

Today's Prelims Topics

Forest Rights Act, 2006

Context

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration is **accused of giving a false report to the Centre that tribal forest rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006** were settled for the ₹72,000-crore Great Nicobar project, though tribal representatives say their rights remain unresolved.

About Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA, 2006)

- Officially called **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006**.
- Aims to correct **historical injustice** faced by forest-dwelling communities.
- Recognises rights of tribals and traditional forest dwellers over **land and forest resources** they depend upon.
- Ensures **livelihood security** while promoting **sustainable forest management**.

Need for FRA, 2006

- Tribals share a **close cultural and livelihood relationship** with forests.
- Colonial rule and post-Independence policies **alienated tribals from forests**.
- Non-recognition of ancestral rights led to **displacement due to developmental projects**.
- FRA enacted to:
 - **Re-recognise forest rights** of tribals.
 - Protect their symbiotic relationship with forests.
 - Balance **livelihood security with conservation**.

Objectives of FRA, 2006

- **Empower local self-governance** institutions.
- Secure **livelihoods** of forest-dependent communities → reduce poverty.
- Strengthen **conservation and sustainable use** of forests.
- Promote **inclusive natural resource governance**.

Key Provisions of FRA, 2006

- Recognises rights to **live on and cultivate forest land** for livelihood.
- Provides rights over **forest resources**, such as:
 - Ownership and use of **minor forest produce (MFP)**.
 - **Community rights** (e.g., Nistar).
 - **Habitat rights** for primitive and pre-agricultural communities.
 - Rights to **protect, regenerate, conserve, and manage community forest resources**.
- Allows **diversion of forest land** for essential public utilities (schools, dispensaries, electricity, water, telecom etc.) with **Gram Sabha approval**.
- Forest rights adjudication through **Gram Sabha → Sub-Divisional Committee → District Level Committee**.

Rights Given to Forest Dwellers under FRA

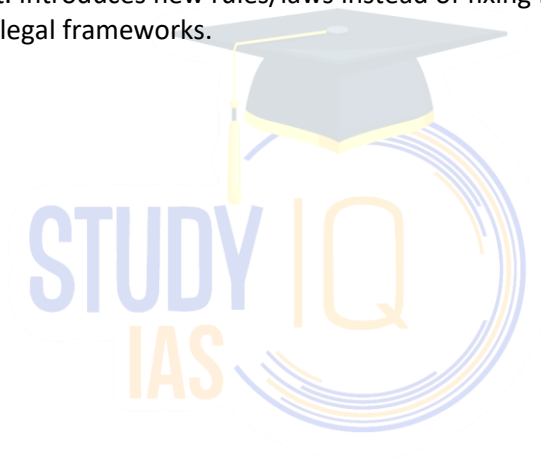
- **Land Rights**
 - Ownership of cultivated forest land (up to 4 hectares).
 - Valid for cultivation done **before Dec 13, 2005**.
 - Documentary proof not mandatory.
- **Use Rights**

- Collect and use **minor forest produce** (herbs, tendu leaves, medicinal plants etc. – excluding timber).
- Access to **grazing grounds** and **water bodies**.
- Rights over **traditional use areas of pastoralist/nomadic communities**.
- **Community Rights**
 - Right to manage and protect forests, wildlife, and biodiversity.
- **Protection from Displacement**
 - No arbitrary eviction from national parks or protected areas without due process.

Challenges & Issues in Implementation

- **Lack of Awareness:** Tribals often unaware of their rights → vulnerable to exploitation.
- **Conflicts with Other Laws:** Overlaps with **PESA Act, 1996** and **Joint Forest Management** practices.
- **Weak Institutional Capacity:** MoTA (nodal ministry) lacks sufficient skilled staff for FRA implementation.
- **Wrongful Rejections:** Many claims rejected due to poor verification processes.
- **Inactive Vigilance Committees:** State-level monitoring often ineffective.
- **Bias towards Individual Rights:** Most titles issued are **individual**, with only ~4% **community-based**.
- **Legal Complexity:** Govt. introduces new rules/laws instead of fixing FRA's implementation issues → creates overlapping legal frameworks.

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



Lipulekh Pass

Context

Nepal has opposed the India-China decision to restart border trade through the **Lipulekh Pass** in Uttarakhand, calling it *unexpected and unacceptable* as the region is disputed (Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura).

