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The Hindu Analysis

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GANDHI JAYANTI SPECIAL

Compiled by Sapna Chauhan

WITH THE HINDU · DELHI EDITION · 02.10.2026

Electoral Rolls under Scrutiny: Bulk Form 7 Objections and Deletions Without Hearing

WHY IN NEWS The **Bombay High Court (Goa Bench)** held that the draft roll under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) **cannot be the basis for deleting names without a hearing**, while the **Election Commission** ordered a probe into bulk, “pre-filled” Form 7 objections in Karnataka after a five-hour protest by CM D.K. Shivakumar.

HC says draft roll can't be basis for deleting names without hearing

The object of Representation of the People Act and EC is to ensure that votes are cast by citizens, the court says, adding poll body's endeavour is to have as many eligible voters on the roll as possible; expresses concern over automated deletions

Press Trust of India
PANAJI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday said that the primary mandate of the Election Commission (EC) is to ensure that citizens cast their votes, and asserted that while the poll body questions voter conduct, citizens are equally within their rights to ask why exercises such as the special intensive revision (SIR) are ordered after decades.

Hearing a petition filed by six family members whose names were deleted from the voter list, the High Court's Goa Bench, comprising Justices Valmiki Menezes and Amit S. Jamsandekar, said the EC's action was not in consonance with its mandate.

As per the plea filed by Paresh Salgaonkar and his family, they had moved to a new house in the same Santa Cruz Assembly constituency and were instructed by the booth-level officer (BLO) to submit Form 8 for a change of address.

At the time of processing these forms, they said,

Show us from the Act... what empowers you to delete without a hearing? Your officers were helpless and just decided to throw it on the system. We are very perturbed by this... we are just wondering how many more who have not come to court

GOA BENCH OF BOMBAY HC



errors showed up since no record of their elector photo identity cards (EPIC) was found, and as such, the only option available in the ERONET software was “reject”. Their Form 8 was rejected, following which they approached the High Court.

The EC's advocate Gaurish Agni questioned why the petitioners had not notified authorities of their relocation earlier, to which the Bench remarked “the petitioner will also ask why this SIR after 24 years because he is a citizen of India, why not in between, because the number could have been controllable”.

The court added that such discrepancies would never arise if updating electoral rolls was a continuous process.

“It is not about the blame game,” the judges noted, pointing out that authorities have access to birth and death records and should automatically update rolls, enrolling people as soon as they turn 18.

The object of the Representation of the People Act and the EC is to ensure that votes are cast by citizens, the court said, adding the election body's endeavour is to have as many eligible voters on the roll as possible. “For that purpose, they can adopt any measures. Whatever measures that you adopt, the object has to be achieved. In that object, here and there, there may be aberrations. But the object cannot be overridden,” the Bench asserted.

It noted that instead of

rejecting the Form 8, the authorities could have kept it in abeyance and taken it up after the SIR was completed.

“Because what happens is that if you don't keep it pending, the person escapes from the roll... You finish your roll and deal with all the Form 8s. Because that is the best information for you to understand that people have shifted,” the court observed.

‘Automated deletions’

Expressing deep concern over the automated deletions, the Bench questioned the EC's authority to drop names without giving electors a hearing.

“Show us from the Act... what empowers you to delete without a hearing? Your officers were helpless and just decided to throw it on the system. We are very perturbed by this... we are just wondering how many more who have not come to court,” it said and pointed out that such rejections risk taking lakhs of legitimate voters off the rolls.

The Bench had, during the earlier hearing on Wed-

nesday, said the draft roll under the SIR cannot be the basis for deletion of names from the voter list and held that administrative software cannot supersede statutory laws to disenfranchise voters.

The court ruled that the draft roll cannot be the basis for deletion of voters' names. “Otherwise, Form 6, 7 or 8 have no meaning. Form 6, 7 and 8 are specifically for either a person who is a new voter, a person who has lost the right to vote, or a person who is shifting,” the court said on Wednesday.

The court told the EC that the “software system did not allow” it to accept Form 8. “He was never a new voter. He was an existing voter. He became new for your system,” it said.

The Bench questioned the EC on the provisions empowering it to delete names without a hearing.

The Bench said that once a Form 8 is received, the authority must “apply its mind and see whether this person has really moved (to a new address)”.

The court will hear the plea further on October 5.

Source: The Hindu, p.15 & p.11 (Parley), p.14

- **HC on EC's mandate:** Justices Valmiki Menezes and Amit S. Jamsandekar said the primary object of the RPA and the EC is that *citizens cast their votes*; administrative software (ERONET's “reject” option) cannot supersede statute to disenfranchise voters. A family that filed **Form 8 (shifting)** within the same constituency was wrongly rejected.
- **Continuous revision, not decadal SIR:** The Bench asked why an SIR was ordered after 24 years and suggested linking rolls with birth and death records, so that people are enrolled automatically on turning 18.

- **Karnataka pattern:** 4,000+ Form 7s; in Babaleshwar **1,363 came from just 10 electors**; at a Kodagu booth 50 forms citing “absent” were filed in one day, mostly against Muslim voters. Five FIRs were registered under the BNS (police cannot invoke the RPA — only EC officials can complain under it).
- **CEO’s direction:** EROs to act under **Section 31, RPA 1950** against those knowingly making false declarations — but only after an inquiry under **Rule 20, Registration of Electors Rules, 1960**.
- **Elsewhere:** Telangana (pre-printed deletion forms, Musheerabad); Uttarakhand (3,500 objections filed in the ERO’s own name in Haridwar Rural); West Bengal (5.72 lakh of 6.39 lakh Form 7s accepted — about 90%).
- **Expert view (Parley):** Ashok Lavasa — Section 31 is hardly ever used, so deterrence has collapsed; suggests a separate NCRB dataset on electoral offences. Prasenjit Bose — 1950s-era forms and laws are out of sync with digital, online filing.

VALUE ADDITION

Key forms (Registration of Electors Rules, 1960): Form 6 – new inclusion; Form 6A – overseas electors; Form 6B – Aadhaar details; **Form 7 – objection to inclusion / deletion**; Form 8 – shifting, correction, replacement EPIC.

Constitutional & legal base: Art. 324 (superintendence of rolls), Art. 326 (adult suffrage); RPA 1950 – Sec. 13B (ERO), Sec. 21 (preparation/revision; 21(3) special revision), Sec. 24 (appeals: DM, then CEO), **Sec. 31 (false declaration: up to 1 year, fine, or both)**.

Case law: *Lal Babu Hussein v. ERO* (1995) – a name once entered cannot be deleted without notice and a reasonable opportunity of being heard. EC norm: a booth with >2% additions or deletions gets extra scrutiny; more than five objections by one person triggers review.

PRELIMS POINTER Four qualifying dates for enrolment — 1 Jan, 1 Apr, 1 Jul, 1 Oct (Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021). ERONet 2.0 was merged into **ECINet** in January 2026.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-II: Salient features of the Representation of People’s Act; constitutional bodies (ECI); judiciary.



02

GS-II · POLITY & LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Reservation in Local Bodies: A.P. High Court Strikes Down 34% BC Quota

WHY IN NEWS A Division Bench of the **Andhra Pradesh High Court** (CJ Lisa Gill, Justice Challa Gunaranjan) set aside G.O.s 105 and 1065 that gave **34% reservation to BCs in Panchayati Raj Institutions** and **33.33% in Urban Local Bodies**, as total reservation breached the **50% ceiling**.

- **Liberty to redo:** The State may revisit the BC share only after completing data collection as mandated in *Vikas Kishanrao Gawali v. State of Maharashtra* (2021); data from the “unified family survey” cannot be the basis for BC reservation.
- **Polls cannot wait:** SEC to begin elections to PRIs and ULBs preferably within **six weeks from October 1**; the ongoing SIR cannot be a reason to postpone elections.
- **Delimitation:** The Census Act, 1948 and Census Rules, 1990 do not bar the State from delimiting municipalities.
- **West Bengal OBC row:** The Supreme Court agreed to hear a plea against the Calcutta HC order declaring OBC certificates issued between May 2025 and May 18, 2026 void; HC had revived its stay on

the re-declaration of **114 classes (77 + 37)** after the State withdrew its SLP. Appointments made meanwhile will abide by the result.

A.P. HC strikes down 34% BC quota in local body elections

Court says the reservation exceeds the 50% threshold laid down by the Supreme Court; it further directs State government and State Election Commission to begin poll process within six weeks

V. Raghavendra
VIJAYAWADA

A Division Bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, comprising Chief Justice Lisa Gill and Justice Challa Gunaranjan, on Thursday set aside Government Orders 105 and 1065 through which the government provided 34% reservation to the Backward Classes (BCs) in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and 33.33% quota in the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

The court said that they exceeded the 50% threshold laid down by the Supreme Court.

