

Today's Prelims Topics

SBI raises ₹50,000 crore via bonds in FY25

Context

The State Bank of India (SBI) has raised ₹50,000 crore through domestic bonds so far during FY25.

Types of Bonds

Types of Bond	Description
Fixed-rate Bonds	Pay a fixed interest rate over the life of the bond, ensuring a fixed amount of income for the bondholder.
Floating-rate Bonds	Interest rate is adjusted periodically according to market conditions, fluctuating with changes in the market rate.
Zero-coupon Bonds	Do not pay interest; offered at a discount to their face value, with investors receiving the full face value at maturity. Also known as deep discounted bonds .
Convertible Bonds	Hybrid securities offering fixed interest payments and an option to convert into equity shares at a predetermined price within a specific timeframe.
Perpetual Bonds/ AT-1 Bonds	Do not have a maturity date and provide fixed interest payments indefinitely, popular for their steady income stream.
Inflation-linked Bonds	Offer returns indexed to the inflation rate, ensuring that returns keep pace with inflation as rates rise.
Municipal Bonds	Issued by local and state governments to finance projects like schools and highways; often offer tax exemptions and can have short-term or long-term maturities.
High-yield Bonds	Also known as junk bonds , issued by companies with lower credit ratings; riskier due to a higher chance of default, but offer higher yields to attract investors.
Green Bonds	Debt instruments that are issued to finance projects that have a positive environmental impact. The money raised from investors is used to finance projects like - Renewable energy, Electric vehicles, Energy efficient buildings, Pollution prevention and control, Clean transportation etc.
Masala Bonds	Debt instruments issued by Indian companies outside of India in Indian rupees . Kerala was the first Indian state to issue masala bonds in 2019.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Bank of India raises ₹5,000 cr. through long-term bonds](#)

MP/MLA Court

Context

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is planning to request the Delhi High Court to designate the NIA court as an MP/MLA court to hear a terror funding case involving a Member of Parliament from J&K.

About MP/MLA Courts

- They are special courts established in India to expedite the trial of cases involving sitting and former Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs).
- They deal with criminal cases, including corruption, bribery, electoral offenses and other criminal charges, filed against MPs and MLAs
- **Formation:** In 2017, the Supreme Court ordered that special courts be set up across the country to fast-track the long-pending trials of lawmakers. Following this, 12 special courts were set up across 11 States.

Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA) - Relevant Provisions

- **Section 8(1):** Disqualification upon conviction for specific offenses, such as corruption, bribery or promoting enmity.
- **Section 8(3):** Automatic disqualification if sentenced to imprisonment for 2 years or more. Disqualification continues for 6 years after the release.
- **Section 123:** Defines corrupt practices such as bribery, undue influence, and appeals on religious or caste grounds.
- **Section 125:** Penalizes hate speech during elections.
- **Section 125A:** Prescribes punishment for submitting false information in election affidavits, up to 6 months imprisonment or a fine.

Supreme Court Interventions on MP/MLA Cases

- **2013 (Lily Thomas v. Union of India):**
 - Struck down Section 8(4) of the RPA, which previously allowed MPs/MLAs to continue in office if they appealed a conviction within 3 months.
 - Immediate disqualification upon conviction.
- **2017 (Lok Prahari v. Union of India):**
 - Directed setting up of special courts for MP/MLA cases to reduce pendency.
- **2020:**
 - Mandated the High Courts to monitor pending criminal cases against legislators to ensure timely trials.

Source:

- [The Hindu - NIA seeks change in powers of special court in Rashid case](#)

Demands for separate mithilanchal

Context

Opposition parties in Bihar have reiterated their longstanding demand for the formation of a Mithila State.

