



SAMARTHYA IAS · AHMEDABAD

DAILY UPSC COMPANION

Samarthya Current Affairs

Prelims facts · Mains frameworks · Practice MCQs

12 | **October 2026**
MONDAY

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Your Complete UPSC Current Affairs Companion

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Judicial Independence and Separation of Powers in Constitutional Governance

WHY IN NEWS

On October 11, 2026, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant declined a request from Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi for a meeting scheduled on October 12, citing administrative and legal grounds.

Story so far:

- **7 October 2026** Electoral Reforms and Constitutional Integrity
- **25 September 2026** Institutional Independence and Judicial Scrutiny of the Election Commission
- **24 September 2026** Parliamentary Democracy & Anti-Defection Law: Judicial Restraint in Fixing Timelines for the Speaker



STORY 1 **The Hindu**

CJI Surya Kant declines meeting request from Opposition leaders with formal reasons

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant declined a meeting request from Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and INDIA bloc leaders scheduled for October 12, 2026, citing specific administrative and judicial reasons.

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant communicated the decision directly from the Supreme Court of India in New Delhi to the official email address of opposition leader Rahul Gandhi.

The meeting request was scheduled for one hour between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. on October 12, 2026, before CJI Surya Kant formally declined to meet the political leaders.

The decline occurred because the issues intended to be raised were already sub-judice in the Supreme Court, making administrative judicial intervention in governance matters legally inappropriate.

Article 50 of the Constitution directs the State to separate the judiciary from the executive, upholding judicial independence and preventing political interference in sub-judice administrative and legal proceedings.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Tests constitutional provisions surrounding the separation of powers, sub-judice limitations, and the institutional integrity of the highest judiciary.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Article 50 of the Constitution directs the State to separate the judiciary from the executive in public services.
- Issues actively pending judicial adjudication before courts fall under the sub-judice doctrine, restricting administrative interventions.
- The Chief Justice of India functions as both the administrative head of the Supreme Court and the master of the roster.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: The doctrine of separation of powers forms a core structural principle of the Indian Constitution, ensuring institutional boundaries between political representatives and the judiciary.

DIMENSIONS

- Preservation of judicial neutrality on sub-judice policy and administrative matters.
- Prevention of political pressure on constitutional court administrative functions.
- Maintenance of public confidence in non-partisan constitutional adjudication.

Way forward: Sustaining clear protocols for administrative communications safeguards judicial independence while respecting democratic accountability.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Separation of Powers:** A constitutional doctrine dividing governmental responsibilities among distinct legislative, executive, and judicial branches to prevent arbitrary concentration of authority.
- **Sub-judice:** A rule restricting public or official discussion on matters currently under active judicial consideration to avoid prejudicing court proceedings.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the doctrine of separation of powers in the context of judicial functioning in India.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Examine how the sub-judice rule and Article 50 safeguard the independence of the judiciary from executive and political overreach. (150 words)

ANSWER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Judicial independence requires that courts operate free from external political interactions on pending disputes, reinforcing constitutional checks and balances.

BODY

1. SUB-JUDICE RULE PROTECTIONS:

Declining political meetings regarding active court matters, as seen on October 12, 2026, prevents external influence on judicial deliberations.

2. CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE OF ARTICLE 50:

Separating judicial functioning from administrative and executive operations ensures impartial trial environments.

3. INSTITUTIONAL BOUNDARIES:

Supreme Court refusal to intervene in administrative governance outside statutory jurisdiction preserves constitutional balance.

CONCLUSION

Upholding structural boundaries between political bodies and the judiciary safeguards public trust in democratic institutions.

KEY TERMS

Separation of Powers

Sub-judice

Judicial Independence

Article 50

Constitutional Propriety

ACTS & ARTICLES

Article 50 of the Constitution of India

Article 142 of the Constitution of India

02

GS-3 • ENVIRONMENT

Management of Invasive Alien Species and Biodiversity Preservation

WHY IN NEWS

The Kerala State Biodiversity Board submitted a comprehensive policy document to the state government to mitigate threats from invasive alien species across native ecosystems.

Story so far:

- **5 October 2026** Ecosystem Restoration through Invasive Alien Species Eradication and Land Easements
- **2 October 2026** Marine and Freshwater Ecosystem Conservation & Invasive Species Dynamics
- **13 September 2026** Invasive Species and Alpine Ecosystem Biodiversity Loss



STORY 1 **The Hindu**

Kerala Biodiversity Board submits seven-point policy strategy against invasive species

The Kerala State Biodiversity Board submitted a comprehensive seven-point policy document to the state government proposing strategic measures to mitigate threats posed by invasive alien plant species.

