



INFINITE  
IAS KAS

KAS CURRENT AFFAIRS

Daily Current Affairs | [www.infiniteiaskas.com](http://www.infiniteiaskas.com)

## KAS Current Affairs

### Preliminary Examination

#### Paper-I: Current Events of National and International Importance

##### ❖ First-ever SIP under PM-SETU scheme comes to A.P.

Context: Andhra Pradesh has emerged as a pioneer in the national effort to upgrade vocational education, with the National Steering Committee (NSC) approving the first-ever Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) under the Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU) scheme for the Visakhapatnam ITI Cluster.

- The proposal, submitted by ArcelorMittal/Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), was cleared during the 3rd NSC meeting held at Kaushal Bhawan in New Delhi, chaired by, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- The National Steering Committee approved a ₹200.21-crore Strategic Investment Plan for Visakhapatnam's ITI Cluster under the PM-SETU scheme.
- The approval marks the first operational industry partnership under the ₹60,000-crore flagship initiative across the nation, establishing Andhra Pradesh as the first State to onboard an Anchor Industry Partner (AIP).

#### Modernise infra

- The PM-SETU scheme aims to transform 1,000 Government ITIs across the country through an industry-led 'Hub-and-Spoke' model, designed to modernise infrastructure and align vocational training with the requirements of advanced manufacturing and emerging technologies.
- The successful approval of the Visakhapatnam cluster is expected to serve as a national model for strengthening industry participation in vocational training, fostering outcome-oriented governance, and enhancing the financial sustainability of Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) created under the scheme.
- The initiative is a critical component of broader government efforts to build a future-ready workforce for Viksit Bharat-2047, with 32 States and Union Territories already having constituted their respective steering committees to accelerate implementation.

### ❖ General Subramani takes charge as CDS; lays emphasis on ‘JAI’

Context: General N.S. Raja Subramani on Sunday assumed charge as India’s third Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and Secretary, Department of Military Affairs.

- The new CDS expressed gratitude for the trust reposed in the armed forces and reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening national security through greater integration among the services. “The Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, Ministry of Defence, strategic institutions and all stakeholders stand united as part of the Whole of Nation approach to strengthen India’s security”.
- The armed forces would work towards implementing **Prime Minister vision of “JAI” — Jointness, Atma Nirbharta (self-sufficiency), and Innovation.**
- Organisational reforms aimed at enhancing synergy, integration, and operational effectiveness among the three services would remain a key focus area.
- **“Atma Nirbharta is a central pillar of our national security.** We will accelerate the development, induction, and integration of indigenous weapons in our armed forces”.

- A highly decorated officer with more than four decades of service, General Subramani was commissioned into the Garhwal Rifles in December 1985. He has held several key command and staff appointments, including General Officer Commanding 2 Corps, GOC-in-C Central Command, and Vice Chief of the Army Staff.

### ❖ Admiral Swaminathan takes charge as 27th chief of Navy

Context: Admiral Krishna Swaminathan on Sunday assumed charge as the 27th Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy, succeeding Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, who retired after over 41 years of service.

- Admiral Swaminathan reaffirmed the Navy’s commitment to protecting national and economic interests amid an increasingly complex regional security environment.
- The Indian Navy stands vigilant to protect national interests and is actively deployed in a regional security environment that remains challenging, complex, unpredictable and uncertain”.
- His priorities as the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Swaminathan stressed the importance of maintaining the highest standards of operational readiness and combat effectiveness. He said the Navy would continue its ongoing modernisation drive while accelerating the induction of niche and emerging technologies to strengthen its operational capabilities. “The Indian Navy is well set on a course of capability enhancement and modernisation.

- Commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1987, Admiral Swaminathan is a Communication and Electronic Warfare specialist with nearly four decades of distinguished service.
- During his career, he has held several key operational and staff appointments, including Commander of Western Fleet, Vice Chief of Naval Staff and Flag Officer Commanding-

in-Chief of Western Naval Command, a position he held prior to becoming the Navy chief.

### ❖ Nepal PM sparks row, says his country has encroached upon Indian territory

#### Why in news?

Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah said that **his country too had encroached upon Indian territory, in what is considered to be the first such public statement by a head of government of the neighbouring country.**

#### Key Points

Dimension	Analytical Details & Diplomatic Context
<b>Bilateral Frontier</b>	A highly porous, open international border stretching approximately <b>1,850 km</b> , shared across five Indian states (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Sikkim).
<b>Primary Disputed Tri-junction</b>	The <b>Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura</b> region, situated at the strategic tri-junction between India, Nepal, and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.
<b>Recent Trigger</b>	The formal revival and upgrading of the <b>Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via the Lipulekh Pass route</b> , which involves newly metalled road infrastructure built by India's Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
<b>India's Sovereign Stand</b>	These territories are historically, administratively, and geographically integral parts of the <b>Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand</b> .
<b>Nepal's Clarification</b>	Following recent bilateral friction, Kathmandu clarified that its official statements regarding "encroachment" or "cross-border occupation" specifically targeted local administrative variations along the <b>Dasgaja (the designated 10-yard No-Man's Land strip)</b> on the plains border, rather than a confrontation over the high-altitude Himalayan boundary.

