

Declining Legislative Productivity Data

1. Bills referred to Parliamentary Standing Committees declined from 71% during 15th Lok Sabha (2009–14) to 27% during 16th Lok Sabha (2014–19) and around 16% during 17th Lok Sabha (2019–24).
2. This declining committee referral trend indicates rushed legislation without adequate scrutiny undermining quality of laws.
3. The 17th Lok Sabha's record-low 274 sittings represent fundamental failure of democratic accountability mechanisms.

Causes of Frequent Disruptions

Political Polarisation

1. Increasing political confrontation leads to disruptions becoming preferred mode of protest rather than substantive debate.
2. Party-based politics prioritizes electoral positioning over constructive legislative engagement.

Search for Public Attention

1. Political parties use disruptions to attract media coverage and highlight contentious issues as electoral strategy.

2. Disruptions generate television coverage providing visibility disproportionate to legislative debate.

Contentious Issues and Lack of Consensus

1. Key policy matters including economic reforms, minority rights, and constitutional amendments frequently lead to walkouts and protests.
2. Laws like Farm Bills (2020), Citizenship Amendment Act (2019), and GST rollout (2017) triggered significant walkouts and protests.

Weak Adherence to Parliamentary Norms

1. Declining respect for parliamentary conventions and decorum contributes to disorderly proceedings.
2. Cultural shift away from traditional parliamentary values undermines institutional effectiveness.

Limited Consensus-Building

1. Insufficient dialogue among political parties results in legislative deadlocks and disruptions.
2. Opposition parties are often excluded from policy formulation stage creating adversarial rather than collaborative environments.

3.Impact of Disruptions on Democracy

Weakening Executive Oversight

1. Repeated adjournments diminish effectiveness of accountability mechanisms such as Question Hour and parliamentary debates.
2. Executive functions without adequate parliamentary oversight when disruptions prevent scrutiny of government actions.

Reduced Legislative Productivity

1. Disruptions result in loss of valuable working hours and delay passage of important legislation.
2. Critical bills addressing public welfare, economic development, and national security are delayed.

Eroding Public Trust

1. Persistent disorderly conduct lowers citizens' confidence in democratic institutions and elected representatives.
2. Trust deficit weakens democratic legitimacy and creates cynicism about electoral participation.

Increasing Financial Costs

1. Frequent interruptions lead to wastage of public financial resources spent on conducting legislative sessions.
2. Each disrupted session costs taxpayers' significant sums while delivering no legislative output.

4.Way Forward

1. **Enforce Parliamentary Discipline** – Legislative rules and codes of conduct should be strictly enforced discouraging disruptive behaviour.
2. **Strengthen Committee Systems** – Parliamentary committees should be empowered to undertake detailed examination of policies and legislation restoring 71% committee referral rates.
3. **Encourage Constructive Opposition** – Political parties should prioritize substantive debate and policy engagement over obstructionist tactics.
4. **Foster Citizen Engagement** – Greater public participation can improve transparency, accountability, and trust in democratic institutions.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/frequent-disruptions-in-legislatures-pose-a-serious-challenge-to-democratic-institutions-om-birla/article71081572.ece>

9. PCPNDT Act

The Supreme Court of India recently delivered a significant observation calling for strict and effective enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994. The court expressed serious concern over the

continued societal preference for male children across large parts of the country and the persistence of sex-selective practices rooted in deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes. While acknowledging progress in certain states and urban pockets, the court noted that several states continue to report sex ratios at birth below the national average – a troubling sign that the problem is far from resolved.

1.About the PCPNDT Act, 1994

The PCPNDT Act is the primary legal framework governing the misuse of medical technology for the detection and disclosure of the sex of a foetus. It prohibits sex selection both before and after conception. All genetic counselling centres, genetic laboratories, genetic clinics, ultrasound clinics, and imaging centres are mandated to register under this law and comply with detailed documentation requirements.

The punishment framework under the Act is graduated. A first offence attracts imprisonment of up to three years and a fine of up to Rs 10,000. Subsequent offences attract up to five years imprisonment and higher financial penalties. Medical practitioners found guilty may also face suspension or cancellation of registration by the State Medical Council, making the professional consequences equally serious.

Sex Ratio Data – A Disturbing Picture

Data from Census 2011 places the overall sex ratio at 943 females per 1,000 males at the all-India level. The rural sex ratio stood at 949 and urban at 929. Disaggregating by age group, the sex ratio for the 0–19 age group was a deeply concerning 908, while the 60+ age group showed 1,033 – indicating differential survival disadvantage for females in younger cohorts. The economically active group (15–59 years) stood at 944. Regionally, Kerala recorded the highest sex ratio at 1,084, followed by Puducherry at 1,037, while Daman and Diu recorded the lowest at 618, followed by Dadar and Nagar Haveli (774) and Chandigarh (818).

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2021) reported a sex ratio at birth of 929 and an overall population sex ratio of 1,020. The high overall sex ratio masks the deeply skewed sex ratio at birth, which reveals the extent of sex-selective practices.

2. Root Causes of Historical Sex Ratio Imbalance

The imbalance in India's sex ratio is the outcome of a confluence of deep-seated cultural, social, and economic factors.

1. **Cultural preference for sons** has historically been dominant across caste groups and regions. Sons were seen as essential for carrying forward the family name, performing last rites, and providing financial security in old age.
2. **Dowry practices** rendered daughters an economic liability for families, especially in agrarian and lower-income households.
3. **Gender discrimination in healthcare and nutrition** historically resulted in higher female infant and child mortality due to systematic neglect.
4. **Female infanticide** was practised in parts of Rajasthan, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu, with female infants abandoned or killed at birth.
5. **Sex-selective abortion** became widespread following the availability of ultrasound technology from the 1980s onward, enabling identification of foetal sex and targeted termination of female foetuses — precisely the practice the PCPNDT Act was enacted to address.
6. **Economic logic of agrarian societies** reinforced son preference, as male labour was disproportionately valued in field-intensive agriculture.

3. Government Initiatives

Several policy interventions have been undertaken to address the sex ratio crisis.

1. **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)**, launched in 2015, is the flagship campaign combining awareness-generation with specific programmatic interventions to address gender-based discrimination. Initially focused on 100 districts with the lowest Child Sex Ratio, it was subsequently expanded nationwide.
2. **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana** incentivises families to invest in the future of the girl child through a high-interest, tax-exempt savings scheme, promoting a positive perception of daughters.
3. **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** provides direct financial assistance to pregnant women and lactating mothers, reducing the economic burden of childbearing and supporting maternal and child health.

4. **National Health Mission (NHM)** has focused on improving maternal health infrastructure, reducing female mortality across the life course, and expanding reproductive healthcare access to underserved regions.
5. **Awareness campaigns and legal reforms** have sought to sensitise communities, healthcare providers, and local governance bodies to the imperative of gender equality.

Significance of the Supreme Court's Direction

The Supreme Court's intervention reflects ongoing concern about implementation gaps in the PCPNDT Act despite its existence for over three decades. Enforcement has been uneven across states, with inspections of ultrasound clinics and prosecution of violators remaining inadequate. The judicial push brings renewed urgency to the administrative machinery — including appropriate authority boards, regular audits of Form F records, and fast-track prosecution of offenders.

4.Way Forward

1. **Strengthening enforcement architecture** through regular, surprise inspections of registered ultrasound clinics and strict action against non-compliant units is the immediate priority.
2. **Community-based awareness** through sustained Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaigns must go beyond urban and literate audiences to reach deeply patriarchal rural communities.
3. **Improving women's access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunity** is the most durable long-term intervention. Educated and economically empowered women are better able to resist family pressure for sex selection.
4. **Changing social norms** around dowry, son preference, and the perceived burden of daughters requires gender-sensitive education at all levels and active engagement with men as agents of change.
5. **Robust data collection** through regular time-use surveys, district-level sex ratio monitoring, and SRS updates enables evidence-based targeting of interventions.

6. **Judicial accountability mechanisms** — including mandatory reporting of prosecutions and conviction rates under PCPNDT to the Supreme Court — can help sustain enforcement pressure.

Source - <https://newsonair.gov.in/sc-necessitates-stringent-implementation-of-pcpndt-act-illustrating-gravity-of-gender-imbalance/#~~-text=The%20Supreme%20Court%20today%20underscored,in%20deeply%20entrenched%20patriarchal%20attitudes>.

10. Draft Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) has released draft Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026 for public consultation. The draft rules represent the most comprehensive attempt in India's broadcasting history to consolidate a fragmented, multi-layered regulatory architecture into a single, unified framework — a reform long demanded by industry stakeholders and governance reformers alike.

1. Background – The Regulatory Fragmentation Problem

India's broadcasting sector has historically been governed through a patchwork of policy guidelines issued at different points in time by different administrative orders. Direct-to-Home (DTH) broadcasting has been regulated under guidelines issued in 2001, Headend-in-the-Sky (HITS) services under guidelines from 2009, FM Radio under Phase-III guidelines from 2011, Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) under 2008 guidelines, and satellite television up linking and downlinking under 2022 guidelines. Community Radio Stations operate under Revised Policy Guidelines issued in 2024. This fragmented architecture created unequal compliance burdens, jurisdictional ambiguities, and a dated regulatory environment ill-suited to the convergence of broadcasting, telecommunications, and digital media that now characterises the industry.

The foundational legislative shift enabling this consolidation was the passage of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, which replaced the colonial-era Indian Telegraph Act of 1885 — a 138-year-old statute that had outlived its relevance by several decades. The MIB administers provisions of the 2023 Act relating to television, radio, and associated broadcasting services, and the 2026 Rules operationalise this mandate.

2.Key Features of the Draft Rules

1. **Unified Regulatory Framework** – The most significant structural innovation of the draft rules is the consolidation of multiple existing platform-specific guidelines into a single regulatory document. DTH, FM Radio, Community Radio, IPTV, HITS, and satellite television channels will all be governed under one framework rather than separate, often inconsistent, policy guidelines. This harmonisation reduces compliance complexity and eliminates the legal grey areas that arise when different guidelines contain conflicting provisions.
2. **Removal of Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA)** – The current system requires broadcasters and service providers to sign a Grant of Permission Agreement with the government — a formal, document-heavy process that has historically been associated with delays and administrative friction. The draft rules abolish this requirement, replacing it with a streamlined authorisation process. This reform directly reduces entry barriers and administrative burden for new and existing operators.
3. **Public Interest Obligations** – The draft rules introduce mandatory public interest content requirements for both television and radio. Television channels are required to broadcast a minimum of 30 minutes of content daily on themes of national importance and social relevance. Private FM radio stations must dedicate at least one hour per day to such content. Additionally, radio stations are required to ensure that at least 20% of their daily programming comprises local content — a provision

designed to protect regional languages, cultures, and community voices from being entirely displaced by national and global content.

4. **Digital Implementation** – The entire authorisation process will be implemented through digital platforms, eliminating the need for physical document submission and enabling real-time tracking and transparency in the licensing process. This aligns with the government's broader Digital India and e-governance objectives.

3.Guidelines Consolidated Under the Draft Rules

The draft rules integrate six distinct sets of previously applicable guidelines – the Satellite Television Uplinking and Downlinking Guidelines (2022), DTH Broadcasting Guidelines (2001), HITS Broadcasting Guidelines (2009), FM Radio Phase III Guidelines (2011), Revised Community Radio Guidelines (2024), and IPTV Guidelines (2008) – into a single coherent document, eliminating decades of regulatory fragmentation.

4.Significance of the Draft Rules

1. **Ease of doing business** is materially improved when broadcasters, cable operators, FM radio stations, and community radio networks operate under a single, clear, predictable regulatory framework rather than navigating multiple overlapping guidelines of varying vintage.
2. **Digital governance** gains from the digital authorisation process, which reduces discretion, improves transparency, and builds an auditable record of regulatory decisions.
3. **Broadcasting sector growth** is supported by a simplified regulatory environment that reduces compliance costs, lowers barriers for new entrants, and creates a more level playing field across different broadcasting platforms.
4. **Convergence-readiness** – As broadcasting, broadband, and communications technologies continue to converge – with streaming, OTT platforms, and internet radio blurring traditional distinctions – a unified regulatory framework positions India better to govern the emerging media landscape coherently.

Concerns and Areas for Attention

1. The **public interest content obligation** of 30 minutes per day for television channels will need careful implementation to ensure compliance is substantive rather than nominal – avoiding a situation where channels fulfil the letter of the requirement while undermining its spirit through scheduling choices.
2. The **local content requirement** of 20% for radio stations is potentially significant for community and regional broadcasters, but will need to be monitored for enforcement, particularly in markets where national content is commercially more viable.
3. The **adequacy of public consultation** before finalisation of the rules will determine their legitimacy and durability. Broadcasting stakeholders – from large media conglomerates to small community radio operators – have distinct interests that must be balanced in the final framework.

5.Way Forward

1. The MIB should ensure a genuinely **inclusive public consultation process** – with specific outreach to community radio operators, regional language broadcasters, and civil society media organisations whose interests may be overshadowed by larger commercial players.
2. **Implementation timelines** for transitioning existing licensees from their current permissions to the new unified framework should be clearly specified and accompanied by adequate technical support.
3. A **periodic review mechanism** should be built into the rules themselves, ensuring that the regulatory framework keeps pace with the rapidly evolving broadcasting and digital media landscape.

Source – <https://newsonair.gov.in/centre-releases-draft-telecommunication-rules-2026-for-public-consultation/>

11. Women-Led Development

Over the last decade, India has witnessed a paradigm shift from a welfare-oriented approach towards women to a model of women-led development, placing women at the centre of economic growth, governance, innovation, and decision-making. Key indicators reflect this transformation – Maternal Mortality Ratio declined from 130 per lakh live births (2014-15) to 88 (2021-23), institutional deliveries increased from 79% to 90.6%, and more than 14.5 lakh women serve as elected representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023 providing 33% reservation in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies marks the latest legislative milestone in this journey.

