

Today's Prelims Topics

Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)

Context

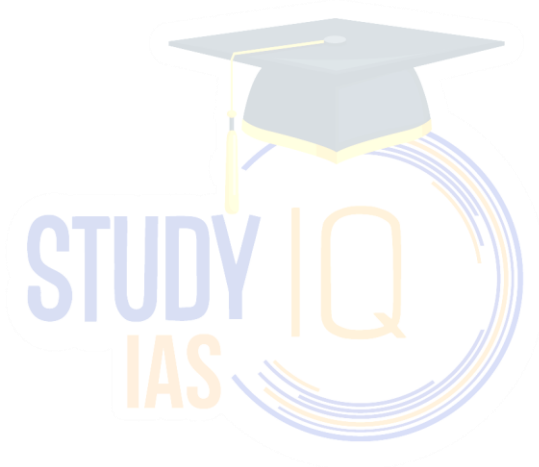
- A student in Balasore, Odisha, died by self-immolation after her sexual harassment complaint against her department head was dismissed by the college's Internal Complaints Committee (ICC).
- Her family claims the ICC was biased and poorly trained, raising concerns over the fairness and effectiveness of institutional grievance redressal mechanisms.

Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) – A legal mechanism to address sexual harassment at the workplace

- **Origin & Legal Foundation**
 - **Vishaka Guidelines (1997):**
 - Laid down by the **Supreme Court of India** in *Vishaka & Others vs. State of Rajasthan*.
 - Triggered by the gang-rape of **Bhanwari Devi**, a social worker who tried to stop child marriage.
 - First legal recognition of **sexual harassment as a violation of fundamental rights** under Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21.
 - Mandated all workplaces to create complaints committees.
 - **Statutory Backing: POSH Act (2013)**
 - **The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**
 - Converted the Vishaka Guidelines into enforceable law.
 - Mandated the formation of an **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** in every workplace with **10 or more employees**.
- **Composition of ICC (Under POSH Act)**
 - **Presiding Officer:** A senior woman employee (mandatory)
 - **Two or more members:** With legal knowledge or experience in social work
 - **External Member:** From an NGO or legal field (to ensure independence)
 - At least **50% members must be women**
- **Powers and Functions**
 - **Quasi-judicial powers:**
 - Can summon individuals and require the production of documents.
 - Conduct inquiry similar to a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure.
 - **Duties:**
 - Inquire into complaints of sexual harassment.
 - Submit findings to the employer with recommended action (warning, termination, deduction of salary, etc.)
 - Ensure confidentiality, protection to the complainant, and awareness programs.
- **Definition of Sexual Harassment (under Section 2(n), POSH Act)**
 - Physical contact and advances
 - A demand or request for sexual favors
 - Sexually colored remarks
 - Showing pornography
 - Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature
- **Status of Implementation (as of recent reports)**
 - **Widespread Non-Compliance:**

- Many private and government organizations **fail to constitute ICCs** properly.
- **Lack of external members**, absence of gender balance, or completely missing ICCs are common.
- **Annual compliance reports** (mandatory under Rule 14) often not submitted.
- **Cases of misuse and underreporting:**
 - Many women **do not report** due to fear of retaliation or reputational damage.
 - Sometimes ICCs are used to suppress whistleblowers rather than support them.
- **Landmark Cases & Developments**
 - **Farooqui Case:** Highlighted the legal grey areas in consent and workplace relationships.
 - **Tata Consultancy Services vs. Jane Doe:** Reaffirmed ICC's internal jurisdiction.
 - **#MeToo Movement:** Sparked mass public discourse; exposed failure of ICCs in major corporations and media houses.
- **Challenges**
 - **Lack of awareness** among employees
 - **Poor training** of ICC members
 - **Employer bias** or interference in proceedings
 - **No protection for third-party women (e.g., clients, vendors)** in some cases
 - **No time-bound oversight body** to monitor implementation across India

Source: [TheHindu](https://www.thehindu.com)



Direction-Dependent Conduction Polarity in Altermagnetic CrSb

Context

CrSb becomes the first known **altermagnet** to show **direction-dependent charge flow**, paving the way for **advanced spintronics and thermoelectric devices**.

About Altermagnets

- Altermagnets are a **newly discovered class of magnetic materials**.
- They combine the best properties of **ferromagnets** (strong magnetic effects) and **antiferromagnets** (zero net magnetism).
- Though they show **no net external magnetism**, their **internal electron behavior** is highly useful for advanced technologies like **spintronics** (which manipulates electron spin instead of charge).