While striking down the impugned G.O.s, the court



The High Court gives liberty to the State to revisit the issue and determine the percentage of reservation for BCs. FILE PHOTO

gave liberty to the government to revisit the issue and determine the percentage of reservation for BCs keeping in view the apex court judgment in *Janhit Abhiyan vs Union of India* after completing the exercise of data collection in compliance with the judg-

ment in *Vikas Kishanrao Gawali vs State of Maharashtra*. The judges have expressed the opinion that the empirical data collected by the State through unified family survey cannot form the basis of declaration for reservation for the BCs. In the same vein, the

court directed the State government and the State Election Commission (SEC) to expeditiously commence the process of holding elections to the PRI and ULBs preferably not later than six weeks from October 1.

Continued operation of electoral rolls in existence on the qualifying date cannot be affected by the special intensive revision (SIR) and it cannot be the reason for postponement of the elections, the judges said.

On delimitation of Municipalities and Municipal Corporations, they said the Census Act of 1948 or Census Rules, 1990 do not prohibit the State from undertaking the process.

Source: The Hindu, p.6 & p.5

VALUE ADDITION

Enabling provisions: Art. 243D(6) and 243T(6) allow States to reserve seats for backward classes in panchayats and municipalities; SC/ST reservation is proportional to population (Art. 243D(1), 243T(1)).

Triple Test (K. Krishna Murthy 2010 → Gawali 2021): (1) a **dedicated commission** for a contemporaneous, rigorous empirical inquiry into political backwardness; (2) local-body-wise proportion specified on its recommendation; (3) **aggregate SC+ST+OBC not to exceed 50%**.

Related rulings: *Indra Sawhney* (1992) – 50% ceiling; *Janhit Abhiyan* (2022) – upheld the 103rd Amendment (EWS), holding the ceiling is not inflexible for that class.

PRELIMS POINTER Political backwardness (for local bodies) is distinct from social and educational backwardness (for jobs/education under Art. 15(4), 16(4)).

SYLLABUS LINK GS-II: Devolution of powers to local levels; mechanisms for protection of vulnerable sections.

03

GS-II / GS-III · GOVERNANCE & ROAD SAFETY

Road Safety: SC Blocks Vehicle Services for Motorists with Unpaid e-Challans

WHY IN NEWS In a September 28 order made public on October 1, a Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K.V. Viswanathan directed States/UTs to **block registration renewal, fitness and PUC certificates, ownership transfer and licence renewal** for vehicles with unpaid e-challans and to blacklist them on the **Parivahan** portal.

SC bars licence renewal for motorists with unpaid fines

Top court directs that vehicles with unpaid e-challans be blacklisted, preventing their sale or transfer until the dues are cleared; it also calls for greater use of technology in traffic enforcement

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed the States and Union Territories to block a range of online and vehicle-related services for motorists with outstanding traffic fines, including registration renewals, fitness and pollution-under-control certificates, ownership transfers, and driving licence renewals.

The court was informed that e-challans worth about ₹49,194.05 crore remained outstanding across the country, while ₹26,175.05 crore had been recovered so far.

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K.V. Viswanathan directed that vehicles with unpaid e-challans be blacklisted on the Central Parivahan portal, effectively preventing their sale or transfer until dues are cleared. In cases involving multiple traffic violations, the authorities have also been directed to withhold renewal of driving licences and take steps to suspend existing licences.

“What we want to convey in simple words is that



The court has asked the States and Union Territories to block vehicle-related services for motorists with pending fines. FILE PHOTO

the authorities need to work at the ground level, having regard to the ground realities... We also direct that let there be random checking of the vehicles, and if it is found that the e-challan issued has not been abided or honoured, necessary steps shall be taken to impound the vehicle itself,” the Bench said, in its September 28 order made public on Thursday.

Road safety case

The directions were issued in a road safety case dating back to 2012, in which the top court has been monitoring the implementation

of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, for nearly 14 years.

The Bench called for greater use of technology in traffic enforcement, directing the States and Union Territories to immediately implement the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) framed by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways on October 28, 2025. The SOP seeks to give effect to Section 136A of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, read with Rule 167A of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989.

Under the framework, traffic violations are to be

detected electronically through devices such as CCTV cameras, speed cameras, and speed guns. The State governments have been directed to identify and notify locations for electronic enforcement and complete the procurement, deployment, and calibration of equipment.

The court directed the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to set up a public dashboard showing how electronic traffic enforcement is being implemented.

The Bench sought details of the steps taken by the Delhi government to comply with its September 15 directions on pedestrian safety along Mathura Road near the Delhi High Court and the National Zoological Park.

Amicus curiae and senior advocate Gaurav Agrawal informed the court that he wrote to the Delhi Chief Secretary on September 19 regarding compliance with the directions but had received no response. The earlier directions called for measures, including synchronised traffic lights, along the stretch.

Source: The Hindu, p.16 & p.2

- **The pendency:** e-challans worth **₹49,194.05 crore** are outstanding nationally, against only ₹26,175.05 crore recovered.
- **Escalating sanctions:** for multiple violations, licence renewal to be withheld and existing licences suspended; random checks and **impounding** of vehicles that ignore challans.
- **Technology-led enforcement:** States must immediately implement MoRTH's SOP of October 28, 2025 giving effect to **Section 136A, MV Act 1988** read with **Rule 167A, CMVR 1989** — notify locations, deploy and calibrate CCTV, speed cameras and speed guns; MoRTH to set up a **public dashboard**.
- **Continuing mandamus:** the road-safety case dates to 2012; the Court has monitored implementation of the MV Act for nearly 14 years.
- **Delhi parallel:** the **'No PUCC, No Fuel'** rule kicked in on October 1 — ANPR cameras at fuel stations verify vehicles against the **VAHAN** portal and flag overage or non-PUCC vehicles; the DPCC's AI-based Integrated Command and Control Centre was inaugurated.

VALUE ADDITION

Section 136A (inserted by the MV (Amendment) Act, 2019): electronic monitoring and enforcement of road safety on national and State highways and urban roads. **Rule 167A** (2021): electronic devices, e-challan service and data norms.

Databases: VAHAN (vehicle registration) and SARATHI (driving licences) under MoRTH/NIC. **Road-safety case:** *S. Rajaseekaran v. Union of India* – SC Committee on Road Safety.

Global goals: Brasilia Declaration (2015) and Stockholm Declaration (2020) – halve road deaths; UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. India records about 1.7 lakh road deaths a year.

PRELIMS POINTER ANPR = Automatic Number Plate Recognition. PUCC = Pollution Under Control Certificate.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-II: Government policies and interventions; GS-III: Infrastructure (roads); environmental pollution.



04

GS-II · HEALTH

Counterfeit Medicines: How Fakes Slip Through India's Drug Supply Chain

WHY IN NEWS Busts of inter-State rackets dealing in **counterfeit, spurious and diverted drugs** – from high-value cancer injections to anti-rabies vaccines and oxytocin – expose how fakes move through layers of the supply chain, while **no system exists to trace affected patients**.

MAINS ANGLE Drug quality is also a trade-credibility issue: India supplies about a fifth of the world's generics, and cough-syrup deaths abroad (The Gambia, Uzbekistan, 2022) dented its 'pharmacy of the world' image.

Breaking the blister pack

Over the past few months, probe agencies have busted several major drug rackets involving counterfeit and adulterated pharmaceuticals, from cancer treatments and vaccines to antibiotics and psychotropic drugs. **Lavpreet Kaur** and **Ashna Butani** trace how fakes move through illicit supply chains and find that while many perpetrators may be caught, there is no system for tracking down victims at the receiving end

Source: The Hindu, p.8 (Spotlight)

- **Scale of one racket:** Delhi Police's Inter-State Cell arrested 17 and seized 588 filled vials + 3,021 other medicines (≈₹9 crore); original cartons were reused after batch numbers and MRP were wiped with **acetone**.
- **Human cost:** spurious oxytocin was a major reason for the deaths of five women after C-sections in Kota (May 2026); fake anti-rabies vaccine was seized at Bhagirath Palace, Delhi.
- **Three routes:** (i) counterfeits made in warehouses; (ii) genuine drugs **diverted** from procurement chains (e.g., government hospitals); (iii) genuine but **unapproved** drugs.
- **Loopholes:** invoices attest only that a transaction occurred, not what is in the box; every handover (C&F agent → stockist → sub-stockist → retailer) allows pilferage; **QR codes can be cloned** unless

verified against the manufacturer's database at the point of sale; L1 (lowest-bidder) procurement rewards suspicious discounts.

- **Testing gap:** 2025-26 – 1,41,322 samples tested, **3,012 Not of Standard Quality**, 283 spurious/adulterated, 779 prosecutions; yet over **8.5 lakh retail pharmacies** cannot be physically policed.
- **Silent failure:** oncology suffers most – a patient may believe therapy is working while the disease progresses.

VALUE ADDITION

Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940: Sec. 17 (misbranded), 17A (adulterated), **17B (spurious)**; Sec. 27 – spurious drugs causing death or grievous hurt attract 10 years to life (after the 2008 amendment). **NSQ** = fails a quality parameter; **spurious** = deliberately fake identity.

