



## SC Plea for Lifetime Ban on Convicted Politicians

For Prelims: [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#), [Representation of the People Act, 1951 \(RP Act, 1951\)](#), [Election Commission \(EC\)](#), [Parliament](#), [Administrative Reforms Commission](#), [Law Commission](#).

For Mains: Measures for decriminalization of politics

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

The [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) is hearing petitions seeking a **lifetime ban on convicted persons** from contesting elections for **decriminalizing politics**.

- Petitions seek to amend the [Representation of the People Act, 1951 \(RP Act, 1951\)](#) that contains **legal provisions** for convicted persons from contesting elections.

### What are Legal Provisions and SC Judgements Related to Convicted Persons?

- **Legal Provisions:**
  - **Section 8(3):** It determines disqualification based on **sentence duration**.
    - If a person is convicted of a criminal offense and sentenced to **imprisonment for two years or more**, they are **disqualified** from contesting elections during the **period of imprisonment** and for **six years after release**.
  - **Section 8(1):** It determines disqualification for **specific offenses** that lead to **immediate disqualification**, irrespective of the **sentence duration and six years** after release.
    - Offences include **rape** and other heinous crimes, **untouchability**, **terror**, and **corruption** related offenses.
  - **Section 11:** The [Election Commission \(EC\)](#) can **remove or shorten** a convicted person's **disqualification period**.
    - E.g., In 2019, the EC controversially cut **Prem Singh Tamang's (Sikkim's CM)** disqualification from **6 years to 13 months**, enabling his election bid despite a corruption conviction.
- **SC Judgements:**
  - **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) Case, 2002:** It mandated the **disclosure of criminal records** of all candidates contesting elections.
  - **CEC vs. Jan Chaukidar Case, 2013:** The SC upheld the **Patna High Court's** view that **jailed individuals** lose their 'elector' status under **Section 62(5)** of the RP Act, 1951, disqualifying **undertrial prisoners** from contesting elections.
    - However, the [Parliament](#) amended the RP Act, 1951 in **2013** to overturn this judgment allowing under **trial prisoners to contest elections**.
  - **Lily Thomas Case, 2013:** The SC struck down **Section 8(4)** of the **RP Act, 1951**, which earlier allowed convicted legislators to **remain in office** if they **filed an appeal**.

- After this judgment, a **sitting MP/MLA** is **immediately disqualified** upon **conviction**.
- **Public Interest Foundation Case, 2018:** The SC mandated political parties to publish **candidates' criminal records** on their websites, social media, and newspapers.

## Status of Criminalization of Politics in India

- A report by **ADR** states that 251 (46%) of the 543 elected MPs in **2024**, have **criminal cases** against them, and **171 (31%)** face serious criminal charges including **rape, murder, attempt to murder and kidnapping**.
- The **chances of winning** for a candidate with a criminal background was **15.4%** as against just **4.4%** for a candidate with a **clean background**.

## What are Arguments For and Against a Lifetime Ban on Convicted Politicians?

Arguments For	Arguments Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Vohra Committee (1993)</b> recommended <b>strict background checks</b> and disqualifies candidates with <b>serious criminal charges</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Political rivals may file <b>false cases to disqualify opponents</b>, exploiting the judicial process.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Just like <b>government employees</b> are <b>dismissed upon conviction</b>, politicians should face <b>similar disqualification</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MPs and MLAs <b>lack 'service conditions'</b> like government servants. A <b>six-year disqualification</b> after sentencing is <b>sufficient</b>.</li> <li>▪ Elected representatives differ from government employees as they are <b>chosen by the public</b> rather than appointed through service rules.</li> <li>▪ Unlike bureaucrats, MPs and MLAs have a <b>fixed 5-year tenure</b> and must seek <b>re-election</b>, making them <b>directly accountable to voters</b>.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ignores</b> the possibility of <b>reformation</b> and <b>denies</b> individuals a <b>second chance</b> to serve. Measures such as <b>fast-tracking cases</b> against politicians may be more effective.</li> </ul>

## Way Forward

- **Strengthening Disqualification Criteria:** Extend disqualification **beyond six years** for grave crimes like **corruption, terrorism, and sexual offenses**.
- **Empowering Election Commission:** Empower the EC with **stronger regulatory powers** to verify candidates' **criminal records and financial disclosures**.
  - EC has recommended that even persons against whom **charges** are framed by a **competent court** for an offence that entails **punishment of more than five years** should not be allowed to contest elections.
- **Judicial Reforms: Fast-track trials of MPs/MLAs** in **special courts** to ensure **time-bound justice** and avoid prolonged legal battles that allow criminals to continue contesting elections.
- **Enforcing a Code of Conduct for Politicians:** Introduce a **mandatory Code of Conduct for political leaders**, ensuring **ethical behavior, accountability, and discipline in public life**.
  - Establish a **Political Ethics Committee** under the Election Commission to monitor

violations of ethical standards.