#### What Did Nepal Clarify?

Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs clarified that the Prime Minister's remark was related to:

- **Dasgaja area**, or no-man's land along the border.
- Cross-border occupation, where citizens of one country may be cultivating or residing on land belonging to the other country.
- Technical committee findings that some land being used by Nepal may actually fall on the Indian side.

## India–Nepal Boundary Dispute

The India–Nepal dispute mainly centres around:

1. **Kalapani**
2. **Lipulekh**
3. **Limpiyadhura**

Nepal claims these areas based on its interpretation of the origin of the **Kali/Mahakali River**, while India maintains that they are part of **Uttarakhand**.

### Static Linkage

Term	Meaning
<b>Kalapani</b>	A highly strategic disputed territory located near the India-Nepal-China tri-junction, currently administered by India as part of Uttarakhand.
<b>Lipulekh</b>	A high-altitude Himalayan mountain pass in Uttarakhand used as a trade route and for the <b>Kailash Mansarovar Yatra</b> pilgrimage.
<b>Limpiyadhura</b>	A mountain ridge claimed by Nepal as the true geographical origin of the Kali River, forming the basis of its claim over the Kalapani region.
<b>Dasgaja</b>	The designated ten-yard-wide (approximately 9 meters) strip of <b>No-Man's Land</b> serving as a buffer zone along the plains section of the India-Nepal border.
<b>Treaty of Sugauli (1816)</b>	The historic peace accord signed between the Kingdom of Nepal and the British East India Company that established the <b>Kali River</b> as Nepal's western boundary.

### Significance

- Highlights the sensitivity of **India–Nepal border management**.
- Shows how local land use and cross-border occupation can become diplomatic issues.
- Important for India's neighbourhood policy and border security.
- The issue also affects people-to-people ties due to the open border between India and Nepal.

### ❖ Padma Barrage: Bangladesh's New River Engineering Project

### Why in News?

Bangladesh has approved the **Padma Barrage Project** on the **Padma River** in Rajbari district to address water scarcity in its southwest region.

Dimension	Details & Key Metrics
Project Name	Padma Barrage Project
Country & Location	Bangladesh; Pangsha Upazila in the <b>Rajbari District</b>
Primary River	<b>Padma River</b> (The main distributary/continuation of the Ganga River in Bangladesh)
Physical Dimensions	<b>2.1 km</b> in length
Engineering Features	<b>78 spillway gates</b> , 18 undersluices, 2 fish passes, and a 14-meter navigation lock
Storage Capacity	<b>2.9 Billion Cubic Metres (BCM)</b>
Projected Benefits	<b>113 MW</b> of hydropower; irrigation coverage for <b>2.88 million hectares</b>
Strategic Secondary Use	Securing cooling water supply for the <b>Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant</b>

### Why is it Important?

- The Padma is the **Bangladesh stretch of the Ganga**.
- Bangladesh says the project is needed due to reduced seasonal water flow linked to the **Farakka Barrage upstream in India**.
- It aims to improve irrigation, hydropower generation, water storage and navigation.

### Concerns

- Large barrages may disturb natural river flow.
- They can affect sediment movement and fish migration.
- Risk of waterlogging and ecological imbalance.
- Critics have demanded stronger public scrutiny and environmental assessment.

### India-Bangladesh Angle

The project has significance for **transboundary river management**, especially in the context of the Ganga-Padma river system, Farakka Barrage and India-Bangladesh water diplomacy.

### Global Context

While South Asia continues to build large river barriers, many European and North American countries are removing old dams and barriers to restore free-flowing rivers.

## ❖ Japan’s Defence Minister at Shangri-La Dialogue: Indo-Pacific Security

### Why in News?

Japan’s Defence Minister **Shinjiro Koizumi** indirectly criticised China at the **Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore**, raising concerns over China’s expanding military capabilities and lack of transparency.

Dimension	Analytical Details & Strategic Context
Event / Forum	<b>Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD)</b> — Asia's premier independent defense and security summit.
Convening Authority	<b>International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)</b> , a London-based global think tank.
Permanent Venue	<b>Singapore</b> (Hosted annually at the Shangri-La Hotel since its inception in 2002).
Timeline	<b>May 29 – May 31, 2026</b> (The 23rd edition of the dialogue).
Core Character	A <b>Track one-and-a-half (Track 1.5) diplomatic forum</b> , meaning it brings together official government ministers (defense ministers, military chiefs) but is organized and structured by an independent, non-governmental body.

### What Did Japan Say?

- Japan rejected China’s allegation that Tokyo is following a policy of “new militarism”.
- Japan said it does not possess **nuclear weapons or strategic bombers**.
- It indirectly questioned China’s large nuclear arsenal and rapid military expansion.
- Japan expressed concern over China’s military activities being carried out **without sufficient transparency**.