Regulators: CDSCO headed by the DCGI (MoHFW); State Drug Controllers license manufacture and sale. **Central Drugs Laboratory, Kasauli** tests vaccines and sera.

Traceability: Schedule H2 – QR codes on the top 300 drug brands from August 1, 2023; QR on APIs from January 2023. Revised **Schedule M** raises GMP standards. WHO estimates about 1 in 10 medical products in low- and middle-income countries is substandard or falsified.

PRELIMS POINTER Way forward: point-of-sale database verification, vial accounting for high-value injections, records of empty-vial disposal, more testing labs, quality-weighted procurement.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-II: Issues relating to development and management of Health; GS-III: Internal security (organised crime).



05

GS-II · URBAN GOVERNANCE

Indore Contaminated Water Deaths: Commission Blames 'Cumulative Institutional Failure'

WHY IN NEWS A one-member **Judicial Commission** headed by former MP High Court judge **Sushil Kumar Gupta** held that the **Bhagirathpura (Indore) water contamination** tragedy – which claimed 30+ lives (report links 22) between December 2025 and February 2026 – was **preventable**.

- **Red-tape delays:** tender-to-completion of one pipeline project took **859+ days**; another file sat for 72 days after an official merely noted “discuss”.
- **Accountability:** the then IMC Additional Commissioner (water supply) and executive engineer held “primarily responsible”; two IAS officers and former IMC Commissioners got a clean chit.
- **Missing records:** IMC and IDA failed to produce records of the 1990–95 sewer network and the 1999–2004 water pipeline; the panel sought a separate probe into their “disappearance”.
- **Science:** of 52 samples (MPPCB), **50 positive for total coliform** and **40 for E. coli**. Immediate cause: **sewage ingress**; root cause: parallel laying and crossing of sewer and water lines, sewer running *above* water mains.
- **Irony:** Indore has been ranked India's cleanest city eight years in a row – visible cleanliness is not the same as safe underground infrastructure.

MAINS ANGLE The tragedy shows the ‘invisible infrastructure’ deficit of Indian cities: rankings reward what is seen (garbage-free streets) while buried networks age without maps, records or replacement

budgets. The 15th Finance Commission tied urban grants to drinking water and sanitation outcomes; municipal capacity, file-movement timelines and personal accountability for delays must follow. Citizen water-quality dashboards, as in some Smart Cities, can turn hidden risk into public information before an outbreak.

Institutional failure led to deaths from contaminated water in Indore: report

Probe report blames systematic lapses and delays in replacing ageing infrastructure for the Bhagirathpura deaths; states that tragedy was preventable; pointing to delays totalling 859 days in tender processes, it holds top civic body officials responsible

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

The Judicial Commission formed to probe the death of more than 30 people due to water contamination in Indore has said the tragedy was preventable while blaming institutional failure, systematic lapses and delays in replacing the ageing infrastructure.

The one-member panel headed by former Madhya Pradesh High Court judge Sushil Kumar Gupta, who submitted the report to the Indore Bench of the High Court, flagged delays of “approximately 859+ days” in inviting important tenders, necessary approvals and completion of work in Bhagirathpura, the hotspot of the tragedy.

The probe report held the then Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) Additional Commissioner (water supply) Rohit Sisonia and then executive engineer (water supply) Sanjeev Shrivastava “primarily responsible” for several delays.

Between December 2025 and February 2026, more than 100 people suffered from ailments such as acute gastroenteritis,



The immediate cause of contamination was the ingress of sewage into the drinking water system, stated the report. A.M.FARUQUI

acute diarrhoea, vomiting, and severe dehydration after consuming contaminated water by the IMC.

The tragedy claimed more than 30 lives, denting the image of Indore, which has been awarded India's cleanest city for eight consecutive years. The probe report, however, links only 22 deaths to the tragedy citing hospital records.

72-day delay

In one pipeline project, the process, from inviting tenders to completion of the work, took 859 days, the panel said. In another tender process, Mr. Sisonia re-

corded only “discuss” on the file on October 15, 2025. Despite this, Mr. Shrivastava did not hold the discussion for 64 days until December 18, 2025. After the discussion, the file was sent again on December 26 for approval to open the tender, resulting in a total delay of 72 days, the report said.

The report, however, gave a clean chit to two IAS officers and former IMC Commissioners – Dilip Kumar Yadav, who was appointed in September 2025 and removed amid the tragedy, and his predecessor Shivam Verma, who has been the Indore District

Collector since September 2025. It said the competent authority to accord final approval to the tender was Mr. Sisonia.

Missing records

The report also said that the IMC and the Indore Development Authority (IDA) had “failed to produce” several records, including inspection reports and documents related to laying a sewage network in Bhagirathpura between 1990 and 1995, and a drinking water supply pipeline between 1999 and 2004. The report flagged “gross failure and administrative negligence” in preservation and transfer of public records, while recommending a separate and detailed investigation into their “disappearance or non-availability”.

“The explanation regarding destruction of records in 2010 is unsupported by documentary evidence. No note-sheet, destruction register, or approval record has been produced to establish that the missing records were lawfully destroyed,” the report said, adding that it was unable to identify the officials responsible for the

two projects due to missing records and fix responsibility.

The report also said that of the 52 water samples taken by the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board (MPPCB) amid the tragedy, 50 were found positive for total coliform and 40 for E. Coli, confirming bacterial contamination of the water.

“The immediate cause of contamination was the ingress of sewage into the drinking water distribution system, while the root cause lay in the improper planning and execution of the sewerage network itself,” it said, blaming the mixing on parallel laying of sewage and water pipelines, their crossing over and even sewage line running above the water pipeline in some places.

‘Cumulative failure’

As Justice Gupta concludes his probe, he wrote, “The Commission, therefore, concludes that the Bhagirathpura contaminated water incident was not the result of a single act of negligence but was the cumulative consequence of failures occurring at different stages over several decades.”

Source: The Hindu, p.5

VALUE ADDITION

Constitutional placement: Water supply is in the **Twelfth Schedule** (Art. 243W, 74th Amendment) – a municipal function; ‘Water’ is Entry 17, State List.

Standards: BIS IS 10500:2012 – E. coli and total coliform must not be detectable in any 100 mL sample. The CPHEEO manual requires separation of water mains and sewers, with water lines above sewers.

Schemes: AMRUT 2.0 (2021) – universal tap water in all statutory towns; Swachh Survekshan – cleanliness ranking. Inquiry under the **Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952**.

PRELIMS POINTER Lessons: GIS mapping of buried utilities, digitised asset records, time-bound tendering, real-time water-quality sensors and public disclosure.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-II: Accountability and transparency; local bodies. GS-III: Infrastructure – urban water supply and sanitation.



Economy Watch: Import-Led GST Surge, PMI at 7-Month High, and the Case for Multilateralism

WHY IN NEWS Gross GST collections rose 14.7% to ₹2.03 lakh crore in September 2026, with the share of import-linked GST at a record 32.2%; the HSBC Manufacturing PMI hit a seven-month high of 55.1; and the Finance Ministry's **Monthly Economic Review** warned that deals replacing the multilateral system raise trade diversion and costs.

- **GST composition shift:** import GST grew **25.9%** versus **10.1%** for domestic GST; domestic share fell to a record-low **67.8%**. Net GST grew 18.1%; H1 (Apr–Sep) gross growth 11.6%; refunds contracted 3%. Growth came despite lower rates after GST rationalisation.
- **Why it matters:** heavier reliance on import-linked revenue reflects currency, commodity prices and import volumes — a less stable base than domestic consumption.
- **PMI:** up from 52.8 in August; but the **Q2 average of 53.8** was the weakest since Q2 of 2021–22. Demand rose for electronics, food, pharma and textiles; new export orders came from Brazil, Europe, UAE and the U.S.
- **WTO World Trade Report 2026 scenarios (by 2050):** geo-fragmented world — global GDP –5.1%, exports –18.6%; 'FTA world' replacing multilateralism — –6.9% and –26.9%; enhanced cooperation — +2.9% and +17.9%.
- **MER's takeaway:** regional/bilateral pacts help only when they **complement** the WTO framework; India pursues diversified trade while keeping the WTO at the core.
- **Diplomacy:** Piyush Goyal met USTR Jamieson Greer at the G20 Trade Ministers' meeting (Milwaukee) on an early **interim India–U.S. BTA**, and EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič on the signing and entry into force of the India–EU FTA.

MAINS ANGLE A rising import share in GST signals that revenue buoyancy is partly riding on prices and the rupee rather than domestic demand. For fiscal planning, the domestic base (consumption and manufacturing) is the sustainable engine — making the PMI recovery and trade-deal choices directly relevant to revenue stability.

GST revenue rises to ₹2.03 lakh cr. in Sept.

