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The Hindu Analysis

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

15 JULY 2026

SC's SOP for Urgent Life & Liberty Cases · Forced-Labour Import Ban & the U.S. Probe
India's New Political Generation · **Steady in Turbulence:** Australia & New Zealand
India-U.S. Defence Tech Ties · **Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)** · Acid Ingestion under RPwD Act
+ 2 Mains Questions (8 & 12 Marks) · 10 Prelims MCQs with Answer Key

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KNOWLEDGE · DISCIPLINE · SUCCESS

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Step 1** Read the original clipping to build newspaper-reading habit.
- Step 2** Revise the bullet analysis and gold factboxes — these are Prelims gold.
- Step 3** Attempt the Mains questions in 8/12-minute time limits, then the MCQs.

1

SC Weighs SOP for Urgent Cases Affecting Life & Liberty

GS 2 · Judiciary

SC weighs SOP for urgent cases affecting life, liberty

Constitutional remedies must be accessible at all time, says petition in top court; Bench headed by CJI Kant says an SOP could be put in place to reduce 'response time' to urgent requests for justice

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to consider framing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to allow citizens to knock on the doors of the courts any time, day or night, in cases affecting life and liberty, including illegal detentions, imminent demolition of homes, deportations, custodial violence, or other state actions.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant was hearing a petition filed by a top court advocate, Maheravish Rein, who said the courts cannot afford to close especially against the background of credible reports of late-night arrests, early-morning demolition

The absence of a structured and institutionalised mechanism ensuring continuous judicial accessibility may result in irreversible consequences

drives, and deportation or executive actions undertaken during weekends or holidays. "The absence of a structured and institutionalised mechanism ensuring continuous judicial accessibility may result in irreversible consequences before affected persons are

Preparation of an SOP should be undertaken by the Supreme Court on its administrative rather than judicial side.

TUSHAR MEHTA
Solicitor-General

Maybe the response from the court should come within an hour of an urgent mention

SURYA KANT
Chief Justice of India

able to approach constitutional courts... The protection of liberty cannot remain dependent upon the temporal boundaries of court schedules. In a constitutional democracy governed by the rule of law, the Constitution cannot fall silent at night, nor can

the protection of liberty await the morning bell of the courts," Ms. Rein submitted. Access to justice cannot exist merely in theory. Constitutional remedies must be practically accessible at all times, she said.

The Bench noted that an SOP could be put in place to reduce the "response time" to urgent requests in cases of life and liberty. "Maybe the response from the court should come within an hour of such an urgent mention," Chief Justice Kant noted.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said the preparation of an SOP should be undertaken by the top court on its administrative rather than judicial side.

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WHY IN NEWS

The Supreme Court agreed to consider framing a **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** to let citizens approach courts **any time, day or night**, in cases affecting life and liberty — illegal detentions, imminent demolition of homes, deportations, custodial violence and other state actions.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- A **three-judge Bench headed by CJI Surya Kant** heard a petition by advocate Maheravish Rein, citing credible reports of late-night arrests, early-morning demolition drives and weekend deportations.
- The Bench noted an SOP could reduce the **"response time"** — "maybe the response from the court should come within an hour of such an urgent mention," said the CJI.
- Petitioner's core plea: constitutional remedies must be **practically accessible at all times**; "the Constitution cannot fall silent at night." Access to justice cannot exist merely in theory.
- Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta: the SOP should be prepared by the top court on its **administrative side**, not the judicial side.
- CJI's counter: in a **federal set-up**, High Courts do not fall within the administrative ambit of the Supreme Court — so orders may have to be passed on the **judicial side**.
- Justice Joymalya Bagchi's **"graded approach"**: differential access after court hours is not a denial of justice — courts never "close up" where digital access exists; "a letter, an email or a phone call would be enough to activate the justice system."

CONCEPT CONNECT — PRELIMS & MAINS

Article 32	Right to constitutional remedies — Ambedkar's "heart and soul" of the Constitution; itself a fundamental right.
Article 226	Writ jurisdiction of High Courts — wider than Art. 32 (extends to "any other purpose").
Article 21	Life & personal liberty; access to justice read into Art. 21 in <i>Anita Kushwaha v. Pushap Sudan</i> (2016).
e-Courts Project	Digital filing/hearing infrastructure that underpins the "graded access" argument.