**Drishti Mains Question:**

Critically examine the role of the Supreme Court in addressing the criminalization of politics in India, with a focus on the disqualification of convicted politicians.

**UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

**Prelims**

**Q. Consider the following statements:**

1. In India, there is no law restricting the candidates from contesting in one Lok Sabha election from three constituencies.
2. In the 1991 Lok Sabha Election, Shri Devi Lal contested from three Lok Sabha constituencies.
3. As per the existing rules, if a candidate contests in one Lok Sabha election from many constituencies, his/her party should bear the cost of bye-elections to the constituencies vacated by him/her winning in all the constituencies.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

**Mains**

**Q.1** Discuss the procedures to decide the disputes arising out of the election of a Member of the Parliament or State Legislature under The Representation of the People Act, 1951. What are the grounds on which the election of any returned candidate may be declared void? What remedy is available to the aggrieved party against the decision? Refer to the case laws. (2022)

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## **Changing Nature of Terrorism**

**For Prelims:** [Sahel](#), [United Nations Security Council \(UNSC\)](#), [International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#), [Deepfake](#), [AI](#), [Cryptocurrency](#), [FATF](#), [BIMSTEC](#), [SAARC](#), [UAPA](#), [NIA](#).

**For Mains:** Changing nature of terrorism and ways to counter them.

**Source:** [TH](#)

## Why in News?

**New terror methods and terror attacks** are evolving, influenced by **geopolitical instability**, **digital radicalization**, and **evolving strategies** of extremist groups.

## How is the Nature of Terrorism is Changing?

- **Unpredictability:** Terrorism trends are **unpredictable**, allowing dormant groups like **Hamas** and **Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)** (Syrian terrorist organization) to resurface with major impact.
  - The earlier belief that **terror groups would not engage in full-scale war** but Hamas attack on Israel in **October 2023** has **blurred this predictability**.
  - **Self indoctrinated and radicalised** youths are leading to unpredictable **Lone-wolf attacks**. E.g., **New Orleans attacks 2025 in the US**.
- **State Sponsored:** Both **Syria and Afghanistan** now governed by terrorist groups (**HTS and the Taliban**, respectively) prolonging terrorism.
- **Evolving Tactics:** Modern terrorism relies on **sympathizers, sleeper cells, ideological debates on use of violence**, unconventional attacks like **vehicle ramming**, and a rising number of **educated professionals** joining extremist networks.
- **Expanding Geographic Reach:** **ISIS-K**'s growing presence in **Afghanistan** threatens South Asia.
- **Technology as a Force Multiplier:** Terrorists are using advanced technology like **drones, 3D printing**, and **cyber tools** to boost their capabilities, potentially enabling high-profile attacks that **amplify propaganda**.
  - E.g., **Houthi attack on Saudi Aramco's oil facilities** in 2019 showcased use of **precision drones**.
- **Cross-Group Cooperation:** Terrorist groups are collaborating to increase their area of influence and threaten regional stability.
  - E.g., Iran's **Axis of Resistance (Hezbollah, Hamas, and Iraqi militias)** working against Israel.
- **Domestic Terrorism in the West:** **Political polarization** in the US and Europe is driving extremism, while **immigration tensions** risk violence, as seen in the **El Paso shooting 2019** in US

## What are the Reasons for Changing the Nature of Terrorism?

- **Weakened Global Governance:** Institutions like the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** and the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** are proving **ineffective** in **dismantling terror groups** and **preventing their funding**, making global counter-terrorism efforts **weak**.
- **Emergence of Terror Regime:** The collapse of the **Assad regime** and rise of **HTS** in Syria indicate potential for **strengthening of terror infrastructure** due to political shifts.
- **Global Terrorist Networks:** Increased globalization has facilitated the **movement of people, money, and weapons** across borders.
  - E.g., **Al-Qaeda and ISIS** presence in **Africa, South Asia, and Europe** beyond the Middle East.
- **Shift in Ideological Motivations:** Terrorism now stems from **religious extremism, identity grievances, and personal motives**, not just political goals.
  - E.g., the **Christchurch shootings 2019** were driven by white supremacist extremism.
- **Proxy Warfare:** State-backed terrorist groups complicate terrorism by **fueling instability** in rival countries. E.g., **Jaish-e-Mohammed** carried out attacks in **India** with **Pakistan's** support.

## How the Changing Nature of Terrorism Impacting India?

- **Homegrown Radicalization:** Terror organisations have recruited **Indian youth**, with radicalization cases in **Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka**.
  - E.g., India identified **62 locals and 68 overseas Indians** linked to **ISIS**, with **95% from South India**.

