

IMPORTANT JUDGEMENT COMMITTEES COMMISSIONS

For Civil & Judicial Services Examinations



Chronicle's Value Addition Series

IMPORTANT JUDGMENTS COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS

Useful for Civil and Judicial Services Examinations

- This book covers the above-mentioned important segments that help aspirants gain a better understanding of General Studies topics.
- In all Prelims and Mains exams, questions are invariably asked from these segments.
- The content provided herein arms the readers with valuable, exam-oriented insights that will add significant value to their preparation.
- The inputs from different facets/dimensions will help write high-scoring answers in the Mains exams.

Editor

N.N. Ojha

Mentoring Civil Services Aspirants Since 1990

Compiled by

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IMPORTANT JUDGMENTS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Highway Safety Recognised as Part of Right to Life

On 13th April 2026, the Supreme Court (SC) issued a series of pan-India guidelines to enhance road safety, observing that expressways must not become corridors of danger due to administrative lapses or infrastructure gaps.

Supreme Court's Key Observations

- ❑ **High Mortalities:** National Highways (NHs) comprise only 2% of India's road network but account for nearly 30% of all road accident deaths.
- ❑ **Constitutional Mandate:** Commuter safety on highways is an intrinsic component of the Right to Life under **Article 21** of the Constitution. Avoidable hazards causing loss of life signify State failure.

Key Directions Issued by the SC

- ❑ **Enforcement & Cleanses:** Heavy vehicles are barred from parking on lanes or shoulders. Unauthorized structures inside the Right of Way must be cleared within 60 days.
- ❑ **Administrative Tasks:** District Magistrates must set up Highway Safety Task Forces within 15 days. Advanced Traffic Management Systems will drive real-time digital monitoring and e-challans.
- ❑ **Licensing & Emergency Services:** Safety zone licenses require NHAI/PWD approval, with existing ones reviewed within 30 days. Emergency cranes and ambulances must be stationed every 75 km.
- ❑ **Black spot Rectification:** Accident-prone spots must be identified within 45 days and structurally upgraded (lighting, signage) within four months.

Passive Euthanasia in India: Ethical Concerns

Harish Rana, the first person in India to be granted permission for passive euthanasia by the Supreme Court, died at AIIMS, New Delhi, bringing one of medicine's most contested ethical questions back into sharp focus. His case was not an isolated tragedy but a mirror held up to a system unprepared- legally, medically, and morally, to handle end-of-life decisions with consistency and compassion.

The question India must now confront: **does the right to die with dignity receive the same seriousness as the right to live?**

What Is Passive Euthanasia?

- ❑ Passive euthanasia involves the **withdrawal or withholding of life-sustaining treatment**- ventilators, feeding tubes, resuscitation, allowing natural death to occur.
- ❑ Distinguished from **active euthanasia**, which involves a deliberate act to end life (illegal in India).
- ❑ Legalised in India through the Supreme Court's landmark **Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)** judgment.
- ❑ The Court also recognised the Advance Medical Directive (AMD), or a living will, allowing individuals to specify treatment preferences in case of future incapacitation.

The Ethical Fault Lines

Sanctity of Life vs. Right to Dignity

- ❑ Many medical professionals, religious traditions, and ethicists argue that **life is inherently sacred** and cannot be surrendered under any circumstance.
- ❑ **Counter-argument:** prolonging a life devoid of consciousness, comfort, or recovery is not preserving dignity; it is merely prolonging suffering.
- ❑ **The ethical tension:** who defines a life worth living, the patient, the family, the doctor, or the state?

Informed Consent and Patient Autonomy

- ❑ Passive euthanasia raises acute concerns when the patient cannot communicate, as in persistent vegetative states.
- ❑ Consent then shifts to family members or courts, creating the risk of:
 - ✓ Decisions influenced by financial burden rather than patient welfare.
 - ✓ Family disagreements leading to prolonged legal battles.
 - ✓ Vulnerable patients being denied treatment without genuine informed consent.

The Role of the Medical Profession

- ❑ Doctors are trained to **preserve life**; passive euthanasia fundamentally challenges this professional identity.
- ❑ **Ethical concerns** include:
 - ✓ Risk of **premature withdrawal** of treatment in cases where recovery was possible.
 - ✓ Absence of uniform palliative care infrastructure across India.
 - ✓ Fear of **legal liability** making doctors reluctant to act even when legally permitted.

Socioeconomic Bias in End-of-Life Decisions

- ❑ In a country with stark healthcare inequalities, passive euthanasia carries the risk of being applied **disproportionately to the poor**.
- ❑ Families unable to afford prolonged ICU care may seek withdrawal of treatment out of **financial compulsion**, not genuine choice.
- ❑ The ethical safeguard of a living will remains largely inaccessible to rural and low-income populations who are **unaware of or unable to execute** an AMD.

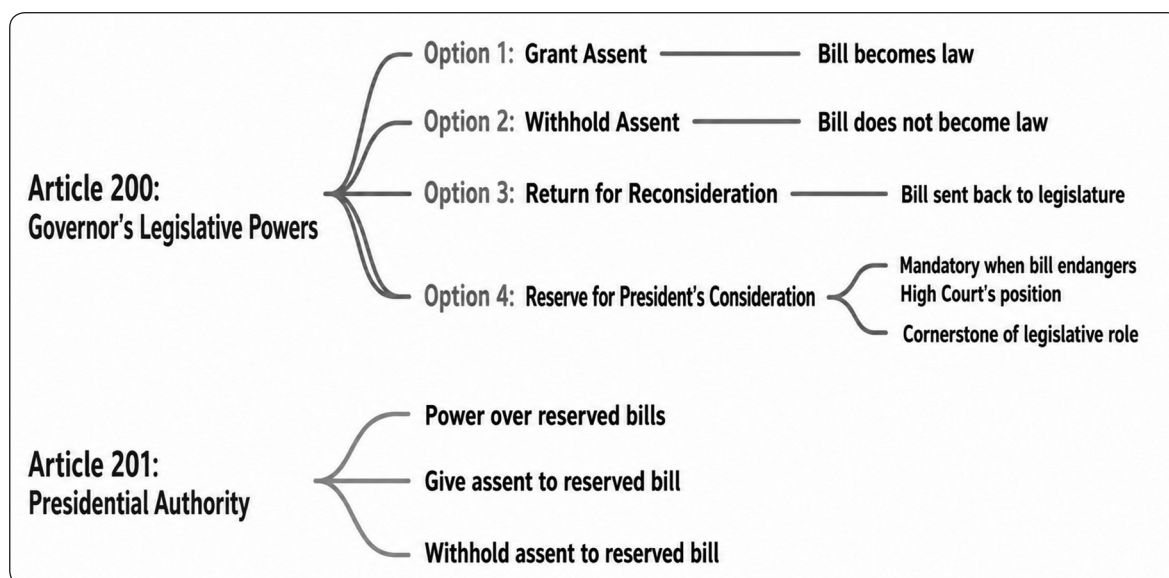
Procedural Gaps and Implementation Concerns