1. What is Women-Led Development?

Definition

1. Goes beyond welfare and empowerment by placing women at centre of economic growth, governance, innovation, decision-making
2. Views women NOT merely as beneficiaries of schemes but as **drivers of social and economic transformation**
3. Distinguishes from welfare approach (giving to women) and empowerment approach (enabling women) – women-led development means women leading change itself

2. Key Pillars of Women-Led Development

Health, Nutrition and Maternal Care

1. **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** - Maternity benefit scheme providing financial incentive for first live birth
2. **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)** - Free antenatal care on 9th of every month
3. **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)** - Cash incentive for institutional delivery
4. **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)** - Free entitlements to pregnant women, sick newborns
5. **Mission Indradhanush** - Expanded immunization coverage

6. **Poshan 2.0** – Nutritional support framework
7. MMR – 130 (2014–15) → **88 per lakh live births (2021–23)**
8. Institutional deliveries – 79% (2015–16) → **90.6% (2023–24)**

Education and Skill Development

1. **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** – Improving girl child survival, education awareness
2. **Samagra Shiksha** – Improved girls' enrolment, retention in schools
3. **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas** – Residential schools for girls from disadvantaged communities
4. **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** – Future-ready skills promotion
5. **NAVYA (Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational Training for Young Adolescent Girls)** – Vocational training for adolescent girls

Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship

1. **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana** – Brought millions of women into formal banking system
2. **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana** – Long-term financial planning for girl children
3. **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana** – Women constitute major share of beneficiaries (collateral-free loans up to ₹20 lakh)

Digital and Economic Empowerment

1. **Womaniya on GeM (Government e-Marketplace)** – Expanding market access for women entrepreneurs through government procurement
2. **SHE-Mart initiatives** – Digital marketplace for women-led businesses
3. **NaMo Drone Didi** – Enabling women to become technology-driven service providers in agriculture (training women SHG members as drone pilots)
4. Women increasingly participating in digital services, e-commerce, technology-driven livelihoods

Safety and Quality of Life

1. **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** – LPG access reducing indoor air pollution; improving women's health, time savings

2. **Jal Jeevan Mission** – Reduced burden of water collection; improved health outcomes (women primary water collectors)
3. **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana** – Strengthened women's property ownership, housing security (preference for women in house allotment)

Leadership and Political Participation

1. Women constituted **48.62% of electorate** in 2024 General Elections
2. **14.5 lakh+ women** serve as elected representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions
3. **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023** – 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies (effective after delimitation exercise)

3. Significance of Women-Led Development

1. Promotes inclusive, sustainable economic growth by expanding productive workforce
2. Greater women's labour market participation contributing to innovation, job creation, economic diversification
3. Increased governance representation strengthening democratic participation, inclusive policymaking
4. Directly contributing to multiple SDGs – Gender equality (SDG 5), poverty reduction (SDG 1), quality education (SDG 4), good health (SDG 3), inclusive growth (SDG 8)
5. Demographic dividend realization – Women constitute ~50% population; their full participation doubling India's human capital contribution
6. Viksit Bharat 2047 – Women-led development essential for achieving developed nation status

4. Challenges to Realising Women-Led Development

Low Female Labour Force Participation

1. Despite improvements, women's workforce participation below potential
2. Structural barriers – Limited mobility, safety concerns, family responsibilities
3. Social barriers – Patriarchal norms restricting women's employment in certain sectors

Persistent Gender Wage Gap

1. Women facing wage disparities, unequal access to high-paying employment
2. Occupational segregation concentrating women in low-paying sectors

Digital Gender Divide

1. Unequal access to digital technologies, internet connectivity, digital skills
2. Particularly acute in rural areas
3. Limiting women's participation in digital economy

Burden of Unpaid Care Work

1. Women disproportionately shouldering household, caregiving responsibilities
2. Reducing availability for paid employment, entrepreneurship, education
3. India's unpaid care work estimated at significant percentage of GDP

Social and Cultural Constraints

1. Deep-rooted patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes
2. Safety concerns restricting mobility, opportunities
3. Child marriage, dowry practices persisting in some regions

Underrepresentation in Leadership

1. Women underrepresented in senior corporate, political, administrative, institutional leadership
2. Despite Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, implementation pending delimitation
3. Glass ceiling persisting in corporate sector

5. Way Forward

1. Create more employment opportunities for women in manufacturing, services, green economy, emerging technologies
2. Expand childcare facilities, crèches, social security systems reducing unpaid care burden
3. Effective implementation of women's reservation, leadership development programmes
4. Bridge digital gender divide through targeted digital literacy, infrastructure

5. Strengthen safety mechanisms encouraging women's mobility, participation
6. Equal pay legislation enforcement addressing gender wage gap

6. Conclusion

India's women-led development model positions women as agents of transformation rather than passive beneficiaries, with significant progress across health (MMR 88), education (institutional deliveries 90.6%), financial inclusion (Jan Dhan, MUDRA), digital empowerment (NaMo Drone Didi, Womaniya), and political participation (14.5 lakh PRI representatives, Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023). Persistent challenges — low FLFP, gender wage gap, digital divide, unpaid care burden, cultural constraints — require targeted policy responses to fully realize women's potential as drivers of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Source - [https -](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2267960®=3&lang=2)

[//www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2267960®=3&lang=2](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2267960®=3&lang=2)

12. Prison Statistics 2024- Overcrowding, Undertrials, And Reform Imperatives

The National Crime Records Bureau's latest Prison Statistics report reveals that India's jail occupancy rate fell to a decade-low of 112.7% in 2024, yet overcrowding remains a persistent challenge driven largely by a disproportionately high share of undertrial prisoners. India had 1,333 jails with capacity of 4.53 lakh inmates but housed over 5.11 lakh prisoners at end of 2024. Undertrials accounted for approximately 73% of total inmate population with Delhi (194% occupancy, 87% undertrials) and Bihar recording highest shares. The crisis reflects structural failures across judicial, legal aid, infrastructure, and bail systems.

1. Major Highlights

Overcrowding in Jail

1. 1,333 jails with sanctioned capacity of 4.53 lakh inmates
2. Actual inmate population- 5.11 lakh (overcrowded by 58,000+ prisoners)

3. Occupancy rate- 112.7% (decade-low but still overcrowded)
4. More than half of states had occupancy rate over 100%
5. **Delhi-** Highest occupancy rate at 194% (2024)

High Number of Undertrials

1. Undertrials- ~73% of total inmate population (2024)
2. **Delhi and Bihar-** Over 87% inmates being undertrials
3. Prisoners awaiting trial spending months/years in jail without conviction
4. Violates fundamental right to personal liberty (Article 21)

2. Reasons Behind Rising Prison Overcrowding

Judicial Delays

1. Large pendency of criminal cases (5+ crore cases pending in Indian courts)
2. Results in prolonged incarceration of undertrial prisoners
3. Insufficient judges, courts relative to caseload

Overcriminalization

1. Excessive use of imprisonment for minor offences contributing to congestion
2. Petty crimes, traffic violations, minor disputes leading to imprisonment
3. Alternatives to imprisonment underutilized

Bail-Related Challenges

1. Economically weaker sections failing to secure bail due to financial constraints
2. Lack of awareness about legal rights
3. Inadequate legal assistance prolonging detention
4. Stringent bail conditions for certain offences (UAPA, NDPS, PMLA)

Inadequate Prison Infrastructure

1. Prison infrastructure expansion not keeping pace with growing inmate population
2. Understaffing in prisons (guards, medical staff, counsellors)
3. Aging facilities requiring modernization

3. Concerns

1. **Basic needs failure-** Overcrowding undermining healthcare, food, accommodation provision

2. **Rights violation**– Endangers right to adequate living standards, physical-mental health (Article 21)
3. **Security hazards**– Creates security problems, health hazards, disrupts rehabilitation programs
4. **Administration challenge**– Segregation of hardened criminals from mild offenders becomes impossible
5. **International standards violation**– Conditions unacceptable to UN Standard Minimum Rules for treatment of offenders (India is signatory)

4. Committees on Prison Reforms

1. **Justice A.N. Mulla Committee (1980–83)**– Separation of undertrials from convicts; improvement of prison conditions, nutrition, sanitation
2. **Justice Amitava Roy Committee**– Decongestion of prisons, speedy trials, legal aid reforms, technology for prison management
3. **Krishna Iyer Committee**– Separate jail facilities for women preventing exploitation

5. Judicial Interventions

1. **Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar**– SC held right to speedy trial is fundamental right under Article 21
2. **State of Rajasthan vs. Balchand**– SC established "bail is rule and jail is exception" reinforcing Article 21 personal liberty

6. Government Initiatives

1. **Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023**– Provisions for reformation, rehabilitation, social integration; Welfare Programs for Prisoners; After-Care and Rehabilitation Services
2. **Undertrial Review Committees (UTRCs)**– Established in every district; periodically reviews cases of undertrial prisoners eligible for bail/personal bonds
3. **e-Prisons Project**– Mission Mode Project under National e-Governance Plan; digitizes prison records; integrates prisons with courts, police, legal services; facilitates faster bail-parole-release processing

4. **Open Prisons/Open Correctional Institutions-** Eligible prisoners serving sentences in less restrictive environments; reduces pressure on conventional prisons; promotes rehabilitation
5. **Legal Aid and Bail Reforms-** NALSA and SLAs providing free legal aid to indigent prisoners; "Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme" assisting those unable to afford bail bonds

7. Way Forward

1. **Technology integration-** Digital prison management, video conferencing for court hearings reducing delays
2. **Social reintegration-** Vocational training, skill development enhancing post-release employability
3. **Strengthening legal aid-** Timely, effective representation for undertrials and economically weaker sections
4. **Alternatives to imprisonment-** Community service, probation, non-custodial punishments for minor offences
5. **Expand open prison models-** Reduce congestion, support rehabilitation across states

Conclusion

NCRB Prison Statistics 2024 revealing decade-low 112.7% occupancy rate despite housing 5.11 lakh prisoners against 4.53 lakh capacity underscores systemic crisis rooted in 73% undertrial proportion, judicial delays, bail inaccessibility for poor, and inadequate infrastructure. Delhi's 194% occupancy rate and 87% undertrial share exemplify urban prison crisis. Multiple committee recommendations (Mulla, Amitava Roy, Krishna Iyer), judicial mandates (Hussainara Khatoon, Balchand) and government initiatives (Model Act 2023, UTRCs, e-Prisons, Open Prisons, NALSA legal aid) provide comprehensive reform framework. Structural solutions require fast-track courts reducing pendency, bail reforms ensuring personal liberty for economically weaker sections, expanded alternatives to imprisonment, technology integration, vocational

rehabilitation, and open prison scaling ensuring India's prison system transforms from custodial warehousing to genuine correctional, rehabilitative institution upholding constitutional dignity of every prisoner.

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/data/prisons-in-india-continue-to-be-overcrowded-by-undertrials-data/article71048620.ece>

13. Fire Safety Governance in India

Recent fire tragedies — the Delhi B&B fire (2026) revealing operation without mandatory fire clearance with far more rooms than permitted, and the Muzaffarpur hospital fire (2026) demonstrating vulnerability of patients during emergencies — have once again exposed persistent shortcomings in fire safety compliance and enforcement in urban India. These incidents follow a troubling pattern including the Uphaar Cinema fire (1997) exposing overcrowding and blocked exits, and the Arpora nightclub fire in North Goa (2025) highlighting unsafe occupancy violations. Fire service being a State subject under the Constitution has resulted in fragmented standards and uneven enforcement across states.

1. India's Major Fire Accidents Over Last Three Decades

1. **Uphaar Cinema fire (1997)** - Overcrowding, blocked exits, inadequate emergency preparedness; 59 killed
2. **Arpora nightclub fire, North Goa (2025)** - Violations of safety norms, unsafe occupancy levels
3. **Delhi B&B fire (2026)** - Operating without mandatory fire clearance; far more rooms than permitted
4. **Muzaffarpur hospital fire (2026)** - Vulnerability of patients, particularly elderly and critically ill, during emergencies

2. Fire Services in India

Constitutional Position

1. Fire Service is a state subject

2. Included as Municipal function in 12th Schedule of Constitution under Article 243(W)
3. Results in variation in legal, institutional framework across different states
4. No uniform national fire safety standards enforceable across all states

Key Legal Framework

1. **National Building Code (NBC), 2016** – Issued by Bureau of Indian Standards; most comprehensive document on fire safety; deals specifically with fire and life safety; lays down technical guidelines for building design, construction, fire protection systems
2. **State Fire Service Acts** – Govern implementation, enforcement at state level; empower fire departments to conduct inspections, issue NOCs, take action against violations
3. **Disaster Management Act, 2005** – Implemented by NDMA; integrates fire incidents into broader disaster management framework; strengthens preparedness, response mechanisms
4. **Sector-specific laws** – Factories Act 1948, Explosives Act 1884, Petroleum Act 1934 – regulating fire safety in industrial, hazardous environments

Special Provisions for High-Rise Buildings

1. Installation of fire lifts for firefighter access
2. Refuge areas for temporary shelter during evacuation
3. Pressurized staircases preventing smoke infiltration
4. Facilitating safe evacuation, firefighting operations

3. Institutional Framework

Central Level

1. Directorate General of Fire Services, Civil Defence & Home Guards under Ministry of Home Affairs
2. Responsible for – Policy formulation, training, modernization of fire services
3. Advisory and capacity-building role (NOT enforcement)

State Level

State fire departments responsible for –

1. Implementation of fire safety regulations
2. Conducting inspections
3. Issuing certifications (NOCs)
4. Responding to emergencies

4. Fire Safety Certification (NOC)

Process

1. Mandatory for – High-rise buildings, commercial establishments, hospitals, schools, other public buildings
2. Steps –
 1. Submission of building plans
 2. Inspection by fire department
 3. Verification of compliance with safety norms
 4. Issuance of certificate
3. Periodic renewal required ensuring continued compliance

5. Structural Causes Behind Recurring Fire Accidents

Weak Enforcement of Safety Norms

1. Poor inspections, inadequate monitoring allowing violations to persist for years
2. Fire departments understaffed, under-equipped for comprehensive enforcement

Unauthorized Modifications and Overcrowding

1. Many establishments exceeding approved capacities
2. Unapproved structural changes compromising evacuation, firefighting efforts
3. Blocking emergency exits, corridors

Regulatory Loopholes and Evasion

1. Businesses exploiting land-use, licensing exemptions bypassing safety requirements
2. Continuing unsafe operations through legal ambiguities

Cost-Cutting

1. Fire safety systems, compliance measures frequently neglected to reduce operational costs
2. Sprinkler systems, smoke detectors, emergency lighting treated as unnecessary expenses

Lack of Institutional Accountability

1. Regulatory agencies rarely facing consequences for enforcement failures
2. Officials granting NOCs without proper inspections not prosecuted
3. Allowing negligence to persist without deterrent

Weak Safety Culture

1. Fire safety frequently treated as compliance formality rather than public safety imperative
2. Low awareness among building owners, occupants about evacuation procedures

6. Key Issues in India's Fire Safety Governance

Fragmented Regulatory Framework

1. Fire services being State subject resulting in varying standards, enforcement capacities
2. No uniform minimum national standards binding all states
3. High-capacity states (Maharashtra, Delhi) vs low-capacity states divergence

Compliance-Centric Approach

1. Focus remaining on obtaining NOCs rather than ensuring continuous compliance
2. One-time certification becoming license for perpetual non-compliance
3. Renewal processes often cursory

Capacity Constraints

1. Many fire departments facing shortages of –
 1. Personnel (firefighters, inspection officers)
 2. Equipment (modern fire trucks, aerial platforms, thermal cameras)
 3. Modern firefighting technologies

2. Urban expansion outpacing fire service capacity growth

Limited Risk-Based Inspections

1. Inspections often reactive and incident-driven rather than preventive
2. High-risk establishments (hospitals, hotels, schools, malls) not receiving priority inspection
3. Absence of data-driven risk profiling

7. Way Forward

1. **Harmonized national standards** – Move toward minimum national fire safety standards while respecting federal structure
2. **Technology-enabled monitoring** – Smart surveillance, sensor-based compliance tracking, third-party audits
3. **Mandatory periodic audits** – Fire safety audits and mock drills for hospitals, hotels, schools, malls, public buildings
4. **Enhanced accountability** – Both owners AND regulatory authorities facing consequences for violations
5. **Modernize fire services** – greater investment in equipment, training, emergency response systems
6. **Safety culture promotion** – Awareness among citizens, businesses, public institutions
7. **Risk-based inspection system** – Prioritizing high-risk establishments for frequent inspections
8. **Central coordination** – Strengthen DGFS role in setting minimum standards, capacity building

Conclusion

fire tragedies from Uphaar (1997) to Delhi B&B and Muzaffarpur hospital (2026) reflect systemic failures in India's fire safety governance — weak enforcement, unauthorized modifications, regulatory loopholes, cost-cutting, and institutional non-accountability — demanding harmonized national standards, technology-enabled

continuous compliance monitoring, mandatory periodic audits, and genuine accountability for both violators and enforcement agencies.