- **Low-Cost Attacks:** Low-cost, high-impact attacks are rising e.g., low key attacks like **Coimbatore car blast 2022** for which **resources** can be arranged **locally**.
- **Radicalization in Local Dialects:** Terrorists use social media and **encrypted apps** for propaganda, recruitment, and planning, while **deepfake technology** and **AI** pose rising misinformation threats in **local dialects** which are **hard to detect** on the **formal social media platforms**.
- **UAV-Based Terrorism:** Drones are now used to **drop arms, explosives, and drugs** across the India-Pakistan border.
  - E.g., Two **explosives-laden drones** crashed into the **Indian Air Force station** at Jammu in 2021.
- **Hawala Transactions:** Increased reliance on **hawala networks, cryptocurrency transactions, and fake NGOs** run by fugitive people like **Zakir Naik** to fund terrorism.
  - E.g., channeling of foreign funds for unlawful activities by the now banned **Popular Front of India (PFI)**.

## Way Forward

- **Global Cooperation:** Strengthen international counterterrorism frameworks, including the **UNSC** and **FATE**, to curb terrorist financing and transnational networks.
  - India should strengthen intelligence-sharing with neighbors via **BIMSTEC** and **SAARC**.
- **AI & Cybersecurity Measures:** Develop AI-driven surveillance and **deepfake detection tools** to counter online radicalization and misinformation in local languages.
  - Work with tech companies to curb extremist content and propaganda spread through encrypted apps.
- **NGO Scrutiny:** Strictly monitor **NGOs** receiving foreign funds to **prevent terror financing** under the guise of charity.
- **Counterterrorism Laws:** Update laws like **UAPA** and **NIA Acts** to tackle new-age threats like one-wolf attack.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

How is the nature of terrorism evolving globally? Discuss the role of technology and geopolitics in shaping modern terrorism.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### **Mains**

**Q.** Keeping in view of India's Internal Security, analyse the impact of cross-border cyber-attacks. Also, discuss defensive measures against these sophisticated attacks. (2021)

**Q.** Analyse the complexity and intensity of terrorism, its causes, linkages and obnoxious nexus. Also suggest measures required to be taken to eradicate the menace of terrorism. (2021)

**Q.** Terrorist activities and mutual distrust have clouded India-Pakistan relations. To what extent the use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange could help generate goodwill between the two countries. Discuss with suitable examples. (2015)

## Paris AI Summit 2025

**For Prelims:** [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#), [Paris Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Action Summit 2025](#), [Indo-Pacific Region](#), [India France Relations](#).

**For Mains:** India France Relations, Major Areas of Cooperation between India and France

**Source:** [TH](#)

## Why in News?

The **Prime Minister (PM)** of India visited France to co-chair the **Paris Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit 2025**.

Also, the **2nd India-France AI Policy Roundtable** was held on the sidelines of the summit.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit:

- The **AI Action Summit** is a global forum that brings together **world leaders, policymakers, technology experts**, and industry representatives to **discuss AI governance, ethics**, and its role in society.
- The **AI Action Summit** in Paris is the **3rd summit**, following the **Bletchley Park Summit (UK 2023)** and the **Seoul Summit** (South Korea 2024).
  - **Bletchley Park Declaration** (28 countries): Advocated **safe, human-centric, and responsible AI**.
  - **Seoul Summit** (27 nations): Reaffirmed **international cooperation and proposed a network of AI Safety Institutes**.

## Key Themes of Paris AI Action Summit 2025:

- **Public Interest AI:** Developing open AI infrastructure for social, economic, and environmental benefits.
- **Future of Work:** Ensuring AI's responsible use through sustained social dialogue.
- **Innovation & Culture:** Creating sustainable AI ecosystems, especially for creative industries.
- **Trust in AI:** Establishing scientific consensus on AI safety and security.
- **Global AI Governance:** Shaping an inclusive and effective international AI governance framework.

## What are the Key Outcomes of the Paris Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit 2025?

- **Joint Declaration on Inclusive and Sustainable AI:** Joint Statement on '**Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet**' was signed by **58 countries** including **India, China, EU, except US and the UK** (expressing concerns related to excessive regulations on AI).
- **Public Interest AI Platform and Incubator:** **Public Interest AI Platform and Incubator** was launched to **bridge** public-private AI efforts, and **promote a trustworthy AI ecosystem** through **capacity building in data**, transparency, and financing.
- **Human-Centric AI and Global Priorities:** The summit emphasized the need for **ethical, safe, and inclusive AI**, ensuring **human rights protection** while **addressing AI-driven inequalities**.
  - Global Priorities related to AI includes **AI accessibility, transparency, job creation, sustainability, and international governance**.