- ❑ Despite the 2018 judgment, **no standardised national protocol** exists for implementing passive euthanasia.
- ❑ Medical boards tasked with approving such decisions lack **uniform composition, training, and timelines**.
- ❑ The process remains extraordinarily lengthy; Harish Rana's case itself required prolonged judicial intervention.
- ❑ **Palliative care**, the ethical backbone of end-of-life dignity, remains critically underdeveloped in India; only an estimated 1-2% of those needing it receive adequate care.

Right to Die vs. Duty to Protect

- ❑ The state has a constitutional duty to protect life under **Article 21**.
- ❑ The same Article, through judicial interpretation, now also protects the **right to die with dignity**.
- ❑ These obligations are not opposites, but reconciling them demands:
 - ✓ Robust **living will awareness campaigns**.
 - ✓ Trained **ethics committees** in every hospital.
 - ✓ Clear, **time-bound legal procedures**.
 - ✓ Sensitivity to socioeconomic vulnerabilities.
- ❑ Passive euthanasia demands ethical frameworks built on dignity, consent, and equity, not just legal permission. Compassion must be institutionalised, not left to courtrooms alone.

- ❑ **Article 163** states that the Governor shall act on the “aid and advice” of the Council of Ministers, except where the Constitution requires them to act “in their discretion.” It is this discretionary space that has been the subject of judicial scrutiny.
- ❑ **Article 200** is the cornerstone of the Governor’s legislative role. It provides four options for a bill presented for assent:
 1. **Assent:** The bill becomes law.
 2. **Withhold Assent:** The bill does not become law.
 3. **Return for Reconsideration:** The bill is sent back to the legislature.
 4. **Reserve for President’s Consideration:** A mandatory action if the bill endangers the position of the High Court.
- ❑ **Article 201** empowers the President to give or withhold assent to a bill reserved by the Governor.



Analysis

- ❑ **Political:** Different party affiliations of Governor and state government often delay bills, creating mistrust and perceptions of political bias.
- ❑ **Federal:** Indefinite assent delays paralyze governance and weaken the federal balance.
- ❑ **Constitutional:** Supreme Court rulings have curbed misuse by mandating timely action and affirming the primacy of the elected legislature.
- ❑ **Challenges**
- ❑ **Pocket Veto by Delay:** Indefinite pendency causes legislative deadlock.
- ❑ **Political Bias:** Partisan friction occurs under rival parties.
- ❑ **Discretionary Ambiguity:** Article 200 lacks timelines, enabling misuse.
- ❑ **Appointment and Removal Issues:** Opaque processes fuel Union control.
- ❑ **Overuse of Reservation Power:** Frequent referrals dilute state legislatures.
- ❑ **Way Forward**
- ❑ **Time-bound Assent:** Establish limits; SC (2025) barred indefinite pocket vetos.
- ❑ **Consultative Appointments:** Grant Chief Ministers an appointment role.
- ❑ **Code of Conduct:** Enforce legally binding frameworks ensuring impartiality.
- ❑ **Judicial Oversight:** Courts must continue curbing discretionary misuse.
- ❑ **Commission Recommendations:** Implement Sarkaria and Punchhi suggestions.

Anti-Defection Law & Speaker's Role

Constitutional Mandate & Background

- ❑ **The Tenth Schedule:** Introduced via the **52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985**, to curb the destabilizing “*Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram*” culture of frequent political floor-crossing.
- ❑ **Constitutional Anchors: Articles 102(2) and 191(2)** provide for the disqualification of MPs and State Legislators on grounds of voluntarily giving up party membership or voting against the party whip.
- ❑ **91st Amendment Act (2003):** Made the law stringent by completely removing the exemption for one-third party splits and barring defectors from holding ministerial or remunerative political posts until re-elected.

Shift in Judicial Interpretation & Recent Verdicts

- ❑ **Past Framework (*Kihoto Hollohan*, 1992):** Upheld the schedule, designating the Speaker as a “tribunal.” However, judicial review was traditionally restricted to post-adjudication stages.
- ❑ **The Turning Point (*Subhash Desai v. Governor of Maharashtra*, 2023):** Stemming from the 2022–2023 vertical split in the Shiv Sena, the SC aggressively criticized the Speaker’s inordinate delays, ruling that tactical delays undermine democracy and are subject to fast-tracked judicial review.
- ❑ **Latest Milestone (*Padi Kaushik Reddy vs. State of Telangana*, July 2025):** Dealing with ten MLAs who defected from the BRS to the INC after the 2023 elections, a Division Bench ruled that Speaker inaction defeats the law’s purpose by letting defectors complete their terms without consequences.

Key Supreme Court Directives (July 2025)

- ❑ **Three-Month Deadline:** Instructed the Telangana Assembly Speaker to conclude the disqualification proceedings within a fixed period of **three months**.
- ❑ **Adverse Inference:** Directed the Speaker to draw an adverse inference against any MLA attempting to protract or delay the process.
- ❑ **Call for Reform:** Urged Parliament to reconsider whether the Speaker should remain the disqualification authority, strongly suggesting a legislative review to uphold democracy.