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/fire-and-furore-on-fire-accidents-in-india/article71061600.ece>

14. Operation Langda

A recent analysis examined the growing use of "Operation Langda" by the Uttar Pradesh Police, raising serious questions about crime control, due process, and rule of law. Operation Langda refers to a policing practice where accused persons are allegedly shot in the leg during police encounters and then arrested — often called a "half-encounter" because the accused survives but is incapacitated through injury rather than killed. The Allahabad High Court in 2026 observed that such "half-encounters" appeared to be becoming routine and reiterated that the power to punish belongs exclusively to the judiciary. Critics argue the practice violates Article 21, due process, and the constitutional principle separating law enforcement from punishment.

1. What is Operation Langda?

Definition

1. Policing practice in Uttar Pradesh where accused persons are allegedly **shot in the leg** during police encounters and then arrested
2. Called "**half-encounter**" — accused survives but is incapacitated through injury rather than killed
3. Emerged under State's "zero-tolerance" approach to crime
4. Presented as method of incapacitating habitual offenders

Typical Pattern

1. Suspect interception → Alleged attempt to flee or attack → Police retaliation → Leg injury → Arrest → Weapon recovery
2. Standard narrative making scrutiny difficult

3. Often involves prior criminal history of accused justifying the encounter narrative

2. Why Has It Gained Attention?

Crime Control Tool

1. Supporters view it as quick method to incapacitate habitual offenders
2. Low conviction rates and delays in criminal justice system creating perceived need
3. Repeat offenders difficult to keep incarcerated under bail provisions

Non-Lethal Encounter Model

1. Unlike traditional encounter killings, suspects usually survive with leg injuries
2. Making practice appear more legally defensible than fatal encounters
3. Reduces public outrage compared to encounter killings

Institutionalisation of Encounters

1. Large number of such incidents and official endorsement
2. Turned exceptional tactic into routine policing practice
3. Creating systemic pattern raising rule of law concerns

3. Concerns About Operation Langda

Violation of Due Process

1. Punishment effectively imposed **before judicial determination of guilt**
2. Undermining criminal justice system's foundational principle
3. Violates presumption of innocence (innocent until proven guilty)
4. Article 22 rights (arrest procedures, legal representation) potentially compromised

Human Rights Concerns

1. Deliberately injuring suspects raises concerns under **Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty)**
2. Encompasses right to life with dignity — not merely survival
3. **Article 20(3)** - Protection against self-incrimination
4. Forced injury as coercive interrogation tactic raises torture concerns
5. India's obligations under UN Convention Against Torture (despite not being a formal signatory)

Extra-Judicial Punishment

1. Blurs line between **law enforcement and punishment**
2. Punishment function reserved exclusively for courts under constitutional scheme
3. Police acting as judge, jury, and executioner
4. Violates separation of powers principle

Lack of Accountability

1. Repetitive encounter narratives (suspect always attacks first, weapon always recovered) limiting scrutiny
2. Limited independent investigation
3. Weakens transparency, public trust in policing
4. Magistrial inquiries often perfunctory

Perverse Incentives

1. Rewards, recognition, encounter statistics encouraging excessive use
2. Creating institutional incentive structure rewarding extra-legal violence
3. Officers competing for encounter numbers undermining rule of law culture
4. Possibility of fabricated encounters for personal gain, settling scores

Selective Application

1. Concerns about targeting based on religion, caste, economic status
2. Disproportionate impact on marginalized communities
3. Police discretion without oversight creating discrimination risks

4. Judicial Position

Supreme Court — People's Union for Civil Liberties v. State of Maharashtra

1. Supreme Court prescribed **detailed guidelines** for encounter cases
2. **Key guidelines -**
 1. Independent investigation of every encounter case
 2. FIR must be registered
 3. Magisterial inquiry mandatory
 4. Cases sent to **State Human Rights Commission** or **NHRC**

5. If investigation reveals prima facie case against police, prosecution must follow
6. Compensation to family of deceased in wrongful encounters
7. No promotion or reward until investigation clears officer

Allahabad High Court (2026)

1. Observed "half-encounters" appearing to become **routine**
2. Reiterated that **power to punish belongs exclusively to judiciary**
3. Expressed concern about institutionalization of extra-judicial violence
4. Called for strict compliance with Supreme Court guidelines

Other Relevant Judgments

1. **D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal (1997)** – Established guidelines preventing custodial torture, illegal detention
2. **Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association v. Union of India (2016)** – No encounter can be justified even against militants, criminals; every death must be investigated
3. **Nilabati Behera v. State of Orissa (1993)** – Compensation for custodial deaths, violations of personal liberty

5. Constitutional and Legal Framework

Constitutional Provisions Violated

1. **Article 14** – Equality before law and equal protection – selective, arbitrary targeting
2. **Article 19** – Freedom of movement – suspects shot for attempting to exercise this right
3. **Article 20** – Protection against arbitrary conviction, self-incrimination
4. **Article 21** – Right to life and personal liberty – encompasses dignity, bodily integrity
5. **Article 22** – Protection against arbitrary arrest and detention

Legal Framework

1. **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023** – Replaced CrPC; regulates police powers, arrest procedures
2. **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023** – Replaced IPC; Section 100 on private defence limits

3. **Police Act, 1861 (state variations)** - Governs police conduct (outdated, needs reform)
4. **NHRC Guidelines** - All encounter deaths must be reported within 48 hours

6. Broader Context – Encounter Culture in India

Historical Background

1. Encounters prevalent since 1970s–80s (Punjab insurgency, Mumbai organized crime, naxal operations)
2. Justified as necessity against organized crime, terrorism
3. Gradually normalized as routine policing tool

Structural Reasons for Encounter Prevalence

1. **Overburdened courts** – 5+ crore pending cases; trial delays of 5–10 years
2. **Low conviction rates** – ~50% conviction in IPC cases (some estimates lower)
3. **Weak forensic infrastructure** – Poor evidence collection limiting prosecution
4. **Political pressure** – Demand for quick results from elected officials
5. **Institutional culture** – Encounter officers celebrated as "supercops"

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

1. Monitors encounter cases across India
2. Issues notices to states for explanation
3. Recommends compensation for victims' families
4. Limited enforcement capacity (advisory body)

7. Way Forward

Strengthen Due Process

1. Strict compliance with Supreme Court PUCL guidelines
2. **Independent investigation** of every encounter by SIT or CBI
3. Mandatory **video recording** of encounters where possible
4. Magisterial inquiry within specified timeline

Improve Criminal Justice Delivery

1. Enhance investigation quality (forensic capacity, trained investigators)

2. Fast-track courts for serious offenders
3. Strengthen witness protection programs
4. Reduce trial delays removing incentive for extra-legal approaches

Accountability and Transparency

1. **Mandatory body cameras** for police officers during operations
2. Regular **encounter audits** by independent bodies
3. **Judicial oversight** through district court monitoring
4. **Public reporting** of encounter cases (annual state reports)
5. Prosecute officers in fabricated encounter cases without delay

Police Reforms

1. Implement Prakash Singh Committee recommendations (2006 SC judgment)
2. Establish **Police Complaints Authority** at district and state levels
3. Separate investigation from law-and-order policing
4. Revamp police training emphasizing human rights, rule of law

Community-Centred Policing

1. Intelligence-led policing identifying crime networks before incidents
2. Crime prevention through community engagement, surveillance
3. Rehabilitation programs for habitual offenders addressing root causes
4. **Community policing initiatives** building trust between police and marginalized communities

8. Conclusion

Operation Langda exemplifies the dangerous institutionalization of extra-judicial violence where crime control imperatives override constitutional safeguards – violating Article 21 (bodily integrity), due process (pre-judicial punishment), and separation of powers (police usurping judicial punishment function). While structural failures in criminal justice (low convictions, trial delays) create pressures for shortcut policing, the Allahabad HC's 2026 observation that half-encounters are becoming routine demands strict enforcement of SC's PUCL guidelines, mandatory independent

investigation, accountability mechanisms, and fundamental criminal justice reforms replacing encounter culture with evidence-based, community-centred, rights-respecting policing.

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/is-shoot-to-disable-the-new-normal/article71056685.ece>

15. Inclusive Transformation of Vulnerable Sections

Over the last decade, India has witnessed an inclusive transformation through welfare expansion and social protection, significantly reducing deprivation and improving quality of life of vulnerable sections.

1. This transformation encompasses multidimensional approaches targeting poverty alleviation, financial inclusion, healthcare, water access, women empowerment, and livelihood generation.
2. Comprehensive data shows measurable progress across multiple human development indicators reflecting integrated policy implementation.

1. Defining Inclusive Transformation

Conceptual Framework

1. Inclusive Transformation refers to a development process ensuring benefits of economic growth, social progress, and public policies reach all sections of society, particularly poor, marginalized, and vulnerable groups.
2. It seeks to improve not only income levels but also access to basic services, opportunities, and human capabilities reducing social and economic inequalities.
3. The approach recognizes that growth without inclusion perpetuates disparities and social instability.

Major Initiatives for Inclusive Transformation

Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection

1. Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) provides free food grains to over 81 crore beneficiaries ensuring food security for poorest households.

2. One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) ensures food security for migrant workers enabling portability of benefits across states.
3. Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) has improved transparency and reduced leakages in welfare delivery through digital channels.

Financial Inclusion Initiatives

1. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has expanded banking access to over 58 crore beneficiaries providing basic financial services to unbanked populations.
2. PM Mudra Yojana provides collateral-free loans to micro and small entrepreneurs enabling entrepreneurship without asset requirements.
3. UPI and Digital Payments have facilitated financial inclusion and digital transactions reducing dependence on physical currency.

Healthcare and Nutrition Coverage

1. Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY provides health insurance coverage of ₹5 lakh per family addressing catastrophic health expenditure concerns.
2. Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission promotes digital health records and seamless healthcare access enabling continuity of care.
3. Mission Indradhanush and maternal health schemes improve child and maternal healthcare outcomes reducing preventable deaths.

Water, Sanitation and Housing Access

1. Jal Jeevan Mission provides functional household tap water connections reducing water collection burden particularly on women.
2. Swachh Bharat Mission has achieved near-universal sanitation coverage eliminating open defecation transforming public health.
3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) promotes affordable housing for urban and rural poor providing dignity and stability.

Women Empowerment Programs

1. PM Ujjwala Yojana provides clean cooking fuel to women from poor households reducing indoor air pollution and health risks.

2. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao promotes education and empowerment of the girl child addressing gender disparities.
3. DAY-NRLM, Lakhpati Didi, and Drone Didi initiatives encourage women-led entrepreneurship building economic independence.

Livelihood and Employment Generation

1. Viksit Bharat-Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (formerly MGNREGA) provides wage employment and rural asset creation addressing unemployment and rural poverty.
2. PM SVANidhi supports street vendors through collateral-free loans formalizing informal sector workers.
3. PM Vishwakarma strengthens traditional artisans and craftsmen preserving cultural heritage while improving incomes.

Tribal Development Initiatives

1. Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan focuses on holistic tribal development addressing multidimensional deprivation.
2. Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) improve educational access in tribal areas enabling upward mobility.

2. Progress Achieved in Inclusive Transformation

Poverty Reduction Impact

1. Multidimensional poverty declined from 29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23, reflecting a reduction of 17.89 percentage points.
2. Nearly 25 crore people moved out of multidimensional poverty demonstrating scale of transformation.

Water and Sanitation Improvements

1. Rural tap water coverage under Jal Jeevan Mission increased from 3.23 crore households (2019) to 15.84 crore households (May 2026), covering 81.87% of rural households.
2. Rural sanitation coverage increased from 39% in 2014 to 100% in 2019 eliminating open defecation.

Maternal and Child Health Gains

1. Maternal Mortality Ratio declined from 130 (2014-16) to 88 (2021-23) per 100,000 live births reflecting improved maternal health services.

Clean Energy and Electricity Access

1. 10.57 crore free LPG connections provided under PM Ujjwala Yojana reducing biomass dependence and indoor pollution.
2. Average rural electricity supply increased from 12.5 hours/day (2014) to 22.6 hours/day (2025) improving quality of life.

Women-Led Development

1. Women associated with Self-Help Groups increased from 2.37 crore to 10 crore under DAY-NRLM reflecting expanding women entrepreneurship.
2. The number of SHGs increased to 91.75 lakh providing collective economic power.

3.Challenges Requiring Attention

Persistent Regional Disparities

1. Development outcomes remain uneven across states, districts, and tribal regions with some areas lagging significantly.
2. Interstate variations in implementation effectiveness create unequal access to welfare benefits.

Quality Deficit in Public Services

1. Access has improved but quality of healthcare, education, and sanitation services remains inconsistent across regions.
2. Service quality monitoring and accountability mechanisms need strengthening.