2

India Bans Import of Goods Made Using Forced Labour

GS 2 • 3 • Trade & Social Justice

India bans import of goods made using forced labour amid pending U.S. probe

T.C.A. Sharad Bagthavan
NEW DELHI

The Government of India has issued a notification banning the import of goods manufactured using forced labour, a significant step towards clearing the path towards the signing of an interim trade agreement with the U.S.

The U.S. is currently in the process of releasing its final decision on the tariffs it plans to levy on countries that it says have not done enough to stop the import of goods made using forced labour.

"The import of goods produced or manufactured, wholly or in part, through the use of forced labour is prohibited," the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in its notification. It added that the Union government may, from time to time, specify the goods whose import shall be prohibited under this paragraph.

"The procedure for conducting an enquiry by the Director General of Foreign Trade into the use of forced labour in the production of such goods shall be as prescribed in the Handbook of Procedures,

The govt. said it may, from time to time, specify the goods whose import shall be prohibited

2023," it added. Under its draft proposal following an investigation, the U.S. found that India and 53 other countries "failed to impose and effectively enforce" prohibitions on the import of goods produced using forced labour. As such, it proposed a tariff of 12.5% on imports from these countries.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal confirmed on Monday that India had made its submissions to the U.S. on the matter and protested the tariffs.

This pending decision has led to significant uncertainty surrounding the India-U.S. trade deal, with Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Mr. Agrawal separately saying India would sign a deal only once it is established that it will receive a comparative advantage over its competitors.

One key factor in establishing this comparative advantage is to see what tariffs the U.S. plans to levy

under its various investigations. The second investigation is into whether the U.S. trade partners are using excess capacity to export to the U.S. to the detriment of the American economy.

According to the notification by the Commerce Ministry, "forced labour" means "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily, as defined under the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)".

According to Manoj Mishra, Partner and Tax Controversy Management

Leader, Grant Thornton Bharat, the introduction of a prohibition on imports of goods produced through forced labour marks a significant policy shift in India's trade framework.

While India has so far relied largely on labour and criminal laws to address forced labour domestically, the Foreign Trade Policy now incorporates a dedicated trade measure aligned with international standards under the ILO Forced Labour Convention," Mr. Mishra said.

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WHY IN NEWS

The Commerce Ministry notified a **prohibition on importing goods produced "wholly or in part" through forced labour** — a significant step towards an **interim India-U.S. trade agreement**, as the U.S. finalises tariffs on countries seen as lax on forced-labour imports.

KEY FACTS

- **Definition:** "Forced labour" = all work or service exacted under menace of any penalty and not offered voluntarily — as per **ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)**.
- The Union government may, from time to time, **specify the goods** whose import shall be prohibited; enquiry procedure lies with the **Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** under the Handbook of Procedures, 2023.
- U.S. probe under **Section 301, Trade Act 1974** covers **60 economies** (India, China, EU, UK, Japan, Australia, Canada, Russia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka); a **12.5% tariff** was proposed on imports from India and 53 others found "failing to enforce" prohibitions.
- **Tariff-revival strategy:** the probe is seen as legal cover to reimpose tariffs after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down earlier reciprocal tariffs in 2026.
- **Policy shift:** India earlier relied on labour and criminal laws domestically; the Foreign Trade Policy now embeds a dedicated **trade measure aligned with ILO standards**.

STATIC CORNER — CONSTITUTIONAL & LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Article 23	Prohibits human trafficking, <i>begar</i> and forced labour; protects inherent dignity.
Article 24	No child below 14 in factories, mines or hazardous employment.
Bonded Labour Act 1976	Extends to whole of India, implemented by States; district-level Vigilance Committees .
PENCIL Portal 2017	Electronic platform for enforcement of the Child Labour Act & NCLP Scheme , involving Centre, States, districts, civil society.