Core Issues, Challenges & Impact

Major Shortcomings of the Law

- ❑ **Curtails Dissent & Inner-Party Democracy:** Restricting voting choices strengthens the centralized high command and suppresses individual conscience.
- ❑ **Ambiguities:** Vague phrases like “voluntarily giving up membership” cause conflicting interpretations, while provisions for mergers are frequently misused to bypass disqualification.

Challenges Tied to the Speaker’s Position

- ❑ **Partisan Position & Conflict of Interest:** As ruling party members, Speakers often face a dual-role conflict between political loyalty and judicial neutrality, leading to perceived bias.
- ❑ **No Fixed Timeline:** The statute lacks a statutory time limit, allowing governments to exploit indefinite delays during political crises to maintain majorities.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

SC Expands Prison Reforms Panel Role to Safeguard Rights of Disabled Prisoners

On 21st April 2026, the Supreme Court, in *Sathyan Naravoor v. Union of India & Ors.*, directed the High-Powered Committee to prepare a comprehensive action plan to strengthen safeguards for prisoners with disabilities and ensure access to assistive devices across prisons.

The committee was constituted by the Supreme Court in February 2026 in the case *Suhas Chakma v. Union of India, 2026*, and is chaired by former Supreme Court judge Justice S. Ravindra Bhat.

What the Supreme Court Said

- ❑ **Rights Status:** Fundamental rights under Articles 14 and 21 remain fully intact behind bars.
- ❑ **Approach:** Rights of prisoners with disabilities must be recognized using a humane approach.

Directions Issued by SC

- ❑ **Participation:** Mandates active participation of the Union DEPwD Secretary (or nominee) and State Social Justice/Welfare Secretaries.
- ❑ **Compliance:** States and UTs must submit compliance affidavits within six weeks and extend full logistical and data support.
- ❑ **Role:** The committee will periodically review data, address infrastructural constraints, and serve as an accessible forum for grievances in a time-bound manner.

No Scheduled Caste Status after Conversion

On 24th March 2026, in a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court upheld a ruling of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, clarifying that a person who converts to Christianity and actively practices it cannot continue to claim Scheduled Caste (SC) status.

Background of the Case

- ❑ The case arose in Andhra Pradesh, involving a Christian pastor with over ten years of service.
- ❑ Though born into a Scheduled Caste, he had converted to Christianity and actively practiced the religion.
- ❑ He argued that he remained eligible for SC benefits based on his caste by birth.

High Court Decision

- ❑ In April 2025, the Andhra Pradesh High Court quashed the charges against the pastor.
- ❑ The court held that the caste system is alien to Christianity.
- ❑ Consequently, it ruled that the provisions of the SC/ST Act could not be invoked by individuals practicing Christianity.

Key Points of the Supreme Court's Judgment

Religions Eligible for SC Status

- ❑ Only those who profess Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism are eligible for Scheduled Caste status under the law.
- ❑ The term 'profess' was clarified to mean a public and outward declaration of faith.
- ❑ The court described the bar as "absolute" with "no exceptions", stating that the two positions are "mutually exclusive and contrary to the Constitutional scheme."

Clause 3 of Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950

- ❑ It interpreted Clause 3 of the 1950 SC Order strictly, which states that no person practicing a religion other than Hinduism can be deemed a Scheduled Caste.

Reconversion Guidelines

- ❑ For individuals seeking to return to Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism, the Court outlined three conditions:
 1. proof of original caste,
 2. credible evidence of genuine reconversion, and
 3. Acceptance by the original community.

Broader Impact of Ruling

- ❑ It clarifies the legal scope of SC benefits.
- ❑ It discourages false claims or manipulations of caste status post-conversion.
- ❑ It underscores the importance of caste identity being linked to specific religions, primarily Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.

SC Strikes Down Age Limit on Maternity Leave for Adoption

On 17th March 2026, the Supreme Court delivered a landmark ruling that strengthens the rights of adoptive mothers, holding that women who adopt children older than three months are entitled to maternity leave.

Background of the Case

- ❑ The petition filed by Hamsaanandini Nanduri **challenged Section 60(4) of the Code on Social Security, 2020**, which limited maternity benefits to adoptive mothers of children below three months.
- ❑ She argued that since the **adoption process usually exceeds three months**, the provision was impractical and excluded most adoptive mothers.

What did the Court Observe in its Judgment?

Striking Down Age Restrictions

- ❑ Declared Section 60(4) of the Code on Social Security, 2020 unconstitutional and discriminatory.
- ❑ The provision had limited 12 weeks of maternity benefit only to adoptive mothers of children below three months.
- ❑ The Court held that adoptive mothers have the same rights and responsibilities as biological mothers, and maternity leave cannot be restricted based on the child's age.

Right to Reproductive Autonomy

- ❑ It recognised adoption as an expression of reproductive autonomy.
- ❑ It emphasised that a family is built on care, emotional bonds, and shared responsibility rather than purely biological connections.

Maternity Leave as a Workplace Equality Measure

- ❑ The Court highlighted **maternity benefits as a tool of “de-familisation,”** which reduces women’s dependence on family for financial support.
- ❑ It ensures economic independence and prevents exclusion of women from the workforce due to motherhood.

Call for Paternity Leave

- ❑ The Court urged the **Central Government to introduce statutory paternity leave**, underlining that childcare and parenting are shared responsibilities and not solely the duty of mothers.

Societal Impact of this Judgment

- ❑ **Ensuring Equality for Adoptive Parents:** By recognising adoptive mothers’ entitlement to maternity leave, the Supreme Court has ensured equal **support for parents who choose adoption**, placing them at par with biological parents.
- ❑ **Reinforcing Child Welfare and Inclusivity:** The ruling upholds **the principle that every child deserves equal care and protection**, irrespective of whether they are born into or adopted into a family.

Menstrual Health as a Fundamental Right

In February 2026, the Supreme Court of India (*Dr. Jaya Thakur v. Government of India*) recognized Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) as a fundamental right under Article 21.