Key Properties of Altermagnets

- Exhibit **zero net magnetization** like antiferromagnets.
- Show **non-relativistic spin splitting** like ferromagnets.
- Feature **unique spin polarization** in both:
 - **Real space** (atomic arrangement),
 - **Momentum space** (distribution of electron spins).
- Ideal for **spin caloritronics**, a field combining spin and heat flow—unachievable by traditional magnets.
- Potential use in **next-gen information processing and data storage technologies**.

Altermagnetism in Chromium Antimonide (CrSb)

- CrSb is a **metallic altermagnet** with exceptional properties:
 - Magnetic order remains stable at over **twice room temperature**.
 - Shows the **largest altermagnetic spin-splitting** known.
- It is the **first known altermagnet** to exhibit **direction-dependent conduction polarity** (DDCP).
- CrSb is:
 - **Earth-abundant**,
 - **Non-toxic**, and
 - **Environmentally friendly**.
- These qualities make CrSb a **top candidate for future electronic and spintronic applications**.

Source: [TheHindu](https://www.thehindu.com)

National Cooperative Policy 2025

Context

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has announced a new **National Cooperative Policy**, replacing the 23-year-old existing framework to strengthen and modernize India's cooperative sector.

About National Cooperative Policy 2025

- Launched by **Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah** in New Delhi.
- Replaces the previous **2002 cooperative policy**, after 23 years.
- Aligned with the vision of "**Sahkar se Samriddhi**" (**Prosperity through Cooperation**).
- Designed to guide the sector's growth over the next **20 years**.

Objectives

- Strengthen **institutional capacity** of cooperatives.
- Expand cooperatives into **new and emerging sectors**.
- Promote **inclusivity, transparency, and village-level economic empowerment**.
- Align cooperatives with **national development goals**.

Political and Historical Context

- Follows the creation of a **dedicated Ministry of Cooperation** in 2021.
- India has over **8.4 lakh cooperative societies**, reaching **31 crore people**.
- Aims to **expand presence** in states like **Uttar Pradesh** and **Bihar**.
- Target: **30% increase** in cooperative societies nationwide.

Six Core Pillars of the Policy

1. **Strengthening foundational systems**
2. **Revitalizing existing cooperatives**
3. **Digitalisation and future readiness**
4. **Inclusive outreach and participation**
5. **Expanding into new sectors**
6. **Youth engagement and capacity building**

Key Goals by 2034

- **Triple the sector's contribution to GDP**.
- **One cooperative society in every village**.
- **Engage 50 crore citizens** in cooperative activities.

Expansion into New Sectors

- Support for cooperatives in:
 - **Green energy**
 - **Tourism**
 - **Insurance**
 - **Taxi services** (Sahkar Taxi)
- **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** to take up:
 - Fuel & LPG distribution
 - Jan Aushadhi Kendras
 - Common Service Centres (CSCs)
 - Rural schemes like **Har Ghar Jal** and **PM Surya Ghar Yojana**

Model Cooperative Villages

- Each **tehsil** will develop **5 model villages** in collaboration with:

- State cooperative banks
- **NABARD**
- Focus on:
 - **Dairy, Fishery, Floriculture, Agri-services**
 - **Women and tribal empowerment** (White Revolution 2.0)

Institutional Reforms and Modernisation

- Full **computerisation of PACS**
- Tech-driven **governance and monitoring**
- **Cluster tracking systems** for performance evaluation
- **Legal review every 10 years**
- Over **83 reform points** identified:
 - **58 under implementation, 3 completed**

Education and Training

- Establishment of **Tribhuvan Sahkari University**
- Aimed at **professional education** and **cooperative leadership training**

Economic Impact (Current Role of Cooperatives)

- **20%** of India's **agricultural credit**
- **35%** of **fertiliser distribution**
- **30%+** of **sugar production**
- **10%** of **milk production**
- **21%** of the **fishing sector**
- **13%** of **wheat** and **20%** of **paddy procurement**

History of Cooperatives in India

- **Early Phase**
 - **1904:** Cooperative Credit Societies Act enacted by the British.
 - **1912:** Broader Cooperative Societies Act introduced, expanding scope.
- **Post-Independence**
 - Cooperatives included in the **Directive Principles of State Policy** (Article 43B).
 - Rapid expansion in **agriculture, credit, dairy, sugar, housing, and fisheries**.
 - Landmark movements like **Amul** (White Revolution) built on cooperative models.
- **Challenges Over Time**
 - Political interference
 - Lack of autonomy
 - Weak governance and transparency
 - Ineffective representation of women, youth, and marginalised communities

97th Constitutional Amendment (2011)

Purpose

To provide **constitutional status and protection** to cooperatives.