An analysis of historical Goods and Services Tax data shows that an increasing share of GST revenues have been coming from tax paid on imports rather than GST collected on domestic transactions; share of revenue from domestic transactions has correspondingly fallen to its lowest-ever level

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The Centre's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue rose to ₹2.03 lakh crore in September 2026, a growth of 14.7% over the last year. However, the data also points to a changing trend of where India is earning its GST revenue from.

An analysis of historical GST data shows the share of revenues from imports has risen to its highest-ever level, while the share of revenue from domestic transactions has correspond-

ingly fallen to its lowest-ever level.

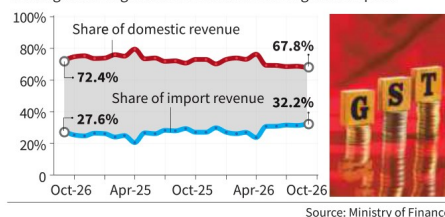
Over the first half of the financial year, spanning the April–September 2026 period, gross GST revenue grew at 11.6%.

"The increased focus on reducing complications and the increasing number of GST audits undertaken this year appear to be yielding results in the form of the gross monthly GST collection once again crossing the Rs 2 lakh crore mark," M.S. Mani, partner at Deloitte India said.

"It is especially remarkable to see the gross GST

Changing composition

A rising share of gross GST revenue is coming from imports



collections growing by 14.7% and the net GST collections growing by 18.1% compared to the same month last year despite

last year being on higher GST rates compared to the current year," he added.

However, within the gross collections, the data

shows that revenue from imports grew by 25.9% in September 2026 while revenue from domestic transactions grew by a relatively slower 10.1%.

While the growth in domestic revenue is among the fastest seen since August 2025, the faster pace of import revenue growth through this period has meant that the composition of the Centre's GST revenues has been changing. That is, revenue from imports in September 2026 saw its share increase to 32.2% of total gross GST revenue, the highest-ever.

Correspondingly, the share of domestic revenues fell to a lowest-ever 67.8%.

"The sharp 25.9% growth in import-linked GST in September, compared with around 10% growth in domestic GST, reflects a combination of currency, commodity prices and import dynamics," Manoj Mishra, Partner and Tax Controversy Management Leader at Grant Thornton Bharat said.

The data also shows that total refunds contracted 3% in September 2026, driven by a contraction in domestic refunds.

Source: The Hindu, p.17

Anti-multilateral trade deals may hit growth, exports: govt. economists

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Economists in the Ministry of Finance have warned that bilateral and regional trade deals that seek to replace the current multilateral trade system could lead to “greater trade diversion, higher trade costs, and greater uncertainty”.

However, while India was pursuing a diversified trade strategy, it was doing so within multilateral trading system and still sought to have the World Trade Organization (WTO) at the core of such a system, say the economists.

The Monthly Economic Review for September, prepared by economists in the Department of Eco-



'Network of FTAs' system can cut global GDP, exports.

nomics Affairs, cited the WTO's recent report that sought to predict what would happen to the world economy by 2050 under three different trade-related scenarios.

“According to the WTO's World Trade Report 2026, in a ‘geo-fragmented world’ scenario, in which

trade is organised around geopolitical blocks, global GDP is projected to decline by 5.1%, and global exports by 18.6% relative to the baseline in 2050,” they said.

Worst of scenarios

The worst of the scenarios would be a ‘Free Trade Agreement (FTA) world’ in which the multilateral trading system is replaced by a network of FTAs with tariffs on non-FTA partners in a non-cooperative way. If this comes about, cuts in global GDP and exports were estimated by WTO at 6.9% and 26.9% each.

“In an ‘enhanced cooperation world’ scenario, wherein multilateral cooperation is reinforced, global GDP and global exports

are projected to rise 2.9% and 17.9%, respectively.”

Therefore, the report concluded regional and bilateral trade pacts can provide additional market access and complement the multilateral system when they operate within the WTO framework. However, the costs of such trade deals turn higher when they take place outside the multilateral framework and used to substitute it.

“In such a situation, market access turns more dependent on the terms negotiated between partners while trade outside the arrangements faces less favourable conditions. This results in greater trade diversion, higher trade costs, and greater uncertainty.”

Source: The Hindu, p.17

VALUE ADDITION

GST on imports = IGST levied and collected by the Centre (**Art. 269A**); GST Council under Art. 279A; 101st Amendment (2016); GST rolled out July 1, 2017.

PMI: survey-based diffusion index (S&P Global, sponsored by HSBC); **above 50 = expansion**, below 50 = contraction — it measures breadth of change, not the growth rate.

WTO law: MFN (GATT Art. I) is the default; FTAs are exceptions under **GATT Art. XXIV** (and the Enabling Clause for developing countries). India's recent pacts: India-UAE CEPA, India-Australia ECTA, India-EFTA TEPA, India-UK CETA.

PRELIMS POINTER Coal India output +9.2% (53.5 MT) in September; PV wholesales grew in double digits; PNG Drive 3.0 targets 50 lakh new domestic connections by end-FY27.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-III: Mobilisation of resources, growth; GS-II: Important international institutions (WTO), bilateral agreements.



07

GS-I · GEOGRAPHY | GS-III · AGRICULTURE

Monsoon 2026 Ends ‘Deficient’: Why the IMD Must Not Shy from Bad News

WHY IN NEWS India's south-west monsoon ended on September 30 with **759 mm — 87% of the normal 869 mm**, i.e., in the ‘deficient’ range in a strong **El Niño** year. The IMD had forecast ‘below normal’ (90–95%), though its own models pointed to ‘deficient’.

- **Month-wise misses**: June got only **65%** against a 92% forecast; July slightly above the “below 94%” call; August 84%; September 92.4% (forecast below 91%).

- **Regional extremes:** North-east India recorded its **driest season since 1901** (26% short) though forecast 'normal'; south peninsula 23% short; central and north-west India closer to forecast, helped by ocean conditions and **Western Disturbances**.
- **Farm impact:** kharif sowing lag shrank from 16% (July 10) to under 2% (early September). Karnataka declared drought in 100+ taluks; Maharashtra in **265 of 358** talukas, though the national deficit (~12%) is below the 20% 'agricultural drought' threshold cited.
- **Outlook:** El Niño to strengthen — below-normal rain over most of the country in October–December, threatening soil moisture and reservoirs; MSP of wheat raised by ₹25 and mustard by ₹413 a quintal to nudge diversification.

Season's end

The IMD is conservative when it comes to projecting rainfall deficit

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issues two forecasts — in April and May — before the monsoon. Both unambiguously pointed to a dry monsoon — confidence boosted by global unanimity that one of the strongest El Niño ever was in the offing — and the consequential question was, 'How bad?' It turns out that the IMD's forecast of 'below normal' rain (90% to 95% of average) was conservative. This was surprising, given that its model pointed to 'deficient' rains (below 90%). On September 30, when India's monsoon tally ended the IMD announced 759 mm across the country 87% of the normal 869 mm. El Niño years, when the Central Equatorial Pacific warms and suppresses monsoon rains, test a weather department's mettle because predicting the extent of the shortfall is challenging. It is perplexing why the agency opted for 'below normal' rainfall when it could have warned of a 'deficiency' and claimed accuracy. As of now the IMD can only

Source: The Hindu, p.10 (Editorial)

VALUE ADDITION

IMD categories (% of LPA): Deficient <90 · Below normal 90–95 · Normal 96–104 · Above normal 105–110 · Excess >110. The current LPA (~87 cm) is based on 1971–2020; a forecast carries a ±4–5% error window.

Drivers: El Niño (warm central-eastern Pacific) usually weakens the Indian monsoon; a positive IOD can offset it. Western Disturbances are extra-tropical storms from the Mediterranean, now bringing more rain in monsoon months.

Drought declaration: Manual for Drought Management (2016, revised 2020) – rainfall, vegetation, soil moisture and crop indicators.

PRELIMS POINTER HP angle: apple production in Himachal Pradesh is down 48% this year (1.15 crore boxes vs 2.18 crore) due to unseasonal rain, hail and snow.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-I: Important geophysical phenomena, monsoon; GS-III: Cropping patterns, agricultural impact of climate variability.

Women's Safety in Public Spaces: Beyond Outrage, Towards Outcome-Based Policing

WHY IN NEWS A spate of sexual assaults in Delhi — Astha Kunj Park, Swaroop Nagar, and a Greater Noida–Delhi sleeper bus — and a **500-strong women's march at DU South Campus** have revived questions on the Nirbhaya-era framework; the **Supreme Court** has taken *suo motu* cognisance of public spaces becoming “zones of high risk”.

- **Data:** NCRB — crimes against women rose ~80%, from **2.4 lakh (2012) to 4.4 lakh (2024)**; more than **50 cases every hour**; highest rates in Jaipur, Indore, Lucknow and Delhi. Higher reporting explains only part of the rise.
- **Implementation gap:** CCTVs and lights mean little if not functional, monitored and linked to a response system; patrols and helplines matter only if they trigger prompt, trained intervention.
- **Reform agenda:** move from scheme-based to **preventive, outcome-based policing**; public audits of vulnerable spots with deadlines; clear case backlogs so speedy investigation means speedy justice.
- **Freedom, not restriction:** the answer cannot be curfews on women (avoid parks after dark, travel only with companions); the root is a culture of toxic masculinity and patriarchy.
- **Students' demands:** democratically elected, functional Internal Complaints Committees, safer campuses, better street lighting and public transport.