Income Vulnerability

1. Informal employment continues to dominate the labour market with job creation not always keeping pace with workforce expansion.
2. Wage employment remains unstable and insufficient for poverty escape.

Nutritional Challenges

1. Child malnutrition, anaemia, and stunting remain significant concerns despite improvements affecting child development potential.

Digital Divide

1. Internet connectivity and digital literacy gaps persist, particularly in remote and tribal areas limiting digital service access.

Social Exclusion

1. Certain vulnerable groups including migrants, urban homeless, elderly citizens, and persons with disabilities continue facing barriers in accessing welfare benefits.

Fiscal Sustainability

1. Expanding welfare commitments require sustained fiscal resources and efficient targeting to ensure program sustainability.

4.Way Forward

1. **Strengthen Last-Mile Delivery** – Improve beneficiary identification and grievance redressal mechanisms ensuring all eligible people receive benefits.
2. **Quality of Services** – Shift from infrastructure creation to service quality and outcome-based monitoring measuring impact rather than inputs.
3. **Digital Inclusion** – Expand broadband connectivity and digital literacy in underserved regions enabling digital service access.
4. **Improve Human Capital** – Increase investments in health, nutrition, education, and social protection building capabilities.
5. **Strengthen Cooperative Federalism** – Encourage greater coordination between Centre, States, and local governments for effective implementation.

Source - [https -](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2270144®=3&lang=1)

[//www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2270144®=3&lang=1](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2270144®=3&lang=1)

16. Evolving Landscape of Digital Inclusion in India

'The Evolving Landscape of Digital Inclusion in India', released by National Council of Applied Economic Research, argues India's digital divide has entered new phase.

1. While mobile phone ownership has reached 95.1% of households, only 39.7% of individuals aged 15 and above use internet reflecting access-usage gap.

2. The report identifies critical disconnect between device ownership and meaningful digital participation limiting inclusive growth benefits.

1.Digital Divide Analysis

Apparent Success Masking Deeper Challenges

1. India's digital revolution succeeded in putting mobile phones in nearly every household but fallen short of delivering meaningful digital inclusion.
2. 95.1% of households own mobile device and 74.8% have access to smartphone or internet-enabled phone.
3. However, only 39.7% of individuals aged 15 and above use internet despite high device ownership indicating significant usage gap.

Persistent Connectivity Gaps

1. Around 27.5% of households remain offline with connectivity gaps varying by location and income.
2. 32.2% of rural India remains offline despite rapid digitalization in urban areas creating rural-urban divide.
3. 52.1% among poorest consumption group lacks connectivity highlighting income-based digital exclusion.

Entertainment-Driven Usage Patterns

1. Internet use among connected households is largely entertainment-driven rather than productive or skill-building focused.
2. About 66% use internet to watch movies, television, or news content; 53.8% use social media.
3. Only 16.1% use internet for online courses and 11.4% access government services digitally limiting productive usage.

Hidden Dependency and Literacy Divide

1. One in five households requires help from someone outside to use digital services rising to one in three among households with no formal education.
2. This "hidden divide" prevents independent digital participation and creates dependence on intermediaries.

Gender and Age Disparities

1. Internet use among working-age adults stands at 57.6% for men and 35.6% for women indicating significant gender gap.
2. Only 37.8% of children aged 13–16 actively use internet limiting digital skills development among youth.

2. Government Initiatives for Digital Inclusion

Digital India Program

1. Launched July 1, 2015, Digital India program envisions transforming India into knowledge-based economy and digitally empowered society.
2. Comprehensive framework addressing digital infrastructure, services, and literacy across sectors.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

1. Enables instant, interoperable, and secure transactions between individuals and merchants in real time.
2. International Monetary Fund recognized UPI as world's largest retail fast payment system by transaction volume in 2025.
3. Within India, 81% of total retail payment transactions processed on UPI demonstrating dominance.

PM-WANI Framework

1. Wi-Fi Access Network Interface framework launched in 2020 expanded affordable public internet access.
2. Over 4.10 lakh Wi-Fi hotspots operate across States and Union Territories as of June 2026.

Digital Document Infrastructure

1. Digi Locker introduced secure digital document wallet allowing individuals to store, access, and share authenticated electronic documents.
2. UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New age Governance) provides single window access to services from central, state, and local government bodies.

Common Service Centres

1. CSCs grown from 0.83 lakh centres in 2014 to over 5.01 lakh functional centres by April 2026.
2. These centres improve digital access and delivery of citizen services across rural and urban areas.

Digital Education Platform

1. DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) with over 2 crore registered users serves as unified, AI-enabled digital education platform.
2. All States/UTs onboarded hosting 7,497 Energized Textbooks and over 3.74 lakh e-content resources.

E-Governance Revolution

1. E-Governance has revolutionized citizen-government interaction making services more accessible, transparent, and efficient.
2. Initiatives like Mission Karma yogi, Digi Locker, and UMANG App exemplify digital service transformation.

3.Critical Gaps and Priority Areas

The Four Priorities Identified

1. **Expanding affordable broadband and public Wi-Fi** ensuring universal connectivity at affordable costs.
2. **Improving access to computers and shared devices** addressing hardware constraints in low-income areas.
3. **Strengthening digital literacy and skills** enabling meaningful technology use beyond entertainment.
4. **Targeting women, rural households, poorer families, and disadvantaged communities** addressing systematic exclusions.

4.Way Forward

1. **Accelerate Broadband Rollout** – Speed up Bharat Net implementation in remote and tribal areas expanding 4G/5G coverage.

2. **Enhance Digital Literacy** – Scale up digital literacy programs particularly for women, senior citizens, and rural populations.
3. **Bridge Gender Digital Divide** – Implement targeted initiatives improving women's access to mobile phones, internet services, and digital skills training.
4. **Promote Regional Language Content** – Expand digital services and applications in Indian languages enabling broader participation.
5. **Deepen Digital Public Infrastructure** – Expand Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker reach ensuring inclusivity and privacy safeguards.
6. **Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships** – Foster collaboration among government, industry, civil society, and academia creating inclusive digital ecosystems.

Source – <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/digital-2-0-access-to-mobiles-up-but-not-empowerment/articleshow/131598964.cms>

17. Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan – A Decade of Transforming Maternal Healthcare

The union Health minister launched the nationwide campaign "10 Years of PMSMA – A Decade of Care" in New Delhi to celebrate ten years of the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan.

1. Over its decade-long journey, PMSMA has provided free comprehensive antenatal services to more than 7.50 crore pregnant women transforming maternal healthcare delivery.
2. India achieved a 43-point reduction in Maternal Mortality Ratio from 130 per lakh live births (2014-16) to 87 (2022-24) with PMSMA acting as primary driver.

1. About PMSMA – Design and Structure

Launch and Institutional Framework

1. Launched in 2016 by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, PMSMA aims to provide free and quality antenatal care to pregnant women across India.

2. The scheme operates under the broader Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health plus Nutrition (RMNCAH+N) strategy under National Health Mission (NHM).
3. Services delivered through a vast network including 1.8 lakh Ayushman Aarogya Mandirs ensuring geographic reach.

The 9th of the Month Rule

1. Conducted on 9th day of every month across designated government health facilities providing fixed-day, assured, and completely free Antenatal Care (ANC).
2. Fixed scheduling enables patients to plan visits in advance, healthcare workers to prepare resources, and facilities to deploy specialists.
3. Services target pregnant women in their second and third trimesters when risk monitoring is most critical.

Comprehensive Care Package

1. Single-window system delivers clinical examinations by specialists eliminating need for multiple visits to different facilities.
2. Crucial laboratory tests including blood and urine tests, ultrasonography, free medicines, and counseling for birth preparedness provided in each session.
3. Distribution of Mother and Child Protection Cards and safe motherhood booklets enables continuous tracking.

Public-Private Partnership Model

1. Private obstetricians, gynecologists, and radiologists voluntarily commit 12 days per year to treat patients at government facilities bridging specialist gaps.
2. Top contributors recognized through 'IPledgeFor9' Achievers Awards incentivizing private sector participation.
3. Public-private collaboration addresses specialist shortage in rural government health centers.

Core Objectives of PMSMA

1. Ensuring every pregnant woman receives at least one checkup by physician/specialist during second or third trimester.

2. Improving quality of care during antenatal visits through standardized protocols.
3. Identifying and managing high-risk pregnancies (HRP) at early stage preventing complications.
4. Appropriate birth planning and complication readiness for each pregnant woman.
5. Ensuring appropriate management of women with malnutrition addressing nutritional deficiencies.
6. Special focus on adolescent and early pregnancies addressing vulnerable demographic groups.

2.High-Risk Tracking Through Color-Coded System

25-Risk Factor Screening

1. Doctors screen for 25 distinct high-risk factors including severe anemia, gestational diabetes, and pregnancy-induced hypertension.
2. Color-coded stickers pasted on Mother and Child Protection (MCP) card enable quick identification by all healthcare workers.
3. Systematic risk stratification enables appropriate allocation of specialist care and monitoring intensity.

Color-Coded Classification System

1. Green Sticker indicates normal pregnancy with no risk factors detected requiring routine monitoring.
2. Red Sticker designates High-Risk Pregnancy (HRP) requiring strict monitoring and specialized care interventions.
3. Blue Sticker identifies pregnancy complicated by hypertension (high blood pressure) requiring blood pressure management.
4. Yellow Sticker marks pregnancy co-existing with other diseases like hypothyroidism or malaria requiring disease-specific management.

3.Extended PMSMA (e-PMSMA) Launched 2022

Dedicated Follow-Up Tracking

1. Introduced to protect high-risk cases between monthly sessions guaranteeing additional, specialized ANC visits.

2. Continuous tracking for every red-sticker patient until safe delivery ensuring no high-risk patient lost to follow-up.
3. Up to four additional PMSMA sessions per month for high-risk cases addressing intensity of monitoring required.

Financial Incentives for Compliance

1. Beneficiary receives ₹100 per visit offsetting travel expenses for up to three extra follow-up visits.
2. ASHA workers receive ₹100 per visit for tracking and additional ₹500 upon ensuring healthy outcome for both mother and child 45 days post-delivery.
3. Financial incentives align interests of beneficiaries and community health workers with program objectives.

Digital Alert System

1. Automated SMS reminders sent to both patient and local ASHA worker regarding upcoming clinic dates.
2. Digital alerts reduce missed appointments and improve follow-up compliance.
3. Name-based line listing of High-Risk Pregnancies enables systematic tracking and accountability.

4. Understanding Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)

Definition and Significance

1. Maternal Mortality Ratio is official statistical measure representing number of maternal deaths per 1 lakh (100,000) live births due to pregnancy-related or childbirth causes.
2. High MMR indicates systemic failures in maternal healthcare including inadequate antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, and emergency obstetric services.
3. MMR serves as critical indicator of healthcare system quality and gender equity in health outcomes.

India's MMR Trajectory

1. In 2014-16 baseline, India recorded MMR of 130 deaths per lakh live births driving national urgency for structured medical care.

2. UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target aims to reduce global MMR to under 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.
3. Between 2014-16 and 2022-24, India achieved remarkable 43-point reduction bringing MMR from 130 to 87.
4. This progress reflects cumulative impact of PMSMA and related maternal health interventions.

Tenth Anniversary Celebrations

National Activities on June 9, 2026

1. Ayushman Arogya Shivirs (Special health camps) providing quality checkups across 1.8 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs nationwide.
2. Government released special ₹75 commemorative coin and ₹5 postal stamp marking 10th anniversary.
3. Special healthcare drives held at all District Hospitals and First Referral Units re-engaging women who dropped out of regular checkups.

5.Integration with Broader Maternal Health Ecosystem

Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)

1. Safe motherhood intervention providing cash incentives encouraging institutional deliveries.
2. Has benefited over 11.96 crore women since 2014-15 driving shift from home deliveries to institutional care.

Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)

1. Entitles pregnant women and sick infants to 100% free drugs, diagnostics, diet, and transport reducing financial barriers.
2. Has supported over 18.05 crore beneficiaries eliminating out-of-pocket expenses for institutional delivery.

SUMAN Initiative

1. Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan scheme guarantees zero-tolerance for service denial providing assured quality care.
2. Network of over 99,290 public facilities ensures geographic coverage for quality maternal care.

LaQshya and PMMVY

1. LaQshya initiative improves quality of care in labor rooms and maternity operation theatres enhancing delivery outcomes.
2. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) provides direct cash transfers for partial wage compensation and nutrition.

6.Key Challenges in Implementation

Regional Inequalities

1. States including Assam, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh continue reporting higher maternal mortality due to geographical barriers, poverty, and weaker healthcare infrastructure.
2. Interstate disparities require targeted interventions recognizing varying levels of development and healthcare capacity.

Specialist Shortage

1. Many rural Primary Health Centres and Community Health Centres lack sufficient obstetricians, pediatricians, and anesthesiologists needed for emergency maternal care.
2. Specialist deficit undermines service quality particularly in remote areas where private sector participation is limited.

Unexpected Complications

1. Some women initially categorized as low-risk pregnancies later develop sudden complications showing limitations of monthly checkup-based monitoring.
2. Dynamic risk assessment requires continuous monitoring capability beyond fixed monthly sessions.

Last-Mile Transport Problems

1. Delays in transporting pregnant women from remote or tribal areas to higher healthcare centers remain major cause of preventable maternal deaths.
2. Transportation infrastructure and emergency referral systems require substantial improvement particularly in hilly and tribal areas.

Uneven Awareness and Follow-Up

1. Lack of awareness, poor nutrition, social barriers, and irregular follow-up visits reduce scheme effectiveness in some regions.
2. Cultural and social factors including preference for home deliveries require sustained behavior change communication.

7.Way Forward

1. **Continuous Digital Monitoring** – Shift from only monthly checkups to real-time digital tracking of high-risk pregnancies through mobile applications and cloud-based health records.
2. **Better Specialist Distribution** – Strengthen First Referral Units and rural hospitals by improving deployment of trained gynecologists, pediatricians, and anesthesiologists.
3. **Dynamic Risk Screening** – Train Auxiliary Nurse Midwives and ASHA workers for more frequent community-level screening detecting rapidly developing complications early.
4. **Improved Emergency Transport** – Integrate ambulance systems with GPS-based tracking and village-level ASHA networks reducing emergency response times.
5. **Greater Community Awareness** – Expand campaigns on nutrition, institutional delivery, regular antenatal care, and danger signs in pregnancy especially in vulnerable regions.