Lipulekh Pass – Location & Features

- A **high-altitude mountain pass** in the **Kumaon region of Uttarakhand**, near the **India–Nepal–China trijunction**.
- Connects **Uttarakhand (India)** with **Tibet (China)**.
- **Altitude:** ~5,334 m (17,500 ft).
- Acts as a **gateway to the higher Himalayas** due to its elevation and strategic location.
- **First Indian border post opened for trade with China (1992).**
 - Later followed by **Shipki La (Himachal Pradesh, 1994)** and **Nathu La (Sikkim, 2006)**.

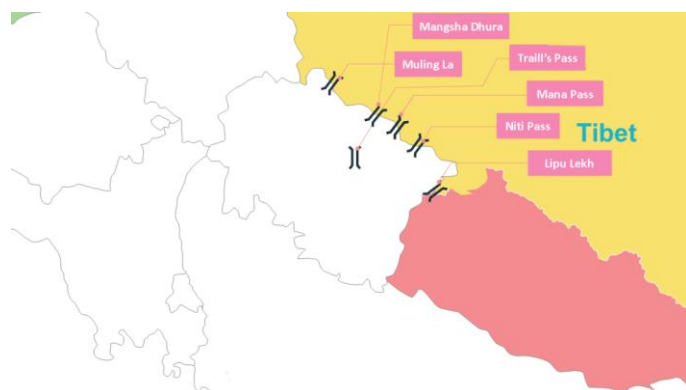


Significance of Lipulekh Pass

- **Ancient Trade Route**
 - Historically used as a key **trade corridor** linking India with the **Tibetan plateau**.
- **Religious Importance**
 - Integral to the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra**, a major Hindu pilgrimage route.
- **Strategic Importance**
 - Located near the **contested Kalapani-Limpiyadhura region**, claimed by both India and Nepal.
 - Serves as a vital **border trade and military route** in the Himalayan frontier.

Major Passes of Uttarakhand

- **Mana Pass**
 - Located in Uttarakhand on the border with Tibet.
 - Elevation: **5610 m**.
 - Lies slightly north of the holy place **Badrinath**.
 - Remains closed during **winter (Nov–Apr)**.
- **Mangsha Dhura**
 - Border pass between Uttarakhand and Tibet.
 - Used by pilgrims on the route to **Kailash–Mansarovar**.
- **Niti Pass**
 - Border pass between Uttarakhand and Tibet.
 - Remains closed during **winter (Nov–Apr)**.
- **Muling La Pass**
 - Border pass between Uttarakhand and Tibet.



- Located **north of Gangotri**.
- Elevation: **5669 m** in the Great Himalayas.

Source: [TheHindu](#)

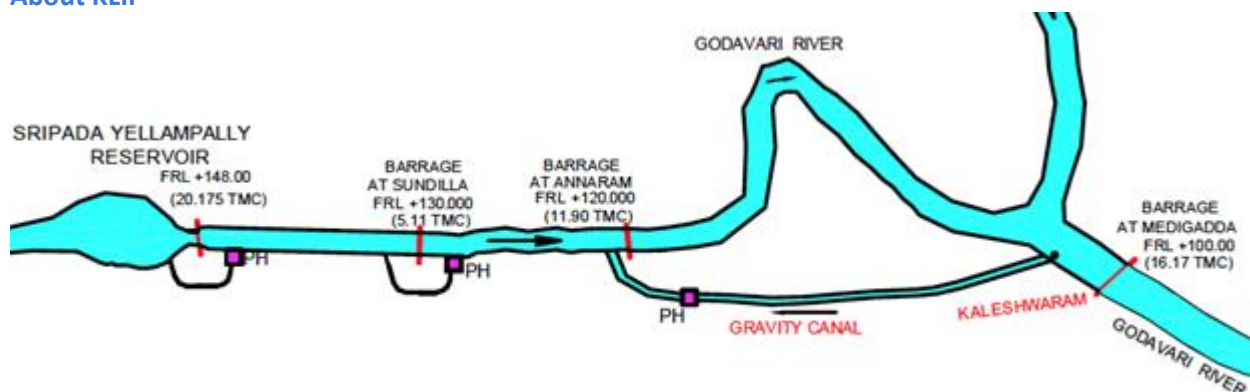


Kaleshwaram Project

Context

The Telangana High Court refused to stay the Justice P.C. Ghose Commission report on alleged irregularities in the **Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project**.