Other than outrage

Restrictions on women cannot be the answer to unsafe public spaces

There is a sickening sense of *déjà vu* in last month's headlines of sexual assault against women and children. In the national capital alone, the gang-rape of a 17-year-old girl in Astha Kunj Park by three men posing as police personnel, the gang-rape and murder of a 16-year-old in Swaroop Nagar, and the gang-rape of another 17-year old on a sleeper bus travelling from Greater Noida to Delhi have each shocked the nation briefly before giving way to a numbing outrage. Little seems to have changed in the 14 years since the candlelight marches and commissions after the Nirbhaya case unleashed a slew of new schemes, laws and funds that vowed to protect women and girls from sexual violence, especially in public spaces. The latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau shows an 80% surge in crimes against women since Nirbhaya, from 2.4 lakh in 2012 to 4.4 lakh in 2024. Some of this can be attributed to higher reporting of crimes

Source: The Hindu, p.10 (Editorial) & p.2

VALUE ADDITION

Post-Nirbhaya architecture: Justice J.S. Verma Committee → Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013; **Nirbhaya Fund** (2013, MWCD nodal); **Safe City Projects** in 8 cities; ERSS-112; Fast Track Special Courts (incl. exclusive POCSO courts).

Mission Shakti (2022): *Sambal* (One Stop Centres, Women Helpline 181, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Nari Adalat) and *Samarthya* (empowerment).

Workplace/campus: *Vishaka* (1997) → POSH Act, 2013 (Internal Committee where 10+ employees); UGC Regulations, 2015 on sexual harassment in HEIs. BNS 2023 groups offences against women and children in a dedicated Chapter V.

PRELIMS POINTER Safe City cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Lucknow.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-I: Role of women, social empowerment; GS-II: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; police reforms.



09

GS-III · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (BIOTECH)

Xenocortication: Human Brain Tissue Grown Inside Mice Opens a ‘Third Window’

WHY IN NEWS A *Nature* study by **Sergiu Pasca’s group (Stanford)** transplanted human cortical **organoids** into mice genetically engineered to lack most of the neocortex and hippocampus; the human tissue grew to form about **92% of the animal’s cortical tissue**.

- **Method:** human cells reprogrammed into **induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs)** → 3-D brain organoids → transplanted soon after birth into immune-deficient, cortex-less mice (no rejection, no competition for space).
- **What grew:** several types of developing cortical neurons, progenitors and astrocytes, at a maturity similar to the **late second trimester** human cortex, including cells with the molecular signature of **von Economo neurons** (found in humans and few large-brained mammals, absent in rodents).
- **Integration:** grafts became electrically active (slow waves typical of developing networks); human fibres reached the cervical spinal cord. Machine-learning **MoSeq** showed behaviour intermediate between normal and cortex-less mice.
- **Disease model:** after 5 hours of oxygen deprivation, stress markers appeared only in human tissue — useful for studying **birth hypoxia and cerebral palsy**, developmental disorders and drug testing.
- **Limits & ethics:** tissue remained immature and disordered; no evidence of a human-like mind. Larger, more mature grafts, embryos or primates will need greater ethical scrutiny.

VALUE ADDITION

iPSCs: Shinya Yamanaka (2006; Nobel 2012 with John Gurdon) – adult cells reprogrammed via Oct4, Sox2, Klf4, c-Myc. **Organoids** are 3-D mini-tissues; **chimeras** carry cells of two species.

Indian framework: National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research (ICMR-DBT, 2017); stem-cell products are ‘new drugs’ under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019; only haematopoietic stem cell transplantation is standard therapy.

Global: ISSCR Guidelines (2021) on embryo models and chimeras; U.S. FDA Modernization Act 2.0 (2022) permits non-animal alternatives in drug testing.

What human brain tissue transplanted into mice showed us

A Stanford University experiment called 'xenocortication' lets human brain tissue develop inside a living mouse, offering a new way to study the developing human brain and, potentially, how disease develops; it also raises new ethical questions about how far such experiments should go

Source: The Hindu, p.II (Health)

PRELIMS POINTER Three windows to the developing human brain: lab organoids → organoids grafted into rodents with intact cortex → xenocortication (host re-engineered).

SYLLABUS LINK GS-III: Developments in biotechnology; GS-IV: Ethics in science and research.



10

GS-I · MODERN HISTORY | GS-IV · ESSAY

Gandhi Jayanti Special: Two Songs, 'Genius', and the Mahatma's Global Legacy

WHY IN NEWS On the Mahatma's 157th birth anniversary, *The Hindu's* Editorial and Opinion pages carried a compilation: Sanjay Hegde proposes *Vaishnava Jana To* as a 'National Prayer', contrasting it with the 2026 legal compulsion around *Vande Mataram*; Gopalkrishna Gandhi traces Gandhi's use of 'genius'; M. Kalyanaraman explores his unfinished global role.

- **Vande Mataram in 2026:** MHA directed all six stanzas at official functions (January) and placed the Song before the Anthem (July); Parliament amended the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971** — preventing its singing now invites up to 3 years' imprisonment. In T.M. Krishna's challenge, Justice Joymalya Bagchi observed that *Bijoe Emmanuel* still governs silent, respectful objectors.
- **History of the settlement:** Bankim wrote the first two stanzas ~1875; later stanzas came with *Anandamath* (1882); the CWC in **October 1937** adopted only the first two; on **January 24, 1950**, Rajendra Prasad announced *Jana Gana Mana* as Anthem and *Vande Mataram* to be "honoured equally".
- **The other song:** Narsinh Mehta's *Vaishnava Jana To* (15th c., Junagadh) — one who knows another's pain (*peed parai*) — reads like an early Preamble: fraternity, equality (Art. 14), secularism, probity, Art. 51A. "A prayer compelled is no prayer at all."
- **Gandhi and 'genius':** Suez Canal (London Diary, 1888); 'evil genius' of the Transvaal Asiatic Department and of Sir Michael O'Dwyer (Jallianwala); Tilak as "the genius of swaraj" (Belgaum Congress, 1924); Tagore's "poetic genius"; Raychandbhai — "a genius" without qualification.
- **Global legacy:** Dharasana coverage in ~1,300 papers; Bayard Rustin and James Lawson carried satyagraha to the U.S. civil rights movement (Montgomery Bus Boycott, Nashville training school); a world pacifist conference was held in India in 1949, a year after his death.

MAINS ANGLE Gandhi distinguished between love invited and obedience demanded — a useful frame for questions on constitutional patriotism versus coercive nationalism, the place of dissent, and the role of moral exemplars (Rustin, King, Mandela) in non-violent movements of the 20th century.

A reflection on two songs and their nationalisms

While it is customary to garland Gandhiji on his birthday, this year, let us listen to him instead and to the song he lived by. At a time when the Republic has spent 10 months legislating about another song, the contrast will be a lesson in what nationalism is, and what it is not.

The song the Republic legislated



Sanjay Hegde

Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India

argument, the other renames the arguer.

Vande Mataram

Let us take a closer look at the six stanzas of the Song; Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote the first two around 1875, reportedly as a filler for his journal. They are a hymn to a landscape, richly watered, bountiful, and cool with

hundred thousand. Our national anthem is the first of Tagore's five stanzas. Fitting a work to a public purpose is homage and not a denigration.

This settlement worked. In 1997, A.R. Rahman, born a Hindu and a convert to Islam, reimagined *Vande Mataram* as *Maa Tujhe Salaam*. Ask anyone under 40 to sing *Vande Mataram* and you will hear Rahman.

conduct.

Here, then, are two songs and two nationalisms. One venerates the soil and asks the citizen to bow. The other civilises the soul and asks citizens to be worthy. One now comes with a sub-inspector attached. The other has never needed one.

A modest proposal

Source: *The Hindu*, p.10–11 (Ed & Op)

VALUE ADDITION

Key dates: October 2 – **International Day of Non-Violence** (UNGA, 2007). Gandhi Peace Prize instituted 1995. Tagore first sang *Vande Mataram* at the 1896 INC session (Calcutta).

Law on national honour: the 1971 Act protected the Flag and Constitution (Sec. 2) and the Anthem (Sec. 3). Art. 51A(a): duty to respect the Constitution, its ideals, the National Flag and the National Anthem. *Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala* (1986): no one can be compelled to sing the Anthem if he stands respectfully (Art. 19(1)(a), 25).

Essay line: “Standing at attention takes 90 seconds. Feeling *peed parai* takes a lifetime — and it, not the standing, builds a nation.”