- It emphasized **bridging the digital divide, ensuring AI safety, promoting green AI, and fostering global cooperation.**
- **Alignment with Existing Multilateral AI Initiatives:** The summit emphasized alignment with global AI initiatives, including **UN General Assembly Resolutions, the Global Digital Compact, UNESCO AI Ethics Recommendations, the African Union AI strategy, and frameworks by OECD, G7, and G20.**
- **India' Stance:** India advocated **open-source and sustainable AI, emphasizing clean energy and workforce upskilling.**
  - As the **2024 lead chair** of the **Global Partnership on AI (GPAI)**, it aims to establish GPAI as the central platform for responsible AI development.

## What are the Key Outcomes of 2nd India-France AI Policy Roundtable?

- **About:**
  - The **2nd India-France AI Policy Roundtable** was held alongside the **AI Action Summit 2025 in Paris.**
  - It was organized by India's **Principal Scientific Adviser's Office, IISc Bengaluru, IndiaAI Mission, and Sciences Po Paris.**
- **Key Takeaways:**
  - **AI Governance & Ethics:** Emphasis on **responsible AI, equitable benefit-sharing, techno-legal frameworks, and AI safety.**
    - Discussions covered **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for AI, AI foundation models, global AI governance, and AI's role in tackling global challenges.**
  - **Cross-Border AI Collaboration:** Focus on **data sovereignty, interoperable AI infrastructure, and sovereign AI models, addressing the lack of arbitration mechanisms** for cross-border data flows.
  - **AI for Global Challenges:** Integration of AI in **multilingual models, federated computing, and solutions for global issues.**
  - **Sustainable AI:** Promotion of **energy-efficient AI models** and **responsible computing practices** to mitigate AI's **high energy footprint.**

Read more: [Major Areas of Cooperation between India and France](#)

Read More: [Some Major AI Tools](#)

## PM Recalls Marseille Connection with Savarkar's and India's Freedom Struggle:

- In 1910, while being transported to India, **Veer Savarkar attempted an escape in Marseille** but was recaptured.
- His extradition led to a **Franco-British legal dispute**, resolved by the **Permanent Court of Arbitration (1911)** in Britain's favor.
- He was sentenced to **2 life terms** and imprisoned in the **Cellular Jail, Andamans.**

## What are the Challenges Related to the Development of AI?

- **High Energy Consumption:** AI's **growing energy demand** could increase data centers' power consumption from **1-2% to 3-4% by 2030, potentially reaching 21% of global energy consumption.**
  - The expected **rise in carbon dioxide emissions** due to increased energy demand

is projected to result in a "social cost" of USD 125-140 billion.

- **IEA** states that a ChatGPT query uses 10 times more energy than a Google search.
- AI data centres may consume as much electricity as India's total current consumption (1,580 terawatt-hours) ([Economic Survey 2024-25](#)).
- **Issue of People-Centric AI vs AI-Centric Development:** Balancing **people-centric AI** (ethical, inclusive, and human-focused) with **AI-centric development** (automation-driven) is a key challenge as over-reliance on AI risks **job loss, data privacy issues, and digital divide**.
- **Insecure and Low-Cost AI Models:** Insecure and **low-cost AI models like DeepSeek** pose risks of data breaches, **misinformation, deepfakes, and cybersecurity threats**.
  - Weak regulatory oversight and ethical safeguards heighten bias and security concerns, necessitating robust AI governance.

## What are the Challenges related to Generative AI before India?

Read more: [Challenges of AI Disruption](#)

## Way Forward

- **Sustainable AI Infrastructure:** Promote **energy-efficient AI models, renewable-powered data centers, and optimized algorithms** to reduce AI's carbon footprint.
  - Encourage **green computing and AI-driven smart grids** for sustainability.
- **Ethical and Inclusive AI Policies:** Promote **equity, transparency, and accountability** in AI.
  - Strengthen **data privacy, bias mitigation, and algorithmic fairness** to balance people-centric and AI-centric.
- **Strengthening AI Regulations and Security:** Enforce **strict oversight on AI models, especially insecure ones like DeepSeek, to counter cyber threats, misinformation, and deepfakes**.
- **Capacity Building and Workforce Readiness:** Strengthen **AI education, skilling programs, and research institutions** to build a skilled workforce and mitigate job displacement.
- **AI for Public Good:** Utilize AI in **healthcare, agriculture, governance, and disaster management** to drive **economic and social progress** while minimizing risks.

### Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the key challenges in AI implementation in India and suggest policy measures to address them.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims:

#### Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)

1. The International Solar Alliance was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015.
2. The Alliance includes all the member countries of the United Nations.

#### Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (a)



## **Mains:**

**Q.** How will the I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics? (2022)

## **In-Vitro Gametogenesis (IVG)**

**Source:** [IE](#)

### **Why in News?**

Researchers have developed **In-Vitro Gametogenesis (IVG)** that enables **lab-based reproduction** from [stem cells](#) that has many benefits compared to [In-Vitro Fertilization \(IVF\)](#).

### **What is In-Vitro Gametogenesis (IVG)?**

- **About: IVG** is a new reproductive technology that creates **eggs and sperm** from **stem cells** collected from **skin, hair, or blood**.
  - These lab-grown gametes can be fertilized to create an **embryo**, which is implanted into a **surrogate** to carry the pregnancy.
- **Scientific Breakthroughs:** Scientists in Japan successfully produced **mice** using **IVG**, while the UK researchers expect **human trials within three years**.
  - It could allow **same-sex couples, older individuals, and infertile people** to have **biological children without** the need of a donor as in case of IVF.
- **Significance for India:** Due to several **socio-biological factors** IVG can be helpful in case of India like:
  - Indian women's reproductive age (**ovarian function**) is **declining six years earlier** than Western women.
  - **Men's sperm count** has declined over **50 years** and may reach **minimal levels in four decades**.
  - India's population has fallen **below the 2.1 replacement level**, risking an aging crisis.
- **Difference Between IVG and In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF):**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>In-Vitro Gametogenesis (IVG)</b>	<b>In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF)</b>
<b>Gamete Source</b>	Converts <b>stem cells</b> into eggs or sperm of the intended couple itself.	Requires <b>natural eggs and sperm</b> from the <b>intended couple or donors</b> .
<b>Genetic Editing</b>	Allows <b>removal of harmful traits</b> before fertilization ( <a href="#">designer babies</a> ).	Limited to <b>screening embryos</b> for genetic disorders.
<b>Reproductive Age</b>	Could enable parenthood at any age by creating new gametes.	Fertility is limited by age-related as egg and sperm quality <b>declines with age</b> .
<b>Legal Status</b>	<b>Not yet regulated</b> in most countries.	Regulated and <b>widely used</b> worldwide.
<b>Ethical Concerns</b>	Raises concerns about designer babies and <a href="#">genetic selection</a> e.g., <b>selection of physical traits, intelligence etc.</b>	Less controversial, but involves embryo selection.

## **Stem Cells**

- **About:** Stem cells are unique cells that generate **specialized cells like blood, bone, and muscle**, playing a vital role in **tissue repair and bodily functions**.
- **Types:**
  - **Embryonic (Pluripotent) Stem Cells:** Can become **any cell type**, sourced from **embryos or cord blood**.
  - **Tissue-Specific (Multipotent/Unipotent) Stem Cells:** Generate cells **only for their tissue**, e.g., **blood stem cells**.
  - **Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs):** **Lab-made cells** mimicking embryonic stem cells for **research and drug testing**.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. In the context of recent advances in human reproductive technology, “Pronuclear Transfer” is used for (2020)**

- (a) fertilization of egg in vitro by the donor sperm
- (b) genetic modification of sperm producing cells
- (c) development of stem cells into functional embryos
- (d) prevention of mitochondrial diseases in offspring

**Ans: (d)**

**Q. Consider the following statements: (2020)**

1. Genetic changes can be introduced in the cells that produce eggs or sperms of a prospective parent.
2. A person’s genome can be edited before birth at the early embryonic stage.
3. Human induced pluripotent stem cells can be injected into the embryo of a pig.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (d)**

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## Obscenity Laws in India

## Why in News?

A YouTube influencer is under investigation for allegedly making **obscene comments** during a widely viewed show. A complaint has been filed under **Section 296 of the [Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 \(BNS\)](#)** for "**obscene acts**".

- This raises questions about the **legal definition of obscenity**, particularly in the digital age.

## What are the Laws Governing Obscenity?

- **Section 294 of BNS 2023: Formerly [Indian Penal Code \(IPC\) Section 292](#)**, it prohibits the sale, advertisement, or public display of obscene content, including digital media.
  - Defines obscenity as material that is **sexually suggestive, meant to provoke sexual thoughts, or likely to harm people's morals or behavior**.
  - First-time offenders face up to **2 years in jail and a ₹5,000 fine**. Repeat offenders may get **up to 5 years** and a **Rs 10,000 fine**.
- **Section 296 of the BNS:** It penalizes performing **obscene acts in public**, as well as singing, reciting, or uttering obscene songs, ballads, or words in public or doing so to the annoyance of others.
  - By regulating public behavior that could offend **public morality or decency**, this section aims to uphold societal norms.
- **Section 67 of the Information Technology Act, 2000:** Punishes publishing or transmitting obscene material electronically.
  - The definition of obscene material is identical to that provided under **Section 294 of the BNS**.
  - Provides **harsher penalties** than BNS with **up to 3 years of imprisonment** and a fine of **Rs 5 lakh** for first-time offences.
- **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986:** Prohibits **indecent depiction of women** that is derogatory, denigrating, or harms public morality.
- **POCSO Act, 2012 (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act):** Prohibits creating, storing, sharing, or accessing child sexual content online, with strict penalties for offenders.