Source - [https -](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2270828®=3&lang=1)

[//www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2270828®=3&lang=1](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2270828®=3&lang=1)

18. Water Contamination in Urban Area

In South Delhi's Gulmohar Park, drinking water pipelines have been delivering sewage-contaminated water for over two weeks highlighting failures in urban water governance.

1. Urban water contamination represents systemic failure affecting public health, economic productivity, and environmental sustainability.

2. Multiple constitutional provisions guarantee access to safe drinking water yet enforcement gaps create persistent urban water crises.

1.Understanding Water Contamination

Types of Contamination

1. Biological contamination occurs due to pathogens including bacteria, viruses, protozoa, and parasites such as E. coli and cholera bacteria causing waterborne diseases.
2. Chemical contamination results from industrial effluents, pesticides, heavy metals, and excess nutrients creating long-term health hazards.
3. Physical contamination includes sediments, plastics, and suspended solids degrading water quality and taste.
4. Radiological contamination involves radioactive substances entering water sources creating serious long-term health risks.

2.Why Sewage Mixes with Drinking Water

Infrastructure Failures

1. Sewage enters through cracks and damaged joints in water pipes with risk increasing when pipelines are old, corroded, or damaged during construction activities.
2. Many pipelines were laid decades ago and have exceeded design life with lack of regular maintenance increasing contamination risks.

Intermittent Water Supply Problem

1. Most Indian cities supply water only for few hours daily creating empty or low-pressure pipes.
2. Empty or low-pressure pipes create suction allowing contaminated water to enter through leaks reversing intended flow direction.
3. Intermittent supply is fundamental design flaw creating contamination risk even in relatively new infrastructure.

Poor Sewage Management

1. Large share of urban households lack access to organized sewer networks with septic tanks and untreated effluents often discharging into drains and water channels.
2. Unorganized sewage management creates contamination sources adjacent to drinking water infrastructure.

Structural Challenges in Urban Water Governance

1. Lack of comprehensive digitized maps of water and sewer networks prevents systematic leak detection and maintenance planning.
2. Fragmented responsibilities among multiple agencies creates accountability gaps where no single authority ensures water quality.
3. Weak coordination between water supply and sewage departments allows infrastructure proximity problems to develop unaddressed.
4. Large informal settlements lack adequate water and sanitation infrastructure creating persistent contamination hotspots.
5. Existing standards focus on water quality but not on service delivery mechanisms leaving operational gaps.

Health, Economic, and Social Consequences

Public Health Hazards

1. Spread of waterborne diseases including cholera, typhoid, dysentery, and hepatitis leads to increased burden on public healthcare systems.
2. Vulnerable populations including children, elderly, and immunocompromised individuals face highest health risks from contaminated water.

Economic Costs

1. Higher household expenditure on bottled water, water purifiers, and medical treatment imposes financial burden on families.
2. Industrial productivity loss and healthcare system strain create macroeconomic costs of contamination.

Environmental Degradation

1. Poor wastewater management pollutes urban water bodies creating long-term environmental damage.

Social Inequity

1. Low-income households are less able to access alternative safe water sources creating health disparity along economic lines.

3. Constitutional and Legal Framework

Fundamental Right Provisions

1. Article 21 guarantees Right to Life which includes access to safe drinking water through judicial interpretation.
2. Subhas Kumar v. State of Bihar (1991) – Supreme Court held that right to live under Article 21 includes right to enjoy pollution-free water and air.
3. A.P. Pollution Control Board II v. Prof. M.V. Nayudu (1999) – Court stated access to safe drinking water is fundamental to life.

Constitutional Empowerment

1. Article 243W empowers Urban Local Bodies to manage water supply, sanitation, and public health.
2. Article 47 (DPSP) directs State to raise level of nutrition, standard of living, and improve public health.

Government Initiatives

1. Smart Cities Mission promotes technology-driven monitoring of civic services including water systems.
2. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) aims to develop robust sewage networks and treatment plants.
3. Swachh Bharat Mission addresses sanitation through door-to-door waste collection and source segregation.

4. Way Forward

1. **Infrastructure Modernization** – Urban local bodies should prioritize replacement and modernization of ageing water and sewer pipelines.

2. **Real-Time Monitoring** – Sensor-based water quality monitoring should be institutionalized across urban networks.
3. **Decentralized Wastewater Treatment** – Implementing small-scale localized treatment units (DEWATS) in housing societies reducing burden on main sewer lines.
4. **Independent Audits** – Third-party audits of water infrastructure must be made mandatory ensuring accountability.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/gulmohar-park-sewage-taps-urban-water-systems-fail-10728181/>

19. National Cooperation Policy 2025 – Transforming Cooperatives for Viksit Bharat

The Ministry of Cooperation held the first meeting of its National Level Policy Implementation and Monitoring Committee in New Delhi to design a country-wide roadmap for the newly launched National Cooperation Policy-2025.

1. The policy aims to transform India's cooperative societies into transparent, technology-enabled, professionally managed, and member-centric economic institutions guided by "Sahkar se Samriddhi" (Prosperity through Cooperation).
2. Strategic targets include expanding cooperative membership to 50 crores by 2035 and tripling the economic contribution of the cooperative sector representing transformative scale ambition.

1. About National Cooperation Policy 2025

Vision and Framework

1. Comprehensive national framework designed to transform India's cooperative societies into transparent, technology-enabled, professionally managed, and member-centric economic institutions.
2. Guided by Prime Minister's vision of "Sahkar se Samriddhi" (Prosperity through Cooperation), it acts as core vehicle to energize the rural economy.

3. Directly aligned with India's Viksit Bharat @2047 goals ensuring cooperative sector contributions to national development.

Key Goals

1. Expand number of cooperatives by 30% and triple their GDP contribution by integrating 50 crore active members by 2034.
2. Achieve Universal Coverage by establishing at least one primary cooperative unit in every panchayat ensuring grassroots outreach.
3. 83 intervention points identified with work completed on 58 providing comprehensive implementation framework.

2.The Six Strategic Pillars

Strengthening the Foundation

1. Revamping and reinforcing existing base of cooperative sector addressing structural weaknesses and governance gaps.
2. Building institutional capacity for long-term sustainability.

Vibrant and Competitive

1. Transforming cooperatives into modern, highly efficient, and competitive business enterprises capable of market competition.
2. Enabling professional management practices while retaining cooperative principles.

Preparing for the Future

1. Modernizing operations with advanced technology to handle tomorrow's economic demands.
2. Focus on computerization, ERP-based management systems, and cybersecurity for PACS.

Expanding Inclusiveness

1. Broadening outreach ensuring deep participation from women, youth, and small/marginal farmers.
2. Prioritizes villages, rural women, Dalits, and tribals for equitable growth through member-centric development.

New and Emerging Sectors

1. Promoting cooperative footprints in modern business fields including tech-driven services and green energy.
2. Sectoral expansion into tourism, taxi services (Sahkar Taxi), insurance, and green energy with profits benefiting PACS.

Next-Gen Leadership

1. Connecting younger generation with cooperative values and creating startup culture within sector.
2. Employment generation by establishing one cooperative in every village increasing youth participation.

3.Key Provisions and Institutional Innovations

Model Cooperative Villages

1. Establishment of five model cooperative villages in every tehsil beginning with pilot in Gandhinagar (NABARD-led).
2. Model villages demonstrate integrated cooperative approach across multiple economic sectors.

New National-Level Cooperatives

1. National Cooperative Exports Limited established for international trade and global market access of Indian cooperative products.
2. Three new national-level cooperatives created for exports, organics, and quality seeds addressing supply chain needs.

Technology Integration

1. Fast-tracked computerization of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) with ERP-based management systems.
2. Data system security against cyber threats ensuring integrity of financial operations.
3. PACS transformed into Common Service Centers (CSCs) delivering e-services to rural citizens.

Training and Education

1. Tribhuvan Sahkari University established to build skilled manpower for cooperative ecosystem.
2. Legal updates planned every 10 years ensuring policy remains contemporary and relevant.

4.Institutional Architecture

Ministry of Cooperation

1. Created in 2021 by Government of India to realize vision of 'Sahkar se Samriddhi' providing dedicated platform.
2. First dedicated ministry for cooperative sector reflecting policy prioritization.

Monitoring Committee Composition

1. Brings together central ministries including Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, and Agriculture.
2. State governments and financial institutions like NABARD ensure coordinated grassroots implementation.
3. Whole-of-Government approach ensures cross-sectoral coordination and resource convergence.

5.Understanding Cooperative Societies

Definition and Principles

1. Cooperative societies are voluntary associations of individuals joining together to meet common economic, social, and cultural needs.
2. Operate on principle of mutual help and self-help prioritizing member well-being over profit maximization.
3. Currently more than 8 lakh cooperative societies are registered across housing, dairy, agriculture, and finance sectors.

Types of Cooperative Societies

1. Consumer Cooperatives provide quality goods and services at affordable prices (examples – Kendriya Bhandar, Apna Bazar).

2. Producer Cooperatives support small producers with resources, technology, and market access (examples – Amul, Karnataka Handloom Weavers' Cooperative).
3. Marketing Cooperatives facilitate collective marketing ensuring better prices for agricultural products.
4. Credit Cooperatives offer financial services to rural and marginalized communities (examples – Urban and Rural Cooperative Banks).
5. Housing Cooperatives provide affordable housing solutions through pooled resources.

Multi-State vs Single-State Cooperatives

1. Multi-State Cooperatives operate across multiple states governed by Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002; IFFCO, Amul, and NCDFI are examples.
2. Single-State Cooperatives operate within one state following respective State Cooperative Societies Act; State Cooperative Banks and PACS are examples.

6. Constitutional Framework for Cooperatives

Jurisdictional Status

1. Cooperatives are a state subject under the Constitution mentioned in Entry 32 of State List under Seventh Schedule.
2. Constitutional placement reflects federal nature of cooperative governance.

97th Constitutional Amendment

1. Added Part IXB (The Co-Operative Societies) to Constitution providing dedicated constitutional recognition.
2. Right to Form Cooperative Societies included as Right to Freedom under Article 19(1) ensuring fundamental rights protection.
3. Article 43-B on Promotion of Cooperative Societies inserted as Directive Principle of State Policy.

Multi-State Cooperative Societies Amendment Act, 2023

1. Strengthened governance, enhanced transparency, increased accountability, and reformed electoral process.

2. Incorporated provisions of 97th Constitutional Amendment in Multi-State Cooperative Societies framework.

PACS – Core Implementation Vehicle

Computerization Scheme

1. Government allocated ₹2,516 crore to computerize nearly 63,000 PACS with ERP systems.
2. Computerization improves accountability, reduces mismanagement, and enables data-driven decision-making.

Sectoral Diversification of PACS

1. Digital Services – PACS transformed into Common Service Centers delivering e-services to rural citizens.
2. Healthcare – PM Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras operated by PACS improving affordable medicine access.
3. Energy – Under PM-KUSUM Convergence scheme, PACS promoting solar energy adoption for sustainable agriculture.
4. Fisheries – Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) empowering fish farmers and enhancing market access.

7.Way Forward

1. **Strengthen Governance** – Enforce transparent election processes, audit requirements, and professional management standards across cooperatives.
2. **Technology Adoption** – Complete PACS computerization and extend digital platforms enabling real-time monitoring and service delivery.
3. **Inclusive Expansion** – Prioritize women, youth, Dalits, and tribals in cooperative leadership and membership expanding genuine inclusivity.
4. **Global Integration** – Leverage National Cooperative Exports Limited for international market access positioning Indian cooperatives globally.
5. **Legal Modernization** – Implement planned 10-year legal updates ensuring cooperative laws remain contemporary and enabling.

Source - <https://dailypioneer.com/news/meeting-of-national-level-policy-implementation-and-monitoring-committee-held-in-new-delhi>

20. National statistical commission (NSC)

Prelims

Polity & Governance

Mains

GS Paper II – Governance, GS Paper III – Economy

Current relevance

Recently, the Government of India appointed **Dr. Saibal Chattopadhyay** (former Director, IIM Calcutta) as the Chairperson of the National Statistical Commission (NSC), along with **Prof. Shubhabrata Das, Shri Satyendra Bahadur Singh, and Dr. Madhavan Mukund** as part-time Members.

About National statistical commission (NSC)

1. It was established in **2005** based on the recommendations of the **Rangarajan Commission**.
2. The **apex advisory body** for India's statistical system and operates under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.
3. The Commission comprises a **part-time Chairperson and four part-time Members** possessing expertise and experience in the field of statistics.

Major functions

1. **Formulates national standards**, concepts, definitions, classifications, and methodologies for the collection and dissemination of official statistics.
2. Recommends measures to improve **public trust in official statistics** and ensure data reliability.
3. **Ensures effective coordination** between Central Government agencies and strengthens collaboration with State and Union Territory administrations on statistical matters.

4. Conducts **periodic audits** to ensure high standards of data quality and integrity of statistical outputs.



Source – PIB [https -](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2274108®=3&lang=1)

[//www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2274108®=3&lang=1](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2274108®=3&lang=1)

21. National family health survey-6

Prelims

Polity & Governance, Social Development

Mains

GS Paper I – Society, GS Paper II – Governance & Social Sector, GS Paper III – Human Resource Development

Current relevance

The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** recently released the **NFHS-6** report, offering the latest insights into India's demographic, health, and nutrition indicators.



Key findings

Positive outcomes

1. **Stunting declined** from **35.5% to 29.3%**, indicating gradual improvement in child nutrition.
2. **Institutional deliveries increased to 90%**, improving maternal and child health outcomes.
3. **91% of births** were attended by **skilled health personnel**.
4. **95% of mothers** received at least one **antenatal care visit** from health workers.
5. **Full immunisation coverage** among children aged 12–23 months reached **87%**.
6. Strong contribution of frontline health workers such as **ASHAs, Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), and ANMs** in improving healthcare outreach.
7. Improved access to **healthcare, maternal education, housing, drinking water, and sanitation** has contributed to better health indicators.

Areas Requiring Attention

1. **Wasting levels** have largely stagnated, though severe wasting has witnessed a slight decline.
2. **Feeding practices** among infants and children remain inadequate, which hinder improvements in child nutrition and health.
3. **Anaemia** continues to affect a large proportion of women and children.
4. Higher levels of diabetes, hypertension, and obesity point to a rising burden of lifestyle-related **non-communicable diseases**.
5. **Dual burden of disease**, where persistent undernutrition coexists with a rising prevalence of obesity and non-communicable diseases.