3

The Disruptive Rise of India's New Political Generation

GS 2 · Polity / Essay

The disruptive rise of India's new political generation

India's political establishment has long spoken of youth in the future tense — young people as tomorrow's leaders, democracy's inheritors, and the next generation of voters. Beneath this language of hope, however, is a political reality, which is that power has remained concentrated among ageing leaders who rarely entrusted young people with real influence. That political fiction is now rapidly fading.

India's youth are no longer "citizens in waiting". They are already shaping elections, influencing political discourse, forcing parties to recalibrate, and redefining how politics is practised in a unique way. This transformation is not simply demographic. India has long been a young country. What is different today is the emergence of youth as an independent political force with its own language, expectations, methods, and centres of influence. Political leaders who fail to recognise this shift increasingly risk irrelevance.

A new political language

The shift is most visible in political communication. For much of the post-independence years, Indian politics operated through hierarchy and distance: leaders spoke from elevated stages while citizens listened. Communication flowed through party structures, newspapers, television, and carefully managed public events, depending on spectacle, organisational control, and ideological certainty. That model is weakening rapidly.

Today's youth inhabit a radically different political landscape shaped by short-form videos, memes, podcasts, livestreams, online commentary, and decentralised digital communities. While attention spans may be shorter, political awareness has not declined. Young voters are not necessarily anti-political; they are anti-performance. They respond to accessibility, authenticity, responsiveness, humour, emotional intelligence and transparency over scripted rhetoric. Tamil Nadu offers one of the clearest examples of this shift.

The rise of actor-turned-politician C. Joseph Vijay cannot be explained through celebrity appeal alone. What makes Mr. Vijay's emergence politically significant is his intuitive understanding of a transformed communication ecosystem. More importantly, even leaders within established parties have publicly acknowledged his growing influence among younger voters.

For decades, India's political establishment spoke of youth as the future, but that future has arrived sooner than expected.

This transformation is also visible in the rise of meme-driven political commentary and satire collectives that increasingly shape public perception among younger audiences. On Instagram, YouTube, and X, informal digital ecosystems now influence political narratives far more rapidly than traditional party communication machinery. The "Cockroach Janta Party" phenomenon — alongside a broader ecosystem of meme-creators, satirical commentators, and independent digital voices — reflects a generation engaging with politics through humour, irony, cultural references, and decentralised online participation. Once dismissed as frivolous internet culture, these spaces increasingly function as parallel arenas of political socialisation and opinion formation.

A similar recalibration is visible elsewhere in India. In Kerala, Congress leader and the "people's CM" V.D. Satheesan has consciously cultivated an image distinct from the confrontational and centralised styles that increasingly characterised the State's recent political culture. His emphasis on accessibility, dialogue, and participatory communication reflects a recognition that younger citizens no longer respond automatically to ideological inheritance or party loyalty. A political leader unable to communicate within this evolving ecosystem risks irrelevance, regardless of organisational strength.

From protest to participation

India's youth politics is no longer confined to party youth wings or campus elections. The 2017 pro-Jallikattu protests in Tamil Nadu marked a turning point in understanding how digitally connected youth could sustain mass mobilisation without centralised party leadership. What began as a cultural movement evolved into a wider demonstration of youth-led political coordination powered by social media networks, online narratives, and decentralised participation.

Since then, online political culture — from meme creators and independent digital commentators to podcast ecosystems and Instagram-based political analysis — has become a major force shaping public discourse. Political parties now obsessively monitor online sentiment, adapt campaign messaging to digital reactions, and respond rapidly to narratives emerging far outside traditional institutions.

The distinction between "online politics" and "real politics" is steadily disappearing. This broader shift mirrors developments elsewhere in

South Asia. Sri Lanka's 2022 Aragalaya protests demonstrated how digitally connected youth could convert public frustration into sustained political pressure against corruption, dynastic entitlement, and elite detachment. Nepal too has witnessed growing youth-led mobilisations around governance failures, unemployment, and democratic accountability.

India has so far remained relatively insulated from such large-scale upheavals. But recent political developments suggest that a quieter transformation is underway — not necessarily through street uprisings, but through changing patterns of political communication, participation, and voter behaviour.