About Mithilanchal

- Mithilanchal is a geographical and cultural region bounded by the **Mahananda river in the east, the Ganga in the south, the Gandaki river in the west and by the foothills of the Himalayas in the north. (Comprises parts of Bihar, Jharkhand and adjoining districts of the eastern Terai of Nepal)**
- The demand for Mithilanchal was first made by local people in **1912**, based on Sir George Grierson's survey, when Bihar was leaving the Bengal presidency to become a separate state.
- In modern day Bihar, Mithilanchal comprises **20 of its 38 districts**.
- **Mythological significance:** According to the Ramayana, Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, broke Shiva's celestial bow to marry Mithila's king Janaka's daughter Sita — who is believed to have been born in the Sitamarhi district while her father ruled from Janakpur in Nepal.
- The native language in Mithila is **Maithili (8th Schedule language)**
- The region is known for its **Mithila painting**, also known as the **Madhubani art**.

Similar statehood demand in other regions

- **Bodoland in Assam:** This region has demanded separate statehood to preserve its cultural identity and for better economic development
- **Vidarbha:** It comprises the Amravati and Nagpur divisions of eastern Maharashtra.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Rabri Devi demands separate Mithilanchal to be carved out of Bihar](#)

Supreme Court Judgment on Religious Conversion and Quota Benefits

Context

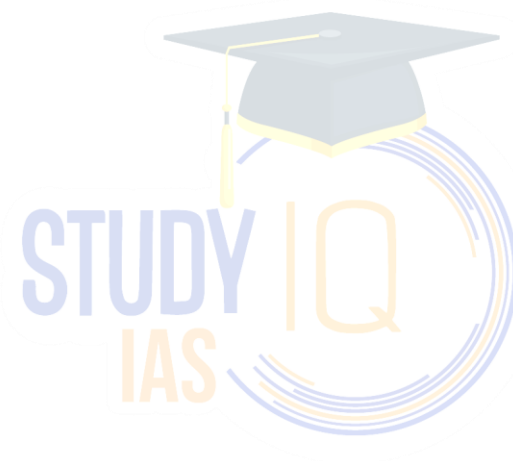
The case involved a Christian woman from Puducherry claiming Scheduled Caste (SC) status after allegedly converting to Hinduism to secure government job benefits under SC reservation.

Constitutional and Legal Perspective

- **Article 25:**
 - Every citizen has the right to practise and profess a religion of their choice.
 - Conversion must reflect genuine inspiration from religious principles and not ulterior motives.
- **Reservation Policy:**
 - Quota benefits are designed for socio-economically marginalized communities.
 - Misuse of this policy through false conversion claims is a fraud on both the Constitution and society.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Conversion to get job amounts to a fraud on Constitution: SC](#)



Emission Penalties on Carmakers

Context

The Centre has identified eight automakers, including Hyundai, Kia, Mahindra, and Honda, as exceeding mandated fleet emission levels in FY 2022-23. This non-compliance with CAFE norms could result in penalties totaling **₹7,300 crore**.

Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) Norms

- CAFE norms are regulatory standards aimed at **improving fuel efficiency and reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions** in the automotive sector.
- **Objective:**
 - Encourage automakers to manufacture fuel-efficient and low-emission vehicles.
 - Promote cleaner technologies like electric vehicles (EVs), hybrids, and compressed natural gas (CNG) cars.
- **Implementation Agency:**
 - **The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** under the Ministry of Power oversees CAFE norms. **(Enforced under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001)**
- **Scope:**
 - Applicable to passenger vehicles with a gross weight of less than 3,500 kg, including:
 - Petrol and diesel vehicles.
 - Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and CNG vehicles.
 - Electric and hybrid vehicles.
- **Fuel and Emission Targets**
 - **Phase I (2017–2022):**
 - Fuel Consumption: Less than 5.5 litres per 100 km.
 - CO₂ Emissions: Less than 130 g/km.
 - **Phase II (2022 Onwards):**
 - Fuel Consumption: Less than 4.78 litres per 100 km.
 - CO₂ Emissions: Less than 113 g/km.

