
Mains Topics

Reforming State Public Service Commissions

Context

The 2025 National Conference of Chairpersons of State Public Service Commissions (PSCs) is being hosted by the Telangana State Public Service Commission and is expected to discuss systemic reforms to improve transparency, efficiency, and fairness in State recruitment processes.

About State Public Service Commissions (PSCs)

- State PSCs are constitutional bodies established under **Article 315** of the Indian Constitution.
- Their mandate includes:
 - Conducting recruitment examinations for state services.
 - Advising state governments on service matters including **appointments, promotions, transfers, and disciplinary actions**.
- The idea of PSCs evolved during the Indian freedom movement when merit-based civil services became a key demand.
- **Historical milestones:**
 - **First Public Service Commission** set up in **1926**.
 - **Government of India Act, 1935** provided for PSCs in provinces.
 - The Constitution retained this structure and also created the UPSC and State PSCs.

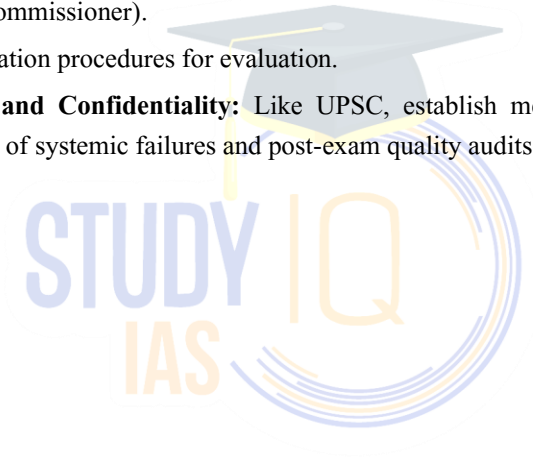
Issues Associated with State PSCs

- **Structural Issues:** Appointments often influenced by political patronage ("spoils system").
 - Lack of uniform eligibility standards for commission members (age, qualifications, experience).
 - Absence of a **dedicated Personnel Ministry** in most states results in irregular workforce planning and delayed vacancy notifications.
- **Procedural Weaknesses:** Irregular and delayed examinations due to uncertainty in vacancy reporting.
 - Lack of periodic syllabus upgrades or academic consultations, unlike UPSC.
 - Limited access to expert paper setters and evaluators, leading to quality concerns.
- **Administrative and Technical Challenges:** Poor exam management, translation errors, and difficulty in moderating subjective answers.
 - Complexity in implementing **vertical, horizontal, and zonal reservations**, leading to legal disputes.
 - Frequent litigation causing cancellation of exams and re-evaluation.
- **Declining Public Trust:** Repeated paper leaks, delayed recruitment cycles, poor transparency, and irregular notification patterns lead to aspirants losing trust in State PSCs.
 - Many aspirants express preference for UPSC-like centralized recruitment standards.

Way Forward

- **Structural Reforms:** Establish a **State Ministry of Personnel** with a five-year recruitment roadmap.
 - Amend constitutional provisions (on lines of the **41st Amendment**) to:
 - Fix minimum age at **55** and maximum at **65** for PSC members.
 - Mandate qualifications (e.g., former Secretaries for official members, 10+ years in professions for non-officials)
 - Introduce mandatory consultation with the **Leader of Opposition** before appointments.
- **Exam and Syllabus Reform:** Periodic review of syllabus aligned with UPSC, with stakeholder consultation and public display before implementation.
 - Adopt a **mixed exam pattern**:
 - **Prelims:** Objective
 - **Mains:** Combination of objective + descriptive papers.
 - Improve translation systems by combining AI-based secrecy tools with human verification.
- **Professionalization and Capacity Building:** Appoint senior education administrators as Secretaries (e.g., former School Education Commissioner).
 - Standardize moderation procedures for evaluation.
- **Balancing Transparency and Confidentiality:** Like UPSC, establish mechanisms for swift redressal of grievances, public reporting of systemic failures and post-exam quality audits.

Source: [The Hindu](#)



Loopholes in Implementation of POSH Act

Context

A Chandigarh college professor was terminated after an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) inquiry under the POSH Act, 2013, confirming allegations of sexual harassment by students.

About the POSH Act, 2013

- The **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013** aims to create safe workplaces for women.
- **Key features:**
 - Mandatory **Internal Complaints Committees (ICC)** in institutions with >10 employees.
 - Defined **sexual harassment**, preventive duties of employers, and timelines for inquiry.
 - Provides **3-month time limit** for filing a complaint (extendable in certain cases).
 - Penal provisions for non-compliance by the employer.
 - Protects the complainant from victimisation/retaliation.