6. Insufficient access to healthy and varied diets remains a major nutritional concern.

Source - THE HINDU- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/nfhs-6-reveals-progress-amid-nutrition-challenges/article71118901.ece>
[text=Better%20health%20care%20alone%20cannot%20overcome%20India's%20nutrition%20challenges&text=The%20recently%20released%20National%20Family,sign](https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/nfhs-6-reveals-progress-amid-nutrition-challenges/article71118901.ece)
[als%20to%20pause%20and%20reflect.](https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/nfhs-6-reveals-progress-amid-nutrition-challenges/article71118901.ece)

22. Telegram Ban and the Constitutional Limits of Internet Restrictions

Prelims

Polity, Governance

Mains

GS Paper II- Governance & Constitution, GS Paper III- Cyber Security & Technology

Current relevance

Recently, the Centre temporarily **blocked Telegram** to prevent the spread of question paper leaks and misinformation during the **NEET-UG retest**. Telegram has challenged the ban before the **Delhi High Court**.



Key Provisions of Section 69A

1. **Section 69A of the IT Act** empowers the Union Government to block access to online content, websites, and digital platforms on specified grounds of public interest and national security.

2. **Grounds for Blocking Under Section 69A -**

- I. Sovereignty and Integrity of India
- II. National Security Concerns
- III. External Relations- Friendly Relations with Foreign States
- IV. Crime Prevention & Investigation
- V. Public Order & Safety

Constitutional Concerns

1. May restrict the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under **Article 19(1)(a)**.
2. May affect the **Article 19(1)(g)** – Freedom to practice any profession, trade, or business, especially for creators, educators, and entrepreneurs using online platform.

Supreme Court Judgment - Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020) – Access to the internet for exercising freedom of speech and the conduct of trade, profession, and business is protected under Articles **19(1)(a)** and **19(1)(g)** of the Indian Constitution.

Source - THE HINDU- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/telegram-challenge-puts-spotlight-on-section-69a-of-the-it-act/article71118292.ece>

23. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

Prelims:

Polity, Governance

Mains:

GS Paper II – Governance, International Relations, Social Justice

Current relevance:

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India participates in the **First Consultative Meeting** on Human Rights of SCO Member States in **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**.



Highlights:

1. Emphasized the **role of NHRIs** in **fostering trust** between the government and citizens and promoting **social stability**.
2. Reiterated that **regional cooperation** must be based on:
 - (i) Respect for State sovereignty
 - (ii) Non-interference in internal affairs
 - (iii) Equality among member states
 - (iv) Mutual respect for national interests

Highlighted **NHRC India's Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)**

Capacity Building Programme for strengthening NHRIs.

- (i) Reaffirmed NHRC India's **commitment to deeper human rights cooperation** within the SCO framework.
- (ii) Expressed confidence that the **consultative mechanism** would become a **permanent platform for dialogue**, cooperation, **exchange of best practices**, and **protection of human rights** across SCO member states.

About National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):

1. It is a **statutory body** established under the **Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993**

2. Functions:

- (i) Inquiry into human rights violations (suo motu or on petitions)
- (ii) Reviewing safeguards under the Constitution and laws
- (iii) Promoting awareness of human rights

Source: PIB-

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2276954®=48&lang=1>

24.BHASHINI – GeM MoU for Multilingual Public Procurement

Subject: Governance | Digital Public Infrastructure | Artificial Intelligence

The Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) and Government e-Marketplace (GeM) signed an MoU to strengthen multilingual access across India's public procurement ecosystem through AI-powered language technologies.

Key Highlights

1. GeM will integrate BHASHINI's multilingual AI capabilities into its procurement platform.
2. Supports seamless interaction across **22 officially recognised Indian languages**.
3. Focus on **Voice First technologies**, translation APIs, multilingual glossaries, voice bots and Generative AI solutions.
4. Aims to improve participation of **MSMEs, startups, entrepreneurs and regional businesses** in government procurement.
5. Encourages language-data contribution through **Bhashadaan**.
6. Supports multilingual governance, service delivery and Ease of Doing Business (EoDB).

Significance

1. Reduces linguistic barriers in accessing government services.
2. Expands procurement opportunities for businesses operating in regional languages.
3. Strengthens India's Digital Public Infrastructure ecosystem.
4. Promotes inclusive and citizen-centric digital governance.

5. Accelerates adoption of AI-driven public service delivery.

Challenges

1. Need for high-quality linguistic datasets across Indian languages.
2. Accuracy challenges in domain-specific translations.
3. Digital literacy gaps among small businesses.
4. Data privacy and AI governance concerns.

Way Forward

1. Expand multilingual AI tools across government platforms.
2. Strengthen open-source language datasets and research.
3. Enhance capacity building for MSMEs and regional entrepreneurs.
4. Develop sector-specific language models for governance and commerce.

Source: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2273408>

25.Yoga Sangam Portal Emerges as Digital Backbone of International Day of Yoga 2026

Prelims

Government Schemes & Initiatives, e- governance, Health

Mains

GS Paper II – Governance, health, GS Paper I – Indian Culture

Current relevance

The Ministry of AYUSH has relaunched the **Yoga Sangam Portal** ahead of the **12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026** to facilitate nationwide participation.

Highlights

1. Yoga Sangam is a flagship initiative of International Day of Yoga (21 June 2026).
2. The portal serves as a digital platform for registration, coordination, and monitoring of yoga events across India.

3. Reinforces India's position as the **global home of yoga** and strengthens its **soft power diplomacy**.
4. Participants follow the **Common Yoga Protocol (CYP)** simultaneously across multiple locations.
5. Strengthens **digital governance** by leveraging technology for mass public participation.

Yoga Sangam Portal yoga.ayush.gov.in



Source – PIB – [https –](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2273997®=3&lang=1)

[//www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2273997®=3&lang=1](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2273997®=3&lang=1)

26. Walking On Footpaths a Fundamental Rights

Prelims:

Polity, Governance

Mains:

GS Paper I – Society, GS Paper II – Polity & Governance, GS Paper III – Infrastructure

Current relevance:

The Supreme Court has declared that the **right to walk safely on demarcated and well-maintained footpaths is a fundamental right**.

Supreme Court's Key Observations:

1. **The right to walk** safely on designated footpaths is an integral part of **Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty)**.

2. The Court held that the **fundamental right to walk overrides the privilege of motorized transport.**

Key constitutional provisions:

1. **Article 21 – Right to Life and Personal Liberty**

Encompasses the right to safe, dignified, and unhindered pedestrian movement.

2. **Article 19(1)(d) – Freedom of Movement**

Guarantees the right of citizens to move freely throughout the territory of India.

Other provisions:

1. **Article 19(1)(a), 19(1)(b) and 19(1)(c)**

Walking enables the exercise of:

- I. Freedom of speech and expression.
- II. Freedom of peaceful assembly.
- III. Freedom of association.

Need for Statutory Protection of Pedestrian Rights:

1. The Court recommended the establishment of **a full-time regulatory authority** for pedestrian rights.

The regulatory body would:

- I. Plan pedestrian infrastructure
- II. Monitor implementation
- III. Enforce standards
- IV. Address grievances
- V. Promote safe and accessible footpaths



Source: THE HINDU <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/supreme-court-declares-the-right-to-walk-carefree-on-footpaths-a-fundamental-right/article71121451.ece>

27. DISHA 2.0: Strengthening Digital Justice Delivery in India

Why in News?

The Union Minister of State for Law & Justice **Arjun Ram Meghwal** approved **DISHA 2.0**, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aimed at strengthening India's digital justice ecosystem by modernising courts through advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The scheme seeks to improve accessibility, transparency and efficiency in the delivery of justice.

India's judicial system faces persistent challenges such as **case backlog, procedural delays, inadequate digital infrastructure and unequal access to justice**.

DISHA 2.0 is designed to accelerate judicial reforms by creating a technology-driven and citizen-centric justice delivery system.

The scheme builds upon the progress made under the **e-Courts Mission Mode Project** and aligns with the vision of **Digital India** and **Ease of Justice**.

Major Components

Digital Court Infrastructure

The scheme focuses on strengthening ICT infrastructure across district and subordinate courts through:

- i. Modern computer hardware
- ii. High-speed connectivity
- iii. Video conferencing facilities
- iv. Digital courtrooms
- v. Secure cloud-based data storage

Paperless Judiciary

DISHA 2.0 promotes:

- i. Electronic filing (e-Filing)
- ii. Digital case records
- iii. Online payment of court fees
- iv. Electronic summons and notices
- v. Digital document management

This reduces paperwork, improves efficiency and minimises delays.

Citizen-Centric Services

The scheme aims to make justice more accessible through:

- i. Online case status tracking
- ii. Virtual court hearings
- iii. e-Seva Kendras
- iv. Mobile-friendly judicial services
- v. Multilingual digital platforms

Artificial Intelligence in Judiciary

The scheme encourages the use of AI-enabled tools for:

- i. Intelligent case search
- ii. Automated cause lists
- iii. Document translation
- iv. Transcription services

- v. Legal research support

AI is intended to assist judicial administration and not replace judicial decision-making.

Significance

DISHA 2.0 can contribute to:

- i. Faster disposal of cases.
- ii. Greater transparency in court administration.
- iii. Reduced litigation costs.
- iv. Better access for rural and remote litigants.
- v. Improved judicial efficiency through digital technologies.

At the same time, issues relating to **cybersecurity, data privacy, digital divide, infrastructure gaps and capacity building** remain critical for successful implementation.

DISHA 2.0

- i. **Full Form:** Digital Infrastructure for Strengthening Access to Justice (DISHA 2.0).
- ii. **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Law & Justice.
- iii. **Objective:** Modernise judicial infrastructure using digital technologies.

e-Courts Mission Mode Project

- i. Launched under the **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)**.
- ii. Implemented by the **Department of Justice** in coordination with the **e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India**.
- iii. Objective:
 - ICT-enabled courts
 - Paperless functioning
 - Online judicial services
 - Better case management

National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)



- i. A real-time database of pending and disposed cases across courts.
- ii. Provides transparency in judicial administration.
- iii. Useful for monitoring pendency and court performance.

Virtual Courts

- i. Online courts established to adjudicate specified categories of cases without requiring physical presence.
- ii. Widely used for traffic challans and petty offences.

e-Seva Kendras

- i. Facilitate access to digital court services.
- ii. Assist litigants in e-Filing, obtaining certified copies and checking case status.

Constitutional Linkages

- i. **Article 39A** – Equal justice and free legal aid.
- ii. **Article 14** – Equality before law.
- iii. **Article 21** – Right to life, interpreted to include **speedy justice**.
- iv. **Article 32 & Article 226** – Constitutional remedies before the Supreme Court and High Courts.

This topic is highly relevant for:

- i. **GS-II:** Judiciary, Governance and Justice Delivery.
- ii. **GS-III:** Digital Governance, ICT and e-Governance.
- iii. **Essay:** Technology and Good Governance; Judicial Reforms.

28.PADMA AWARDS 2026

Context

The President of India approved **131 Padma Awards for 2026**, comprising **5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri**. The list includes **19 women, 6 Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI awardees, 16 posthumous awardees and 2 duo cases**.

India's Civilian Honour System

Award	Nature of recognition
Padma Vibhushan	Exceptional and distinguished service
Padma Bhushan	Distinguished service of a high order
Padma Shri	Distinguished service in any field

The Padma Awards recognise public service and achievement in areas such as **art, literature, education, science, medicine, social work, public affairs, civil service, sports, trade and industry.**

Evolution and Conferment

- Instituted in **1954**, along with the Bharat Ratna.
- Initially classified as **Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg.**
- Renamed in **1955** as Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.
- Announced annually on the **eve of Republic Day.**
- Formally conferred by the **President of India** at Rashtrapati Bhavan, generally during March–April.

How Recipients Are Selected

Public Nomination → Padma Awards Committee → Prime Minister → President

- Nominations are open to the public; self-nomination is permitted.
- Recommendations may also come from States, Union Territories, Central Ministries and institutions.
- The **Padma Awards Committee** is constituted annually by the Prime Minister.
- It is chaired by the **Cabinet Secretary** and includes the Home Secretary, Secretary to the President and eminent persons.
- Final recommendations are submitted to the Prime Minister and the President.

Constitutional and Administrative Position

- Padma Awards are **decorations, not titles.**
- Under **Article 18(1)**, they cannot be used as prefixes or suffixes to a person's name.

- iii. The Supreme Court in **Balaji Raghavan v. Union of India (1996)** upheld their constitutional validity.
- iv. They carry no cash grant, pension or official travel concession.
- v. Recipients receive a **Sanad signed by the President** and a medallion.
- vi. The normal annual ceiling is **120 awards**, excluding posthumous awards and awards to foreigners, NRIs and OCIs.
- vii. A higher Padma category is ordinarily considered only after a gap of **five years**.
- viii. Posthumous awards may be granted in exceptional cases.

Selected Awardees – 2026

Padma Vibhushan

- i. Dharmendra Singh Deol (Posthumous) – Art
- ii. K. T. Thomas – Public Affairs
- iii. N. Rajam – Art
- iv. P. Narayanan – Literature and Education
- v. V. S. Achuthanandan (*Posthumous*) – Public Affairs

Padma Bhushan

- i. Alka Yagnik – Art
- ii. Mammootty – Art
- iii. Dattatreya Nuri – Medicine
- iv. Shibu Soren (*Posthumous*) – Public Affairs
- v. Uday Kotak – Trade and Industry
- vi. Vijay Amritraj – Sports

29. Criminalisation of Politics: 31% of Rajya Sabha MPs Have Declared Criminal Cases

GS-II: Parliament | Electoral Reforms | Representation of the People | Governance

GS-IV: Probity in Public Life | Political Ethics

Why in News?

An analysis by the **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)** and **National Election Watch** examined affidavits of **226 of 233 Rajya Sabha MPs**.

1. **31%** have declared criminal cases.
2. **16%** have declared serious criminal cases.
3. **1 MP** declared a murder-related case.
4. **4 MPs** declared attempt-to-murder cases.
5. **4 MPs** declared cases concerning crimes against women.
6. **31 MPs (14%)** have declared assets exceeding **₹100 crore**.



Constitutional Position

1. **Article 80:** Deals with the composition of the **Rajya Sabha**.
2. **Article 84:** Prescribes qualifications for membership of Parliament.
3. **Article 102:** Provides grounds for **disqualification of Members of Parliament**.
4. **Article 324:** Vests the superintendence, direction and control of elections in the **Election Commission of India**.
5. **Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA):** Provides the principal statutory framework governing qualifications, disqualifications and conduct of elections.

Disqualification on Conviction

1. **Section 8 of the RPA, 1951** provides for disqualification following conviction for specified offences.