Source:

- [Indian Express - Hyundai, Mahindra, 6 others likely to face emission penalties of Rs 7,300 crore](#)

Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Abhiyan

Context

Recently the **Ministry for Women and Child Development** launched the national campaign “Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat”.

More in News

- The ministry also inaugurated the **Child Marriage Free Bharat Portal**.
 - The portal is an innovative online platform allowing citizens to:
 - **Report incidents** of child marriage.
 - **File complaints** related to child marriage.
 - **Access details about Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs)** across the country.

Facts

- **Decline in Child Marriages:** Child marriage rates in India halved from 47.4% to 23.3% between 2006 and 2019-21, following the enactment of the **Prevention of Child Marriage Act, 2006**.
 - Over 2 lakh child marriages were prevented in the past year.
- **Prevalence of Child Marriage in India:** One in five girls in India is still married before turning 18.
- **Improvement in Sex Ratio at Birth:** 918 in 2014-15 to 930 in 2023-24.
- **States with High Burden of Child Marriages:**
 - **West Bengal (41.6%), Bihar (40.8%), Tripura (40.1%), Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh.**

Countries with the highest number of child marriages*



UNICEF Report (2023)

- **One in three** of the world's child brides live in India.
- Over half of the girls and women in India who married in childhood live in five states: Uttar Pradesh (highest), Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
- The majority of young women who married in childhood gave birth as adolescents.

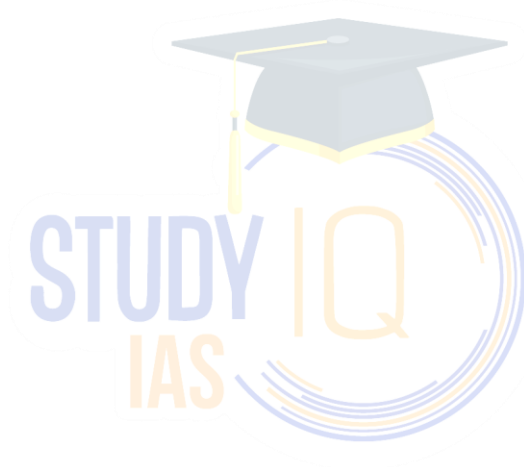
About Prevention of Child Marriage Act, 2006

- The Act aims to prevent child marriages by making certain actions punishable and appointing authorities to enforce its provisions.
- It replaced the **Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929**.
- **Key Definitions**
 - **Child:**
 - **Male:** Below 21 years.
 - **Female:** Below 18 years.
 - **Child Marriage:** A marriage where either party is a child.
 - **Minor:** Defined under the **Majority Act, 1875**, as a person who has not completed 18 years of age.
- **Punishments:**
 - Child marriage is punishable with:
 - Rigorous imprisonment up to **2 years**.
 - Fine up to **₹1 lakh**.

- Or both.
- Offences are **cognisable** and **non-bailable**.
- **Persons Liable for Punishment:**
 - **Individuals Involved in the Marriage:** Anyone performing, conducting, directing, or abetting a child marriage.
 - **Male Adults (Above 18 years):** If they marry a child (as per **Section 9**).
 - **Persons in Charge of the Child:** Includes parents, guardians, or any members of organizations promoting or permitting child marriage.

Sources:

- **PIB: Union Minister for Women and Child Development Launches 'Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat' Campaign**
- **UNICEF: Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in India**
- **The Hindu: Around two lakh child marriages were prevented in a year, says WCD Ministry**



News in Short

Sabal-20 logistics drones

- The Sabal-20 logistics drones have been delivered to the Indian Army for operations in the eastern sector. They are procured from **EndureAir Systems**.
- **Key Features:**
 - Electric unmanned helicopter with a payload capacity of up to 20 kg.
 - Supports long-range deliveries and high-altitude operations.
 - Suitable for precision logistics in rugged terrains.
- **Technology:**
 - **Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL)** for confined and rugged terrains.
 - Low RPM Design: Reduces noise, enhancing stealth for sensitive missions.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Indian Army receives logistics drones for use in eastern sector](#)

