

UPSC Current Affairs

Analysis

Administrative Reforms and Transparency

UPSC to release provisional answer keys after Civil Services prelims — move to publish provisional keys so candidates can raise objections.

Relevance

Prelims logistics / Exam administration / RTI & transparency issues

Prelims Pointers

- UPSC is a Constitutional Body under Article 315 of the Indian Constitution.
- Functions of UPSC are outlined in Article 320, including conducting examinations.
- The Union Public Service Commission (Exemption from Consultation) Regulations, 1958, govern certain aspects of its functioning.
- Concept of provisional vs. final answer keys in public examinations.
- Mechanism for candidate objections to provisional answer keys (e.g., specified window, online portal).
- Relevance of Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 in ensuring transparency in public bodies like UPSC.
- Supreme Court rulings (e.g., Khanapuram Gandaiah case) have emphasized the importance of transparency in selection processes.

Bihar election — parties ask EC for minimal phases; controversies over special intensive revision (voter rolls, deletions/additions)

- **Relevance:** Polity & Governance (Election Commission, electoral rolls, conduct of elections); GS II — State politics; Ethics/Administrative issues for mains
- **Prelims Pointers:**
 - Election Commission of India (ECI) is an independent constitutional body established under Article 324.
 - Article 324(1) vests the superintendence, direction and control of elections in the ECI.
 - Composition of ECI: Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners as fixed by the President.
 - Electoral rolls are prepared and revised under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.
 - Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is a process to update the electoral rolls annually, ensuring accuracy and inclusivity.
 - Key forms for electoral roll management: Form 6 (for inclusion of name), Form 7 (for objection to inclusion or deletion of name), Form 8 (for correction of entries), Form 6A (for overseas electors).
 - The ECI determines the schedule for elections, including the number of phases, considering factors like security, logistics, and resource availability.
 - Article 326 guarantees universal adult franchise (voting age 18 years, reduced from 21 by 61st Amendment Act, 1988).

Public Health and Drug Regulation

Cough-syrup deaths → Centre orders risk-based inspections of manufacturing units after DEG/contamination concerns; States (MP/Kerala) ban product

Relevance Areas

- Public Health (drug regulation, CDSCO)
- Environment/Industry regulation
- GS III (health infrastructure, pharmaceutical regulation)

Key Prelims Points

- **CDSCO: Central Drugs Standard Control Organization**, apex regulatory body for drugs & medical devices under **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**.
- **Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940**: Primary legislation governing manufacture, sale, and distribution of drugs. **Rules, 1945** further detail implementation.
- **Contaminants: Diethylene Glycol (DEG)** and **Ethylene Glycol (EG)** are toxic industrial solvents, not permitted in medicinal products.
- **Risk-based inspections**: A new approach to prioritize inspection of manufacturing units based on risk factors like past violations, product history, and global alerts.
- **State vs. Centre**: Drug manufacturing licenses are issued by state drug regulators, while **CDSCO** handles approvals for new drugs, clinical trials, and standards.
- **Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)**: Mandatory quality standards that drug manufacturers must adhere to, recently made stricter.

Organ donation: survey finds majority of brain deaths not certified — missed organ donation opportunities

Relevance: Health system & ethics (GS II/III) — organ donation policy, capacity & training gaps

Prelims pointers:

- **THOTA, 1994: Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act**, the legal framework for organ donation and transplantation in India.
- **THOTA (Amendment) Rules, 2023**: Removed age cap (previously **65**) for organ recipients, abolished domicile requirement, and simplified brain death certification process.
- **Brain Death Certification**: Performed by a panel of doctors including a neurologist/neurosurgeon, typically after **two** rounds of testing. Essential for cadaveric organ donation.
- **Consent Models**: India primarily follows an '**opt-in**' system (explicit consent required from donor/family) rather than 'opt-out' (presumed consent).
- **NOTTO: National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation**, the apex body coordinating organ donation activities nationwide.
- **SOTTO/ROTT**: **State/Regional Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisations** facilitate organ allocation within states and regions.
- **Organ Registry**: **NOTTO** maintains a national waiting list for organs.