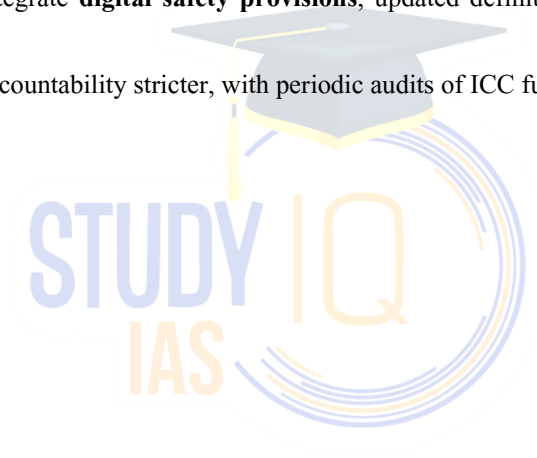
Loopholes

- **Conceptual Gaps:**
 - **Consent vs. Informed Consent:** The Act acknowledges “consent” but ignores situations where consent is obtained through **manipulation, emotional coercion, or power imbalance**—common in academia.
 - **Emotional and Psychological Harassment not Clearly Covered:** Subtle exploitation, manipulation, and betrayal-based emotional abuse often fall outside the Act’s explicit definitions.
- **Procedural & Structural Issues: Limitation period of 3 months** for complaint filing is too short; survivors of coercion or toxic relationships need more time to identify and report abuse.
 - Use of the term **“respondent” instead of “accused”** dilutes seriousness and may normalise misconduct.
 - **Burden of proof** falls heavily on the complainant; committees often dismiss cases without direct evidence despite harassment typically being a **pattern**, not a one-off act.
 - No mechanism for **inter-institutional complaints**, despite frequent academic interactions across campuses.
- **Institutional and Operational Weaknesses:** ICCs often lack **legal training, sensitivity training, or technical expertise**, especially with digital evidence.
 - Fear of **counter-action** for “malicious complaints” discourages genuine complainants.
 - Institutional hesitancy, delays, and risk-averse culture further weaken redressal.
 - Lack of clarity on handling **encrypted, disappearing, or ephemeral digital communication**, which perpetrators often exploit.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Legal Provisions:** Explicitly recognise **informed consent**, emotional manipulation, and psychological abuse as forms of harassment.
 - Extend or remove the **three-month filing limit**, especially for academic and coercive environments.
 - Provide clearer definitions of **digital harassment** and protocols for handling digital evidence.
- **Improving Institutional Mechanisms:** Mandatory **capacity-building** for ICC members on law, digital forensics, trauma-informed inquiry, and gender sensitivity.
 - Develop guidelines for assessing **behavioural patterns**, corroborative testimony, and anonymous feedback mechanisms.
 - Create a system for **inter-institutional coordination** to track repeat offenders across campuses.
- **Protecting Survivors & Ensuring Fair Process:** Remove fear of retaliation by limiting misuse of “malicious complaint” provisions.
 - Ensure time-bound inquiries and post-complaint support—counselling, academic flexibility, or relocation if needed.
- **Policy-Level Reforms:** Integrate **digital safety provisions**, updated definitions of harassment, and stronger investigative tools.
 - Make employer accountability stricter, with periodic audits of ICC functioning.

Source: [The Hindu](#)



Today's Prelims Topics

Capital Gains Accounts Scheme

Context

The Ministry of Finance has notified the Capital Gains Accounts (Second Amendment) Scheme, 2025, introducing changes to the Capital Gains Account Scheme (CGAS), 1988.

About Capital Gains Account Scheme (CGAS) 1988

- It helps taxpayers get exemption on **long-term capital gains** when they cannot immediately reinvest the gains into specified assets.
- **Types of CGAS Deposits:**
 - **Type A – Savings Deposit:** Operates like a regular savings bank account.
 - Provides liquidity; withdrawals allowed anytime.
 - **Type B – Term Deposit (Fixed Deposit):** Operates like a fixed deposit with fixed term (maximum 3 years).
 - Can be cumulative or non-cumulative. Interest rate is as per term-deposit rates.
 - Premature withdrawal allowed only after converting to Type A (i.e., subject to restrictions and possible penalty).
- Interest earned is **taxable**; TDS applicable as per rules.
- **Where It Can Be Opened:** Only in **authorised bank branches** (excluding rural branches).