The policy document was formulated by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board in Kochi for implementation across vulnerable forest and aquatic ecosystems throughout the state of Kerala.

The policy framework introduces a structured 7-point strategic plan prioritizing prevention, risk assessment, scientific identification, and economic utilization to tackle invasive species like *Lantana camara* across ecosystems.

Invasive alien species disrupt local flora and fauna, impair ecological succession, reduce fodder availability for wildlife, and compound human-wildlife conflicts across fragile forest micro-habitats in southern India.

The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 established State Biodiversity Boards to preserve local biodiversity, manage biological resources, and enforce national policies against invasive bio-threats within state territorial jurisdictions.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Evaluates ecosystem vulnerability, legal frameworks for biodiversity protection, and strategic environmental management against biological invasions.

PRELIMS FACTS

- *Lantana camara* is a non-native invasive plant species invading forest understories across India.
- The Kerala State Biodiversity Board policy framework adopts a seven-point strategic plan prioritizing prevention and scientific identification.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Invasive alien species represent one of the primary drivers of global biodiversity loss, disrupting native habitat dynamics and local ecological stability.

DIMENSIONS

- Ecological damage including habitat degradation and native species displacement.
- Economic impacts on forestry, agriculture, and rural livelihoods.
- Institutional challenges in early detection, containment, and eco-restoration.

Way forward: Adopting community-engaged monitoring, scientific risk assessment, and systematic eradication strategies ensures effective bio-threat mitigation.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Invasive Alien Species:** Non-native species introduced into an ecosystem whose establishment and spread cause ecological, economic, or environmental harm.
- **Biological Diversity Act, 2002:** An Act of the Parliament of India providing for the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair equitable sharing of benefits.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the environmental consequences of invasive alien species proliferation in forest ecosystems.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Critically analyse the threats posed by invasive alien species to India's native biodiversity and evaluate the policy measures required for their effective management. (250 words)

ANSWER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Invasive alien species threaten endemic flora and fauna, necessitating structured state-level interventions and statutory policy responses.

BODY

1. ECOLOGICAL DISRUPTION:

Species like *Lantana camara* invade forest understories, inhibiting native plant regeneration and reducing herbivore fodder.

2. POLICY INNOVATION:

The Kerala Biodiversity Board's seven-point plan emphasizes strict quarantine, risk assessments, and scientific taxonomic validation.

3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Engaging local communities in scientific identification and economic utilization creates sustainable removal incentives.

4. INSTITUTIONAL GAPS:

Lack of unified multi-state coordination and adequate monitoring funding hinders long-term containment.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening statutory biodiversity boards and funding eco-restoration models will protect fragile natural ecosystems from invasive biological threats.

KEY TERMS

Invasive Alien Species

Lantana camara

Biological Diversity Act 2002

Ecosystem Restoration

State Biodiversity Board

ACTS & ARTICLES

Biological Diversity Act, 2002

Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

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GS-2 · POLITY & GOVERNANCE

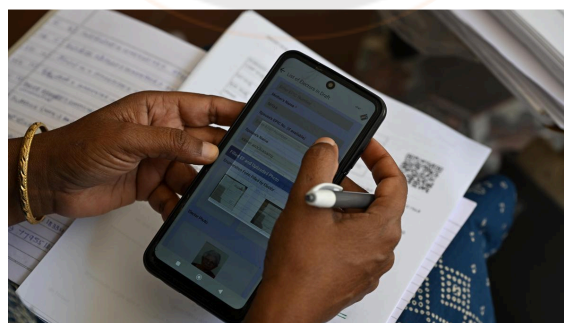
Procedural Integrity and Administration in Electoral Roll Revisions

WHY IN NEWS

Assistant Electoral Registration Officers in Karnataka reported intense administrative pressure to settle pending Special Intensive Revision notices without mandatory voter hearings.

Story so far:

- **8 October 2026** Electoral Integrity and Voter Roll Revisions
- **3 October 2026** Electoral Integrity, Administrative Neutrality, and Institutional Accountability
- **22 September 2026** Electoral Roll Revision and Electoral Integrity in India



STORY 1 The Hindu

Assistant Electoral Registration Officers report administrative pressure during roll revisions

Assistant Electoral Registration Officers in Karnataka reported severe administrative pressure to process pending electoral roll notices and complete verification procedures without conducting mandatory formal voter hearings.

The issue was highlighted by Assistant Electoral Registration Officers operating across multiple electoral registration circles and municipal zones within the state of Karnataka.

Official records revealed 39,169 notices remained undelivered and 7,82,304 hearings were pending as on October 5, 2026, just days before the administrative deadline for completion.

Officers expressed concern that bypassing physical verification and accepting unverified identity documents creates significant risks of wrongful voter list deletions and compromises the integrity of electoral rolls.