New Pamban Bridge

- It is **India's first vertical-lift railway sea bridge**.
- It connects Rameswaram on Pamban Island to Mandapam on the mainland in Tamil Nadu.
- It will replace the **iconic Pamban Bridge, India's first sea bridge, which opened in 1914**.
- The new bridge is being built parallel to the old Pamban Bridge by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Safety official allows operation of trains on new Pamban bridge, but flags 'lapses'](#)

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

- The 2024 OPCW The Hague Award was conferred upon the Indian Chemical Council (ICC)
- OPCW is an **intergovernmental organisation** and the implementing body for the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**. It works to eliminate chemical weapons and the threat of their use. (HQ- The Hague, Netherlands)
- In **2013**, OPCW was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** for its efforts in chemical weapons elimination.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

- It is a multilateral treaty that bans chemical weapons and requires their destruction within a specified period of time. It entered into force in 1997.
- CWC currently has **193 state parties**. (India ratified CWC in 1996)

Source:

- [PIB - Indian Chemical Council Wins 2024 OPCW-The Hague Award](#)

Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)

- Digital Bharat Nidhi is a pool of funds generated by charging a **5% Universal Service Levy on the Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) of all telecom operators**.
- It has replaced the **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) which was established under**

the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003.

- As per 'The Telecommunications Act, 2023' the Universal Service Obligation Fund, has become the Digital Bharat Nidhi.
- **Mandate of DBN:** To promote access and delivery of telecommunication service in underserved rural, remote and urban areas.
- **Working of the Digital Bharat Nidhi:**
 - Contributions made by telecom companies towards the DBN will first be credited to the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI).
 - The Central government will deposit the collected funds to the DBN periodically.

Source:

- [PIB - Digital Bharat Nidhi](#)

Network Readiness Index (NRI) 2024

- India has improved its position by 11 slots and is now placed at **49th rank as per the NRI 2024 report.** (In 2023 India's ranking was 60th).
 - India also ranked **2nd among lower-middle-income countries**, only behind Vietnam.
- NRI measures how ready countries are to take advantage of the opportunities offered by information and communications technology (ICT).
- It evaluates countries based on their performance in **4 areas: technology, people, governance and impact.**
- **Released by:** Portulans Institute, a non-profit educational institute (Washington DC).

Source:

- [PIB - Network Readiness Index 2024](#)

E-Dakhil Portal

- It is an innovative online platform for filing consumer complaints. It has been successfully implemented across all states and union territories of India.
- **Launched by: National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission(NCDRC)** in 2020.
 - NCDRC is a **quasi judicial commission** set up under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.
- It operates under the framework of the **Consumer Protection Act 2019.**
- **E-Jagriti Portal:** The government is working on the e-Jagriti portal, which will further streamline the case filing, tracking and management process.

Success Stories

- **Sambalpur District Commission:** In January, 2024, a complainant received Rs. 25,000 as compensation for a faulty Hero Electric Atria, along with Rs. 5,000 for litigation expenses.
- **Andaman District Commission:** A complainant who was charged twice for fuel due to a failed UPI transaction was awarded Rs. 3,980 as a refund, along with 6% interest and Rs. 10,000 for mental agony.

Source:

- [PIB - Centre launches E-Daakhil](#)

Gorakhpanti Sect

- Gorakhpanti sect is a religious and philosophical movement associated with the teachings of **Gorakhnath.**
- **Gorakhpantis are considered an offshoot of the broader Nathpanthi tradition**
- **Origins and Philosophical Foundations**

- **Guru Matsyendranath's Influence:**
 - The Nath tradition was initiated by **Matsyendranath**, blending **Tantric Shaivism** and **Tantra-inspired Buddhism**.
- **Guru Gorakhnath's Role:**
 - A prominent disciple of Matsyendranath, **Gorakhnath** (11th-12th century) further developed the tradition.
 - He is known for promoting **self-discipline (yoga)** and **inclusive spiritual practices**. He **rejected caste-based and ritualistic barriers**.
 - His teachings emphasized **Equality**, incorporating followers from diverse backgrounds, including **Muslims** and **lower-caste Hindus**.