Judicial Mandate and Fundamental Rights

- ❑ **Article 21 & Dignity:** The Court integrated MHH into the right to dignity under Article 21, issuing a *continuing mandamus* to monitor state compliance.
- ❑ **RTE Act 2009:** The mandate expands “free education” to include removing financial barriers to essential menstrual hygiene products.
- ❑ The Supreme Court recognized Menstrual Health and Hygiene as a fundamental right under Article 21 recently.
- ❑ Petitioners argue that menstrual leave ensures the Right to Dignity and aligns with CEDAW international commitments.
- ❑ However, the Court cautioned that compulsory statutory mandates could discourage employers from hiring women workers.
- ❑ The judiciary favoured voluntary menstrual leave policies through stakeholder consultation instead of a rigid national mandate.
- ❑ Currently, Bihar and Kerala remain the only Indian states having implemented specific menstrual leave provisions.
- ❑ Voluntary policies by private firms like Zomato and Swiggy highlight a shift toward gender-sensitive practices.

Institutional Accountability and Infrastructure

- ❑ **School Mandates:** Schools must provide free oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins and establish Menstrual Hygiene Management corners.
- ❑ **Monitoring & Waste:** District Education Officers will conduct inspections and collect anonymous student feedback. Safe disposal must align with the Solid Waste Management Rules 2026.

ENVIRONMENT

SC Warns States on Illegal Sand Mining in Chambal Sanctuary

On 17th April 2026, the Supreme Court (SC) warned Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to curb illegal sand mining in the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary, failing which paramilitary forces may be deployed.

The Case

- ❑ The Supreme Court of India was hearing interlocutory applications under its suo motu cognizance (13 March 2026) on illegal sand mining in the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary.
- ❑ The pleas flag recent concerns, including killings of forest guards in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and threats to an inter-State bridge over the Chambal River due to illegal mining.

Court's Observations

- ❑ **Environmental Impact:** Disruption of river systems, altered flow patterns, soil erosion, groundwater depletion, and threats to biodiversity, agriculture, and water security.
- ❑ **Governance Concerns:** Organized illegal mining fueled by rising construction demand shows total disregard for the rule of law. States failed to act effectively despite repeated directives.
- ❑ **Systemic Failure:** The Court termed the situation grave, citing administrative apathy and abdication of statutory duties by state machinery.

Directions Issued by SC

- ❑ **Surveillance & Monitoring:** Install high-resolution CCTV cameras on mining routes; mandate real-time monitoring under district police and forest officers.
- ❑ **GPS Tracking:** Pilot mandatory GPS installation in mining vehicles in Morena (MP) and Dholpur (Rajasthan).
- ❑ **Strict Enforcement:** Immediate vehicle seizures, offender prosecution, and confiscation proceedings.
- ❑ **Environmental Compensation:** Implement the "Polluter Pays" principle to recover environmental damages.
- ❑ **Joint Enforcement Teams:** Deploy round-the-clock patrolling teams consisting of police and forest officials equipped with modern gear.

Supreme Court Rulings Strengthening Environmental Governance

The Supreme Court recently barred ex-post facto environmental clearances, empowered Pollution Control Boards to levy compensatory damages, and halted illegal forest clearances in Hyderabad's Kancha Gachibowli, underscoring its active role in strengthening India's environmental governance framework.

Recent Developments

- In **May 2025 (Vanashakti v. Union of India)**, the Court declared retrospective Environmental Clearances (EC) illegal, striking down government notifications that allowed projects to be approved after construction had begun, thereby closing a major loophole for polluters.
- In **May 2025 (Kamla Nehru Memorial Trust v. U.P. State Industrial Development Corporation)**, the Court invoked the public trust doctrine to cancel a non-transparent land allotment, reinforcing that the state must manage public resources as a trustee for all citizens, not for special interests.
- In **January 2024 (T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India)**, the Court issued guidelines to institutionalize the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) as a permanent body with a clear mandate, strengthening the monitoring and enforcement of environmental laws.
- In **August 2024 (M.C. Mehta v. Union of India)**, the Court directed NCR states to fill vacancies in their Pollution Control Boards by April 2025 and address Delhi's waste crisis, highlighting that understaffed agencies cannot uphold the right to a clean environment.

Key Judicial Contributions

Doctrine / Principle	Landmark Case	Significance
Polluter Pays Principle	Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action v. Union of India (1996)	Imposed absolute liability on polluters for remediation costs.
Public Trust Doctrine	MC Mehta v. Kamal Nath (1997)	State is trustee of natural resources, cannot allow their misuse.
Precautionary Principle	Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum v. Union of India (1996)	Shifted burden of proof on industries to show activities are environmentally benign.
Right to Clean Environment	Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar (1991)	Linked clean environment with Article 21, fundamental right.
Environmental Compensation	M.C. Mehta v. Union of India (Oleum Gas Leak, 1987)	Introduced "absolute liability" for hazardous industries.
Institutional Mechanism	A.P. Pollution Control Board v. Prof. M.V. Nayudu (1999)	Advocated for expert adjudication, paving way for NGT (2010).

Background

- ❑ Environmental jurisprudence in India has been shaped significantly by the Supreme Court (SC), which expanded constitutional provisions like Article 21 (Right to Life) to include the right to a healthy environment.
- ❑ The Court has consistently invoked Articles 48A (Directive to protect the environment) and 51A(g) (Fundamental Duty of citizens) to fill legislative gaps and enforce accountability.
- ❑ Its rulings created doctrines like the Polluter Pays Principle, Public Trust Doctrine, and Precautionary Principle, positioning the judiciary as a proactive guardian of ecological balance.

Analysis

Positives

- ❑ Filled legislative and executive vacuum on environmental protection.
- ❑ Fostered environmental rights jurisprudence rooted in Article 21.
- ❑ Catalysed institutional innovations like the National Green Tribunal (2010).
- ❑ Recognized intergenerational equity and sustainable development as legal principles.