Article 324 of the Constitution vests the superintendence, direction, and control of electoral rolls in the Election Commission of India, requiring strictly fair, non-arbitrary procedures under electoral legislation.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines statutory processes in electoral registration, constitutional duties under Article 324, and administrative bottlenecks in grassroots democratic management.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Article 324 vests the superintendence, direction, and control of elections and roll preparations in the Election Commission of India.
- Form 7 under electoral rules is used for filing objections against inclusion or seeking deletion of a name in the electoral roll.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Accurate electoral rolls form the cornerstone of democratic legitimacy, requiring strict adherence to due process and statutory natural justice during revisions.

DIMENSIONS

- Administrative workload challenges facing field-level registration officers.
- Risks of arbitrary voter deletions due to procedural shortcuts.
- Role of technology versus ground verification in electoral administration.

Way forward: Extending operational timelines and enhancing manpower capacity ensures procedural fairness and protects voting rights.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Electoral Registration Officer:** A statutory official appointed under the Representation of the People Act, 1950 to prepare and revise electoral rolls for an assembly constituency.
- **Special Intensive Revision:** A comprehensive electoral roll update process involving door-to-door verification to ensure roll accuracy and eliminate invalid voter entries.

Examine the role of the Election Commission of India in conducting free and fair elections.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Discuss the administrative and statutory challenges in conducting electoral roll revisions, and suggest measures to ensure procedural integrity. (250 words)

ANSWER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Maintaining accurate voter lists is crucial for democratic representation, but field-level operational pressures pose procedural challenges.

BODY

1. PROCEDURAL PRESSURES:

Reports of 7,82,304 pending hearings as on October 5, 2026, highlight severe time constraints on registration officers.

2. RISKS TO FRANCHISE:

Clearing notices without formal hearings compromises due process and increases improper voter deletions.

3. STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS:

Article 324 mandates the Election Commission to ensure voter rolls are prepared without bias or procedural shortcuts.

4. OPERATIONAL BOTTLENECKS:

High numbers of undelivered notices (39,169 cases) indicate infrastructure and postal delivery constraints.

CONCLUSION

Balancing administrative efficiency with natural justice guarantees protects democratic participation and institutional trust.

KEY TERMS

Electoral Registration Officer

Special Intensive Revision

Article 324

Form 7

Electoral Roll Integrity

ACTS & ARTICLES

Representation of the People Act, 1950

Article 324 of the Constitution of India

04

GS-2 • SOCIAL ISSUES

Community-Led Interventions Against Substance Abuse

WHY IN NEWS

A community-driven model called the Panchgama Vikas Model was launched across 300 villages in Haryana's Jind district to combat drug abuse and empower rural youth.

Story so far:

- **18 September 2026** Sustainable Food Systems and Community Resilience: Youth-Led Waste Diversion



STORY 1 **The Hindu**

Haryana launches community-led Panchgama Vikas Model to tackle rural drug abuse

A community-led voluntary initiative named the Panchgama Vikas Model was officially launched in Jind district to tackle rural drug abuse and enhance youth career and educational opportunities.

The program was launched at Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University in Jind, Haryana, jointly organized by the Haryana Professional Forum and the Jind Social Forum.

The model covers 300 villages divided into 60 clusters of 5 villages each, managed by dedicated five-member volunteer teams to identify needs and guide local youth toward employment.

Conceived by Chandigarh Director-General of Police Sagar Preet Hooda, the non-political initiative leverages educated professionals and local resources to combat substance addiction and boost rural skill training.

Article 47 of the Directive Principles of State Policy mandates the State to bring about prohibition of the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs harmful to public health.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Focuses on community participation in social welfare, civil society models for public health, and constitutional mandates under Directive Principles.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Article 47 of the Constitution directs the State to endeavor to bring about prohibition of harmful intoxicating drinks and drugs.
- The Panchgama Vikas Model divides 300 target villages into 60 clusters of 5 villages each in Jind district.
- The initiative utilizes volunteer teams comprising professionals and local resource persons to guide rural youth.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Substance abuse in rural areas requires holistic social solutions alongside law enforcement, highlighting the importance of decentralized community-led models.

DIMENSIONS

- Social and economic impacts of youth substance addiction in rural areas.
- Role of civil society, local professionals, and community clusters in prevention.
- Integration of skill development with addiction rehabilitation strategies.

Way forward: Scaling cluster-based voluntary models nationwide complements statutory enforcement and promotes youth rehabilitation.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Panchgama Vikas Model:** A cluster-based community development approach dividing villages into small local groups to address social issues and youth welfare.
- **Article 47:** A Directive Principle of State Policy obligating the State to raise nutrition levels, standard of living, and improve public health, including prohibiting harmful intoxicants.