International Relations and Diplomacy

India's Gaza Policy Response

India's reaction to **U.S. Gaza "peace plan" — PM**

Modi praises **Trump** leadership; **India's** diplomatic stance and remarks about reconstruction role

Relevance: International Relations (**India-West Asia** policy, diplomacy), **GS II** (foreign policy)

Prelims pointers:

- **Historical Stance:** **India's** consistent support for a **two-state solution** to the **Israel-Palestine** conflict.
- **Diplomatic Balancing Act:** Navigating relations with both **Israel** and **Arab nations** in **West Asia**.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** **India's** provision of **humanitarian assistance** to **Gaza**, including medical supplies and food.
- **Reconstruction Role:** Potential involvement in post-conflict reconstruction efforts, aligning with **India's "Look West" policy**.
- **Geopolitical Context:** Understanding the implications of external peace proposals (e.g., **U.S.-led initiatives**) on regional stability and **India's** interests.
- **Key Institutions:** **India's** engagement with the **UN** and other multilateral forums on the issue.

UK-India Strategic Partnership

U.K. PM Keir Starmer to visit **India** (**8–9 Oct**); follow-up after **FTA** — trade & strategic dialogue

Relevance: **IR** (trade diplomacy, **FTA**), **GS III** (international trade & agreements)

Prelims pointers:

- **UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** Current status and key contentious issues (e.g., tariffs, services, visas).
- **Strategic Partnership 2030 Roadmap:** Bilateral framework guiding cooperation across defense, trade, climate, health, and people-to-people links.
- **Visit Dates:** **U.K. PM Keir Starmer's** visit scheduled for **8–9 October**, focusing on enhancing economic and strategic ties.
- **Key Areas of Cooperation:** Defense and security, science and technology, green growth, and education.
- **Multilateral Engagements:** **India-UK** collaboration in **G7**, **G20**, and the **Commonwealth**.
- **Trade Figures:** Overview of major exports and imports between **India** and the **UK**.

Nirav Modi — **London** court to hear plea to reopen extradition (**Nov 23**) citing fears of interrogation

Relevance: Polity/International law (extradition), **GS II** (treaties, bilateral legal cooperation)

Prelims pointers:

- **Extradition Act, 1962 (India):** Key provisions and conditions for extradition requests.
- **Extradition Act 2003 (UK):** Legal framework governing extradition from the **UK**.
- **Dual Criminality:** Principle requiring the alleged offense to be a crime in both the requesting and requested states.
- **Specialty Rule:** Principle that an extradited person can only be prosecuted for the offenses for which extradition was granted.
- **Human Rights Concerns:** Grounds often cited by fugitives to resist extradition (e.g., fear of unfair trial, prison conditions, mental health).
- **Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs):** Agreements facilitating cooperation in legal matters between countries.
- **Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (India):** Legislation aimed at deterring economic offenders from evading **Indian** law.
- **Key Dates:** **November 23** as the scheduled date for the **London** court hearing.

Internal Security Challenges

NIA files **chargesheet** in **Batala (Punjab) RPG terror attack (April 2025)** — **11** accused named; foreign handlers alleged

Relevance: **Internal Security / Terrorism (GS III)** — counter-terror investigations & **NIA role**

Prelims pointers: The **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** was established in **2008** post-Mumbai attacks. It functions under the **NIA Act, 2008**, and investigates offenses affecting **India's sovereignty, security, and integrity**, and has jurisdiction across states without special state permission. Key statutes relevant to NIA's mandate include the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967**, and the **Explosive Substances Act, 1908**. A **chargesheet** is a final report prepared by a police or investigating agency after completing its investigation, indicating sufficient evidence for trial. **RPG** refers to a **Rocket Propelled Grenade**, a common weapon in terror attacks.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah rules out talks with **Maoists** until they **lay down arms**; deadline to eliminate **Maoism** by **March 31, 2026**

- **Relevance:** **Internal security / Left-wing extremism policy (GS III), Centre-State counter-insurgency measures**
- **Prelims pointers:** **Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)** primarily affects states within the '**Red Corridor**' (e.g., **Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha**). The government's strategy against LWE includes the **SAMADHAN doctrine** (Smart leadership, Aggressive strategy, Motivation, Actionable intelligence, Dashboard-based KPIs, Harnessing Technology, Action plan for each theatre, No access to financing). The **Communist Party of India (Maoist)** is designated as a **terrorist organization** under **UAPA**. Government policy emphasizes **surrender and rehabilitation schemes** for **Maoists**, linking security operations with **development initiatives** in affected areas like **Bastar**, rather than negotiation without disarmament. The stated deadline for total elimination of **Maoism** is **March 31, 2026**.