PRELIMS POINTER The Hindu releases a documentary ‘Gandhi for GenZ: The Mahatma is suddenly cool again’ on Gandhi Jayanti.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-I: Freedom struggle & personalities; GS-II: Fundamental duties, rights; GS-IV: Contributions of moral thinkers; Essay.

11

GS-II · FEDERALISM | GS-I · GEOGRAPHY

Mahanadi Water Dispute: Odisha and Chhattisgarh Edge Towards a Settlement

WHY IN NEWS Odisha CM **Mohan Charan Majhi** said the Mahanadi dispute with **Chhattisgarh** is “moving closer to a solution” after a meeting chaired by Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** with Jal Shakti Minister **C.R. Patil** and Chhattisgarh CM **Vishnu Deo Sai**, with technical support from the **Central Water Commission**.

- **Timeline:** both States told the tribunal that the expanded technical committee meets on **October 13**; the **Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal**, headed by former SC judge **Justice Bela M. Trivedi**, meets on **October 15**.
- **Negotiated route:** legal, administrative and political tracks are running together; the Odisha CM credits ‘double-engine’ governments in both States for acceleration.
- **Opposition demand:** BJD asked that decisions be made public given Odisha’s stake in non-monsoon flows.

VALUE ADDITION

Dispute: Odisha (downstream) objects to barrages in Chhattisgarh (upstream) reducing non-monsoon flows to the **Hirakud** reservoir. Tribunal constituted in **March 2018** under the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956** on SC direction. **Art. 262** – Parliament may bar courts' jurisdiction over such disputes.

River facts: rises near **Sihawa (Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh)**; tributaries Seonath, Hasdeo, Mand, Ib, Jonk, Tel; Hirakud Dam near Sambalpur; empties into the Bay of Bengal (False Point); basin mostly in Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

Mahanadi river dispute to be resolved soon, says Odisha CM

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday said that the Mahanadi water distribution issue between Odisha and Chhattisgarh – with technical support from the Central Water Commission – is “moving closer to a solution”. Mr. Majhi said this after attending a meeting chaired by Union Home

Minister Amit Shah and attended by Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil.

“After meeting under chairmanship of Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil in New Delhi on July 30, 2026, we had informed that the issue would be resolved within three months. Today marked completion two months, we are on track to resolve it within three months,” said Mr. Majhi.

Stating that the discussions were positive and were held in a cordial atmosphere in attendance of Union Jal Shakti Minister and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bishnu Deo Sai, the Odisha CM said, “After the double-engine government of BJP came to power in both Chhattisgarh and Odisha, the process of resolving the Mahanadi issue has accelerated. Along with the legal process, ad-

ministrative and political efforts have also been taken.” “We are gradually moving closer to a solution and I hope that the final framework for resolving the issue will emerge very soon. Both State governments have submitted the proposals... as well as all the documents that were sought. Based on these, all necessary steps are being taken to work out a solution keeping in view the in-

terests of both States,” Mr. Majhi said.

‘Make decisions public’ Meanwhile, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) demanded that the decisions taken at this meeting be made public. BJD MLA and former Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo said that since the Mahanadi water dispute is an important issue from the perspective of Odisha's interests, it is essential that the

people of the state formed about the decisions taken at this meeting. Odisha and Chhattisgarh had informed the technical commission scheduled to meet on October 13. The report of Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal headed by former Supreme Court Justice M. Trivedi, has been released for October 15.

Source: The Hindu, p.5

PRELIMS POINTER Assam alert: a landslide in Nagaland (Longleng–Mokokchung) blocked ~80% of the Dikhow river, which caused June's deluge in Sivasagar.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-II: Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure; GS-I: Drainage systems.

12

GS-II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Sri Lanka at Two Years of the NPP: Stability Achieved, ‘System Change’ Pending

WHY IN NEWS President **Anura Kumara Dissanayake** (sworn in September 23, 2024) completed two years; the NPP government has restored macroeconomic stability under the **IMF programme**, but key structural promises of the 2022 **Aragalaya** remain unfulfilled.

- **Mandate:** AKD won with 42.31% (via preferential votes) and the NPP secured a historic **supermajority** in the November 2024 polls – ending alternation between two legacy formations.
- **Economy:** stuck with the IMF programme inherited from predecessors, met or surpassed revenue targets despite **Cyclone Ditwah** (late 2025, ~700 deaths, ~1,200 landslides) and the West Asia fuel shock; but poor families are eating less under austerity.
- **Political culture:** high-profile arrests in narcotics and grand corruption cases, including a former intelligence chief in the Easter 2019 bombing probe.
- **Pending promises:** Provincial Council polls stuck in a parliamentary committee; no movement on a **new constitution**; executive presidency not abolished; draft law replacing the **Prevention of Terrorism Act** criticised by rights defenders; move to extend judges' retirement age drew flak.
- **Verdict:** political scientist Pradeep Peiris – a “government of good governance” rather than transformation; needs an inclusive conversation on a new social contract.

VALUE ADDITION

India link: 13th Amendment (1987) created Provincial Councils following the **Indo-Sri Lanka Accord** (Rajiv Gandhi-J.R. Jayewardene) – key to Tamil devolution. India extended about \$4 billion in 2022 (credit lines, currency swap) and was first to back IMF financing assurances; **Operation Sagar Bandhu** for Cyclone Ditwah relief.

Background: 1978 Constitution created the executive presidency; PTA dates to 1979; JVP led insurrections in 1971 and 1987–89.

Sri Lanka: chasing system change

The NPP govt. restored macroeconomic stability and introduced a different political culture, but key promises of structural reform remain unfulfilled; two years after Dissanayake's election, the govt. faces the challenge of turning the *Aragalaya's* demand for 'system change' into lasting political transformation

Source: The Hindu, p.12 (World Insight)

PRELIMS POINTER Neighbourhood watch: Pakistan claims 22 militants killed in air strikes on TTP hideouts in Afghanistan; Taliban say 9 civilians died.

SYLLABUS LINK GS-II: India and its neighbourhood; effect of policies of other countries on India's interests.



13

GS-I · URBANISATION & MODERN HISTORY

Delhi Dehat: The Forgotten Villages at the Heart of the Capital's History

WHY IN NEWS A Full Context essay by Shekhar Tokas traces how **colonial surveys, land acquisition and urbanisation** transformed Delhi's villages — and asks what happens to their commons and heritage as the city plans for 2047.

The forgotten villages at the heart of Delhi's urban history

Delhi's villages were integral to the city's history, but colonial surveys, land acquisition and urbanisation transformed their land and communities; as Delhi expands, preserving the heritage and living traditions of Delhi *Dehat* remains a challenge

Source: The Hindu, p.13 (Full Context)

- **Turning point: Battle of Delhi, September 11, 1803** at Patparganj — EIC forces defeated the Marathas and took Delhi.
- **Ecological zones:** *khadar* (Yamuna floodplain), *pahari* (Aravalli triangle), *dabar* (low-lying, Sahibi river), *bangar* (north-west upland plains). The *Ain-i-Akbari* recorded Palam's revenue at 5,726,787 dams.
- **Colonial records:** revenue surveys from 1837; *shajra naksh* (village map), *khasra* (plot number), *shajra nasab* (genealogy), *jamabandi*, *khatauni*; land classed as *abadi deh*, cultivated/hilly land and *shamilat deh* (commons). Settlement of 1880; Zaildari-Nambardari revenue chain.
- **1908 Lal Dora** separated village *abadi* from farmland; after the 1911 shift of capital ~30 villages lost land — **Raisina** (Viceroy's House), Khairpur (Lodhi Garden), Malcha and Pilanji (Chanakyapuri).

- **Urban village paradox:** post-Independence acquisition of farmland left *abadi* intact — ‘unplanned’ urban villages are a *product* of planning. *Bhats* (genealogists) and oral memory remain alternative archives (e.g., Munirka, Katwaria Sarai).

VALUE ADDITION

Capital shift: announced at the Delhi Durbar, December 12, 1911; New Delhi inaugurated February 13, 1931 (Lutyens and Baker). **SVAMITVA** (2020) gives property cards for rural *abadi* land; Delhi’s Master Plan 2041 addresses urban villages.

Historiography: Collingwood (*The Idea of History*), Bloch (*The Historian’s Craft*), Carr (*What Is History?*) – history is reconstructed through questions, evidence and interpretation.

PRELIMS POINTER Also in news: Wenger’s, Connaught Place, completed 100 years (est. 1926).

SYLLABUS LINK GS-I: Urbanisation – problems and remedies; Modern Indian history; Indian heritage.

PRACTICE ZONE

Mains · Prelims · Revision

MAINS ANSWER WRITING

Q1 · GS-II · 15 Marks · 250 Words

Electoral roll revision must balance the purity of rolls with the citizen’s right to remain on them. In the light of recent controversies over bulk Form 7 objections and automated deletions, examine the safeguards available under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 and the Representation of the People Act, 1950. Suggest reforms.