Source:

- [Indian Express - The Real Gorakhanthi](#)

Nanozymes

- Nanozymes are a class of nanomaterials with enzyme-like catalytic activities.
- Nanozymes can be categorized into **4 types based on their catalytic activities**: Oxidoreductases, Hydrolases, Isomerases and Synthases.
- **Advantages over conventional enzymes:**
 - **Stability:** Nanozymes are highly stable and can be used in harsh environments
 - **Low Cost, High Durability & Mass Production.**
 - **Therapeutic potential**
- **Applications:** Nanozymes have been used as therapeutics against cancer, inflammatory diseases, **neurodegenerative and neurological disorders**, bacterial, fungal and viral infections, wounds and diseases associated with **Reactive Oxygen Species**.

Source:

- [PIB - Nanozymes can transform biomaterials](#)

Mars' Moons

- Mars has 2 moons - **Phobos & Deimos**.
- **Facts about Mars' moons:**
 - Both moons are irregularly shaped and covered with craters.
 - They are made of rock and iron and are among the smallest moons in the solar system.
 - They are thought to be **captured asteroids or debris** from the early formation of our solar system.
 - **Phobos is slowly moving closer to Mars**. In about **50 million years**, it will either collide with the planet or disintegrate, potentially forming a ring around Mars.

Source:

- [Indian Express - Mars Moons and Asteroid destruction](#)

Increase in India-Russia Trade

- India-Russia trade has **increased fivefold over the past 5 years**.
- Russia and India are on track to achieve the **ambitious \$100 billion trade target by 2030**.

Source:

- [The Hindu - India-Russia trade marks fivefold increase over past five years](#)

U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA)

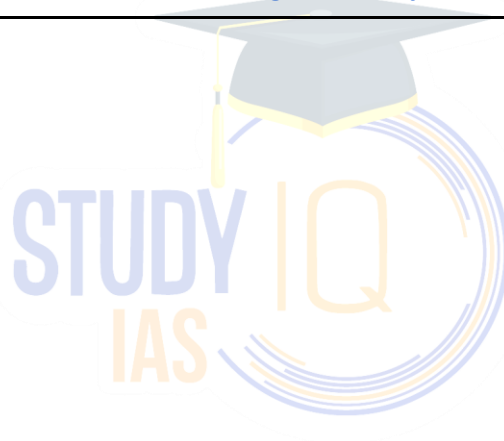
- FCPA is an anti-corruption law enacted in 1977 to curb bribery and corruption involving U.S. individuals and entities in foreign countries.
- It is enforced by the **Department of Justice (DOJ)** and the **Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)**.

Key Features of the FCPA

- **Prohibition of Bribery:** Prohibits offering, paying, promising, or authorizing anything of value to foreign officials to gain or retain business or secure an improper advantage.
- **Scope of Application - Who is Covered?**
 - **U.S. Individuals and Companies:** Includes citizens, residents, and corporations operating in or from the U.S.
 - **Foreign Companies and Nationals:** If their activities have a connection to the U.S., such as using U.S. banking systems.
 - **Publicly Listed Companies:** All companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges are subject to the FCPA's accounting provisions.
- **Jurisdiction:** Applies to actions conducted anywhere in the world if they involve U.S. entities or their agents.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Adani embroiled in U.S. findings of bribery 'scheme'](#)



Editorial Summary

Schooling in India in Case of Poor Air Quality

Context

- In mid-November 2024, schools in Delhi State were instructed to transition from in-person to online classes as part of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).
- This directive followed a Supreme Court ruling and was influenced by concerns over the adverse health effects of deteriorating air quality on students.