Promote **autonomy, democracy, accountability, and professionalism** in cooperative functioning.

Key Provisions

Article 19(1)(c): Right to form **co-operative societies** added as a fundamental right.

Article 43B (DPSP): States to promote voluntary formation, democratic control, and professional management of cooperatives.

Part IXB (Articles 243ZH to 243ZT): Introduced specific provisions for governance of cooperatives:

Regular elections

Maximum board size: 21 members

Audit and accountability mandates

Five-year term for elected boards

Legal Challenge

In 2021, Supreme Court struck down Part IXB **insofar as it applied to multi-state cooperatives**, citing that the amendment required **ratification by half the states** under Article 368(2), which was not done.

Source: [TheHindu](https://www.thehindu.com)



Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)

Context

Over **1.6 lakh people globally** have undergone **Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)**, a medical procedure used to treat various neurological and psychiatric conditions.

What is Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)?

- A **medical procedure** where **electrodes are implanted** into specific areas of the brain.
- Used to treat **neurological and psychiatric disorders** by modulating brain activity.

How DBS Works

- Electrodes are connected by wires to a **small pulse-generating device** (like a pacemaker) implanted in the chest.
- This device sends **mild electrical impulses** to targeted brain regions.
- The stimulation helps correct **abnormal brain signals or chemical imbalances**.

Applications of DBS

- Primarily used for **movement disorders**, especially:
 - **Parkinson's disease**
 - **Essential tremor**
 - **Dystonia**
- Also approved for:
 - **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**
- Currently being studied for:
 - **Severe depression**
 - **Epilepsy**

Mechanism

- DBS modifies the way **neurons communicate** by delivering electrical signals.
- Interrupts **faulty or erratic brain signals**, reducing symptoms like:
 - **Tremors**
 - **Muscle stiffness**
 - **Involuntary movements**

Advantages of DBS

- **Non-destructive**: Unlike brain surgeries that destroy tissue, DBS is **reversible**.
- If the device is turned off, **stimulation stops immediately**.
- Helps restore **normal function** at both the **cellular** and **network** level in the brain.

Source: [TheHindu](#)

Kudavolai System or Ballot pot Election

Context

PM Modi praised the Chola Empire's ancient democratic system using "**ballot pots**," calling it older than the Magna Carta.

Kudavolai System

- **Ballot-pot method:** Names of candidates were written on palm leaves and placed in a pot (Kudavolai).
- **Fair selection:** A neutral child drew the winning leaf publicly to ensure **transparency and impartiality**.
- **Symbolic integrity:** The system combined **divine randomness** with **civic responsibility**, discouraging dynastic politics.

Strict Eligibility Criteria

- Candidates had to:
 - Be **landowners** paying taxes.
 - Be **35–70 years** old.
 - Be **literate** in Vedas or administrative texts.
 - Be free from **criminal charges, debt, alcoholism, and nepotism**.

Strong Disqualification Norms

- Disqualified if found:
 - Involved in **financial fraud, ethical violations, or corruption**.
 - Punishments included **finances or removal from office**, as seen in **epigraphic evidence** (e.g., Inscription No. 24, *Epigraphia Indica*).

Source: [IndianExpress](#)

Exercise Bold Kurukshetra

Context

The 14th edition of **Exercise Bold Kurukshetra 2025** is scheduled to begin in **Jodhpur** and will run until **4th August 2025**.

About Exercise Bold Kurukshetra 2025

- A **bilateral military exercise** between **India and Singapore**.
- **Started in 2005**, showcasing strong and enduring defence cooperation between the two nations.

Participants in 2025 Edition

- **Indian Army**: Mechanised Infantry Regiment
- **Singapore Armed Forces**: 42 Singapore Armoured Regiment of the 4 Singapore Armoured Brigade

Nature of the Exercise

- Conducted as a **Table Top Exercise** and **Computer-Based Wargame**.
- Focuses on **validating operational procedures** for **mechanised warfare**.

Objective

- To enhance **interoperability** and **joint training capabilities** of both armies.
- Conducted under the framework of a **United Nations mandate**.
- Aims to strengthen **bilateral defence cooperation**.

Wider Defence Engagement

- India and Singapore regularly engage through:
 - **High-level visits**
 - **Policy dialogues**
 - **Training courses**
 - **Professional military exchanges**
- Reinforces strategic and tactical ties between India and Singapore.
- Promotes **mutual understanding** and deepens **collaborative capabilities**.

Source: [PIB](#)