निर्वाचक नामावलियों के पुनरीक्षण में नामावली की शुद्धता और नागरिक के उसमें बने रहने के अधिकार के बीच संतुलन आवश्यक है। प्रपत्र-7 की थोक आपत्तियों और स्वचालित विलोपन से जुड़े हालिया विवादों के आलोक में निर्वाचक रजिस्ट्रीकरण नियम, 1960 तथा लोक प्रतिनिधित्व अधिनियम, 1950 के अंतर्गत उपलब्ध सुरक्षा उपायों का परीक्षण कीजिए। सुधार भी सुझाइए।

Intro: Link Art. 326 (adult suffrage) with the SIR context — Karnataka bulk Form 7s, Bombay HC (Goa) ruling against deletion without hearing.

Safeguards: Public display of claims and objections; notice to the person objected to; Rule 20 inquiry with oath; appeals under Sec. 24; Sec. 31 penalty; *Lal Babu Hussein* (1995); EC caps on objections per person and 2% booth scrutiny.

Gaps: Software over statute (ERONET ‘reject’), pre-printed/automated forms, weak use of Sec. 31, low transparency of Form 6/7/8 data, decadal SIR instead of continuous updating.

Reforms: Mandatory hearing logs; public dashboards of aggregate forms; NCRB category for electoral offences; auto-enrolment via birth/death registers; audit trails on ECINet; independent social audit by BLAs.

Conclusion: Inclusion is the default — the burden must lie on the objector, not the voter.

Q2 · GS-II · 15 Marks · 250 Words

Counterfeit and substandard medicines are a silent threat to patient safety. Examine the regulatory and supply-chain gaps that allow spurious drugs to reach patients in India, and suggest a traceability-led framework to address them.

नकली और अवमानक दवाएँ रोगी-सुरक्षा के लिए एक मौन खतरा हैं। उन नियामकीय एवं आपूर्ति-शृंखला संबंधी कमियों का परीक्षण कीजिए जिनके कारण भारत में नकली दवाएँ रोगियों तक पहुँच जाती हैं, तथा इनसे निपटने के लिए अनुरेखणीयता (ट्रेसबिलिटी) आधारित ढाँचा सुझाइए।

Intro: Cite recent busts — cancer drug racket (588 vials), spurious oxytocin deaths in Kota, fake anti-rabies vaccine; 3,012 NSQ and 283 spurious samples in 2025-26.

Gaps: Fragmented Centre–State regulation under the 1940 Act; multi-layer distribution; invoices without product verification; clonable QR codes; L1 procurement; limited labs vs 8.5 lakh pharmacies; no patient-level tracing.

Framework: End-to-end track-and-trace (serialisation verified at point of sale), Schedule H2 expansion, revised Schedule M compliance, vial accounting and disposal records, quality-weighted procurement, more NABL labs, whistle-blower rewards, pharmacovigilance (PvPI) linkage.

Conclusion: Shift from periodic raids to a system where every pack can be authenticated in the patient's hand.

PRELIMS MCQS

1 The 13th Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka, often discussed in India–Sri Lanka relations, is associated with:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) Abolition of the executive presidency | (b) Creation of Provincial Councils following the Indo–Sri Lanka Accord, 1987 |
| (c) Making Sinhala the sole official language | (d) Repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act |

2 As per the IMD's classification, an all-India south-west monsoon rainfall of 87% of the Long Period Average would be categorised as:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| (a) Below normal | (b) Deficient |
| (c) Normal | (d) Excess |

3 The 'triple test' laid down by the Supreme Court for reservation of backward classes in local bodies includes which of the following?

1. A dedicated commission to inquire into political backwardness
2. Use of the latest decennial Census caste data as the sole basis
3. Aggregate SC, ST and OBC reservation not exceeding 50%

Select the correct answer:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 1 and 3 only |
| (c) 2 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3 |

4 With reference to induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs), consider the following:

1. They are derived only from early-stage human embryos.
2. Shinya Yamanaka received the Nobel Prize for showing that mature cells can be reprogrammed to pluripotency.
3. They can be guided to form brain organoids.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 and 3 only |
| (c) 1 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3 |

5 'Schedule H2' under the Drugs Rules, sometimes seen in news, relates to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) Price control of scheduled formulations | (b) Mandatory QR code / barcode on top drug brands for traceability |
| (c) Good Manufacturing Practices for pharma units | (d) Drugs that can be sold over the counter |

6 Consider the following statements regarding forms under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960:

1. Form 7 is used to object to the inclusion of a name or seek its deletion.
2. Form 6A is filed by overseas electors for inclusion in the roll.
3. Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 penalises false declarations in connection with electoral rolls.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 and 3 only |
| (c) 1 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3 |

7 With reference to India's National Song, consider the following statements:

1. The Congress Working Committee adopted its first two stanzas for national gatherings in 1937.
2. It was originally composed as part of the novel *Anandamath*.
3. *Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala* (1986) concerned the singing of the National Anthem.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 only | (b) 1 and 3 only |
| (c) 2 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3 |

8 Consider the following statements:

1. GST on imported goods is levied as IGST under Article 269A of the Constitution.
2. A Purchasing Managers' Index reading above 50 indicates expansion over the previous month.
3. In September 2026, domestic transactions contributed less than half of gross GST revenue.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 and 3 only |
| (c) 1 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3 |

9 Section 136A of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, recently in news, deals with:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) Compulsory third-party insurance | (b) Electronic monitoring and enforcement of road safety |
| (c) Cashless treatment of road accident victims | (d) Recall of defective motor vehicles |

10 Consider the following statements:

1. Hasdeo and Seonath are tributaries of the Mahanadi.
2. The Hirakud Dam is located in Chhattisgarh.
3. The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal was constituted under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| (a) Only one | (b) Only two |
| (c) All three | (d) None |

ANSWER KEY & RATIONALE

- 1 – (b)** The 1987 Accord (Rajiv Gandhi–Jayewardene) led to the 13th Amendment devolving power to Provincial Councils.
- 2 – (b)** Deficient is below 90% of LPA; below normal is 90–95%; normal is 96–104%.
- 3 – (b)** The test (*K. Krishna Murthy, Gawali*) requires a dedicated commission, local-body-wise proportion and the 50% aggregate cap; Census caste data is not prescribed.
- 4 – (b)** iPSCs are made by reprogramming adult somatic cells (no embryo needed) – that is their ethical advantage over embryonic stem cells.
- 5 – (b)** Schedule H2 mandated QR codes on 300 top brands from August 1, 2023. GMP is Schedule M; prices are governed by the DPCO.
- 6 – (a)** Statements 1 and 2 are correct. Section 31 (false declaration) belongs to the RPA, **1950**, which deals with electoral rolls; the 1951 Act governs conduct of elections.
- 7 – (b)** Bankim wrote the first two stanzas around 1875; they were later incorporated into *Anandamath* (1882). *Bijoe Emmanuel* dealt with the Anthem.
- 8 – (a)** Import GST hit a record 32.2%; domestic transactions still contributed 67.8%.
- 9 – (b)** Sec. 136A (inserted in 2019) enables electronic enforcement; Rule 167A of CMVR operationalises it. Cashless treatment is Sec. 162; recall is Sec. 110A.
- 10 – (b)** Hirakud Dam is near Sambalpur in **Odisha**; the Mahanadi rises in Chhattisgarh (Sihawa, Dhamtari).

QUICK REVISION RECAP

Electoral rolls: Bombay HC (Goa): no deletion without hearing; draft SIR roll not a basis for deletion. EC probe into bulk Form 7s in Karnataka; Sec. 31 RPA 1950 after Rule 20 inquiry.

BC quota: A.P. HC struck down 34% (PRI) / 33.33% (ULB) BC quota for breaching 50%; triple test; polls within six weeks of Oct 1. SC to hear WB OBC certificate plea (list Nov 23).

e-Challans: SC: block services and blacklist vehicles with unpaid e-challans (₹49,194 cr pending); Sec. 136A MVA + Rule 167A CMVR; Delhi 'No PUCC, No Fuel' via ANPR–VAHAN.

Counterfeit drugs: Cancer-drug racket (17 arrests, ₹9 cr); Sec. 17B spurious; Schedule H2 QR (300 brands); 2025–26: 3,012 NSQ, 283 spurious.

Indore water: Justice S.K. Gupta commission: preventable; 859+ day delays; 50/52 samples coliform; sewer above water mains; missing records.

Economy: GST ₹2.03 lakh cr (+14.7%), import share 32.2% record; PMI 55.1; WTO WTR 2026 scenarios; Goyal–Greer on interim BTA.

Monsoon: 759 mm = 87% of LPA (deficient); NE driest since 1901; El Niño; MSP wheat +₹25, mustard + ₹413.

Women's safety: NCRB 2.4 lakh (2012) → 4.4 lakh (2024); outcome-based policing, public audits; Nirbhaya Fund, Mission Shakti.

Xenocortication: Stanford/Paşca, *Nature*: human organoids = ~92% of cortex in cortex-less mice; von Economo-like neurons; hypoxia model.