ECONOMY

States' Taxation of Mining Activities

On 25th July, 2024, a nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court (SC) in **Mineral Area Development Authority Etc. vs. M/S Steel Authority of India** delivered an 8-1 majority ruling which upheld the **power of states to levy royalty on extraction of minerals** from their land and said they can also tax the lands which comprise mines and quarries.

Context: The dispute originated from the enactment of the **Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act (MMDR) Act by the Union Government in 1957**, which brought the control of mines and minerals under the Union government's jurisdiction. Section 9 of this Act mandated that mining lease holders should pay royalties for minerals extracted.

- ❑ In 1963, the Tamil Nadu government granted a mining lease to India Cements Ltd for extracting limestone and kankar. Concurrently, under Section 115(1) of the Madras Panchayat Act, a local cess was levied on land revenue paid to the government in each panchayat development block.
- ❑ In 1989, India Cements appealed to the Supreme Court, which ruled that royalty payments were indirectly related to minerals extracted and classified them as taxable under the MMDR Act.
- ❑ However, a five-judge bench of the apex court ruled in 2004 that there was a typographical error in the 1989 verdict and that royalty was not a tax.
- ❑ The matter was referred to a nine-judge bench in 2011 due to perceived conflicts in previous judgments by five-judge and seven-judge benches in related cases.

Key Observations

- ❑ **Overruling 1989 Judgment:** The SC overruled its 1989 verdict in the India Cements case, which had held royalty as a tax.
- ❑ **Clarification on Royalty and Taxation:** The SC clarified that royalty under Section 9 of the MMDR Act is not considered a tax. The judgment explained three fundamental differences between royalty and tax:
 - ✓ Royalty is charged by a proprietor; tax "is an imposition of a sovereign".
 - ✓ Royalty is a consideration; tax is levied in a "taxable event" determined by law.
 - ✓ Royalty arises from a lease deed; tax is imposed by an authority of law.
- ❑ **Reinstating State's Taxation Power:** It said that states retain the power to impose cesses on mining and related activities.
 - ✓ Parliament can even prohibit states from taxing mineral rights by virtue of **Entry 50 of List II** (State List), but there is, however, no specific provision in the 1957 Act that governs the field "which imposes limitations on the power of the states to tax mineral rights".
 - ✓ That being so, "the scheme of the MMDR Act cannot, by a process of stretched construction, be read to limit the taxing powers of the state under Entry 50 of List II.
 - ✓ On tax on lands containing quarries or mines, the majority ruling said states can do so under **Entry 49 of List II** which concerns "taxes on lands and buildings".
 - ✓ The court concluded that royalties and dead rent do not meet the criteria of a tax, thereby allowing states to continue imposing and collecting taxes on mineral-bearing lands.

- ❑ **Countering Union Government's Arguments:** Union Government had argued that the taxing power of the state is diluted by the MMDRA, passed in the exercise of Entry 54.
 - ✓ The SC held that there is “no direct conflict between the taxing powers of the States under Entry 50” and the regulatory powers of the Union.
 - ✓ **Entry 50** is only limited to the extent that the law on mineral development limits it to. If Parliament makes a limitation, the states are bound to abide by them.
 - ✓ The state's power to levy taxes on “mineral rights” is “unaffected” in the absence of such limitations. Such limitations should be “expressed and specified.”
- ❑ **Exceptions:** SC clarified that this ruling would not be applicable to oilfields, mineral oil resources, petroleum and petroleum products as the Union Govt contended that these petitions did not question the Centre's exclusive jurisdiction, as defined by Entry 53 of List I of Seventh Schedule, over these assets.

Implications

- ❑ **States will have a larger share of the revenue generated** from mineral extraction, boosting their financial resources for development and welfare schemes.
- ❑ The ruling **strengthens the states' financial autonomy** by granting them more control over their natural resources and the revenue derived from them.
- ❑ The central government will experience a decrease in revenue from royalty on minerals, which may impact its overall fiscal position.
- ❑ The ruling could **potentially lead to disputes between states and the center** over the sharing of mineral resources and revenue.
- ❑ Mining companies may face higher costs due to increased royalty and tax burdens imposed by the states.
- ❑ The varying tax regimes across different states can create complexities for mining operations and increase compliance costs.
- ❑ Both the central and state governments need to establish clear guidelines and regulations to implement the ruling effectively, avoid potential disputes and encourage sustainable development of the mining sector across the country.

Split Verdict on GM Mustard Crop

On 23rd July 2024, the Supreme Court (SC) of India, in **Gene Campaign vs. Union Of India** case, delivered a split verdict on the validity of the Centre's 2022 decision to grant conditional approval for the environmental release of genetically modified (GM) mustard crops.

Context: The SC was responding to pleas by activist Aruna Rodrigues and the NGO ‘Gene Campaign,’ which called for a moratorium on the release of any GMOs into the environment until a comprehensive, transparent, and rigorous biosafety protocol is publicly available and conducted by independent experts.

- ❑ On October 18, 2022, the **Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)**, the statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **recommended the environmental release of the transgenic mustard hybrid DMH-11.**
- ❑ DMH-11 is a cross between Varuna, a high-yielding Indian mustard variety, and Early Hira-2, an East European variety.
- ❑ The Centre granted conditional approval for the release on October 25, 2022, marking a significant development in the regulation of genetically modified organisms in India.

SOME LANDMARK JUDGMENTS

Lily Thomas vs. Union of India & Ors, 2013

A two-Judge bench of the Supreme Court, ruled on 10th July, 2013 that Members of Parliament, Legislative Councils and Legislative Assemblies convicted of crimes where they had been awarded a minimum sentence of 2 years imprisonment would cease to be members of the house to which they were elected from the date of sentencing.

Context: In 2005, Kerala-based lawyer Lily Thomas and NGO Lok Prahari filed a PIL before the SC which challenged Section 8(4) of the RPA as ‘ultra vires’ to the Indian Constitution, saying it protected convicted legislators from disqualification because their appeals were pending before higher courts.