About KLIP



- **Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP)** is the **world's largest multi-stage lift irrigation project**, built on the **Godavari River** in **Bhupalpally district, Telangana**.
- The project spans **500+ km** across **13 districts**, with a **canal network of 1,800 km**.
- Construction began in **June 2019**.
- Designed to provide **240 TMC of water**, out of which **70% is allocated for irrigation**.
- The project originates at the **confluence of the Pranhita and Godavari rivers**.
- KLIP uses **massive pump systems** and **surge pools** to lift water to elevated delivery chambers, enabling distribution across a wide command area.

Godavari River

Godavari River, also known as **Dakshin Ganga**, is **India's second-longest river** after the Ganga. Originates from **Trimbakeshwar (Maharashtra)**.

Flows **1,465 km eastward**, passing through **Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha**, before emptying into the **Bay of Bengal**.

Major Left-Bank Tributaries: Purna, Pranhita, Indravati, Sabari.

Major Right-Bank Tributaries: Pravara, Manjira, Manair.

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

Algeria

Context

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi will visit **Algeria** to strengthen bilateral defence ties and enhance military cooperation.

About Algeria

- **Location:** North Africa; bordered by **Tunisia, Libya, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Western Sahara, Morocco, and the Mediterranean Sea.**
- **Capital:** Algiers.
- **Geography:**
 - Largest country in **Africa** (and the **10th largest in the world**).
 - Features **Sahara Desert** (covers 80% of its land).
- **Government:** Presidential Republic.
- **Language:** Arabic (official), Berber (recognized), French widely used.
- **Religion:** Predominantly Islam.
- **Economy:**
 - Heavily dependent on **oil and natural gas exports** (major supplier to Europe).
 - Member of **OPEC**.
- **Strategic Importance:**
 - Key player in **African Union (AU)** and **Arab League**.
 - Important for India in terms of **energy security, defence cooperation, counter-terrorism, and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** ties.
- **India–Algeria Relations:**
 - Diplomatic relations since **1962 (Algerian independence)**.
 - Cooperation in **energy, defence, education, and counter-terrorism**.
 - Algeria supported India on **Kashmir** and other global issues at NAM forums.



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

Satpura Tiger Reserve

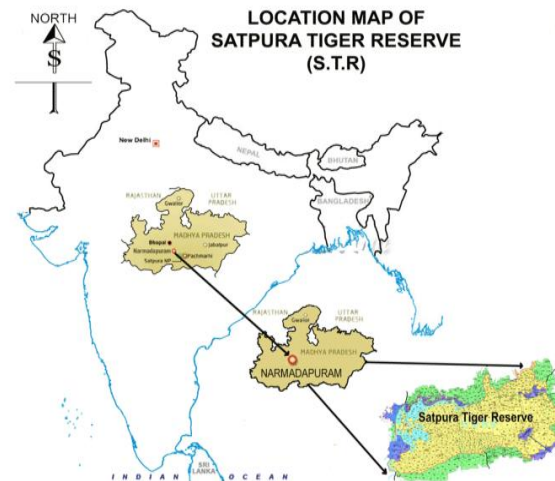
Context

A tiger was recently found dead in **Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR)**, Narmadapuram district, Madhya Pradesh, with officials suspecting that the cause of death was a **territorial fight**.

Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR)

● Location & Geography

- Situated in **Hoshangabad district, Madhya Pradesh**.
- Lies in the **Satpura ranges** of the Central Indian Landscape, **south of River Narmada**.
- Name **Satpura** means “*Seven Folds*”, acting as a **watershed** between the **Narmada and Tapi rivers**.
- Spread over **2,133 sq. km**.
- Comprises **Satpura National Park, Bori Wildlife Sanctuary, and Pachmarhi Sanctuary**.
- Terrain: **rugged sandstone peaks, narrow gorges, ravines, and dense forests**.



● Cultural & Geological Significance

- Contains **50+ rock shelters** dating back **1,500–10,000 years**, important for understanding human evolution.
- Geological formations include the **Deccan Trap series, Gondwanas, and metamorphic rocks**.

● Flora

- Classified as a **mixed deciduous forest** of the Central Indian Highlands.
- Key species: **teak, bamboo, Indian ebony, wild mango, Indian gooseberry, satinwood, various acacias**, etc.
- Rich diversity with **26 Himalayan species** and **42 Nilgiri species**.
- Known as the **northern extremity of the Western Ghats**.