The also calls into question the assumption that youth mobilisation is inherently anti-establishment or anti-democratic. The rise of Mr. Vijay in Tamil Nadu suggests that where democratic institutions remain credible and electoral participation feels meaningful, young citizens are willing to work within existing democratic structures rather than reject them outright.

The problem is not apathy — it is institutional distrust. Increasingly, younger citizens recognise that much of what passes as "youth engagement" is little more than managed participation without genuine power-sharing. Political parties often speak about bringing youth into politics, but resist the logical consequences of doing so: redistributing authority, opening leadership pathways, decentralising candidate selection, and allowing younger voices to shape policy priorities.

Adapt or become irrelevant

The challenge before political parties is no longer simply attracting young voters through social media content, campaigns or symbolic outreach. The real question is whether entrenched political structures are willing to meaningfully share power and adapt to a new democratic culture shaped by honesty, participation, transparency, responsiveness, and decent respect over scripted authority. Young citizens are no longer waiting quietly at the edges of democracy. They are already reshaping it. The street protest and the polling booth are no longer separate democratic spaces; they are increasingly interconnected. Political parties that continue to underestimate this transformation risk finding themselves stranded in a political culture that no longer exists.

The Hindu, 15 July 2026 · Page 8 (Editorial)

CORE ARGUMENT

India's youth are no longer "**citizens in waiting**" — they are an independent political force with their own language, expectations, methods and centres of influence. Leaders who fail to recognise this shift risk irrelevance.

KEY IDEAS

- **New political language:** short-form videos, memes, podcasts, livestreams and decentralised digital communities have replaced the old hierarchy-and-distance model of party communication.
- Young voters are "**not anti-political; they are anti-performance**" — they reward accessibility, authenticity, responsiveness, humour and transparency over scripted rhetoric.
- **From protest to participation:** the 2017 pro-Jallikattu protests (Tamil Nadu) showed mass mobilisation without centralised party leadership, powered by social-media networks and online narratives.
- **Regional parallels:** Sri Lanka's 2022 **Aragalaya** protests and Nepal's youth-led mobilisations converted public frustration into sustained pressure against corruption and elite detachment.
- **The real problem is institutional distrust, not apathy:** "youth engagement" without genuine power-sharing (redistributing authority, opening leadership pathways, decentralising candidate selection) rings hollow.
- Where institutions remain credible, youth work **within** democratic structures — countering the notion that youth mobilisation is inherently anti-democratic.

VALUE ADDITION FOR ANSWERS

Keywords

Demographic dividend in politics · anti-performance voters · parallel arenas of political socialisation · online vs "real" politics convergence.

Use in

Essays on democracy & youth; GS2 answers on political participation, inner-party democracy, social media & governance.

4

Steady in Turbulence — India, Australia & New Zealand

GS 2 · International Relations

Steady in turbulence

India must build partnerships in this age of global turmoil

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visits to Australia and New Zealand marked yet another step in India's efforts to consolidate partnerships across the Indo-Pacific. India's relations with both countries have traditionally been largely economic and people-centric, but the visits underscored an increased emphasis on strategic aspects, a fresh turn. Geopolitical competition, manifested in supply-chain disruptions and the realignment of global economic networks, is keeping the world on tenterhooks, and India has to manage the uncertainties and volatility well to be able to protect its vital interests. The visits reflected New Delhi's attempt to strengthen the southern arc of the Indo-Pacific under its Act East Policy, MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision, and commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. India and Australia adopted a new Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation, significantly upgrading the existing security framework. They agreed to enhance interoperability between their armed forces, expand military exercises, establish an Annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue, and strengthen cooperation in cybersecurity, maritime security and emerging technologies. An India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap was unveiled to deepen information sharing and operational coordination in the Indo-Pacific. An immediate and consequential out-

The Hindu, 15 July 2026 · Page 8 (Editorial)

WHY IN NEWS

PM Modi's visits to **Australia and New Zealand** consolidated Indo-Pacific partnerships — marking a shift from largely economic, people-centric ties to explicitly **strategic** ones amid supply-chain disruption and geopolitical volatility.