What are the Challenges Associated with Closing of Schools?

- **Air Quality in Schools vs. Homes:** Many children experience similar or worse air quality at home compared to schools.
 - E.g., Underprivileged children benefit from better air quality in schools equipped with air purifiers.
- **Social and Emotional Development:** Schools are vital for peer interaction and emotional growth, which are largely absent in virtual setups.
 - E.g., Online platforms reduce real-time engagement, making it difficult for teachers to address students' individual needs.
- **Nutritional Loss:** Children reliant on mid-day meals lose access to this critical nutritional support.
- **Increased Screen Time:** Younger children are exposed to harmful screen time during online classes.

Suggestions for Addressing Poor Air Quality in Schools

- **Ensuring Continuity of Physical Classes:** Schools should remain functional regardless of AQI levels to maintain learning continuity.
 - **Mitigation measures:**
 - Completely halt outdoor activities in schools when AQI is poor.
 - Encourage the use of air purifiers and face masks, based on age and health needs.
 - Allow children with pre-existing respiratory issues to benefit from mask-wearing, particularly in polluted spaces.
- **Health-Centric Preventive Measures:** Focus on preventive healthcare for individuals with pre-existing respiratory or health conditions.
 - Promote regular health check-ups and follow-ups with healthcare providers.
 - Encourage vaccinations, including:
 - Annual influenza vaccination.
 - Age-appropriate vaccines like pneumococcal, measles, and Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib).

Source: [The Hindu: Schooling in India in Case of Poor Air Quality](#)

Evolution of Electoral System In India

Context

November 26, 1949 marks the adoption of the Constitution in India. Since its implementation a significant aspect of the Constitution is its protection of election integrity.

Making of the Constitution

- **Duration of Drafting:** It took the Constituent Assembly **2 years, 11 months, and 17 days** to draft the Indian Constitution.
- **Amendments Proposed:** A total of **7,635 amendments** were proposed to the draft.
- **Final Document:** The Constitution comprised **395 articles** and **8 schedules** at its inception.
- **Adoption:** The Constitution was adopted on **November 26, 1949**.
 - The Constituent Assembly enacted **16 articles** of the Constitution 2 months prior to its enactment. **E.g., Article 324**
- **Enacted:** 26th January, 1950

Election Commission Of India (ECI)

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring free and fair elections.
- It manages all aspects of elections, including the preparation of electoral rolls, supervision of election campaigns, and declaring the results.
- The ECI's work includes overseeing the conduct of elections to the **Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, Rajya Sabha, President, and Vice President**.
- It also issues the **Model Code of Conduct** that guides political parties and candidates on ethical behavior during elections.

Articles 324 to 329, Part XV

- **Article 324:** It establishes that the **superintendence, direction, and control** of the preparation of electoral rolls for and the conduct of elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice-President are vested in the Election Commission.
 - **Article 324(2):** Anticipated Parliament to legislate the service conditions and appointment procedure for Election Commissioners.
- **Article 325:** It mandates that **electoral rolls** must include all citizens of India who are above the voting age, without discrimination based on race, caste, religion, or sex.
- **Article 326:** It mandates that **elections to the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and the Legislative Assemblies of States and Union Territories** must be on the basis of **universal adult suffrage**, which means every citizen of India above the age of 18 has the right to vote.
- **Article 327:** **Parliament is authorized to make laws** regarding the conduct of elections to Parliament and State Legislatures, including the creation of electoral rolls, the manner of voting, and the machinery for election administration.
- **Article 328:** It gives the **state legislatures the authority to make laws** regarding the elections to the State Legislatures, in line with the provisions of Article 327.
- **Article 329:** It **bars the jurisdiction of courts** in matters related to the validity of elections to Parliament and State Legislatures, except in cases where a law made by Parliament provides for such jurisdiction.