Source: [CNBC TV18](#)

Fujiwhara Effect

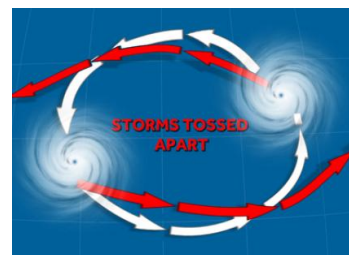
Context

Two cyclonic storms may develop in the Bay of Bengal with a potential Fujiwhara-type interaction between them.

What is Fujiwhara Effect?

- It refers to the interaction between **two nearby cyclonic systems**, causing them to rotate around a **common centre**.
- **Factors Favouring the Fujiwhara Effect:**
 - **Proximity:** Form within about **1,000 km** of each other.
 - **Same Rotational Direction:** Counter-clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere.
 - **Warm Sea Surface:** Temperatures **above 26°C** are required.
 - **Vertical Wind Shear:** Weak.

Source: [Down To Earth](#)



Exercise Surya Kiran

Context

The 19th edition of “Exercise SURYAKIRAN - 2025” commenced at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.

About Exercise Surya Kiran

- A **bilateral military exercise** between the **Indian Army and the Nepal Army**.

- **Started In: 2011**, merging earlier exercises “Prabal Dostyk” (Nepal) and “Surya Kiran” (India).
- **Frequency:** Conducted **annually**, hosted alternately by India and Nepal.
- **Aim:** To jointly rehearse conduct of Sub Conventional operations under Chapter VII of United Nations Mandate (Deals with “**Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression.**”).

Source: [PIB](#)

HAMMER Precision Weapon System

Context

Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and French firm Safran Electronics and Defence (SED) have signed a joint venture cooperation agreement (JVCA) for the production of Highly Agile Modular Munition Extended Range (HAMMER) weapon systems.

About HAMMER Precision Weapon System

- **Air-to-ground weapon** designed to **strike hardened targets with high accuracy from stand-off ranges**.
- **Aim:** To provide the IAF and Navy with a combat-proven, modular, precision weapon suitable for mountainous warfare, quick deployment, and integration with aircraft like Rafale and Tejas.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Modular Design:** Guidance + range-extension kits adaptable to multiple general-purpose bombs.
 - **Precision Strike:** GPS/INS, IR, and laser guidance for high-accuracy attacks on hardened targets.
 - **Long Stand-Off Range:** Effective up to **70 km**, allowing strikes from outside threat zones.

- **High Manoeuvrability:** Suitable for **mountain warfare**.
- **Indigenisation Push:** Will achieve **60% localisation**.

Source: [The Print](#)

In Flight Internet

Context

In Flight Internet, once rare in the 2010s, has now become common on commercial flights, enabled by aircraft acting as flying Wi-Fi routers.

Working of In Flight Internet

- **Technologies Used**
 - **Ground-Based Cellular Towers (Air-to-Ground or ATG):** Uses an antenna fitted on the aircraft’s **underside** to connect with ground cellular towers.
 - Provides Internet by maintaining a link with the nearest tower, similar to mobile networks.
 - **Limitation:** Connectivity drops over **oceans, deserts, mountains, or remote regions** where towers are absent.
 - **Satellite-Based Connectivity:** Uses a **top-mounted antenna** to link with communication satellites.
 - Satellite relays data between the aircraft and a **ground station**.
 - Ensures **wide, uninterrupted coverage**, especially over water bodies or sparsely populated regions.

How In-Flight Internet Works

- Multiple Wi-Fi antennas inside the cabin receive signals from passengers’ devices.
- These signals are forwarded to an **onboard server/modem**.
- From here, the backhaul differs:

- **ATG:** The server sends data via the antenna to the nearest **ground tower**, which returns the response back to the aircraft.
- **Satellite:** The server sends data to a **satellite**, which passes it to a **ground station**.
 - The ground station sends the response back to the **satellite**, which relays it to the aircraft.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Guru Tej Singh Bahadur

Context

The nation observed the 350th martyrdom day of Guru Tegh Bahadur on 24th November 2025.