### Background

- Japan has been moving towards a more proactive defence posture.
- This shift comes amid:
  - China’s growing military power
  - Taiwan Strait tensions
  - North Korea’s missile threats
  - Reduced certainty over U.S. security commitments

## About Shangri-La Dialogue

The **Shangri-La Dialogue** is a major annual defence and security forum held in Singapore. It brings together defence ministers, military leaders and strategic experts, especially focusing on **Indo-Pacific security**.

### Significance for India

- The issue is relevant to India's **Indo-Pacific strategy**.
- It highlights the growing importance of:
  - Maritime security
  - China's military rise
  - QUAD cooperation
  - Rules-based international order
  - Taiwan Strait stability

## ❖ U.S. to Send Only Used Nuclear-Powered Submarines to Australia under AUKUS

### Why in News?

Australia will receive **only used nuclear-powered submarines** from the United States under the revised **AUKUS defence agreement**, instead of the earlier plan of getting two used submarines and one new submarine.

AUKUS Submarine Agreement: Recalibrated 2026 Plan:

Dimension	Analytical Details & Revised Strategic Metrics
Agreement Name	AUKUS (Trilateral Security Pact)
Pact Members	Australia (A), United Kingdom (UK), United States (US)
Inception Year	Announced in <b>2021</b> to counter China's rapid naval expansion in the Indo-Pacific.
Core Deliverable	Provision of convention-armed, <b>nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs)</b> to the Royal Australian Navy.
Submarine Class	US-designed <b>Virginia-class submarines</b> (interim measure) leading up to the co-designed <b>SSN-AUKUS</b> class.
The 2026 Revised Plan	Australia will acquire <b>three used (pre-owned) U.S. Navy Virginia-class submarines</b> directly from active American stock, rather than waiting for newly manufactured hulls.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Analytical Details &amp; Revised Strategic Metrics</b>
<b>Primary Reason</b>	<b>Industrial Pragmatism &amp; Cost-Effectiveness:</b> Streamlines the delivery timeline by bypassing severe backlogs in US shipyards (Electric Boat and Newport News), reducing immediate capital expenditure for Canberra.
<b>Diplomatic Venue</b>	Formalized during bilateral sidelines at the <b>Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore</b> (May 29–31, 2026).

### What is AUKUS?

**AUKUS** is a trilateral security partnership between **Australia, the U.K. and the U.S.** aimed at strengthening defence cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

Its major focus areas include:

- Nuclear-powered submarine capability for Australia
- Advanced defence technologies
- Indo-Pacific maritime security
- Deterrence against China’s growing military presence

### Important Clarification

These submarines are **nuclear-powered**, not necessarily **nuclear-armed**.

- **Nuclear-powered:** Uses nuclear reactors for propulsion.
- **Nuclear-armed:** Carries nuclear weapons.

### Why is it Important?

- Strengthens Australia’s underwater naval capability.
- Enhances U.S.-Australia-U.K. defence cooperation.
- Increases strategic deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.
- Reflects growing focus on China’s assertiveness in the region.
- Relevant for India due to its own Indo-Pacific and maritime security interests.

## ❖ Doval Holds Talks with Myanmar President: India–Myanmar Relations

### Why in News?

India’s National Security Adviser **Ajit Doval** met Myanmar President **U Min Aung Hlaing** in New Delhi to discuss key issues related to **bilateral ties, connectivity, border security, trade and defence cooperation**.

India–Myanmar High-Level Strategic Engagement

Dimension	Analytical Details & Geopolitical Context
<b>Key Interlocutors</b>	<b>NSA Ajit Doval</b> (India) and <b>Senior General Min Aung Hlaing</b> (Chairman of the State Administration Council, Myanmar).
<b>Format / Timeline</b>	Comprehensive, security-focused dialogue conducted during a <b>five-day state visit</b> to India.
<b>Main Agenda</b>	Cross-border counter-insurgency, maritime/land connectivity, border fencing logistics, and defense cooperation.
<b>Bilateral Frontier</b>	A highly porous, mountainous <b>1,643 km</b> international land border.
<b>Indian States Affected</b>	Four critical Northeastern frontier states: <b>Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram.</b>

## Key Strategic Themes (Mains Lens)

### 1. Internal Security & Cross-Border Insurgency

The primary driver for New Delhi's engagement with the military regime is managing security spillover from Myanmar's ongoing civil conflict. Insurgent groups like the NSCN-K (Nagaland) and various valley-based insurgent groups in Manipur have historically utilized the dense, unfenced border tracts of western Myanmar for safe havens. India seeks coordinated intelligence and military action to prevent these groups from striking inside Indian territory and retreating across the border.

### 2. Infrastructure & The Kaladan Multi-Modal Project

Myanmar serves as India's sole land gateway to Southeast Asia, making it central to the **Act East Policy**. Security issues are currently stalling premier infrastructure lines.