INDIA-AUSTRALIA OUTCOMES

- New **Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation** — enhanced interoperability, expanded military exercises, an **Annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue**, plus cybersecurity, maritime security and emerging-tech cooperation.
- **India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap** — deeper information sharing and operational coordination in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Uranium exports allowed** for India's civilian nuclear programme — removes a lingering obstacle; boosts clean-energy ambitions; new avenues on **critical minerals**.

INDIA-NEW ZEALAND OUTCOMES

- Ties elevated to a **formal strategic partnership** with a four-year cooperation roadmap.
- Maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific; **mutual logistics support** between the Indian Navy and NZ Defence Force.
- Builds on the recently concluded **India-NZ FTA**; target of substantial bilateral-trade expansion by **2030**; agricultural cooperation being explored.

FRAMEWORKS TO REMEMBER

MAHASAGAR	M utual and H olistic A dvancement for S ecurity and G rowth A cross R egions — vision for the southern Indo-Pacific arc.
Act East Policy	Anchor framework for India's eastern Indo-Pacific engagement.
Strategic autonomy	Network-of-partnerships approach: staying steady in turmoil, "untangled from rivalries."

5

India-U.S. Defence Tech Ties — Big Ambitions, Little Delivery

GS 2 · 3 · Defence

India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap was unveiled to deepen information sharing and operational coordination in the Indo-Pacific. An immediate and consequential outcome was Australia's decision to allow uranium exports for India's civilian nuclear programme, removing a lingering obstacle in ties and boosting India's clean-energy ambitions. Both countries will also find new avenues of cooperation on critical minerals, a specific field of global uncertainty.

India-New Zealand relations are now a formal strategic partnership, with a road map for cooperation over the next four years. Key agreements announced by the countries include maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and mutual logistics support between the Indian Navy and the New Zealand Defence Force. Building upon the recently concluded India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, both sides agreed to aim for a substantial expansion of bilateral trade by 2030. Avenues for agricultural cooperation are also being explored. India shares with Australia and New Zealand a concern about maintaining stability and predictability in the Indo-Pacific. Supply-chain diversification, energy security, and access to critical minerals and emerging technology are key priorities for India, which is trying to protect its strategic autonomy in a world of great volatility. The Modi government has been trying to achieve this objective through building a network of partnerships. These visits fit into that pattern. India's challenge is in keeping itself steady in an era of global turmoil, and untangled from rivalries that can do it no good. Mr. Modi's visits build on this awareness.

The Hindu, 15 July 2026 · Page 8 (Rahul Bedi)

CORE THESIS

Two decades of "historic, transformational, game-changing" announcements have produced a **procurement partnership** — not a mechanism for **technology transfer** and *atmanirbharta*.

KEY FACTS & TIMELINE

- Since 2002, India has bought **\$22 billion+** of U.S. equipment — Apache, Chinook, C-17, C-130J, P-8I, M777 howitzers — yet co-production remains elusive.
- GE F414 engine impasse:** per-engine cost nearly tripled (₹70-80 crore → over ₹200 crore); GE seeks ~**\$800 million (₹7,576 crore)** Indian investment for a dedicated line; disputes over technology transfer, IP and export controls. HAL negotiating for **Tejas Mk-II**; DRDO/ADA separately engaging GE for **AMCA** and the Navy's Twin-Engine Deck-Based Fighter.
- DTTI (2012)** — years of meetings, no significant capability; faded into irrelevance. **iCET (2022)** — expanded to semiconductors, AI, quantum, telecom, space, biotech, drones, resilient supply chains. **INDUS-X (2023)** — links start-ups/academia/industry; no noteworthy co-development yet.
- MQ-9B deal (2024):** 31 SkyGuardian/SeaGuardian drones (~\$3.5 bn, FMS route) resembled a purchase; promised local assembly, partial manufacture and MRO ecosystem yet to materialise. Javelin ATGM and Stryker ICV collaborations stalled.

THE TECHNOLOGY-TRANSFER DIVIDE

India's view	Defence partnerships = route to advanced tech, indigenous manufacturing, reduced import dependence.
U.S. view	Advanced defence tech = strategic assets under stringent export controls (ITAR); security trumps commercial promises.
Next test	Proposed Reciprocal Defence Procurement Agreement (RDPA) — reciprocal market access could balance trade or expose India's nascent defence industry to unequal competition.