Gandhi special: Vaishnava Jana To as 'National Prayer'; 1937 CWC two-stanza settlement; 2026 amendment to 1971 Act; Gandhi's 'genius'.

Mahanadi: Odisha–Chhattisgarh talks; technical committee Oct 13; Tribunal (Justice Bela M. Trivedi) Oct 15.

Sri Lanka: AKD two years; IMF-led stability; PC polls, new constitution, PTA repeal pending.

Delhi Dehat: Battle of Delhi 1803; shajra-khasra records; 1908 Lal Dora; Raisina and ~30 villages acquired after 1911.

PRELIMS TRAP-SETTERS

- ⚠ Section 31 (false declaration on rolls) is in the **RPA 1950**, not 1951.
- ⚠ Form 6A = **overseas electors**; Form 7 = objection/deletion; Form 8 = shifting/correction.
- ⚠ 'Below normal' is 90–95% of LPA; **below 90% is 'deficient'**.
- ⚠ Mahanadi **rises in Chhattisgarh**; Hirakud Dam is in **Odisha**.
- ⚠ PMI above 50 shows breadth of expansion, **not** the growth rate.
- ⚠ iPSCs: Yamanaka (2006) — not Ian Wilmut (Dolly, 1996, nuclear transfer).
- ⚠ Political backwardness (local bodies) ≠ social and educational backwardness (Art. 15(4)/16(4)).
- ⚠ Vande Mataram's first two stanzas (~1875) **pre-date** Anandamath (1882).
- ⚠ Lal Dora was drawn in **1908**; the capital shift was announced in **1911**.
- ⚠ The 13th Amendment is **Sri Lanka's** (1987), not India's.
- ⚠ Spurious (fake identity) ≠ NSQ (fails a quality test) under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

PLACES IN NEWS

Place	Why in News
Tabuk	Saudi Arabia — emergency landing of flydubai FZ1073 after co-pilot attack
Bhagirathpura	Indore (MP) — contaminated water deaths
Babaleshwar	Vijayapura, Karnataka — 1,363 Form 7s from 10 electors
Dikhow river	Nagaland–Assam — landslide blocks ~80% of flow
Diveagar	Raigad, Maharashtra — 8 students drowned
Balaghat	Madhya Pradesh — 30+ tribal child deaths
Kaliningrad	Russian exclave — Putin's nuclear warning
Marshall Islands	Pacific — UN report on U.S. nuclear test legacy
Kasauli	Himachal Pradesh — Central Drugs Laboratory (vaccines)
Milwaukee	U.S. — G20 Trade Ministers' Meeting

PERSONS IN NEWS

Person	Why in News
Capt. Smit Machchhar	Indian flydubai pilot; averted mid-air disaster despite stab injuries
Sergiu Pasca	Stanford neuroscientist; xenocortication study in <i>Nature</i>
Justice Sushil Kumar Gupta	Headed Indore water tragedy commission
Anura Kumara Disanayake	Sri Lankan President; two years in office

Justice Bela M. Trivedi	Chairperson, Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal
Ali al-Zaidi	Iraqi PM; June 30, 2027 militia disarmament deadline
Toshimitsu Motegi	Japan's Foreign Minister; FPCJ 50th anniversary
Narsinh Mehta	15th-c. Gujarati saint-poet; <i>Vaishnava Jana To</i>
Nitesh Siwach	Asian Games silver, 97 kg Greco-Roman wrestling
Anup Bagchi	Approved by RBI as HDFC Bank MD & CEO

PRELIMS BYTES

UPSC Centenary — PM addressed the UPSC centenary (Public Service Commission set up on October 1, 1926 on the Lee Commission's advice); flagged information warfare, deepfakes, algorithmic bias and climate justice as new tests for civil servants.

FCRA (Amendment) Bill, 2026 — Introduced March 25, 2026; referred to a 31-member JPC on August 12. Opposition objects to the provision transferring an organisation's funds and assets to a government authority on cancellation of registration.

Simultaneous Elections JPC — The committee (chair P.P. Chaudhary) deferred its proposed visit to the Supreme Court after concerns over separation of powers.

Sugar Stock Limit — Dealers capped at 1,000 quintals (2,000 in Kolkata region and Assam) from October 15 to November 30, with a 15-day holding period, to check hoarding in the festive season.

NCERT Class 9 — New social science textbook *Understanding Society: India and Beyond Part Two* teaches slab-wise income-tax calculation under the new regime — a first at school level.

Asian Games 2026 (Aichi-Nagoya) — Men's hockey: India beat Pakistan 4-3, final vs Malaysia (LA 2028 berth at stake); cricket final vs Pakistan; Nitesh Siwach — first Indian Greco-Roman finalist in 64 years; Manu Francis-Prince Noble silver in men's skiff.

ICC Playing Conditions — Pink ball allowed in day Tests on trial; play no longer ends automatically on a wicket in the last over; five-run penalty on a third time-wasting offence.

NIMHANS Study — Transdiagnostic study (*Journal of Affective Disorders*): temperament and adverse childhood experiences together offer clues to vulnerability, especially in alcohol use disorder.

Delhi HC Bail & UAPA — British national Jagtar Singh Johal bailed in 7 UAPA cases after 8+ years in custody — prolonged incarceration and delayed trial (cf. *Union of India v. K.A. Najeeb*, 2021).

Iraq & West Asia — U.S.-led coalition mission ended; Iraq set June 30, 2027 for armed factions to surrender weapons; Houthis hit a power station in Medina.

e-Punarvasan — MMRDA's digital rehabilitation & resettlement system using Aadhaar-based verification for project-affected families.

Food Culture Yatra — The Kindness Meal documents disappearing food traditions under the India-France Year of Innovation 2026.

STATIC LINKAGE

News	Static Anchor
Bulk Form 7 deletions	Art. 324, 326; RPA 1950 Sec. 31; <i>Lal Babu Hussein</i> (1995)
A.P. BC quota	Art. 243D(6), 243T(6); <i>Gawali</i> triple test; <i>Indra Sawhney</i>
Unpaid e-challans	MV Act Sec. 136A; CMVR Rule 167A; Art. 142 continuing mandamus

Counterfeit drugs	D&C Act 1940 Sec. 17B, 27; Schedule H2; Schedule M
Indore water	Art. 243W, 12th Schedule; IS 10500:2012; CoI Act 1952
Mahanadi	Art. 262; ISRWD Act 1956; Entry 56 Union List
Vande Mataram law	Art. 19(1)(a), 25, 51A(a); Prevention of Insults Act 1971

DATA BANK: NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

Figure	Context
₹49,194 crore	Unpaid e-challans pending nationally (₹26,175 crore recovered)
1,363 / 10	Form 7 objections filed by just 10 electors in Babaleshwar, Karnataka
~90%	Acceptance rate of Form 7 applications in West Bengal (5.72 lakh of 6.39 lakh)
34% / 33.33%	BC quota in A.P. PRIs / ULBs struck down for breaching the 50% ceiling
3,012 / 283	NSQ / spurious drug samples out of 1,41,322 tested in 2025-26
859+ days	Delay flagged in Indore water pipeline tendering and completion
50 of 52	Indore water samples positive for total coliform (40 for E. coli)
₹2.03 lakh crore	Gross GST, September 2026 (+14.7%); import share a record 32.2%
55.1	HSBC India Manufacturing PMI, September 2026 (seven-month high)
-26.9%	Fall in global exports by 2050 in a WTO 'FTA world' scenario
87% of LPA	Monsoon 2026 rainfall (759 mm vs 869 mm) — 'deficient'
4.4 lakh	Crimes against women in 2024 (2.4 lakh in 2012) — 50+ every hour
~92%	Share of mouse cortical tissue formed by human graft in xenocortication
42.31%	Anura Kumara Dissanayake's first-preference vote share, 2024
48%	Fall in Himachal Pradesh apple production this year

CONNECT THE DOTS

Institutions and the citizen: Three stories today — electoral-roll deletions, unpaid e-challans and the Indore water report — share one thread: technology and procedure must serve the citizen, not replace due process. The Bombay HC refused to let software override statute; the SC wants e-enforcement backed by public dashboards; the Indore commission found that missing records hid decades of risk.

Federalism in action: The A.P. BC-quota verdict, the West Bengal OBC case and the Mahanadi talks show the Union-State-judiciary triangle at work: courts enforcing constitutional limits on States, and the Centre brokering inter-State settlements through tribunals and technical bodies.

Silent failures: Counterfeit cancer drugs, contaminated pipelines and an under-forecast monsoon are all failures that stay invisible until harm appears. The common remedy is measurement — traceability, water-quality sensors, honest forecasts — and disclosure.

Gandhi as a lens: From the women's safety editorial (freedom, not restriction) to the 'two songs' debate (invitation, not compulsion), today's paper repeatedly returns to the Gandhian test: does a policy win willing participation or demand obedience?

"A prayer compelled is no prayer at all." — Keep reading, keep revising.