The Kaladan Multi-Modal Project Corridor. Source: Wikipedia

As visible in the transit layout, the project connects **Kolkata Port** to the deep-water **Sittwe Port** in Myanmar via the Bay of Bengal. From Sittwe, the route moves inland along the Kaladan River to Paletwa, and then connects via a highway to Mizoram. With intense fighting occurring between the Myanmar military and regional ethnic armed organizations (like the Arakan Army) near Sittwe and Paletwa, securing this alternative route to India's Northeast is a top priority.

### 3. Border Governance & Scraping of the FMR

Discussions heavily targeted the logistical implementation of India's decision to scrap the **Free Movement Regime (FMR)**—which previously allowed locals to travel 16 km across either side without visas—and the proposal to completely fence the 1,643 km border. India requires local cooperation on the ground to ensure construction proceeds smoothly without disrupting tribal communities living along the line.

#### Prelims Pointer: North-to-South State Ordering

When dealing with mapping questions regarding India's international boundaries, remember the exact sequence of Indian states bordering Myanmar from north to south:

1. **Arunachal Pradesh** (Shares the longest border stretch)
2. **Nagaland**
3. **Manipur** (Contains the strategic border-trading town of Moreh)
4. **Mizoram** (Directly abuts the Chin State of Myanmar)

## Paper-II: Current Events of State Importance and Important Government Schemes and Programs

### ❖ Women to get smart card for seamless travel in buses, metro

#### Why in news?

Women commuters in Bengaluru may soon be able to use a **single smart card for both free bus travel and Namma Metro journeys, with the State government planning to introduce a Shakti Scheme smart card integrated with the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) system.**

- The proposed initiative aims to simplify public transport for women by enabling seamless travel across multiple modes of transport using a single card.
- While the card will continue to provide free travel benefits under the Shakti scheme on Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) buses and services operated by other State-run transport corporations, it will also function as a **rechargeable payment card for Namma Metro services.**

#### How the smart card will work

- Free card for eligible women beneficiaries
  - e-KYC verification before issuing card
  - Free travel on State-run buses continues
  - Recharge card to pay for Metro fare
  - Tap/swipe card for instant ticket validation
- 

- New card is being designed on the NCMC platform, a nationwide standard that allows commuters to access various public transport systems through a single smart card.
- Under the proposed framework, eligible women can obtain the **card free of cost by submitting an application through online or offline channels**. The government is planning to facilitate registration through citizen service centres and digital platforms.
- “During the enrolment process, applicants will undergo e-KYC verification, during which their residential address and other eligibility details will be digitally authenticated before the card is issued”.
- The card will continue to guarantee free travel under the Shakti scheme across buses operated by the State’s four transport corporations. At the same time, it will serve as a stored-value smart card for Metro journeys.
- “The objective is to provide women with a single, convenient mobility card. A beneficiary can obtain the card free of cost, travel on government buses under the Shakti scheme without any charges, and also use the same card for Metro travel after recharging it. This will eliminate the need to carry multiple cards or tickets and make travel across different modes of transport much smoother”.
- Currently, women passengers avail themselves of free travel under the Shakti scheme by obtaining a zero-fare ticket after presenting a valid government-issued identity card to the conductor. However, officials noted that there have been instances of individuals using invalid or duplicate identity documents to claim the benefit. They emphasised that the scheme is intended solely for women who are domiciled in Karnataka.
- Officials further stated that the verification process will help ensure that only eligible beneficiaries receive the benefits. “While issuing the Shakti smart card, we will verify the applicant’s residential address and other details required to avail the benefits under the Shakti scheme. The digital verification process will help improve transparency and efficiency,” official added.
- The smart card is also expected to replace the current practice of women passengers showing Aadhaar cards to conductors to avail themselves of free travel. Instead, conductors will validate journeys by swiping the card on electronic ticketing machines. The system will automatically generate zero-value tickets for Shakti beneficiaries while maintaining accurate passenger records.
- An official said that the introduction of smart cards would also benefit conductors by improving the accuracy of passenger data. According to the official, there have been instances where zero-fare tickets were allegedly issued even when no eligible passenger was travelling, resulting in discrepancies in passenger records.

**Sources: TH**

#### ❖ **Bangalore Astronomical Society featured in Mann Ki Baat**

- A two-decade-old Bengaluru-based non-profit volunteer group, Bangalore Astronomical Society (BAS), which promotes astronomy through regular sessions and workshops, was featured in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s **134th episode of Mann Ki Baat**.
- Mr. Modi mentioned that the BAS organises astronomy sessions and has launched an initiative to promote astronomy in rural areas. He referred to the group while highlighting India’s connection with astronomy and its links to the country’s culture.