PYQ LINK

Examine the social factors contributing to drug abuse and discuss the role of community interventions.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Evaluate the significance of community-led decentralized initiatives in tackling substance abuse and promoting social welfare in rural India. (150 words)

ANSWER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Addressing rural substance abuse requires moving beyond penal measures to community engagement and peer support networks.

BODY

1. DECENTRALIZED STRUCTURE:

Structuring 300 villages into 60 five-village clusters enables precise local monitoring and swift peer assistance.

2. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

Involving professionals and volunteers creates local mentorship channels for educational and career guidance.

3. DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES ALIGNMENT:

Grassroots preventive strategies help fulfill Article 47 mandates regarding public health and prohibition.

CONCLUSION

Replicating community volunteer models strengthens social capital and builds sustainable resilience against substance dependency.

KEY TERMS

Panchgama Vikas Model

Substance Abuse

Article 47

Community Policing

Rural Youth Empowerment

ACTS & ARTICLES

Article 47 of the Constitution of India

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985

05

GS-3 · INFRASTRUCTURE & ENERGY

Urban Transit Mass Mobility and Inter-State Infrastructure Connectivity

WHY IN NEWS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay flagged off Chennai Metro Rail Phase II operations from Porur Bypass and discussed inter-state metro extensions.

Story so far:

- **6 October 2026** Urban Infrastructure, Congestion, and Traffic Management in India



STORY 1 The Hindu

PM Modi and CM Vijay inaugurate initial stretch of Chennai Metro Rail Phase II

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay jointly flagged off the first service of the Chennai Metro Rail Phase II project from Porur Bypass.

The inauguration took place at Porur Bypass Metro station in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, with passenger operations commencing on the newly built transit corridor later that same afternoon.

The opened 14.6 km Poonamallee-Vadapalani stretch expanded the functional Phase II network from 54 km to 68 km, forming part of the larger 118.9 km overall planned network.

The Phase II project incorporates advanced civil engineering structures, including balanced cantilever construction at Kathipara, aimed at improving urban mobility and alleviating severe road congestion across Chennai.

Urban transport infrastructure development aligns with National Urban Transport Policy guidelines, which prioritize high-capacity transit systems to ensure sustainable urban mobility and reduce urban carbon emissions.



STORY 2 **The Hindu**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister requests inter-state Metro link connecting Hosur and Bommasandra

Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay officially requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to sanction an inter-state Metro Rail connection linking Hosur in Tamil Nadu to Bommasandra in Karnataka.

The proposal was submitted during a public function held at the Kendriya Vidyalaya campus inside the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

The request emphasized expanding urban rail connectivity across the border while asking for reconsideration of pending Metro Rail project proposals for major urban hubs in Coimbatore and Madurai.

Connecting the industrial hub of Hosur to Bengaluru's electronics cluster at Bommasandra aims to facilitate seamless cross-border economic integration and daily commuter movement between the two neighbouring states.

Inter-state infrastructure projects fall under the domain of federal cooperative governance, requiring joint coordination, funding arrangements, and statutory approvals between Union ministries and respective state governments.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Analyzes urban transportation planning, sustainable mass rapid transit systems, and federal financial and logistical coordination in mega-infrastructure.

PRELIMS FACTS

- The Poonamallee-Vadapalani stretch expands Chennai Metro Phase II operational length to 68 km out of a total planned 118.9 km network.
- The proposed Hosur-Bommasandra line represents an inter-state metro project concept connecting Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
- Metro rail projects in India operate under joint funding models involving Union and State government equity participation.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Expanding mass rapid transit systems in expanding urban corridors is vital for economic efficiency, reduced emissions, and sustainable urban growth.

DIMENSIONS

- Urban decongestion and reduction of metropolitan carbon footprints.
- Inter-state economic integration between industrial clusters like Hosur and Bommasandra.
- Financial viability and federal co-funding mechanisms for metro infrastructure.

Way forward: Streamlining inter-state regulatory approvals and transit-oriented development will maximize public investment returns in urban mass transit.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Mass Rapid Transit System:** An electric urban passenger railway network designed for high-capacity, high-frequency public transportation in metropolitan areas.
- **Balanced Cantilever Construction:** A bridge and viaduct construction technique where segments are built outwards from a central pier in balanced pairs to minimize ground disruption.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the challenges and prospects of urban transport development in India.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Examine the role of Mass Rapid Transit Systems in driving sustainable urban growth and regional economic integration in India. (250 words)

ANSWER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Mass Rapid Transit Systems offer eco-friendly, efficient public transport solutions, relieving urban congestion and boosting cross-regional connectivity.