## How Do Courts Determine What is 'Obscene'?

- **Hicklin Test:** In *Ranjit D Udeshi v. State of Maharashtra, 1964* the **Supreme Court of India** used the **Hicklin Test**, which was **adopted by the British in the case *Queen v. Hicklin, 1868***.
  - This test determined that material is **obscene** if it has the **tendency to deprave and corrupt** those people whose minds are **open to such immoral influences**.
    - The **lowest common denominator standard** was applied, meaning content was judged based on its impact on **children or vulnerable adults**, not the average person.
  - **Criticism:** Considered **outdated and overly restrictive**. The test focused on **isolated parts** of content rather than the work as a whole.
- **Community Standards Test:** In *Aveek Sarkar v. State of West Bengal, 2014* the **Indian Supreme Court** replaced the **Hicklin Test** with the "**community standards**" test (**CST**) to determine obscenity.
  - Courts now judge obscenity based on **contemporary societal norms**. They assess whether the overall theme of the content, taken **as a whole**, appeals to **prurient interests** (i.e., sexually arousing content without artistic, literary, or social value).
  - Courts strive to **balance fundamental rights ([Article 19\(1\)\(a\) Free Speech](#)) with [reasonable restrictions \(Article 19\(2\)\)](#)**.
  - **Judicial Precedents:** *Boris Becker Nude Photo Case, 2014* the SC ruled that **nudity alone is not obscene** if it has **artistic or social merit**.
    - Courts take into account whether the work serves a literary, artistic, political, or scientific purpose before determining its obscenity.

- In the 2024 College Romance Web Series case, the SC ruled that vulgar language isn't obscene unless it arouses sexual thoughts.
- **Shortcomings:** CST is **subjective and varies by region** (based on geography, culture, and social norms), leading to inconsistent judgments. It struggles to keep up with **evolving social norms and lacks clear definitions**, causing ambiguity in legal interpretations.

## Public Morality, Decency and Freedom of Expression

- **Morality:** It is the set of principles that define right and wrong behavior based on societal, cultural, or personal beliefs about ethics and justice.
  - In [Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union of India, 2018](#) the Supreme Court held that constitutional morality takes precedence over public morality, emphasizing justice over social norms.
- **Decency:** Avoids obscene language and gestures (*B. Manmohan And Ors. vs State Of Mysore And Ors, 1965*).
- **Freedom of Expression and Obscenity:** Freedom of expression under [Article 19\(1\)\(a\)](#) of the Indian Constitution is subject to reasonable restrictions under **Article 19(2)**, including to **prevent obscenity and uphold societal morality**.

Read more: [Obscenity Laws in India](#)

<https://www.drishtijudiciary.com/en>

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Discuss the evolution of obscenity laws in India and its impact on freedom of speech?

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### **Mains**

**Q.** Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy. (2017)

## World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025

**Source:** [IE](#)

### **Why in News?**

The **2025 World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting** concluded in Davos, Switzerland, bringing together global leaders to discuss pressing issues under the theme **“Collaboration for the Intelligent**

Age.”

## What are the Key Takeaways From 2025 WEF?

- **Sustainability:** The meeting stressed that sustainability is vital for **business resilience**, urging companies to align growth with global sustainability goals for profitability and societal impact.
- **Emerging Technologies:** The 2025 WEF highlighted that **Artificial Intelligence** and **green tech** offer both opportunities and challenges.
  - Responsible AI frameworks and **ethical balance** with progress is key to improving supply chains, reducing **emissions**, and enhancing transparency.
- **Partnerships:** Emphasized that global challenges require multi-sectoral partnerships for impactful solutions. Effective collaborations could unlock **USD 12 trillion in market opportunities by 2030**.
- **Climate Action:** Stressed the need for **urgent climate action**, ensuring **decarbonization** includes a fair transition for workers and communities.
- **India at the 2025 WEF:**
  - **Investment Commitments:** India secured over Rs 20 lakh crore in investment commitments, with Maharashtra securing nearly 80% of the total.
  - **States' Contributions:** Telangana secured Rs 1.79 lakh crore investment, Kerala emphasized its **industrial transformation**, and Uttar Pradesh highlighted its **vision to become a USD 1 trillion economy by 2029 with Zero poverty**.