**‘Comes as a surprise’**

- Sudhash Natarajan, 51, one of the trustees of the volunteer-driven BAS, told *The Hindu* that it came as a surprise when Doordarshan contacted them to inform them about the mention in Mann Ki Baat. Mr. Natarajan said that the group has been active since 2006, when six to seven enthusiasts began discussing astronomy.
- This eventually led to the formation of the whole group, which now has 35 to 40 volunteers. The group also has two other trustees, Keerthi Kiran and Vishwanath S.K. Among its most active volunteers are Pramodh S., Nandan Narasimha, and Shashi Kolar. According to Mr. Natarajan, the group conducts four different types of programmes. To develop curiosity and interest in astronomy in rural areas, they organise night-long stargazing sessions following afternoon theory classes for students. They call this programme the “Star Party”.
- Similarly, by identifying locations with dark skies and minimal light pollution, mostly in the Western Ghats, the group organises skywatching sessions.
- Keerthi Kiran, another trustee, said that the group has organised more than 1,000 programmes so far, and there are instances of participants being inspired to pursue PhDs in the subject.

Constitution:

Provision	Relevance
Article 51A(h)	Formulates the <b>Fundamental Duty</b> of every citizen of India to develop a <b>scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform.</b>

## Main Examination

### Paper-I: Essays

**Essay – 1: Topic of International/National Importance**

**Essay-2: Topic of State importance/Local Importance**

### Paper-II: General Studies 1

### Paper-III: General Studies 2

#### ❖ Odisha govt. clears key road for Vedanta’s mining project

- The Odisha government has granted permission for the construction of a road connecting State Highway 44 and Sijimali hilltop to facilitate the transportation of bauxite in Kashipur block of Rayagada district.
- Sijimali, with an estimated 311 million tonnes of bauxite, was allocated to Vedanta in March 2023. The mineral is crucial for the Vedanta Group to keep its alumina refinery at Lanjigarh running. However, the project has since been facing resistance from local

people, who fear that mining activity could dry up streams and adversely impact their livelihood.

- For several months, villagers have been living in makeshift shelters atop the hill, keeping a round-the-clock watch to prevent the construction of the road from Bichhapinda along SH-44 to Sijimali hilltop.
- The State-run Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) had applied for the diversion of 4.911 hectares of forest land for the construction of an access road from Sijimali bauxite mines (Hill Top) to SH-44 to facilitate bauxite transportation.
- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change granted Stage-I (in-principle) approval for diversion of the forest land in January 2026. Subsequently, considering the compliance with the conditions laid down under the ‘Stage-II in-principle’ approval, the Ministry granted Stage-II approval (final) under Section-2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, for non-forestry use of 4.911 hectares of forest land in favour of the IDCO on May 6.
- Following the final approval, the State has now allowed non-forestry use of 4.911 hectares for road construction.

#### ❖ **Human trafficking can’t be separated from broader migration flows, says SC**

- The Supreme Court has drawn a close link between migration and human trafficking, which it described as one of the worst forms of human exploitation. A journey in search of dignified livelihood often descends into a nightmare, mostly for women, and even children, the court said.
- A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan highlighted how “systemic inequalities transform a survival strategy into a pathway of exploitation”. While not all migration was trafficking, the latter phenomenon rarely occurred in the absence of migration, the court said.
- “For a large majority of this country’s population, migration is a survival and livelihood strategy; the structural vulnerabilities that drive such movement also create conditions conducive to coercion and deception... Trafficking cannot be separated from broader migration flows. Rather, it emerges from within them,” Justice Pardiwala said in a 297-page judgment pronounced on May 29, and released during the weekend.
- The judgment further addressed **the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act or the ITPA’s** failure to accord rights and protections to voluntary adult sex workers. The silence of the statute, Justice Pardiwala observed, had only made the deep social stigma against them louder. This, the court said, had resulted in voluntary adult sex workers being isolated, marginalised, and unable to access protections that the law otherwise extends to them.
- It said a meaningful starting point would be for the government to recognise the rights of voluntary adult sex workers and provide them adequate protections. “The rights of sex workers can exist without there being a right to sex work,” Justice Pardiwala wrote. The court flagged the need for the Union government to re-examine the conflation between sex trafficking and sex work in the legislative framework.

- It said **Section 143 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita requires that for an act of sexual exploitation to amount to trafficking, it has to fulfil the three-tiered framework of act, means, and purpose of the Palermo Protocol. But, on the other hand, all sex work was treated as trafficking under the ITPA. Section 143 mandates that the “act of bringing a person towards prostitution must have been done through one of the specified ‘means’, such as force, coercion, inducement, or deception, for it to constitute trafficking... The ITPA, on the other hand, operates on a fundamentally different logic. The ITPA requires no such ‘means’... Under the ITPA, all prostitution involving third parties is, in effect, treated as trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, regardless of whether any force, coercion, or inducement was employed”, the court pointed out.**
- The court also highlighted that the ITPA tends to harass the very victims it was meant to protect. Moreover, the Act does not expressly exclude children from its ambit. Both these factors must be looked into by the legislature, Justice Pardiwala said.v

#### ❖ **The Voice of Hind Rajab likely to get ‘A’ certificate**

- The Voice of Hind Rajab, the critically acclaimed 2025 film on the killing of the eponymous Palestinian five-year-old by Israeli forces, is set to be cleared by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) with an ‘A’ certificate, say official sources.
- This comes weeks after the Kaouther Ben Hania directorial was rejected for supposedly being detrimental to India-Israel relations.
- The misgivings of the initial advisory panel drew censure from film-makers, actors, activists and the Opposition.
- For the film to release, the CBFC will have to issue the certificate on its website (a step yet to be completed), and hand over the certificate to the film distributor.