BODY

1. URBAN MOBILITY EXPANSION:

Expanding Chennai Metro Phase II by 14.6 km to reach 68 km total operational length reduces daily road traffic bottlenecks.

2. INTER-STATE ECONOMIC SYNERGIES:

Proposed links like Hosur to Bommasandra connect key industrial nodes across state borders, enabling seamless labor movement.

3. ENGINEERING INNOVATIONS:

Deploying balanced cantilever techniques at major intersections like Kathipara minimizes urban surface disruptions.

4. REGIONAL EQUITY:

Demanding metro developments in secondary cities like Coimbatore and Madurai prevents unbalanced urban concentration.

CONCLUSION

Investing in integrated transit networks strengthens urban sustainability and supports balanced regional economic development.

KEY TERMS

Mass Rapid Transit System

Chennai Metro Phase II

Inter-State Infrastructure

Balanced Cantilever

Urban Mobility

ACTS & ARTICLES

Metro Railways (Construction of Works) Act, 1978

National Urban Transport Policy

06

GS-2 · POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Legal Protection and Professional Framework for Advocates

WHY IN NEWS

The Kerala High Court Advocates Association proposed the draft Keralam Advocates Protection Bill to safeguard legal practitioners and their staff from physical threats and violence.



Advocates association proposes draft Keralam Advocates Protection Bill

The Kerala High Court Advocates Association proposed the draft Keralam Advocates Protection Bill to shield legal practitioners, their families, and office staff from physical assault and intimidation.

The draft legislation was formulated and submitted by the Kerala High Court Advocates Association in Kochi for statutory consideration by the State Government of Kerala.

The proposed bill prescribes a stringent penalty of imprisonment up to five years and a fine of ₹1 lakh for acts of violence committed against legal professionals or staff.

Under the draft provisions, offences are classified as non-bailable, requiring mandatory FIR registration and investigation by a police officer holding a rank no lower than Superintendent of Police.

Advocates are key officers of the court under the Advocates Act, 1961, which governs the legal profession and statutory duties, ensuring unhindered legal representation for litigants under Article 39A.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines administration of justice, statutory protections for court officers, and legislative proposals ensuring fear-free legal practice.

PRELIMS FACTS

- The draft Keralam Advocates Protection Bill, 2021 proposes treating offences against advocates as non-bailable offences.
- Under the proposed draft, investigations into acts of violence against legal personnel must be led by an officer not below Superintendent of Police rank.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Securing the personal safety of legal practitioners is essential to ensuring unhindered access to justice and preserving the rule of law.

DIMENSIONS

- Institutional need to protect advocates from intimidation while performing professional duties.
- Impact of legal protection frameworks on preserving constitutional rights under Article 39A.
- Balancing specialized protective legislation with general criminal law provisions.

Way forward: Enacting clear statutory protections safeguards court officers and upholds fear-free administration of justice.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Advocates Act, 1961:** An Act regulating legal practitioners and providing for the constitution of Bar Councils and an All-India Bar.
- **Officer of the Court:** A person, including an advocate, who has an obligation to assist the court in administering justice impartially and effectively.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the statutory role of advocates and Bar Councils under the legal system of India.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Analyse the necessity of enacting specialized legal protections for advocates to safeguard the administration of justice. (150 words)

ANSWER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Advocates play a vital role as court officers, and protecting them from physical threats is fundamental to maintaining judicial integrity.

BODY

1. DETERRENCE AGAINST INTIMIDATION:

Introducing non-bailable offences and penalties up to 5 years imprisonment and ₹1 lakh fine deters targeted violence.

2. HIGHER INVESTIGATION OVERSIGHT:

Mandating investigation by an officer of Superintendent of Police rank ensures prompt and impartial police action.

3. PRESERVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE:

Protecting legal personnel secures the constitutional promise of free and unhindered legal representation under Article 39A.

CONCLUSION

Statutory safeguards for advocates reinforce the rule of law and strengthen democratic judicial processes.

KEY TERMS

Advocates Act 1961

Keralam Advocates Protection Bill

Article 39A

Non-bailable Offence

Officers of the Court

ACTS & ARTICLES

Advocates Act, 1961

Article 39A of the Constitution of India

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023

International Humanitarian Law and the Nobel Peace Prize

WHY IN NEWS

South African jurist Navi Pillay was awarded the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize for her landmark contributions to international human rights law and international tribunals.



STORY 1 The Hindu

South African jurist Navi Pillay awarded 2026 Nobel Peace Prize for human rights service

The Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize to South African jurist Navi Pillay in recognition of her lifelong contributions to human rights and international law.

The award decision was announced by the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo, Norway, highlighting Navi Pillay's historic legal career originating from Durban, South Africa.