2. The crucial distinction for UPSC is:

Criminal Case Pending ≠ Conviction ≠ Automatic Disqualification

3. This protects the **presumption of innocence**, but prolonged trials can permit persons facing serious charges to continue participating in electoral politics.

Supreme Court Linkages

Association for Democratic Reforms Case (2002)

The Supreme Court strengthened the voter's **right to know** by requiring disclosure of candidates' criminal antecedents, assets, liabilities and educational qualifications.

Lily Thomas v. Union of India (2013)

The Supreme Court struck down the protection that had allowed sitting legislators to continue in office after conviction while their appeals were pending. Consequently, where the statutory conditions for disqualification are satisfied, conviction can result in **immediate disqualification**.

Public Interest Foundation v. Union of India (2018)

The Court emphasised disclosure of criminal antecedents but refrained from creating an additional disqualification merely on the basis of criminal charges, observing that such legislative policy falls within **Parliament's domain**.

Why Does Criminalisation Persist?

1. **Winnability Factor:** Political parties may prioritise electoral viability over candidate integrity.
2. **Money–Muscle Nexus:** Financial resources and local influence can provide significant electoral advantages.
3. **Slow Judicial Process:** Cases involving politicians may remain unresolved across multiple electoral cycles.

4. **Weak Internal Party Democracy:** Candidate selection is often concentrated within party leadership.
5. **Voter Calculations:** Electors may sometimes prioritise identity, accessibility, patronage or perceived effectiveness over criminal antecedents.
6. **Campaign Finance:** High electoral expenditure can increase dependence on candidates possessing substantial financial networks.

Democratic Implications

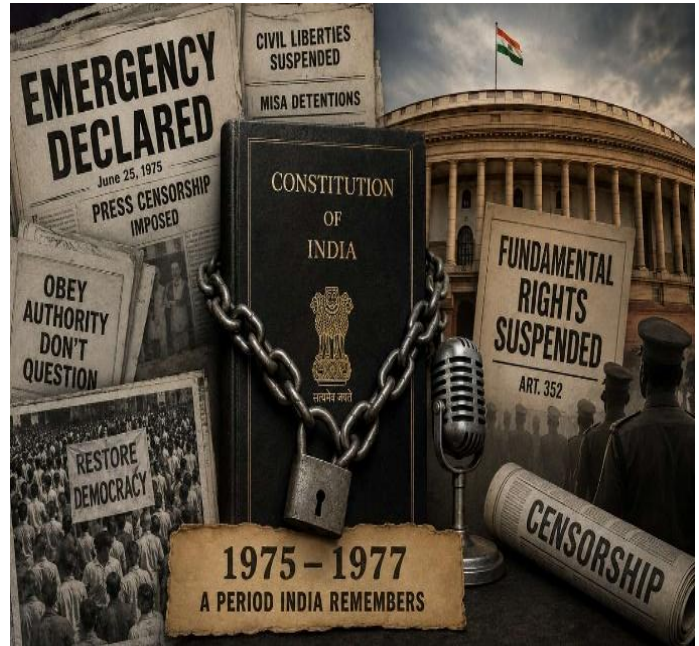
1. **Rule of Law:** Political influence combined with criminal networks can weaken confidence in impartial law enforcement.
2. **Political Equality:** Money and coercive influence can distort a formally equal electoral contest.
3. **Legislative Credibility:** Serious criminalisation can weaken public trust in representative institutions.
4. **Governance Quality:** Patronage networks can influence public contracts, administration and allocation of resources.
5. **Political Ethics:** It creates tension between *electoral winnability* and **probity in public life**.
6. The problem is therefore wider than candidate eligibility; it concerns the **quality of representative democracy itself**.

The Constitutional Dilemma

1. Disqualifying candidates immediately after allegations are made creates the danger of **politically motivated criminal cases**.
2. Waiting until final conviction, however, can become ineffective when trials continue for many years.
3. Therefore, reform must reconcile three objectives:
4. **Electoral Integrity + Speedy Justice + Presumption of Innocence**
5. A constitutionally balanced approach should consequently focus heavily on **expedited adjudication of serious cases**, rather than treating either accusation or indefinite judicial delay as satisfactory.

Reform Priorities

1. **Time-Bound Trials:** Expedite serious criminal cases involving legislators and candidates while preserving due process.
2. **Party Accountability:** Require meaningful justification and transparency when parties nominate candidates with serious criminal antecedents.
3. **Accessible Disclosure:** Present candidate antecedents in formats voters can easily understand.
4. **Political Finance Reform:** Improve transparency in campaign financing and expenditure.
5. **Institutional Enforcement:** Strengthen implementation of existing electoral and disclosure requirements.
6. **Internal Party Democracy:** Improve transparency and accountability in candidate selection.



30. Five Decades After the 1975 Emergency: Constitutional Safeguards and Democratic Lessons

Prelims: Constitution | Emergency Provisions | Fundamental Rights

GS-II: Indian Constitution | Constitutionalism | Executive Accountability

Why in News?

The anniversary of the **Emergency proclaimed on 25 June 1975** has renewed attention on the constitutional safeguards created after 1977 to prevent excessive concentration of executive power. The 1975–77 period witnessed suspension of civil

liberties, preventive detention, press restrictions and major constitutional changes, making it a central case study in Indian constitutionalism.

Constitutional Basis of National Emergency

1. **Article 352:** The President may proclaim a National Emergency when the security of India or any part of it is threatened by **war, external aggression or armed rebellion**.
2. The expression “**armed rebellion**” was introduced by the **44th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1978**, replacing the broader expression “internal disturbance”. The amendment narrowed the grounds on which an internal Emergency could be proclaimed.
3. **Written Cabinet Advice:** A proclamation can be issued only on the written decision of the Union Cabinet, reducing the possibility of unilateral advice by the Prime Minister.
4. **Parliamentary Approval:** The proclamation must receive parliamentary approval within the constitutionally prescribed period and requires a special majority for continuation.
5. **Lok Sabha Safeguard:** The Constitution provides a mechanism through which the Lok Sabha can compel consideration of revocation of an Emergency.

Fundamental Rights During Emergency

1. The constitutional position after the 44th Amendment is substantially more restrictive than during 1975.
2. **Article 358:** Suspension of the freedoms under **Article 19** operates only when the Emergency is declared on grounds of **war or external aggression**, not armed rebellion.
3. **Article 359:** The President may suspend the right to move courts for enforcement of specified Fundamental Rights; however, the rights under **Articles 20 and 21 cannot be suspended**.
4. This protection is crucial because **Article 20** safeguards persons in criminal proceedings, while **Article 21** protects life and personal liberty.

1975 Emergency and Institutional Lessons

1. The Emergency demonstrated that constitutional democracy can be weakened even without formally abolishing the Constitution.
 - i. **Executive Concentration:** Extraordinary powers can reduce the effectiveness of ordinary institutional checks.
 - ii. **Preventive Detention:** Broad detention powers can directly affect personal liberty when judicial remedies become restricted.
 - iii. **Press Freedom:** Restrictions on media weaken scrutiny of executive action and citizens' access to independent information.
 - iv. **Parliamentary Majorities:** Numerical control of legislatures cannot substitute for constitutional restraint.
 - v. **Judicial Protection:** Rights become meaningful only when effective judicial remedies remain available.

42nd and 44th Amendments

1. The **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976** considerably altered the balance among constitutional institutions during the Emergency period.
2. The **44th Amendment Act, 1978** subsequently strengthened safeguards by narrowing emergency grounds, protecting Articles 20 and 21, requiring Cabinet-level written advice and strengthening parliamentary oversight.
3. The larger constitutional development was a movement from **broad emergency discretion towards procedurally constrained emergency power.**
4. **Democratic Significance**
5. Emergency provisions remain necessary because a constitutional State must possess exceptional powers to respond to war, external aggression or grave internal armed threats. The danger arises when extraordinary powers become instruments of ordinary political control.
6. A durable constitutional balance therefore requires **necessity, proportionality, parliamentary scrutiny, judicial review and protection of core liberties.**

31. Draft National Food Security (Amendment) Bill, 2026

Prelims: NFSA 2013 | Antyodaya Anna Yojana | TPDS

GS-II: Welfare Schemes | Food Security | Vulnerable Sections

Why in News?

The **Department of Food and Public Distribution** released the Draft National Food Security (Amendment) Bill, 2026 for public consultation. It proposes changing the foodgrain entitlement of **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** beneficiaries from a purely household-based entitlement to a partly per-capita framework.

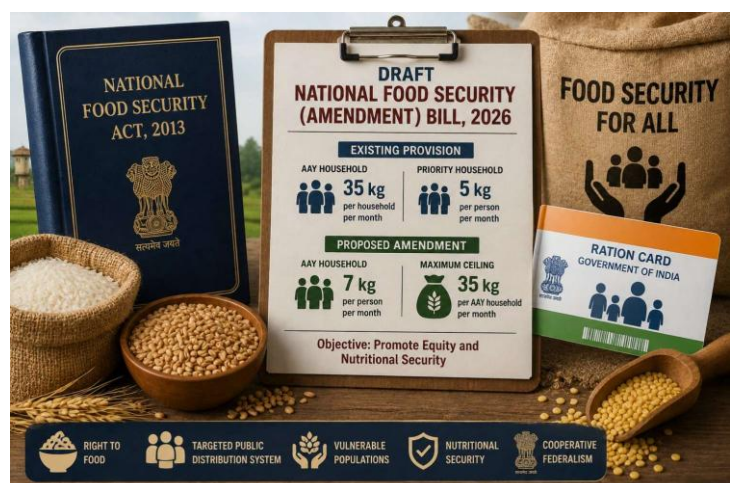
Proposed Change

- Under the existing **Section 3(1) of the National Food Security Act, 2013**:
 - AAY Households:** 35 kg of foodgrains per household per month.
 - Priority Households (PHH):** 5 kg per person per month.
- The draft proposes:
 - AAY Entitlement:** 7 kg per person per month.
 - Household Ceiling:** Maximum 35 kg per AAY household per month.
- The draft therefore does **not** simply raise AAY entitlement universally. It changes the internal distribution formula while retaining a 35 kg household ceiling.

Why the Amendment Has Been

Proposed

- The existing household entitlement produces unequal per-capita outcomes.
- A two-member AAY household receiving 35 kg obtains a much higher per-person allocation than a six-member household receiving the same quantity.
- The proposed amendment seeks to address this **intra-category inequity** by aligning entitlement more closely with household size while maintaining an upper



limit. The Department explicitly links the proposal to more rational allocation and nutritional requirements.

National Food Security Act, 2013

1. The NFSA adopts a **rights-based approach to food security** rather than treating food assistance solely as an executive welfare scheme.
2. It provides coverage of up to:
 - i. **75% of the rural population**
 - ii. **50% of the urban population**
3. The Act covers approximately **81.35 crore persons** based on the statutory framework and Census-linked coverage.
4. Its broader life-cycle approach also includes nutritional entitlements for **children, pregnant women and lactating mothers**, apart from foodgrain entitlements under the Targeted Public Distribution System.

Institutional Architecture

1. **Central Government:** Procurement, allocation and movement of foodgrains to designated depots.
2. **States/UTs:** Identification of beneficiaries, intra-State distribution, ration cards and supervision of Fair Price Shops.
3. Thus, NFSA implementation is inherently a **cooperative federal function**, combining central procurement capacity with State-level beneficiary administration.

Policy Implications of the Draft

1. **Equity:** Per-capita allocation can reduce the disadvantage faced by larger AAY households within the existing 35 kg structure.
2. **Targeting:** Since AAY covers the poorest households, changes in entitlement directly affect highly vulnerable families.
3. **Nutrition:** Grain entitlement remains only one dimension of food security; dietary diversity, protein intake and micronutrient adequacy remain separate concerns.
4. **Fiscal and Procurement Management:** Changes in entitlement formulas must be integrated with procurement, storage and State-wise allocation systems.

5. The proposal should therefore be viewed as a **distributional correction within NFSA**, not a replacement of the broader food-security architecture.

32. Supreme Court and the Right to Emergency Trauma Care

Prelims: Article 21 | Road Safety | Golden Hour

GS-II: Fundamental Rights | Public Health | Judicial Intervention

Why in News?

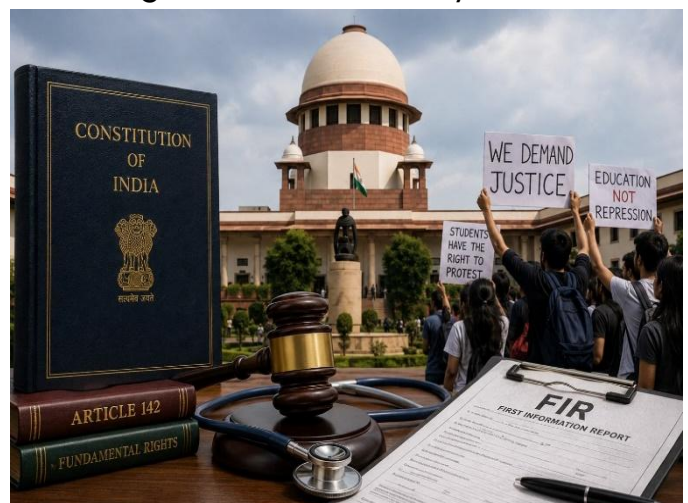
In **SaveLIFE Foundation v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court recognised access to timely trauma care as an integral component of the **Right to Life under Article 21** and issued directions aimed at strengthening emergency medical response from the site of injury to definitive hospital treatment.

Golden Hour

1. The **Golden Hour** refers to the critical period immediately following serious trauma when rapid medical intervention substantially improves the chances of survival and reduces complications.
2. In road accidents, survival depends on an uninterrupted chain of:
3. **Immediate Response → Stabilisation → Ambulance Transport → Appropriate Trauma Facility → Definitive Treatment**
4. Failure at any stage can make a formally available hospital system ineffective.

Article 21 and Emergency Medical Care

1. The Court's reasoning extends the constitutional guarantee of life beyond mere protection against State action. It places a **positive obligation on the State to develop an effective emergency-care system**.
2. This builds upon earlier jurisprudence such as **Parmanand Katara v. Union of India**, where the Supreme Court



emphasised that preservation of life must take priority over procedural and medico-legal formalities.

Why Trauma Care Is a Governance Issue

Emergency care requires coordination across multiple institutions rather than hospitals alone.

- i. **Pre-Hospital Care:** Ambulances, first responders and emergency communication systems determine the speed of initial assistance.
- ii. **Triage:** Patients must be rapidly classified according to clinical severity.
- iii. **Referral Networks:** Victims should reach facilities capable of treating their injuries rather than being repeatedly transferred.
- iv. **Hospital Preparedness:** Trauma centres require personnel, blood, imaging, operating facilities and critical-care capacity.
- v. **Medico-Legal Procedures:** Documentation or police formalities should not delay life-saving treatment.