#### ❖ **U.S. to send only used subs to Australia in revised defence deal**

- Australia will only receive used nuclear-powered submarines from the United States as part of an agreement to “streamline” the AUKUS deal, with the move branded on Sunday as a “cost-effective” measure by Defence Minister Richard Marles.
- The two nations — together with the third partner in their security pact, Britain — met at Singapore’s Shangri-La Dialogue, which brings together top defence officials and experts from about 45 countries.
- Under the 2021 AUKUS deal, Australia is expected to receive at least three so-called “Virginia-class” nuclear-powered submarines from the United States within 15 years.
- Australia had been expecting to receive two used submarines and one new one, but the countries announced on Saturday that all three will now be in-service vessels from the U.S. Navy stock.
- When asked why Canberra was now receiving only used equipment, Mr. Marles, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, told presspersons on Sunday it would be more cost-effective.
- In a joint statement, the U.S. and the U.K. confirmed the revision to the submarine agreement.

## ❖ The Apex Court Rings Its Own Chain: Suo Motu Cognisance by Supreme Court

### Why in News?

An editorial has raised concerns over the Supreme Court's increasing use of **suo motu cognisance** in criminal cases, especially when cases receive high media attention. The discussion is linked to the **Twisha Sharma death case**, where the Supreme Court registered a suo motu case based on media reports.

### Key Issue

The Supreme Court has been taking up some criminal matters on its own, but critics argue that such intervention often happens in **high-profile or media-covered cases**, while many similar cases continue in trial courts without special attention.

### What is Suo Motu Cognisance?

**Suo motu cognisance** means a court takes up a matter on its own, without a formal petition being filed.

It is usually used in cases involving:

- Serious violation of fundamental rights
- Public interest
- Administrative failure
- Urgent need for judicial intervention

### Major Concerns Raised

#### 1. Media-driven judicial attention

The article argues that cases receiving wide media coverage often get faster attention from the Supreme Court, while thousands of ordinary cases remain pending.

#### 2. Scarce judicial time

Judicial attention is limited. If the Supreme Court spends too much time monitoring individual criminal cases, it may affect its larger constitutional role.

#### 3. Trial courts are being bypassed

Criminal justice normally begins from police investigation and trial courts. Frequent Supreme Court monitoring may reduce confidence in lower courts.

#### 4. No clear selection criteria

There is no clear standard on why one case is taken suo motu while similar cases are not.

#### 5. Need for systemic reform

Instead of taking up selected cases, the article argues for strengthening trial courts, investigation quality, infrastructure, appointments and training.

#### Important Examples Mentioned

Case / Issue	Year	Relevance
<b>Twisha Sharma case</b>	2026	Supreme Court took suo motu cognisance based on media reports alleging structural/situational bias in the initial probe, later handing the investigation over to the CBI.
<b>R.G. Kar case</b>	2024	Supreme Court registered a suo motu case and monitored the CBI investigation after widespread public and medical community outrage.
<b>Hathras case</b>	2020	Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court took suo motu cognisance, specifically pulling up state authorities regarding the late-night cremation of the victim.
<b>Manipur violence</b>	2023	Supreme Court intervened heavily, monitoring the humanitarian situation, investigation, and rehabilitation efforts following ethnic violence.
<b>Sahara India Real Estate Corp. v. SEBI</b>	2012	Landmark judgment where the Supreme Court established guidelines for "postponement orders" regarding media reporting to protect the integrity of ongoing trials.

#### Key Legal Context

- **Suo Motu Power:** The Supreme Court exercises this power primarily under **Article 32** of the Constitution, while High Courts exercise it under **Article 226**, allowing them to convert media reports or letters into Public Interest Litigations (PILs) when fundamental rights are egregiously violated.
- **Media vs. Fair Trial:** *Sahara v. SEBI (2012)* remains the core precedent used by courts today when balancing freedom of speech (Article 19(1)(a)) against a citizen's right to a fair, unprejudiced trial (Article 21).

#### Paper-IV: General Studies 3

##### ❖ 'Nexbax AI Index' to redefine AI adoption in India

- A group of researchers have come up with the 'Next-Billion AI Index: The compass for AI utility and adoption in the global majority'.
- The new study challenges the global AI industry's obsession with benchmark rankings with its new framework Next Billion AI Index Framework (Nexbax AI Index).
- It argues that the metrics dominating AI development in the world are essentially useless for the billion-plus users across India and the Global South.