Born in 1941, Navi Pillay established her law firm in the 1960s, defended anti-apartheid prisoners on Robben Island, and co-authored a landmark 1998 international genocide ruling.

Navi Pillay served on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Court, and chaired the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The award highlights international humanitarian law frameworks established under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which prosecutes genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity globally.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Evaluates international human rights frameworks, global judicial institutions, and landmark developments in international criminal law.

PRELIMS FACTS

- The International Criminal Court is established under the Rome Statute to prosecute severe international crimes.
- Jurist Navi Pillay co-authored the historic 1998 ICTR judgment in the Jean-Paul Akayesu case establishing sexual violence as genocide.
- The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded annually by the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo, Norway.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: International human rights jurisprudence serves as a global mechanism to enforce accountability, protect vulnerable populations, and deter war crimes.

DIMENSIONS

- Evolution of international criminal law regarding gender-based violence and genocide.
- Role of UN independent commissions in investigating human rights violations.
- Challenges facing global institutions like the International Criminal Court in enforcing international law.

Way forward: Strengthening multilateral judicial bodies and reinforcing international legal norms enhances global human rights protections.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **International Criminal Court:** A permanent international tribunal governed by the Rome Statute to prosecute individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression.
- **International Humanitarian Law:** A set of international rules establishing limits on armed conflict to protect non-combatants and restrict methods of warfare.

PYQ LINK

Examine the jurisdiction and operational challenges of the International Criminal Court in maintaining global peace.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Examine the role of international judicial bodies and human rights jurists in strengthening international humanitarian law. (150 words)

ANSWER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

International criminal tribunals play a critical role in codifying human rights norms and prosecuting grave violations of international law.

BODY

1. **GROUNDBREAKING LEGAL JURISPRUDENCE:**

Landmark rulings, such as the 1998 ICTR judgment co-authored by Navi Pillay, established rape and sexual violence as acts of genocide.

2. **MULTILATERAL ACCOUNTABILITY:**

International bodies like the ICC enforce accountability across borders under the principles of the Rome Statute.

3. **INVESTIGATIVE OVERSIGHT:**

UN independent commissions of inquiry provide impartial documentation of international law breaches in conflict zones.

CONCLUSION

Recognizing pioneering jurists reinforces global commitment to justice and international rule of law.

KEY TERMS

2026 Nobel Peace Prize

Navi Pillay

International Criminal Court

International Humanitarian Law

Rome Statute

ACTS & ARTICLES

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

08

GS-3 • AGRICULTURE

Climate Vulnerability and Agricultural Adaptation to El Niño

WHY IN NEWS

Telangana requested a special financial package from the Centre to mitigate the severe impact of anticipated El Niño conditions on state agriculture.

Story so far:

- **8 October 2026** Disaster Management and Agricultural Drought
- **22 September 2026** Agricultural Drought Management and Disaster Relief Frameworks
- **19 September 2026** Regional Rainfall Deficits, Drought Declaration, and Agricultural Relief



Telangana seeks special financial package from Centre to address El Niño threat

Telangana Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy announced that a state delegation will seek a special financial package from the Union Government to mitigate potential El Niño impacts.

The decision was announced during a public function in Kusumanchi, Khammam district, Telangana, ahead of an upcoming state delegation meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The state plans to seek financial assistance and additional workdays under the VB-G RAM G Scheme while advising farmers against taking up a second crop due to water scarcity.

Anticipated intensification of El Niño conditions threatens agricultural output through delayed or deficient rainfall, forcing state authorities to prioritize saving existing standing crops through targeted official advisories.

El Niño is a climate phenomenon marked by periodic warming of sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, frequently causing suppressed monsoon rainfall and agricultural droughts in India.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines climate-induced disaster risks in agriculture, agrarian risk management, and federal financial support during environmental distress.

PRELIMS FACTS

- El Niño refers to the anomalous warming of sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean.
- In India, El Niño event years are frequently correlated with deficient monsoon rainfall and agricultural stress.
- The Telangana government requested additional workdays under the VB-G RAM G Scheme to cushion rural distress.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Climate variability and El Niño occurrences pose severe challenges to rainfed agriculture in India, requiring proactive state mitigation and federal assistance.

DIMENSIONS

- Climatic vulnerability of Indian monsoons to Pacific sea-surface temperature changes.
- Rural employment and income safety nets during agricultural distress.
- Advisory-based cropping changes to minimize water consumption and crop failure risks.

Way forward: Promoting climate-resilient farming, micro-irrigation, and flexible rural employment guarantees builds rural economic safety against climate shocks.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **El Niño:** An ocean-atmosphere phenomenon characterized by abnormal warming of central and eastern equatorial Pacific waters, disrupting global monsoon patterns.
- **Agricultural Drought:** A condition where soil moisture falls below the level required to sustain healthy crop growth, leading to agricultural yield loss.