- ❑ According to **Section 8(4) of the RPA disqualification of a convicted MP or MLA** takes effect only “after three months have elapsed” from the date of conviction. The lawmaker would meanwhile have time to appeal it in a higher court.
- ❑ The plea had sought to remove criminal elements from Indian politics by barring convicted lawmakers from contesting elections or holding any official seat.
- ❑ The case drew attention to **Articles 102(1) and 191(1) of the Constitution**. The former lays down the disqualifications for membership to the Houses of Parliament while the latter lays down the disqualifications for membership to the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council of the state.

Key Observations

- ❑ The apex court in its judgment held that **Section 8(4) is indeed ultra vires to the constitutional provisions**.
- ❑ It also accepted the contention of the petitioners that the grounds for disqualification of a candidate and a member are the same. Thus, Parliament has exceeded its powers by bringing in Section 8(4).
- ❑ The Court further observed that the sitting members **who have already benefitted from Section 8(4) would not be affected by this judgment**.
- ❑ However, if any sitting Member of Parliament or state legislature is convicted by virtue of subsections 1, 2 and 3 of Section 8, he/she shall stand disqualified by virtue of this judgment.

Lily Thomas vs. Union Of India, AIR 2000 SC 1650

- Late senior advocate Lily Thomas was the petitioner in various Landmark cases. This case relates to the issues of the second marriage to avoid prosecution under bigamy and the conversion to Islam.
- In Lily Thomas Bigamy Case judgment, in **April 2000**, the Supreme Court ruled that a marriage would be considered void if a man entered into a second marriage without first divorcing his first wife, who is still alive.
- The court also held that if a man converted to Islam and then entered into a second marriage following Islamic practices, that marriage would also be considered void.
- The **first marriage must be dissolved according to the Hindu Marriage Act** for the second marriage to be valid. If a man fails to do so, he can be held liable under Section 494 and 495 of the Indian Penal Code for the offence of bigamy.

COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Committee on Empowerment of Women

On 15th May 2026, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla officially reconstituted the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women for the year 2026–27.

What is Committee on Empowerment of Women?

- ❑ **Establishment:** It was constituted for the first time on 29th April, 1997 during the 11th Lok Sabha.
- ❑ **Composition:** Consists of 30 Members:
 - ✓ 20 nominated by the Speaker from amongst the Members of Lok Sabha
 - ✓ 10 nominated by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha from amongst the Members of the Rajya Sabha.
- ❑ **Term:** The term of the Committee does not exceed one year and it is re-constituted year after year.

Major Functions

- ❑ Reviews National Commission for Women reports.
- ❑ Recommends measures to improve women's status.
- ❑ Examines government efforts for equality, dignity, and rights.
- ❑ Assesses welfare programs, education, and representation in legislatures and services.
- ❑ Monitors government action on its recommendations.

Judicial Infrastructure Advisory Committee

On 12th May 2026, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant constituted the Judicial Infrastructure Advisory Committee, which will prepare a comprehensive roadmap to address infrastructure gaps in courts and create a more uniform and efficient judicial ecosystem across India.

- ❑ The Committee will be headed by Supreme Court Justice Aravind Kumar.

Mandates of the Committee

- ❑ **Infrastructure Audit:** Will execute a comprehensive audit of subordinate and higher judicial institutions.
- ❑ **Structural and Administrative Challenges:** Will assess administrative bottlenecks and operational gaps hindering courts.
- ❑ **Infrastructure and Capacity Assessment:** Will evaluate physical requirements for judges, advocates, litigants, and visitors.
- ❑ **Technology Integration and E-Courts:** Focuses on digitization, e-Courts expansion for fast case disposal, and strengthening the Judge Profile Database.
- ❑ **Citizen-Centric Judicial Services:** Will recommend measures to upgrade citizen-oriented judicial delivery.
- ❑ **Workplace and Service Conditions:** Will suggest infrastructural support and better service conditions for judicial officers and staff.

Panel to Probe HIV Infections

On 16th December 2025, the Madhya Pradesh government constituted a committee to investigate cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection found in six children.

- ❑ **Background of the Case:** The infections are reportedly linked to transfusion of contaminated blood at Satna District Hospital and other health centres in the state.
- ❑ **The Committee is chaired by:** Dr. Satya Avadhiya

Sixteenth Finance Commission

The **16th Finance Commission**, chaired by **Arvind Panagariya**, submitted its report to the President in **November 2025** for the award period **2026–31**.

- ❑ It is a constitutional body under **Article 280** and is expected to recommend the **vertical devolution of taxes between Centre and States, horizontal distribution among States**, and grants to local bodies and disaster-management financing.

Standing Committee on Finance

The Standing Committee on Finance in **August 2025** studied the role of the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** in the digital economy.

- ❑ It highlighted that digital markets exhibit **network effects, data concentration, platform dominance, self-preferencing and gatekeeper power**, which conventional ex-post competition law may not address quickly.
- ❑ The report pushed for a **National Competition Policy**, stronger institutional capacity for CCI, better coordination among sectoral regulators, and a calibrated move toward **ex-ante digital competition regulation**, linked to the proposed **Digital Competition Bill**.
- ❑ It also emphasised consumer welfare, protection of MSMEs and start-ups from predatory conduct, and evidence-based regulation rather than over-regulation.
- ❑ It is also relevant to debates on **Big Tech regulation** and India's digital public infrastructure-led market design.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law & Justice

Recent committee scrutiny on government litigation highlighted the huge burden of pending cases involving Union ministries/departments across the **Supreme Court, High Courts and district courts**.

- ❑ The report underlined that the government remains the **largest litigant**, and excessive appeals, poor inter-departmental coordination, weak legal vetting and delayed decision-making increase pendency and public costs. From a governance perspective, this matters because high litigation burdens affect **ease of doing business, service delivery, contract enforcement and citizen trust**.
- ❑ The broad reform direction includes strengthening **pre-litigation dispute resolution**, legal cells in ministries, accountability for frivolous appeals, use of **technology and e-courts**, and better compliance with court orders.

ECONOMY

Payments Regulatory Board

On 30th September 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) established a six-member Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) to enhance oversight and governance of the country's payment systems.