- The Nexbax AI index is developed by Ambrish Rawat, Kush R. Varshney and Jessica He from IBM research, Subhabrata Majumdar from Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), Claudio Pinhanez from University of Sao Paulo, Yann Le Beux from YUX Design, Satyapriya Krishna from Harvard University, Rahul Gupta from Amazon and Rumman Chowdhury from Humane Intelligence.
- Even in India's AI policy discourse, NITI Aayog increasingly recognises that readiness depends on affordability, multilingual access, and compliance-by-design.
- According to the researchers, the Nexbax AI Index gives that intuition a rigorous and a measurable form. Subhabrata Majumdar, assistant professor from IIMB, said, "This framework is developed with coauthors not only from India but people spanning from across Africa, Europe, and North America. We are trying to evaluate if the existing AI systems can be deployed, trusted, and sustained under the constraints that define adoption in markets like India, because Indian market has diverse users using devices with intermittent connectivity, low-cost devices, multilingual and low-literacy users, and informal small-business workflows."
- He said, "The project was initiated around six months ago during the India AI Summit in February 2026. The idea behind developing the framework was to guide the development of better AI systems so that these systems can solve the problems of people working at the grassroot level. For example, giving the most important health updates to ASHA workers who work in the remote villages of India where internet connectivity hasn't seeped in yet. Such AI systems or developments must be brought in India to help deal with the real world challenges."
- The Nexbax AI Index is developed on the basis of 10 measurable dimensions organised under three themes: Effective Efficiency, Operational Practicality, and Societal Integrity. The 10 dimensions included cost effectiveness and price performance, resource efficiency, adaptability and customisability, interoperability, resilience, reliability and robustness, usability and automation, education and empowerment, trustworthiness and ethics, multiculturalism, inclusivity and pluralism, openness and collaboration.

### Expert evaluation

- The team conducted a formative expert evaluation of the first version of the index through one-hour user interviews with eleven experts (participants) working on AI technology and applications for customer usage. These 11 participants included founders of various companies' developers, and product leaders.
- Prof. Majumdar explained, "Overall, the experts we interviewed felt that the index was useful for reasoning about AI utility and adoption in next-billion settings from a developer and product perspective."

## ❖ Webb Telescope Captures Weather on Exoplanet 700 Light Years Away

### Why in News?

Scientists using NASA's **James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)** have mapped weather patterns on an exoplanet named **WASP-94A b**, located nearly **700 light years away**.

### Key Facts

Dimension	Details & Key Scientific Metrics
Exoplanet Name	<b>WASP-94A b</b> (First discovered in 2014 by the Wide Angle Search for Planets)
Distance from Earth	Approximately <b>700 light-years</b> away (located in the constellation <b>Microscopium</b> )
Planet Classification	<b>"Hot Jupiter"</b> — A gas giant 1.7 times larger than Jupiter, orbiting extremely close to its parent star.
Orbital Period	Just <b>4 Earth days</b> (at a distance of only 5.1 million miles from its star)
Atmospheric Profile	<b>Tidally Locked:</b> One hemisphere experiences permanent daylight while the other remains in permanent darkness.
Extreme Temperatures	Exceeds <b>1,200°C</b> (over 2,200°F), featuring a sharp <b>450 Kelvin temperature disparity</b> between the day and night horizons.
Cloud Composition	<b>Vaporized Rock &amp; Minerals:</b> Clouds are made of <b>magnesium silicate</b> , iron, and magnesium sulphide, rather than water vapor.
JWST Instrument Used	<b>NIRISS</b> (Near Infrared Imager and Slitless Spectrograph)

### About WASP-94A b

- It is a **gas giant exoplanet**.
- It is almost **twice as large as Jupiter**, but has only about **half its mass**.
- It orbits very close to its parent star.
- It completes one revolution in just a few days.
- It is **tidally locked**, meaning one side always faces the star while the other side remains dark.

### What Did Scientists Find?

- The **dayside** of the planet is extremely hot.
- The **nightside** is much cooler and permanently dark.
- Clouds form on the cooler nightside.
- Strong winds carry these clouds across the planet.
- Clouds disappear when they reach the hotter dayside.
- The planet's mornings are cloudier, while evenings show clearer skies.

### How Was It Studied?

Scientists used **spectroscopy** during the planet's transit in front of its star.

When starlight passes through the planet's atmosphere:

- Some wavelengths are absorbed by atmospheric gases and clouds.
- This helps scientists identify the chemical composition and weather pattern.
- JWST's sensitivity made it possible to study such fine atmospheric details.

### Why is it Important?

- It shows that weather can be studied even on planets outside the Solar System.
- It helps scientists understand exoplanet atmospheres.
- It may improve the search for Earth-like planets in future.
- It gives clues about planet formation and planetary systems beyond our Solar System.
- Future telescopes like the **Extremely Large Telescope** in Chile may help identify more exoplanet systems.