PYQ LINK

How does El Niño affect the South-West Monsoon in India? Discuss its consequences on Indian agriculture.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Examine the impact of El Niño on Indian agriculture and suggest policy interventions to build climate resilience among small farmers. (150 words)

ANSWER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

El Niño driven rainfall deficits disrupt crop cycles, making climate-resilient crop planning and state relief vital for agrarian stability.

BODY

1. AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS:

Anticipated El Niño conditions suppress monsoon yields, prompting advisories against cultivating second water-intensive crops.

2. FINANCIAL RELIEF:

Seeking central assistance and additional workdays under employment frameworks cushions rural household incomes.

3. PREVENTIVE CROP PLANNING:

Prioritizing standing crop preservation over new planting prevents acute agricultural loss during dry spells.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening climate advisories and expanding crop insurance ensures long-term agrarian resilience against global climate shocks.

KEY TERMS

El Niño

VB-G RAM G Scheme

Crop Diversification

Agricultural Drought

Monsoon Deficit

ACTS & ARTICLES

Disaster Management Act, 2005

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

EDITORIAL OF THE DAY

Preserving Electoral Integrity and Democratic Faith in Indian Elections — The Hindu:
The need to preserve the shine of Indian elections

The author argues that persistent administrative friction and public agitation surrounding electoral roll revisions threaten public faith in Indian elections. He emphasizes that safeguarding electoral soft power requires addressing systemic institutional vulnerabilities beyond short-term political disputes.

KEY ARGUMENTS

- Elections constitute India's core democratic soft power and the highest organized expression of popular sovereignty.
- Procedures like Special Intensive Revisions (SIR) must maintain complete procedural transparency to prevent long-term public skepticism.
- Electoral administration must move beyond crisis management to strengthen baseline institutional credibility and trust.

THE OTHER SIDE

- Protests and litigation surrounding electoral revisions reflect active civic participation and democratic vigilance.
- Administrative errors in large-scale voter roll revisions are operational inevitabilities given India's massive demographic size.

Way forward: The Election Commission of India must proactively enhance administrative transparency, stakeholder consultation, and dispute resolution to maintain public faith.

Use it in: GS-2: Electoral Reforms and Democratic Governance; Essay: Democratic Institutions and Public Trust

Mains practice question: Discuss the institutional challenges confronting electoral administration in India, and evaluate measures to sustain public confidence in democratic processes. (250 words)

PRELIMS IN FOCUS

SPECIES **Lantana camara**

- An invasive alien plant species spreading rapidly across Indian forest understories.
- Disrupts native vegetation, degrades wildlife habitats, and reduces natural fodder.
- Targeted under Kerala's seven-point biodiversity policy document for control.

PLACE **Girivalam Path**

- A sacred pilgrimage path encircling the Annamalaiyar Hill in Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu.
- Adjoins sensitive forest lands subject to plastic waste removal clean-up drives.
- Cleaned periodically under joint district and forest department eco-initiatives.

ORGANISATION International Criminal Court

- A permanent international tribunal established under the Rome Statute in The Hague.
- Prosecutes individuals for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity globally.
- Tribunal where 2026 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Navi Pillay previously served as judge.

SCHEME VB-G RAM G Scheme

- A employment and assistance framework utilized for rural wage relief.
- Telangana state requested additional workdays under this scheme to cushion El Niño impacts.
- Provides economic safety nets to agricultural households during climate distress.

EVENT Mysuru Dasara

- An 11-day cultural festival held in Mysuru, Karnataka, showcasing state heritage.
- Inaugurated atop Chamundi Hills with flower offerings to Goddess Chamundeshwari.
- Evolved from a royal festival into a state-sponsored public celebration.



Practice MCQs (UPSC Prelims)

Attempt these questions on your own first. The answer key is on the next page.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Judicial Independence and Separation of Powers in Constitutional Governance

CJI Surya Kant declines meeting request from Opposition leaders with formal reasons

Q1. With reference to the constitutional doctrine of Separation of Powers in India, consider the following statements: 1. The Constitution explicitly details the doctrine of separation of powers in a dedicated operational chapter. 2. Article 50 of the Constitution directs the State to separate the judiciary from the executive in the public services of the State. 3. Matters that are currently sub-judice before constitutional courts are protected from administrative political intervention. Which of the statements given above are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | B. 2 and 3 only |
| C. 1 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3 |

ENVIRONMENT

Management of Invasive Alien Species and Biodiversity Preservation

Kerala Biodiversity Board submits seven-point policy strategy against invasive species