## World Economic Forum

- **Founded:** German engineer and economist **Klaus Schwab** in 1971 founded the European Management Forum, it became the WEF in 1987.
  - In 2015, WEF was officially recognized as an international organization, headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- **Purpose:** To engage leaders from business, government, and civil society to address global challenges and promote economic and social progress.
  - Introduced the **Stakeholder Capitalism** concept, emphasizing that companies should prioritize long-term value creation, benefiting all stakeholders.
- **Annual Meeting:** WEF Annual Meeting held in Davos, Switzerland, with over 3,000 participants including world leaders, business executives, and economists.
- **Focus:** Global issues like economic growth, climate change, technology, and geopolitical uncertainties.
- **Funding:** Primarily funded by global corporations with annual turnovers above USD 5 billion.
- **Reports:** **Global Competitiveness Report**, **Global Gender Gap Report**, **Future of Jobs Report**, **Global Risks Report**, and **Global Travel and Tourism Report**.
- **Index:** Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI).
- **Influence:** Has played a role in major diplomatic breakthroughs, such as the **creation of the G20**.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### ***Prelims***

**Q1. Which of the following gives 'Global Gender Gap Index' ranking to the countries of the world? (2017)**

- (a) World Economic Forum
- (b) UN Human Rights Council
- (c) UN Women
- (d) World Health Organization

**Ans: (a)**

**Q2. Who among the following is the founder of World Economic Forum? (2009)**

- (a) Klaus Schwab
- (b) John Kenneth Galbraith
- (c) Hobert Zoellick
- (d) Paul Krugman

**Ans (a)**

**Q3. The Global Competitiveness Report is published by the (2019)**

- (a) International Monetary Fund
- (b) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- (c) World Economic Forum
- (d) World Bank

**Ans: (c)**

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## Cheetah Cubs Birth in Kuno National Park

**Source: IE**

A cheetah at Madhya Pradesh's [Kuno National Park \(NP\)](#) gave birth to **two cubs**, bringing the total to **26 cheetahs**, including **14 cubs**.

- **About Kuno NP:** Kuno NP (Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh) was established as a [wildlife sanctuary in 1981](#) and upgraded to a [national park in 2018](#).
  - **Geography:** It primarily consists of **dry deciduous forest** and the **Kuno River**, a major [Chambal tributary](#), flows through the park.
    - It is located in the [Vindhyan Hills](#).
  - **Fauna:** **Leopard**, Striped hyena, Indian wolf, [Blackbuck](#), Sambar deer, [Gharial \(Kuno river\)](#).
    - It was selected under the [Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India](#).
  - **Vegetation:** The **primary tree species** are **Kardhai, Khair, and Salai**.

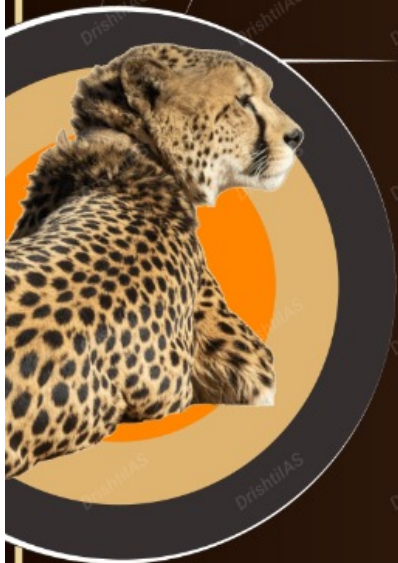
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# Cheetah

**Common Name** - Cheetah

**Scientific Name** - *Acinonyx jubatus*

- *Acinonyx jubatus jubatus* (African Cheetah)
- *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* (Asiatic Cheetah)



## Reintroduction of Cheetah to India:

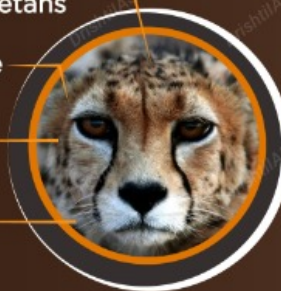
- The "Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India" was released by MoEF&CC at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (January 2022).
  - Such a plan was first proposed in 2009.
- In September 2022, eight cheetahs landed in India from Namibia.
  - The 8 cheetahs have been relocated to the Kuno-Palpur National Park, Madhya Pradesh.
  - The relocation of cheetahs to India from Namibia is the world's first inter-continental large wild carnivore translocation project.

Slightly brownish and golden skin; thicker than the Asiatic Cheetahs

More prominent spots and lines on the face

Found all over the African continent

**IUCN Red List Status - Vulnerable**



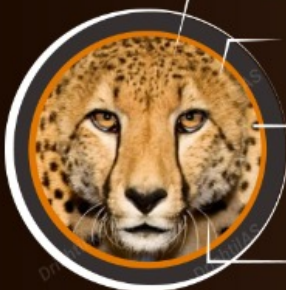
## African Cheetah

Slightly smaller than the African ones.