Flaws in the Election System

- **Criminalisation of Politics:** 46% of MPs in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections have criminal cases.
- **Black Money in Elections:** Lack of regulation over political donations and expenditure.

- **Ineffective Anti-Defection Law:** Horse-trading and political defections continue despite the Tenth Schedule (1985).
- **Lack of Independence:** Appointment and removal of Election Commissioners lack robust safeguards.
- **Gender Gap in Representation:** Despite progress, the number of women candidates and representatives remains low.

Participation of Women in Democracy

- **Constitutional Provision:** Article 326 grants equal voting rights to women from the very beginning.
- **Improvements in Gender Ratio:**
 - **2024 General Elections:** Gender ratio of registered voters improved to **948 women per 1,000 men**, up from **928 in 2019**.
 - The gender gap in voter turnout has disappeared, with more women voting than men in 19 out of 36 states in 2024.
- **Reservation:** A law enacted by the government mandates **33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas**, effective from the **2029 elections**.
- **Mamata Banerjee's Initiative:** In 2019, 41% of her party's Lok Sabha tickets were allocated to women, of whom nine were elected.

Supreme Court Cases Related to the Election Commission

- **Union of India vs. ADR (2003):** Declared free and fair elections as essential for democracy.
- **PUCL vs. Union of India (2003):** Recognized free and fair elections as part of the **basic structure of the Constitution**.
- **NOTA Judgment (2013):** Introduced the "None of the Above" option for voters.
- **Mohinder Singh Gill vs. CEC of India (1977):** Reinforced the principle that free and fair elections are central to the parliamentary system.
- **Electoral Bonds Case (2024):** The Supreme Court **struck down electoral bonds**, terming them "unconstitutional and manifestly arbitrary," thereby addressing crony capitalism in the electoral process.

Measures to Tackle Flaws

- **State Funding of Elections:** Introduce an **independent National Election Fund** for tax-free donations with allocations based on electoral performance.
- **Regulation of Political Expenditure:** Impose spending caps for political parties, similar to limits for individual candidates.
- **Strengthening the Anti-Defection Law:** Revise the Tenth Schedule to close loopholes and penalize defections more effectively.
- **Appointment Safeguards:** Establish an **independent and impartial collegium** for appointing Election Commissioners.
 - Provide protection from arbitrary removal for Election Commissioners.
- **Enhanced Electoral Literacy:** Promote voter education campaigns to reduce voter manipulation and ensure ethical voting practices.
- **Proactive Judicial Role:** Ensure swift legal action against electoral malpractices.
- **Improved Representation:** Fast-track the implementation of the **33% reservation for women in Parliament and State Assemblies**.

Source: [Indian Express: Greatest Show Must Go On](#)

Israel Hezbollah Ceasefire Agreement

Context

Israel and Hezbollah entered into a ceasefire a day after Israel's security cabinet approved a US-backed proposal to end the 13-month-long conflict.

More in News

- The ceasefire mimics UNSC Resolution 1701, which was adopted in the wake of the 2006 conflict.
- A crucial novelty in the agreement is the addition of the **United States and France** to the tripartite mechanism of **Lebanon, Israel, and the UNIFIL** that oversees the implementation of UNSCR 1701.

What is Resolution 1701?

Figure 1

Figure 1: UNSCR 1701 Zone in Southern Lebanon



Note: According to UNSCR 1701, the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River should be free from any armed personnel, assets, and weapons except for those of the government of Lebanon and UNIFIL.

Source: CSIS creation.

CSIS | TRANSNATIONAL THREATS PROJECT

- This aims at ending hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel, and calls for the creation of a **buffer zone as well as a permanent ceasefire**.
- The resolution meant to complete the withdrawal of Israeli forces in 2000 from southern Lebanon along the '**Blue Line**' and the **Israeli-annexed Golan Heights**.