● Fauna

- Hosts iconic species like **tiger, leopard, sloth bear, Indian gaur (bison), and sambar deer**.
- Birdlife includes **Indian peafowl, crested serpent eagle, and several species of vultures**.

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

GST Council

Context

The **GST Council** will hold its 56th meeting on **September 3–4, 2025**, in New Delhi to discuss **GST rate cuts and reforms**.

GST Council

- Established under the **101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016** through **Article 279A**.
- It is a **constitutional body** responsible for GST-related issues and recommendations to both Union and State governments.
- Secretariat is located in **New Delhi**.

Vision & Mission

- **Vision:** Promote **cooperative federalism** by creating a harmonized GST system.
- **Mission:** Develop a **simplified, IT-driven GST structure** through wide consultations.

Objectives

- Ensure smooth and uniform **implementation of GST**.
- Simplify tax structure, **eliminate cascading taxes**, and lower compliance costs.
- Monitor GST processes and **prevent fraud**.

Constitutional Provisions (Article 279A)

- **Formation:** President must constitute the GST Council within **60 days** of the amendment.
- **Levy on Specific Goods:** Can recommend GST rate for **petroleum, diesel, petrol, natural gas, aviation fuel**.
- **Guiding Principle:** Promote a **unified national market**.
- **Procedural Powers:** Can decide its own working procedures.
- **Validity:** Council decisions remain valid despite vacancies or minor flaws.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Can settle disputes between **Centre and States** regarding GST.

Composition

- **Chairperson:** Union Finance Minister.
- **Vice-Chairperson:** Elected by members of the Council.
- **Members:**
 - Union MoS (Finance/Revenue).
 - Finance/Taxation Ministers of States (or nominated Minister).
- **Permanent Invitee:** CBIC Chairperson (non-voting).
- **Ex-officio Secretary:** Union Revenue Secretary.

Functions (Article 279A(4))

- Recommend on:
 - **GST rates**, exemptions, and threshold limits.
 - **Goods & services** under GST or exempted.
 - **Model GST laws** and place of supply rules.
 - **Apportionment** of GST in inter-state trade (Article 269A).
 - **Special rates** in case of disasters/calamities.
 - **Special provisions** for North-Eastern & hilly states.

Working of the GST Council

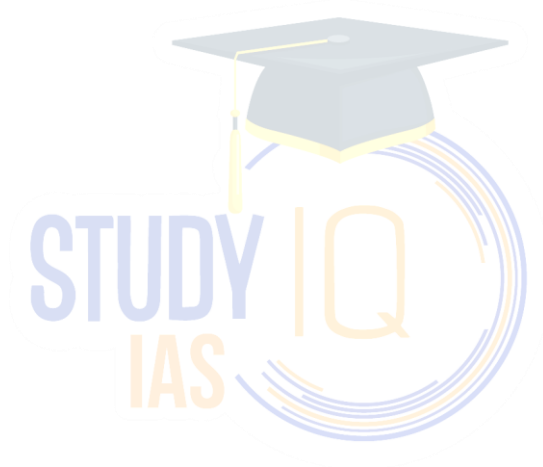
- **Quorum:** At least **half of total members** must be present.
- **Decision-Making:** Requires **3/4th majority of weighted votes**.

- **Voting Power:**
 - Centre = **1/3rd weightage**.
 - States (collectively) = **2/3rd weightage**.

Key Outcomes of GST Council

- **Dual GST Model:** Both Centre and States levy GST.
- **Five Tax Slabs:** 0%, 5%, 12%, 18%, 28% (with some cesses).
- **Online Compliance System:** E-filing, GSTN portal, e-way bills.
- **Relief for Businesses:** Input Tax Credit, Composition Scheme.

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



CCPA

Context

The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** has imposed a **₹10 lakh fine** on ride-hailing platform **Rapido** for running **misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices**, and has directed the company to **refund affected customers**.

About Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- **Legal Basis:** Set up under **Section 10 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.
- **Timeline:** The 2019 Act replaced the 1986 Act, notified on **9th August 2019**, enforced from **20th July 2020**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.

Functions & Powers of CCPA

- Protects and enforces the **rights of consumers as a class**.
- Prevents **unfair trade practices** and checks **false/misleading advertisements**.
- Ensures that **no misleading advertisements** are published or promoted.
- Can initiate **class-action suits** (including product recalls, refunds, or cancellation of licenses).
- Conducts **inquiries and investigations** through its **Investigation Wing** (headed by a Director-General).
- Can **order discontinuation** of unfair practices, **impose penalties**, and ensure **consumer welfare measures**.