Postal services resume in **Manipur's Churachandpur** after **>2 years** (step towards normalcy)

Relevance: **Internal security / administration**; impact on **governance and restoration of services (GS II/III)**

Prelims pointers: The resumption of **postal services** in **Churachandpur** indicates a step towards normalcy after prolonged **ethnic conflict** in **Manipur**, primarily involving the **Meitei and Kuki communities**. Such restoration of **essential public services** (like post, banking, transport, communication) is crucial for **governance and economic activity** in conflict-affected regions. The **Department of Posts** operates under the **Ministry of Communications**, providing various services including mail delivery, **financial services (India Post Payments Bank)**, and **social security schemes**. **Churachandpur** is a district in **Manipur**, located in the southwestern part of the state, and has been a focal point of recent unrest. The administrative fallout of conflict includes disruption of **civil administration, law and order breakdown, and displacement of populations**.

Constitutional and Legal Issues

01

Reservation Law Challenge

Supreme Court to hear challenge against **Telangana's** increase in **OBC quota** for **local bodies** (gross reservation **>50%**)

Relevance: Polity & Judiciary (reservation law, **SC precedents like Mandal**, **GS II**)

Prelims pointers:

- **Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992)**: Landmark **Supreme Court judgment** that imposed a **50% ceiling** on reservations, except in exceptional circumstances.
- **Constitutional Articles**: Reservations are governed by **Articles 15(4), 15(5), 16(4), 16(4A), 16(4B)** of the **Constitution**.
- **State's Power: States** can make laws regarding reservations for **local bodies**, deriving power from relevant entries in the **State List (Entry 41 for state public services)** and **constitutional amendments** related to **Panchayats** and **Municipalities (73rd and 74th Amendment Acts)**.
- **Judicial Scrutiny**: Any reservation exceeding the **50% ceiling** is subject to strict judicial scrutiny by the **Supreme Court** to assess its **constitutional validity** based on '**exceptional circumstances**' criteria.
- **Telangana Act**: The specific law being challenged is the **Telangana State Reservation for Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes in Local Bodies Act**, which increased **OBC quota**.

02

Education Policy Interpretation

Supreme Court / RTE-TET issue – Tamil Nadu review plea over interpretation of **Section 23** and **TET applicability**

Relevance: Education policy / **Fundamental Right to Education (Article 21A), GS II/III**

Prelims pointers:

- **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009**: Enacted to provide **free and compulsory education** for all children aged **6 to 14 years**.
- **Article 21A**: Inserted by the **86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002**, making education a **Fundamental Right**.
- **Section 23(1) of RTE Act**: Mandates that qualifications for appointment as a teacher be laid down by an academic authority authorized by the **Central Government** (which is the **NCTE**).
- **Teacher Eligibility Test (TET)**: A **mandatory examination** for aspiring teachers in **government** and **private schools**, introduced to ensure **quality education** as per **NCTE guidelines**.
- **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)**: A **statutory body** established under the **NCTE Act, 1993**, responsible for planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system.
- **Review Plea: Tamil Nadu's plea** relates to the interpretation of **Section 23(2) of the RTE Act** concerning the relaxation of **minimum qualifications** for **teachers**, specifically regarding the **retrospective application of TET**.