About Guru Tegh Bahadur ji (1621 - 1675)

- He was the **Ninth Sikh Guru**, youngest son of **Guru Hargobind** (the 6th Guru).
- He was **born in Amritsar in 1621** and is known for his spiritual depth, humility, and defense of religious freedom.
- His hymns (116 in total) are included in the **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- His martyrdom is remembered as a supreme sacrifice for **religious liberty and human rights**.
- **Key Contributions:**
 - He founded the town of **Chak Nanki in Punjab, later enlarged into the city of Shri Anandpur Sahib**.
 - He was crowned with the rare honour of **'Hind Di Chadar'**.



Source: [PIB](#)

Biomass Pellets

Context

Union Minister for New & Renewable Energy inaugurated state-of-the-art 240 TPD (tonnes/day) Biomass Pellet Plant in Rewari, Haryana.

What is Biomass Pellet?

- Biomass pellets are **compressed, cylindrical biofuels** made from organic waste materials such as **agricultural residue, wood waste, sawdust, crop stubble, and forest biomass**.
- Produced by **drying, grinding, and compressing** biomass under high pressure using a pellet mill, without any chemical binders.
- **Energy Use:** Used as a **clean, efficient, and high-calorific** alternative to coal in thermal power plants (co-firing), industrial boilers and domestic heating and cooking.
- **Advantages:**
 - Reduces stubble burning and air pollution
 - Cuts CO₂ and particulate emissions
 - Enhances rural income and waste-to-energy conversion
 - Easier to store, transport, and burn compared to raw biomass
- **Government Push:**
 - Mandated **co-firing of biomass pellets 7%** in Thermal Power Plants (TPPs).

Source: [PIB](#)

Lake Urmia

Context

Iran has used cloud-seeding over the Urmia Lake basin to address the country's severe drought.

About Lake Urmia

- Saltwater lake in northwestern Iran, between the provinces of East



Azerbaijan and West Azerbaijan.

- Once the **largest lake in the Middle East** and the **sixth-largest saltwater lake globally**.
- There are **13 rivers that feed Lake Urmia**, the largest of them being **River Zarrineh Rood**
- Designated as a **UNESCO Biosphere Reserve** and **Ramsar Wetland of International Importance**.

Source: [BBC](#)

Abhujmadiya Tribe

Context

Recently, the Bastar Olympics (a government initiative) witnessed increasing participation of the Abujmadiya tribe.

About Abhujmadiya Tribe

- Primarily inhabit the **Abhujmarh region** (meaning "unknown hills") of **Narayanpur, Dantewada, and Bijapur districts of Chhattisgarh**.
- It is a subgroup of the Gond tribe.
- Notified as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)**.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Ningaloo Reef

Context

A new survey finds nearly 70% of corals at UNESCO-listed Ningaloo Reef have died.

About Ningaloo Reef

- Situated along the **north-west coast of Western Australia**.
- It is a **fringing coral reef**.
- Australia's largest fringing coral reef.
- In 2011, Ningaloo Coast (marine + terrestrial areas) was inscribed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**

Source: [DTE](#)

AUSINDEX-2025

Context

The Indian Naval Ship INS Sahyadri participated in AUSINDEX 2025.

About AUSINDEX-2025

- It is bilateral **naval exercise** between **India and Australia**.
- Conducted in **three main phases**:
 - **Harbour Phase**: Planning, briefings, professional exchanges, cross-deck visits.
 - **Sea Phase**: Joint tactical manoeuvres and drills.
 - **Debrief Phase**: After-action review and lessons learnt.
- **First conducted in 2015** in Visakhapatnam, India.
- It focused on **anti-submarine warfare, gunnery drills, and advanced flying operations**, aimed at enhancing interoperability and deepening the strategic maritime partnership.

Source: [Economic Times](#)

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

Context

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has appointed CISF as the safety regulator for more than 250 maritime facilities nationwide.

About CISF

- **Establishment:** 1969 under the CISF Act 1968 to provide security to major industrial undertakings in India.
 - The Act was amended in 1983 declaring the CISF as an Armed Force of the Union.
- **Administrative Control:** It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- **Primary Role:** It is responsible for protecting vital installations such as airports, seaports, nuclear and space establishments, metro systems, government buildings, and major public sector undertakings.
- **Structure:** CISF is headed by an Indian Police Service officer with the rank of Director-General, assisted by an IPS officer in the rank of Addl. Director-General.
 - The force is divided into 7 sectors (Airport, North, North-East, East, West, South, and Training), and also has a Fire Service Wing.

Source: [New Indian Express](#)