Composition of CCPA

- Headed by a **Chief Commissioner**.
- Supported by **two Commissioners**:
 - One for **goods-related issues**.
 - One for **service-related complaints**.

Ethical Issues of Such Advertisements

- **Deception:** Misleading consumers with false promises → violates *right to informed choice*.
- **Exploitation of Trust:** Using celebrities/influencers to mislead consumers into unsafe or overpriced choices.
- **Unfair Advantage:** Companies gain unfair market power by tricking buyers instead of fair competition.
- **Harm to Consumers:** Financial loss, safety risks, disappointment → especially vulnerable groups (elderly, students, poor).
- **Erosion of Consumer Confidence:** Misleading ads reduce trust in brands and the overall market.
- **Moral Responsibility:** Companies should focus on *truthful transparency*, not exploitative persuasion.

Legal Framework for Misleading Advertisements in India

- **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**
 - Defines *misleading advertisement*.
 - Empowers **CCPA** to impose penalties, order discontinuation, and ban endorsers.
- **Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995**
 - Prohibits misleading/false ads on cable TV.
- **Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954**
 - Restricts misleading medical/health-related ads.
- **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**
 - Penalises false claims in food advertisements.

- **Legal Metrology Act, 2009**
 - Regulates misleading packaging and labeling practices.
- **ASCI (Advertising Standards Council of India) Guidelines** (*self-regulation*)
 - Voluntary code ensuring ads are honest, not offensive, and do not exploit consumers.

Source: [IndianExpress](#)



SMILE Scheme

Context

The Government of India launched a **15-day Entrepreneurship Development Programme** under the **SMILE scheme** to promote **economic empowerment and self-reliance of transgender persons**.

About SMILE Scheme

- **Support for Marginalized Individual for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)** is a **Central Sector Scheme**.
- It has **two sub-schemes**:
 1. Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons.
 2. Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in Begging.
- It is an **umbrella scheme** covering welfare and rehabilitation measures for both transgender persons and those engaged in begging.

Features of SMILE Scheme

- **Education Support:** Scholarships for transgender students from **Class IX to Post-Graduation**.
- **Skill Development & Livelihood:** Training provided under **PM-DAKSH scheme**.
- **Health Support:** Composite medical health package through **PM-JAY**, including **gender-reaffirmation surgeries** in selected hospitals.
- **Housing Facility:** Establishment of '**Garima Greh**' providing shelter, food, clothing, recreation, medical aid, and skill development.
- **Protection Mechanism:** Creation of **Transgender Protection Cell** in each state to monitor offences, ensure registration, investigation, and prosecution.
- **Digital Support:** A **National Portal & Helpline** to provide information and solutions to transgender persons and persons engaged in begging.
- **Nodal Ministry:** **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**.

Source: [ETVBharat](https://www.etvbharat.com)

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

Context

The Government of India has granted **UN-style privileges and immunities** to the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** and its officials to bolster its effectiveness in global big cat conservation efforts.

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

Origins

- Launched by PM Narendra Modi in 2023 during the 50th anniversary of Project Tiger.
- Approved by Union Cabinet in February 2024.

Implementation

- Established under the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, MoEFCC.
- Functions as a global platform for conservation expertise, funding, and knowledge sharing.

Objectives

- Conservation of **7 big cats**: Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, Puma.
- Halt population decline and reverse threats from habitat loss, poaching, climate change, and conflicts.

Membership

- Ratified by **India, Nicaragua, Eswatini, Somalia, and Liberia**.
- Open to all UN member states (both range and non-range countries).

Funding

- India committed **₹150 crore (2023–2028)**.
- Additional support to be raised through bilateral, multilateral, and donor agencies.

Role in Conservation

- **Collaborative Platform**: Connects policymakers, scientists, governments, and conservationists.
- **Knowledge Sharing**: Promotes best practices in habitat management, anti-poaching, and ecological restoration.
- **Financial & Technical Aid**: Provides funding pool, research, and expertise to under-resourced nations.
- **Global Synergy**: Complements treaties like **CITES, CMS**, and national/regional programs.

Climate & Ecological Benefits

- Protecting apex predators ensures ecosystem balance, biodiversity, and ecological security.
- Supports forest and grassland restoration → aids **carbon sequestration & climate adaptation**.

Source: [DDNews](#)