- ❑ It is chaired by the RBI Governor and comprises two additional RBI representatives along with three Central Government nominees.
- ❑ RBI Members include Deputy Governor and Executive Director in charge of Payment and Settlement Systems.
- ❑ RBI's principal legal adviser is a permanent invitee to PRB meetings.
- ❑ PRB replaces the Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS), a committee of the RBI's Central Board.
- ❑ PRB derives powers from the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.
- ❑ The RBI's Department of Payment and Settlement Systems (DPSS) reports directly to the PRB.

SEBI Committee on Strengthening Ethical Governance and Conflict-of-Interest Framework

On 10th November 2025, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) received the report of the High-Level Committee (HLC) constituted to conduct a comprehensive review of policies governing conflict of interest, disclosure norms, and related ethical matters pertaining to members and officials of SEBI.

- ❑ At its board meeting held on March 24, 2025, SEBI had decided to establish a high-level committee under Chairmanship of Pratyush Sinha (former Chief Vigilance Commissioner) to reassess the existing mechanisms related to conflict of interest, asset disclosures, and other related provisions.

Key Recommendations

Mandatory Public Disclosure for Senior SEBI Officials

- ❑ SEBI's chairman, whole-time members, and chief general managers and above should publicly disclose their assets and liabilities due to their significant decision-making authority.

Uniform Investment and Trading Restrictions

- ❑ The committee suggested that the same investment and trading restrictions applicable to SEBI employees should also apply to the chairman and whole-time members.
- ❑ It proposed including them within the definition of "insider" under insider trading regulations. Senior officials will be allowed to invest only in professionally managed pooled schemes regulated by financial authorities, with these restrictions applying prospectively.

Conflict-of-Interest

- ❑ To strengthen conflict-of-interest checks, the committee proposed broadening SEBI's definition of "family" for board members.

- ❑ Instead of limiting it to a spouse and minor dependent children, the new definition includes anyone related by blood or marriage who is substantially dependent, as well as individuals for whom the member or employee is a legal guardian.

Whistle-blower Mechanism

- ❑ A secure, anonymous, and retaliation-free whistle-blower framework was proposed to allow reporting of actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
- ❑ This mechanism should apply to SEBI officials, board members, intermediaries, market institutions, market participants, and the general public, ensuring institutional integrity beyond formal complaints.

Restrictions on Gifts and Benefits

- ❑ The committee advised prohibiting the chairman and whole-time members from accepting any gifts, directly or indirectly, from individuals or entities with whom they have official dealings. Ethics and Compliance Framework

Office of Ethics and Compliance (OEC)

- ❑ It proposed setting up a dedicated Office of Ethics and Compliance (OEC) along with an Oversight Committee on Ethics and Compliance (OCEC).

Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) under the MoEFCC

Recently, the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change asked the Tamil Nadu government to revise the design of the proposed International Dugong Conservation Centre at Manora, Thanjavur district.

- ❑ **Reason:** The committee cited concerns over large-scale concrete construction in ecologically sensitive CRZ-I and CRZ-III (No Development Zone) areas.

About the Project (International Dugong Conservation Centre)

- ❑ **Area:** 28,000 sq m (22,000 sq m in CRZ-III NDZ).
- ❑ **Purpose:** Dugong conservation, research, rescue & rehabilitation, public awareness.

Dugong: Key Facts

- ❑ **Scientific name:** *Dugong dugon*.
- ❑ **Habitat:** Shallow coastal waters with **seagrass meadows**.
- ❑ **Distribution in India:** Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- ❑ **Ecological Role:** **Keystone species**; maintains healthy seagrass ecosystems (blue carbon, fisheries support).
- ❑ **Legal Status:**
 - ✓ Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 - Schedule I
 - ✓ IUCN: Vulnerable
 - ✓ CITES: Appendix I

What is CRZ?

- ❑ **CRZ (Coastal Regulation Zone):** Regulatory framework to protect fragile coastal ecosystems.
- ❑ **CRZ-I:** Ecologically sensitive areas (mangroves, seagrass, mudflats); **almost no construction**.
- ❑ **CRZ-III (NDZ):** Largely undisturbed areas; **no development** within specified limits.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

National Dental Commission (NDC)

On 19th March 2026, in a major reform aimed at improving the quality of dental education and aligning it with global standards, the Centre notified the constitution of the National Dental Commission (NDC) under the National Dental Commission Act, 2023.

- ❑ With the National Dental Commission Act, 2023 coming into force, the **Dentists Act, 1948**, stands repealed, and the **Dental Council of India** dissolved.

As the new apex regulatory body, the NDC aims to align oral healthcare with global standards. It functions through three autonomous boards:

- ✓ **Undergraduate and Postgraduate Dental Education Board** (academic oversight)
- ✓ **Dental Assessment and Rating Board** (accreditation)
- ✓ **Ethics and Dental Registration Board** (professional conduct)
- ❑ Key mandates include framing operational regulations, evaluating institutional ratings, promoting research, and setting private college fee guidelines.

Standing Committee on Functioning of the National Testing Agency (NTA)

Following repeated controversies around national entrance tests, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education reviewed the **functioning of the National Testing Agency (NTA)** and tabled its report in **December 2025**.

- ❑ The Committee reportedly raised concerns over technical glitches, exam integrity, administrative weaknesses, security architecture and the impact of disruptions on students.
- ❑ It recommended serious review of the **computer-based testing model** for high-stakes exams and considered whether a **pen-and-paper mode** may be more reliable for some examinations.
- ❑ The issue goes beyond exam logistics—it concerns **equal opportunity, meritocracy, digital divide, mental health of youth, and trust in public institutions**.

SC Panel on Transgender Persons

On 17th October 2025, in a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court (SC) expressed concern about the “grossly apathetic attitude” shown by the Centre and the state governments towards integrating transgender persons into the mainstream and formed a committee to formulate a national equal opportunity policy.