Leh / Ladakh: 30 of 70 youth detained in protests released; **mobile internet suspension continues**; probe into violence

Relevance: **Centre-UT administration, civil liberties, internal security** and **Article 19 implications (GS II)**

Prelims pointers:

- **Ladakh Union Territory**: Formed on **October 31, 2019**, by bifurcating the erstwhile **state of Jammu & Kashmir**; it is a **Union Territory** without a legislature.
- **Administrator/LG**: Administered by a **Lieutenant Governor** appointed by the **President**, under **Article 239** of the **Constitution**.
- **Article 19**: Guarantees **fundamental rights** like **freedom of speech and expression (19(1)(a))** and **freedom to assemble peaceably (19(1)(b))**. These rights are subject to **reasonable restrictions** under **Articles 19(2)** and **19(3)** in the interest of **public order, sovereignty, and integrity of India**.
- **Section 144 CrPC**: Allows **executive magistrates** to issue orders in **urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger**, often used to prohibit **public gatherings** or impose **curfews**, including **internet shutdowns**.
- **Internet Shutdown Rules**: Governed by the **Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017**, issued under the **Indian Telegraph Act, 1885**.
- **Protest Demands (Ladakh)**: Key demands include **statehood for Ladakh**, inclusion in the **Sixth Schedule** of the **Constitution**, **separate Lok Sabha seats** for **Leh** and **Kargil**, and a dedicated **Public Service Commission**.

Disaster Management and Public Safety

Karur stampede – Tamil Nadu to form SIT and draft SOP on crowd control for nationwide adoption

Immediate Response

- Formation of Special Investigation Team
- Comprehensive inquiry into incident
- Accountability measures

Policy Framework

- Standard Operating Procedures development
- Nationwide adoption strategy
- Preventive measures implementation

Relevance: Disaster management, public administration, safety regulations (GS II/III)

Prelims pointers:

- Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Key legislation for disaster management in India, providing for the establishment of National, State, and District Disaster Management Authorities.
- National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA):** Chaired by the Prime Minister, responsible for laying down policies, plans, and guidelines for disaster management.
- State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs):** Headed by the Chief Minister, responsible for implementing NDMA guidelines and developing state-specific plans.
- Crowd Management:** Best practices include detailed event planning, effective communication systems, adequate entry/exit points, trained personnel, and emergency medical facilities.
- Role of State Machinery:** District Collector/Magistrate and Superintendent of Police are pivotal in maintaining law and order, ensuring public safety, and coordinating disaster response at the local level.
- Special Investigation Team (SIT):** Ad-hoc body formed for in-depth investigation into specific cases, often involving high public interest or significant casualties, to ensure accountability and uncover causes.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Detailed, written instructions to achieve uniformity of the performance of a specific function, crucial for effective disaster preparedness and response.



Economic Policy and Industrial Concerns

Industry/economy: concerns on anti-dumping duty on MEG (input for polyester textile industry)



Policy Challenge

Anti-dumping duties affecting input costs for textile manufacturing

Industry Impact

Domestic raw material shortages affecting Polyester production

Sector Implications

MSME and textile policy effects on competitiveness

Relevance: Economy & Industry policy (GS III) — trade remedies, input costs impact on manufacturing

Prelims pointers:

- **Anti-Dumping Duty (ADD):** A tariff imposed on foreign imports priced below fair market value to protect domestic industries.
- **Legal Framework:** In India, ADDs are governed by Section 9A of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975.
- **Investigating Authority:** Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry initiates and conducts anti-dumping investigations.
- **Imposing Authority:** The Ministry of Finance imposes the final anti-dumping duty.
- **Duration:** ADDs are typically imposed for five years, subject to a sunset review.
- **Mono Ethylene Glycol (MEG):** A crucial raw material for producing Polyester Staple Fibre (PSF), Polyester Filament Yarn (PFY), and PET resins, vital for the Polyester textile industry.
- **Impact on Textile Industry:** ADD on MEG increases input costs, affecting the competitiveness of Indian textile exports, particularly synthetic products.
- **MSME Sector:** High input costs due to ADD disproportionately impact Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the textile sector.
- **Trade Remedies:** ADD is a form of trade remedy, alongside countervailing duties (CVD) and safeguard measures, used to counter unfair trade practices.

This comprehensive analysis covers all major UPSC-relevant developments, providing structured study material for effective preparation across multiple General Studies papers.