Constitutional Significance

1. The judgment illustrates the expanding understanding of **Article 21 as a source of substantive health protection.**
2. A right to emergency treatment is meaningful only when supported by administrative capacity. Constitutional recognition must therefore translate into **ambulance coverage, trained personnel, referral protocols and accountable hospital systems.**

Federal Dimension

1. Health is implemented primarily through State health systems, while road transport, national standards and centrally supported programmes involve multiple levels of government.
2. The effectiveness of the ruling therefore depends upon **Union-State institutional coordination**, not merely judicial declaration.

33.Passport Is Not Conclusive Proof of Indian Citizenship

Prelims: Citizenship Act 1955 | Passports Act 1967

GS-II: Citizenship | Constitutional and Legal Status

Why in News?

The **Ministry of External Affairs** clarified during Passport Seva Divas 2026 that an Indian passport is fundamentally a **travel document and is not, by itself, conclusive proof of citizenship**. The clarification revived discussion on the legal distinction between identity documents and determination of citizenship status.



Passport and Citizenship: Different Legal Functions

1. The **Passports Act, 1967** regulates the issue of passports and travel documents.
2. Citizenship, however, is governed principally by the **Citizenship Act, 1955**, read with constitutional provisions and applicable rules.
3. A passport may constitute **strong evidentiary material**, but where citizenship itself is legally disputed, nationality must be determined under the substantive citizenship law rather than solely from possession of the passport.

Constitutional Framework

1. **Articles 5–11** of the Constitution deal with citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution and empower Parliament to regulate citizenship thereafter.

2. Parliament exercised this power through the **Citizenship Act, 1955**, which provides modes such as citizenship by birth, descent, registration and naturalisation, subject to statutory conditions.

Identity Document ≠ Citizenship Determination

1. The issue is useful for differentiating commonly confused documents.
2. **Aadhaar**: Primarily establishes identity under its statutory framework; it does not itself confer citizenship.
3. **Voter Registration**: Electoral enrolment carries its own legal conditions but is not a substitute for adjudicating a disputed citizenship claim.
4. **Passport**: Authorises international travel and records nationality-related information after verification, but is not automatically determinative in every citizenship proceeding.

Why the Distinction Matters

1. Citizenship determines a person's formal membership in the political community and affects rights that are reserved specifically for citizens.
2. Because of these consequences, citizenship disputes require **legal determination based on statutory criteria and evidence**, rather than reliance on a single administrative document.
3. **Passport ≠ Automatic or Irrebuttable Proof of Citizenship.**

34. CCPA Action Against Misleading "100%" Food Claims

Prelims: Consumer Protection Act 2019 | CCPA | Misleading Advertisements

GS-II: Regulatory Governance | Consumer Rights

Why in News?

The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** imposed penalties of **₹1 lakh each** on Storia Foods and Mrs. Bectors Food Specialities for misleading use of the expression **"100%"** in food advertising and directed withdrawal of the claims from packaging and digital platforms.



Why “100%” Became a Regulatory Issue

1. The CCPA treated “100%” as an **absolute numerical representation** rather than a loose advertising expression.
2. For example, a product represented as “100% whole wheat” was found to contain **87% whole wheat flour**, while some products marketed as “100% juice” or coconut water involved concentrates, reconstitution or additional ingredients.
3. The central regulatory principle is that an advertisement must be assessed from the perspective of the **reasonable consumer**, not from a technical interpretation developed later by the advertiser.

Consumer Protection Act, 2019

1. The CCPA relied upon key provisions of the Act:
 - i. **Section 2(9)**: Consumer's right to receive information regarding quality, quantity and related characteristics.
 - ii. **Section 2(28)**: Definition of misleading advertisement.
 - iii. **Section 2(47)**: Unfair trade practice.
2. The action was also linked to the **Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022**.

Regulatory Significance

1. Modern consumer markets rely heavily on **information asymmetry**: producers know substantially more about product composition than buyers.

2. Accurate labelling therefore performs an economic and legal function by allowing informed choice.
3. Misleading claims distort competition because firms making exaggerated representations may gain a commercial advantage over producers using more accurate descriptions.

Consumer Intent vs Consumer Impression

1. The CCPA rejected the proposition that good faith or intended meaning automatically protects an advertiser.
2. The relevant test is whether the overall representation is **capable of misleading an ordinary consumer**.
3. This establishes an important principle for consumer governance:
4. **Disclosure in fine print cannot necessarily cure a misleading dominant claim.**

35.PM RAHAT Scheme

Prelims:

Polity & Governance, Government initiatives

Mains:

GS Paper II – Governance & Social Justice, GS Paper III – Infrastructure

Current relevance:

Recently, the facial identification of an accident victim to claim relief has been **removed**, under the **PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment)** Scheme.



PM RAHAT
SCHEME
 Prime Minister – Road Accident Victims' Hospitalisation and Assured Treatment

THE GOLDEN HOUR SAVES LIVES

ENSURING TIMELY CARE. SAVING LIVES.

IMMEDIATE TREATMENT | CASHLESS UP TO ₹1.5 LAKH | AT ANY EMPANELLED HOSPITAL | FOR EVERY ROAD ACCIDENT VICTIM

DIAL 112 IN CASE OF ROAD ACCIDENT

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)
 Legal Basis: Section 162, Motor Vehicles Act, 1988

PM RAHAT – BECAUSE EVERY LIFE MATTERS

PM RAHAT scheme:

1. **Objective:** To ensure **immediate cashless emergency treatment** for road accident victims during the Golden Hour, reduce fatalities, and **eliminate financial barriers to timely medical care.**
2. **Nodal Ministry:** Implemented by **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).**
3. **Key Features:**
 - I. Provides **cashless medical treatment** of up to **₹1.5 lakh** for eligible road accident victims, covering hospitalization for up to **7 days** from the date of the accident.
 - II. **Stabilization treatment** is provided for **up to 24 hours** in non-life-threatening cases and **up to 48 hours** in life-threatening cases.
 - III. Operates through an **integrated digital platform** that connects hospitals, police, and emergency response systems, enabling **faster verification** and claim processing.
 - IV. Promotes the **Good Samaritan framework** by facilitating immediate medical assistance regardless of the victim's financial condition.
 - V. **Emergency Response Support System, dial 112** to access ambulance services and the nearest designated hospital during a road accident emergency.

Source: THE HINDU- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Mangalore/facial-identification-norm-dropped-for-pm-rahath-claims-dho-says/article71146892.ece>

36.Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2026

Prelims:

Polity & Governance

Mains:

GS Paper II-Government Policies and Interventions

Current relevance:

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notified the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2026, to amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules, 2011.**



Highlights:

1. **Objective:** Strengthens **transparency and accountability** in. Enhances the utilisation of foreign contributions **regulatory oversight** over NGOs receiving foreign funds.
2. **Mandatory Disclosure Requirements:**
NGOs must clearly specify:
 - (i) Approved programme activities.

- (ii) Purpose for receiving foreign contributions.
- (iii) States and Union Territories where the organisation intends to carry out its activities.

3. **Additional Disclosure Requirements:**

NGOs must disclose:

- (i) Official website.
- (ii) Social media accounts.
- (iii) Publications released during the year, including books, magazines, and newspaper articles.

4. **Purpose-Specific Registration:**

- (i) Registration will now be granted only for **specified purposes** listed under the amended Rules.
- (ii) Existing **FCRA-registered organisations** must update their approved purposes within **one year**.

5. Expanded Definition of “**Key Functionary**” now it includes: Trustees, Partners, Karta of a Hindu Undivided Family (HUF), Members of the governing body, Any person exercising control or management over the organisation.

6. **State-wise Registration**

- (i) **Registration fees** will be charged separately for each approved purpose and each State/Union Territory of operation.
- (ii) NGOs operating across **multiple sectors or regions** may incur **higher registration costs**.

7. **Foreign contributions can continue to be received for:**

- i. Social activities.
- ii. Educational programmes.
- iii. Religious activities.
- iv. Economic development.
- v. Cultural initiatives.

However, several categories now specifically **prohibit political or ideological activities.**

8. Civil society organisations have expressed concerns over:

- (i) Increased compliance burden
- (ii) Reduced operational flexibility
- (iii) Restrictions on responding to emergencies
- (iv) Greater regulatory control over NGO activities

Source: THE HINDU-

<https://www.pressreader.com/foryou?popupArticleId=281878715097843>

37. FCRA 2.0 Portal & e-OCI Card

Prelims:

Polity & Governance, Internal Security, Government Initiatives

Mains:

GS Paper II-Governance, GS Paper III-Internal Security

Current relevance:

The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** launched the **FCRA 2.0 Portal** and the **e-OCI Card** to strengthen **digital governance**.

Ministry of Home Affairs
Government of India

Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
launches
FCRA 2.0 Portal
e-OCI Card
To Strengthen Digital Governance

Citizen-centric Service Delivery | Transparency & Accountability | Secure Monitoring of Foreign Contributions | Building a Transparent, Secure and Digitally Empowered Governance System

FCRA 2.0 Portal:

1. It has been launched to simplify compliance under the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (FCRA)** and strengthen monitoring and enforcement of foreign contributions.
2. It provides **end-to-end digital processing** for registration, prior permission, renewals, annual return filing, and compliance monitoring under the FCRA framework.
3. Integrates **Aadhaar-based authentication, e-Sign**, OCR (Optical Character Recognition), and NGO Darpan.
4. **Benefits:** The portal **reduces paperwork** and processing time while enabling **real-time monitoring** of foreign contributions, thereby improving **transparency, compliance, accountability, and national security**.

e-OCI Card:

1. It is the **digital version** of the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Card.
2. Enables complete **online application, document upload, approval, and digital card download**.
3. Eliminates the need to **reissue the OCI booklet** after obtaining a new passport beyond the age of **20 years**.
4. Assigns a **unique registration number** to every OCI cardholder.
5. **Benefits:** It enhances convenience for **over 50 lakh OCI cardholders** by enabling **smoother immigration** through digital verification while improving identity verification, data management, and fraud prevention.

Source: PIB –

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2279410®=48&lang=1>

38. Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh (CTUAP)

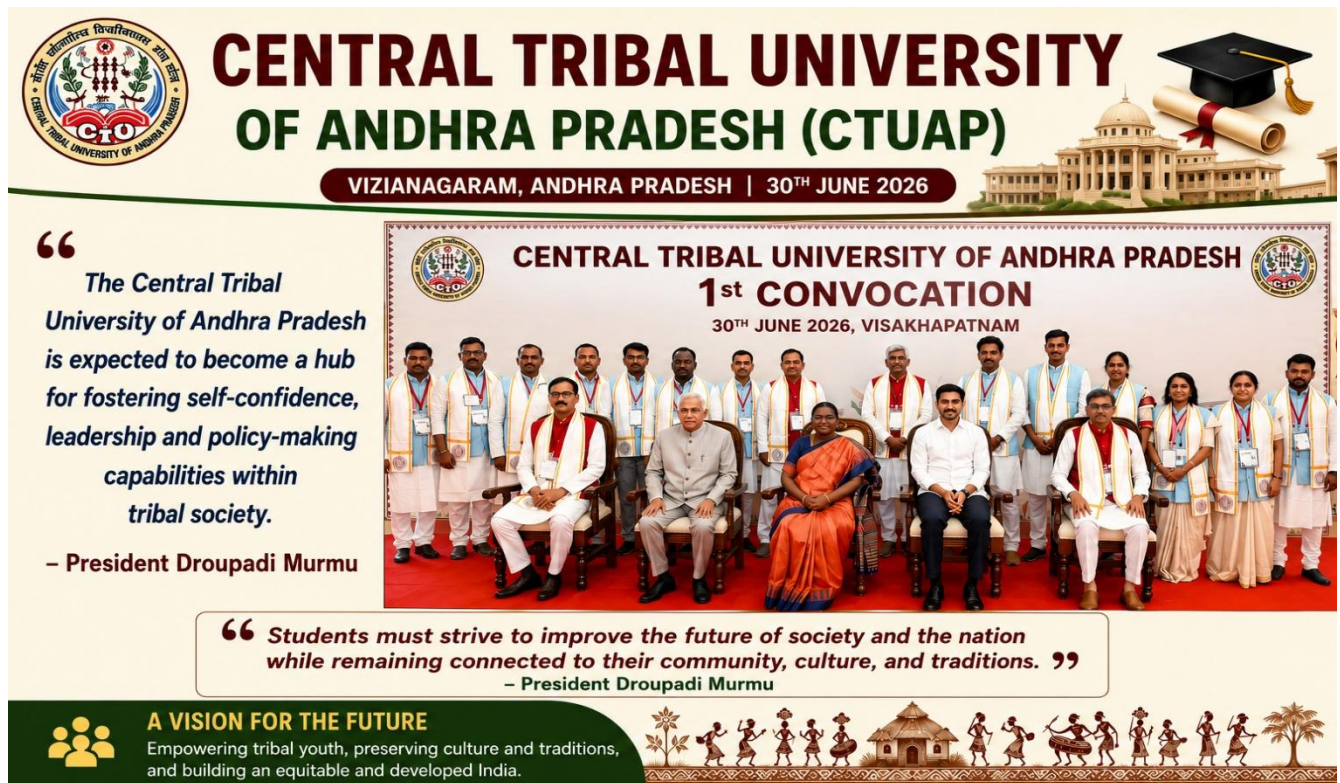
Prelims:

Mains:

GS Paper II–Governance, GS Paper III–Environment & Sustainable Development

Current relevance:

President Droupadi Murmu attended the first convocation ceremony of the **Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh (CTUAP)** at Vizianagaram.



Highlights:

1. The **Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh (CTUAP)** is a **Central University** established to promote **higher education and socio-economic development among tribal communities**.
2. **Institutional Role:**
 - i. It is envisioned as a centre for developing self-confidence, leadership, and policy-making capabilities among tribal youth.
 - ii. It is expected to contribute to education, health, skill development, livelihoods, and forest rights at the grassroots level.
3. **Science and Technology Hub** to empower tribal communities in North Andhra Pradesh by promoting the application of **modern science for community development**.

4. **Significance:**

- i. To promotes **inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development** through quality education and community engagement.
- ii. It integrates **tribal knowledge and traditions** with **modern education** to foster holistic development.
- iii. It supports the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047** by **empowering tribal communities** through inclusive and quality education.

Source: PIB-

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2279442®=48&lang=1>