The Case

- ❑ The ruling was delivered while hearing a petition filed by Jane Kaushik, a transwoman teacher who alleged that she was forced to resign from a school in Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh, in December 2022, and subsequently denied employment by another school in Gujarat in July 2023, both owing to her gender identity.

ENVIRONMENT

PSC on Science & Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change examined the **Department of Space's Demands for Grants for 2025–26** and later reviewed action taken by the government.

- ❑ The committee flagged issues such as **budget shortfalls, utilisation gaps and funding constraints** vis-à-vis ambitious missions.
- ❑ India's space programme underpins **weather forecasting, climate monitoring, disaster management, agriculture advisories, navigation, communication and strategic surveillance**.
- ❑ Argue that public investment in space is not merely prestige spending but a multiplier for **climate resilience, governance delivery and strategic autonomy**.
- ❑ It also points to the need for stronger public-private collaboration, mission prioritisation and sustained funding for high-technology sectors.

National Crisis Management Committee

On 23rd July 2025, the Government of India constituted the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) under the recently amended Disaster Management Act, to address disasters with national ramifications.

Key Highlights

- ❑ The NCMC was set up under the **Disaster Management Act (Amendment) Act, 2025**, which came into force on **April 9, 2025**.
- ❑ This amendment grants **statutory status** to bodies like the NCMC, which existed even before the 2005 Act was enacted.
- ❑ The Ministry of Home Affairs notified the **Disaster Management National Crisis Management Committee (Procedure) Rules, 2025** on Wednesday.

Composition of the NCMC

- ❑ **Chairperson:** Cabinet Secretary **TV Somanathan**.
- ❑ **Members:**
 - ✓ Home Secretary
 - ✓ Defence Secretary
 - ✓ Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Secretariat
 - ✓ Member and Head of Department, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

Functions and Powers of the NCMC

- ❑ Acts as the **apex body** for dealing with major disasters that have **national-level consequences**.
- ❑ Evaluates **preparedness** for any threatening or ongoing disaster.
- ❑ Issues **directions for coordination** and **monitoring** of disaster response across the country.

- ❑ Has the power to **co-opt experts or officers** from central/state governments or relevant organisations, based on the nature of the disaster.

Supporting Infrastructure

- ❑ The **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** currently operates **16 battalions** with a combined sanctioned strength of **18,581 personnel**.

Standing Committee Reports on Environment/Climate Governance

Parliamentary scrutiny is increasingly focused on **climate adaptation, scientific capacity, implementation deficits and institutional coordination**.

- ❑ The committee system has repeatedly stressed better utilisation of funds, stronger environmental monitoring, and improved convergence across ministries dealing with forests, climate, science, space and disaster management.
- ❑ This trend matters because environmental governance in India is moving from a narrow “conservation-only” lens to a **climate-governance + livelihoods + technology + disaster-risk-reduction** framework.
- ❑ Report argues for **decentralised climate action plans, urban resilience, river-basin management, biodiversity conservation and technology-enabled environmental monitoring**.

Central Empowered Committee

Constituted By: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Year of Formation: September 2023

In 2023, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued a revised notification for reconstituting the Central Empowered Committee (CEC).

Mandate

- ❑ The CEC’s creation aimed **to address environmental concerns and ensure proper protection of forests and biodiversity**.

Powers of the Committee

- ❑ **Call for any documents from any person** or the Government of the Union or the State or any other official;
- ❑ **Summon any person** and receive evidence from such person on oath either on affidavit or otherwise;
- ❑ **Seek assistance/presence of any person(s)/official(s)** required by it in relation to its work.

Key Points

- ❑ The committee on environment issues, which **has been ad hoc so far, will now be recognised as a permanent statutory body**.
- ❑ It has been formed on a permanent basis following the SC directions in 2002, which was directed to be constituted at national level for monitoring the apex court orders pertaining to forests and wildlife cases.
- ❑ The panel was **constituted in the famous TN Godavarman vs. Union of States case by the SC in 2002** and was also responsible for pointing out non-compliances with the same.
- ❑ As per the new structure, the committee includes a chairman, a member secretary, and the remaining three expert members, who are civil servants appointed by the Union Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- ❑ Earlier, the expert members constituted non-governmental appointments.

DEFENCE & SECURITY

Standing Committee on Home Affairs – Cyber Crime

The Standing Committee on Home Affairs presented a major report in **August 2025** on **Cyber Crime: Ramifications, Protection and Prevention**.

- ❑ It observed that India's cyber-crime architecture is fragmented across multiple laws and agencies, while cyber threats now include fraud, ransom ware, identity theft, espionage, child exploitation, critical infrastructure attacks and cyber terrorism.
- ❑ The Committee recommended a **comprehensive cybercrime law**, clearer definitions of cyber offences, stronger penal provisions, and creation of an **Integrated Cybercrime Task Force**.
- ❑ It also emphasised specialised investigation capacity, forensic infrastructure, public awareness and inter-agency coordination.
- ❑ It bridges **law, policing, digital economy, citizen safety and national security**.

High-level Committee on Infiltration-linked Demographic Concerns

In **May 2026**, the Union government announced a **high-level committee** to examine demographic changes arising from **“infiltration and other unnatural causes”**, with stated implications for **national security, sovereignty and social stability**.

- ❑ Report show that migration is simultaneously a **security issue, governance issue and humanitarian issue**.

Parliamentary Scrutiny of Defence CPSEs

Recent parliamentary scrutiny through CoPU has also covered **defence-linked public undertakings**, including audit-related reviews of **HAL** and identification of defence-sector CPSEs for deeper examination.

- ❑ This matters because India's defence modernisation is increasingly tied to **Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence**, indigenisation, supply-chain resilience and export capability.
- ❑ Parliamentary reports in this domain usually focus on project delays, cost overruns, technology absorption, production efficiency and accountability in public procurement.

Committee to Combat Transnational Cybercrimes

Constituted By: Union Government

Year of Formation: May 2024

Chairperson: Special Secretary (Internal Security), Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Union Government has constituted an inter-ministerial committee to address the surge in transnational cybercrimes targeting Indians from Southeast Asian countries.