Pale yellowish fawn coloured skin - more fur under body, belly specifically.

Found only in Iran; the country claims there are only 12 of them left. Year 1952 - Asiatic Cheetah officially declared extinct from India.

**IUCN Red List Status - Critically Endangered**



## Asiatic Cheetah

Read More: [One Year of Project Cheetah](#)

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## Fort Williams Renamed as Vijay Durg

[Source: TH](#)

**Fort William**, the **Indian Army's Eastern Command HQ in Kolkata**, has been renamed **Vijay Durg** to remove colonial imprints. It is named after **Maharashtra's oldest Sindhudurg fort**, a former **Maratha naval base under Chhatrapati Shivaji**.

- Other changes include renaming **Kitchener House**, inside the fort to **Manekshaw House** and **St. George's Gate** to **Shivaji Gate**.

### About Fort Williams:

- The fort is **located in Kolkata on the eastern banks of the Hooghly River** and was originally **named after King William III of England**.
  - The original fort was built by the British in **1696** under **Sir John Goldsborough** and **completed in 1706**.
  - It was damaged during the **Siege of Calcutta (1756)** when **Siraj-ud-Daulah defeated the British**.
  - After the **Battle of Plassey (1757)**, **Robert Clive rebuilt** it at a new location between **1758 and 1781**.
- **Significance:**
  - Site of the **Black Hole of Calcutta incident** (1756).
  - It houses a war **memorial** with artifacts from the **1971 Indo-Pak War** and **Bangladesh Liberation War**.

### Other Similar Renamings:

- Renaming **Rajpath to Kartavya Path** and **Port Blair to Sri Vijaya Puram**.
- The Indian Navy adopted a **new ensign, removing colonial symbols** (2022).

Read More: [British Conquest for Bengal: Battles of Plassey and Buxar](#)

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## Exercise CYCLONE

[Source: TH](#)

The **3<sup>rd</sup> edition** of the **India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise CYCLONE** commenced at Rajasthan.

### About Exercise CYCLONE:

- **Annual Exercise:** Conducted alternatively in India and Egypt, with the last edition held in Egypt (January 2024).



- **Objectives:**

- Strengthening **military-to-military relations** between India and Egypt.
- Enhancing **interoperability, joint operational capabilities** and exchange of special warfare operations tactics.
- **Counter-terrorism operations** in **desert/semi-desert terrain** aligning with [Chapter VII of the UN Charter](#).

## India and Egypt:

- **India is one of Egypt's key trading partners** in Africa, with a Bilateral Trade Agreement (1978) based on the Most Favored Nation clause.
- **India and Egypt** established a **Strategic Partnership** in 2023 spanning **political, security, defence, energy, and economic cooperation**.

## Joint Exercises with India:

Country	Exercise
Australia	Austra Hindbah
Bangladesh	Sampriti
China	Hand in Hand
France	Shakti
Indonesia	Garuda Shakti
Kazakhstan	Prabal Dostykk
Kyrgyzstan	Khanjar
Maldives	Ekuverin
Mongolia	Nomadic Elephant
Myanmar	Imbex
Nepal	Surya Kiran
Oman	Al Nagah
Russia	Indra
Seychelles	Lamitiye
Sri Lanka	Mitra Shakti
Thailand	Maitree
UK	Ajeya Warrior
USA	Yudhabhayaas, Vajra Prahar

Read More: [Major Military Exercises of India](#)

## Corruption Perceptions Index 2024

Source: TH

India ranked **96<sup>th</sup>** in the [Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) for 2024, down from **93<sup>rd</sup>** in 2023, with a score of **38**, a decline from **39** in 2023.

- **CPI:** Published annually by the non-governmental organization **Transparency International** since 1995.
  - It ranks 180 countries based on perceived levels of public sector corruption, using a scale from **0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)**.
  - **Denmark** topped the CPI 2024 as the least corrupt nation, followed by **Finland** and **Singapore**. Among India's neighbors, **Pakistan (135)**, **Sri Lanka (121)**, and **Bangladesh (149)** ranked poorly, while **China** stood at **76**.
  - While **32 countries** have significantly reduced their corruption levels since 2012,

148 countries have either stagnated or worsened during the same period, highlighting the ongoing challenge.

- According to the **Transparency International**, Corruption hampers **climate action by misusing funds** meant for mitigation and adaptation, with **fossil-fuel** interests obstructing policies.
  - It also links to **declining democracy, instability, and human rights violations**, necessitating urgent global action.

**Read more:** [Corruption Perception Index 2023](#)

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