### Important terms

Term	Meaning
<b>Exoplanet</b>	A planet located outside our Solar System, orbiting a star other than the Sun.
<b>Hot Jupiter</b>	A class of gas giant exoplanets that are physically similar to Jupiter but possess brief orbital periods because they circle extremely close to their parent stars.
<b>Tidally Locked Planet</b>	A planet whose orbital period matches its rotational period due to gravitational forces, causing one hemisphere to permanently face its host star while the other remains in darkness.
<b>Spectroscopy</b>	An analytical technique where scientists study light to identify the chemical composition of a substance based on which specific wavelengths are absorbed or emitted.
<b>Transit Method</b>	An observational technique used to detect and study exoplanets by measuring the slight dimming of a star's brightness as a planet passes directly between the star and the observer.

**With reference to the recent discovery regarding the exoplanet WASP-94A b, consider the following statements:**

1. It is a "Hot Jupiter" that is tidally locked, meaning it has permanent day and night hemispheres.
2. The James Webb Space Telescope detected that its clouds are primarily composed of water vapor that evaporates during the day.

3. The discovery confirms that treating an exoplanet's atmosphere as a uniform, blended average can heavily distort estimates of its true chemical composition.

**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: C) 1 and 3 only**

**Explanation:** Statement 1 is correct due to its proximity to its star. Statement 2 is incorrect because the clouds are not water vapor; they are made of vaporized minerals, specifically **magnesium silicate (sand)**. Statement 3 is correct, as the JWST proved that separating the morning and evening limbs corrected a long-standing error in evaluating the planet's true chemical abundance.

#### **Paper-V: General Studies 4**

##### **❖ Ethics Case Study: Public Servant Demanding Bribe for Another Person**

In a recent judgment, the Supreme Court clarified that **even if a public servant does not personally receive a bribe, demanding or attempting to obtain a bribe on behalf of another person can still amount to an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act.**

##### **Case Study**

You are working as a **Lokayukta Police Officer** in a district. A citizen approaches you with a complaint that an officer at a police station did not directly demand a bribe for himself, but told the citizen: “This money has to be given to a senior officer/another staff member; otherwise, your work will not move forward.”

In his defence, the police officer claims, “I did not ask money for myself; therefore, this is not a bribe.” However, the citizen has an audio recording and a few messages as evidence. The matter has also started attracting media attention.

##### **Stakeholders**

- The complainant citizen
- The accused public servant
- Police department
- Lokayukta / investigating agency

- General public
- Judicial system
- Honest public servants

## Ethical Issues

### 1. Corruption and misuse of authority

Using public office for private or illegal benefit.

### 2. Public trust

Such conduct weakens people's trust in the police and administration.

### 3. Accountability

Can a public servant escape responsibility merely by saying that the money was not demanded for himself?

### 4. Rule of law

Law must apply equally to all public servants.

### 5. Integrity in public service

The duty of a public servant is to serve people, not to act as a channel for corruption.

Administrative Responses and Ethical dilemma

Option	Core Ethical Values at Stake	Administrative & Legal Consequences
Taking immediate strict action	<b>Efficiency vs. Procedural Justice:</b> Prioritizes swift public satisfaction over due process.	May lead to premature administrative penalties that fail judicial scrutiny later. If the evidence is incomplete, it risks punishing an innocent person, violating institutional integrity.
Ignoring the complaint	<b>Accountability &amp; Integrity:</b> Total failure of public duty and professional ethics.	Directly fosters institutional corruption, erodes public trust in administration, and compromises the statutory obligations of a public servant.
Acting under media pressure	<b>Objectivity vs. External Influence:</b> Yielding to a "trial by media" instead	Directly violates the <b>Principles of Natural Justice</b> ( <i>Audi Alteram Partem</i> — hear the other side). Sets a dangerous

Option	Core Ethical Values at Stake	Administrative & Legal Consequences
	of objective facts.	precedent where executive actions are driven by populist narratives rather than statutory rules.
<b>Conducting a lawful investigation</b>	<b>Rule of Law &amp; Fairness:</b> Upholding institutional due process, objectivity, and impartiality.	<b>The Optimal Choice:</b> Though it involves structural time lags, it provides a legally unassailable, fair, and evidence-driven outcome. It balances public accountability with the constitutional protection of a fair trial.

### Course of Action

1. Register the complaint and conduct a preliminary inquiry.
2. Send the audio recordings, messages and other evidence for forensic verification.
3. Give the accused officer an opportunity to explain his position.
4. If evidence supports the allegation, register a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act.
5. Avoid acting under media pressure and strictly follow due process.
6. Strengthen anti-bribery awareness, digital service delivery and grievance redressal mechanisms within the department.

### Best Ethical Answer

Even if a public servant does not receive money personally, using his official position to demand a bribe on behalf of another person is unethical and illegal. It violates the principles of **integrity, transparency, public trust and rule of law**. Therefore, the correct approach is not to take emotional or media-driven action, but to conduct a **fair, evidence-based, impartial and legally sound investigation**.

-----Best Wishes-----