- Hezbollah is supposed to withdraw to the **north of the Litani river**, Israel to the **south of the Blue Line**, with the Lebanese Army remaining as the only armed force allowed between the two in South Lebanon.

Why does Israel agree to this deal?

- **Focus on Iran:** The ceasefire allows Israel to shift its attention to countering Iran's influence in the region.
 - Iran is seen as a primary backer of both Hamas and Hezbollah, and addressing its broader strategic threat requires resources and focus.
- **Military Replenishment:** The ceasefire provides the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) with a "breather" to replenish supplies and reorganize after intense operations in both Gaza and southern Lebanon.
 - Sustaining simultaneous military engagements against well-armed groups like Hamas and Hezbollah stretches military resources.
- **Front Separation:** By taking one adversary temporarily out of the conflict, Israel can avoid the risk of a full-scale multi-front war.
 - Resolving the Hezbollah threat or containing it allows for greater focus on other fronts, including Gaza.
- **Lessons from Lebanon's Past:** Israel's past military experiences in Lebanon have demonstrated the risks of overextension.
 - Prolonged presence in Lebanon has often led to increased resistance and strategic setbacks, including bolstering support for groups like Hezbollah.
 - A limited engagement reduces this risk.

What does it mean for the region at large?

- **Shift in Regional Power Dynamics:** Iran's acceptance of a U.S. presence in southern Lebanon and its focus on rapprochement with Arab neighbors suggest a recalibration of its regional strategy.
 - This signals a temporary de-escalation in Iran-Israel tensions, allowing Tehran to focus on economic recovery and diplomatic gains while preserving its strategic assets, like Hezbollah.
- **Israel's Strategic Reorientation:** The ceasefire enables Israel to redirect military resources and attention towards other Iranian proxies across the region, including those in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.
 - This could escalate tensions in these areas and influence broader Middle Eastern geopolitics, particularly involving Syrian and Iranian alignments.

Source: [Indian Express: Israel- Hezbollah Ceasefire Deal](#)

Value Addition

Countries Stance on Plastic Treaty

Context

The 5th session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5), which is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme, to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution is ongoing in Busan, Republic of Korea.

Facts

- **Global plastics production** is set to reach **736 million tons by 2040, up 70% from 2020**, without policy changes, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- **Brazil, China, India, and the U.S. contribute to 60%** of the world's plastic waste.

India's Stance

- **Compensation for Costs:** India emphasizes that developing countries should comply with control measures on plastic only if they are compensated for the associated costs.
- **Technology Transfer:** Drawing from principles in climate change negotiations, India calls for the transfer of **sustainable plastic technologies** from developed to developing nations. Such transfers should consider **national circumstances**.
 - India's proposal stresses the importance of aligning global measures with the unique **socio-economic and developmental contexts** of individual countries.
- **Creation of a Multilateral Fund:** India has proposed the establishment of a new multilateral fund:
 - Contributions should be **"additional and distinct"** from other financial mechanisms.
 - This fund should support **technology transfer, capacity building, and a just transition** toward sustainable plastic production and consumption.
 - The proposed fund should be **governed by a subsidiary body** to ensure fair implementation of financial and technical support mechanisms.
- **Undefined Key Concepts:** India highlights the lack of clarity in key terms like **"control measures," "costs,"** and even the **definition of "plastic,"** and emphasised the need for comprehensive definitions.

Other Countries Stances

- The **United States** advocates for **voluntary steps rather than mandatory actions**.
- **Norway, Rwanda, along with 66 other countries and the European Union (EU)**, advocate for addressing the global plastic problem by focusing on **controlling its design, production, consumption, and end-of-life management**.
- Countries with significant oil and gas interests, like **Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Iran, along with fossil fuel and chemical industry groups**, prefer to focus on **plastic waste management and recycling** rather than imposing caps on plastic production.

Sources:

- [The Hindu: A primer on plastic pollution treaty talks](#)
- [The Hindu: Aid needed to meet the costs of controlling plastics: India](#)