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in India: 1. Lantana camara is an invasive alien plant species known to disrupt native forest ecosystems. 2. State Biodiversity Boards are statutory bodies established under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. 3. Invasive species management policies prioritize risk assessment, scientific identification, and prevention of bio-spread. Which of the statements given above are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | B. 2 and 3 only |
| C. 1 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3 |

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Procedural Integrity and Administration in Electoral Roll Revisions

Assistant Electoral Registration Officers report administrative pressure during roll revisions

Q3. In the context of electoral administration in India, consider the following statements: 1. Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) operate under statutory provisions for electoral roll maintenance. 2. Deletion of voter names from electoral rolls can be lawfully executed without providing an opportunity for a hearing to the concerned voter. 3. Article 324 vests the superintendence, direction, and control of electoral rolls in the Election Commission of India. Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only

- B. 2 only
- D. 3 only

SOCIAL ISSUES Community-Led Interventions Against Substance Abuse

Haryana launches community-led Panchgama Vikas Model to tackle rural drug abuse

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding community-led social interventions against drug abuse: 1. Article 47 of the Constitution directs the State to bring about prohibition of the consumption of intoxicating drinks and harmful drugs. 2. The 'Panchgama Vikas Model' divides target villages into cluster groups managed by volunteer teams to combat substance abuse. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- B. 2 only
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

INFRASTRUCTURE & ENERGY

Urban Transit Mass Mobility and Inter-State Infrastructure Connectivity

PM Modi and CM Vijay inaugurate initial stretch of Chennai Metro Rail Phase II

Q5. With reference to urban mass rapid transit systems in India, consider the following statements: 1. Urban metro rail projects are implemented based on joint equity and funding frameworks between Union and State governments. 2. Metro Rail transit construction can incorporate balanced cantilever engineering methods for elevated spans. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- B. 2 only
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

POLITY & GOVERNANCE Legal Protection and Professional Framework for Advocates

Advocates association proposes draft Keralam Advocates Protection Bill

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding the legal profession and criminal law in India: 1. Advocates are regulated under the statutory provisions of the Advocates Act, 1961. 2. Article 39A of the Constitution directs the State to ensure equal justice and free legal aid. 3. Under criminal procedural law, a non-bailable offence requires the accused to apply for bail before a competent court. Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS International Humanitarian Law and the Nobel Peace Prize

South African jurist Navi Pillay awarded 2026 Nobel Peace Prize for human rights service

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding international human rights jurist Navi Pillay and international tribunals: 1. Navi Pillay co-authored a landmark 1998 war crimes tribunal judgment recognizing sexual violence as an act of genocide. 2. The International Criminal Court was established under the Rome Statute. 3. The Nobel Peace Prize is presented annually by the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo. Which of the statements given above are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3



Answer Key — Practice MCQs

Quick reference and explanations for the practice questions on the previous page.

Q1: B

Q2: D

Q3: A

Q4: C

Q5: C

Q6: D

Q7: D

Q1 Option B · 2 and 3 only

Statement 1 is incorrect because the Indian Constitution does not contain a dedicated chapter explicitly operationalizing separation of powers, though it forms part of the basic structure. Statements 2 and 3 are correct as Article 50 directs separation of judiciary and executive, and sub-judice matters are protected from political administrative meetings.

Q2 Option D · 1, 2 and 3

All three statements are correct. Lantana camara is a major invasive plant species. State Biodiversity Boards are statutory under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, and policies focus on prevention, risk assessment, and scientific identification.

Q3 Option A · 1 and 3 only

Statements 1 and 3 are correct. Electoral Registration Officers are statutory officials, and Article 324 vests roll superintendence in the ECI. Statement 2 is incorrect because principles of natural justice and statutory rules require notice and hearing before voter name deletion.

Q4 Option C · Both 1 and 2

Both statements are correct. Article 47 under Directive Principles directs the State to endeavor toward prohibition of harmful intoxicants. The Panchgama Vikas Model in Haryana organizes 300 villages into 60 clusters managed by 5-member volunteer teams.

Q5 Option C · Both 1 and 2

Both statements are correct. Urban metro projects are co-funded through central-state equity partnerships, and elevated viaducts routinely employ balanced cantilever civil engineering structures.

Q6 Option D · 1, 2 and 3

All three statements are correct. Advocates are governed by the Advocates Act, 1961. Article 39A mandates equal justice and legal aid. In non-bailable offences, bail cannot be granted as a matter of right by police and requires judicial court orders.

Q7 Option D · 1, 2 and 3

All statements are correct. Navi Pillay co-authored the 1998 Jean-Paul Akayesu ICTR ruling recognizing sexual violence as genocide. The ICC operates under the Rome Statute, and the Peace Prize is awarded in Oslo.