6

Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) — Pollution & Control

GS 3 · Environment



Industrial SO₂ emissions — source image from today's compilation

WHY IN NEWS

A new analysis found nearly **81%** of SO₂ emissions from coal plants within a **300-km radius of Delhi-NCR** come from facilities **exempted** from installing pollution-control systems.

ABOUT SO₂

- Heavy, colourless, toxic gas with a pungent suffocating odour; a highly reactive inorganic compound and a **primary regulated air pollutant**.
- **Sources:** coal-fired power plants (largest industrial source), petroleum refining, smelting of sulphur-rich ores (copper, zinc, iron); natural — volcanoes, geothermal springs, wetland decomposition.
- **Secondary pollutants:** oxidises to acidic sulfate aerosols → major component of **PM_{2.5}**; dissolves in cloud droplets → **sulphuric acid (H₂SO₄)** → **acid rain** harming forests, soils, aquatic life.
- **Long-range transport:** SO₂ travels hundreds of kilometres across regional airsheds — distance-based exemptions are scientifically weak.
- **Health impacts:** airway irritation, asthma/bronchitis aggravation; via PM_{2.5} — inflammation, cardiovascular disease, strokes, premature death; crop and photosynthesis damage.

WAY FORWARD

FGD	Mandatory Flue Gas Desulphurisation — lime/limestone scrubbers remove up to 95% of SO ₂ .
Public CEMS	Real-time public emissions data — transparency, anti-manipulation, compliance.
Category C	Phase out distance-based exemptions given long-range transport.
Clean energy	Solar, wind & storage to cut coal dependence and overall SO ₂ load.

7

Acid Ingestion Included in Amended RPwD Act

GS 2 · Social Justice / Judiciary

Acid ingestion included in amended Act: Centre to SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government informed the Supreme Court on Tuesday of amending the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD) of 2016 to extend the definition of "acid attack victim" to mean persons who have internal injuries caused by the ingestion of acid or any other similar corrosive substances.

Appearing before a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, said a notification was issued on May 22 by which the Act's schedule was amended to define an "acid attack victim" as anyone "disfigured externally or internally due to violent assault, self-infliction, accident by throwing, administering, or spilling

Earlier, the law only recognised victims of acid-throwing, and not forcible acid ingestion

of acid or similar corrosive substance".

The amendment would have a retrospective effect, which would allow victims with internal injuries that occurred prior to May 22, 2026 to also claim benefits under the 2016 Act.

The 2016 law had previously recognised only victims of acid-throwing, and not forcible acid ingestion. The Act had remained unchanged although the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which replaced the Indian Penal Code, accepted both the act of acid-throwing and administration of acid as offences punishable from

10 years' imprisonment to a life sentence under Section 124 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt).

In May, the top court had flexed its plenary powers to include survivors of forcible administration of acid in the category of "acid attack victims" under the 2016 Act. The court took the extraordinary step in May to judicially intervene under Article 142 of the Constitution after senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the petitioners, successfully urged the Bench that "those who suffered the extreme agony of having to forcibly ingest acid" must not be left out.

In previous hearings, the court had even gone to the extent of indicating to the Centre to change the penal and bail laws to punish the perpetrators of this "most ruthless, most heinous" of crimes.

The Hindu, 15 July 2026 · Page 14

WHY IN NEWS

The Centre told the Supreme Court it has amended the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016** to extend "acid attack victim" to persons with **internal injuries from ingestion** of acid or similar corrosive substances.

KEY POINTS

- Notification of **May 22** amended the Act's schedule: "acid attack victim" = anyone "**disfigured externally or internally** due to violent assault, self-infliction, accident by throwing, administering, or spilling of acid or similar corrosive substance."
- Retrospective effect:** victims with internal injuries occurring before 22 May 2026 can also claim benefits under the 2016 Act.
- The 2016 law earlier recognised only **acid-throwing** victims — although the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Section 124** (voluntarily causing grievous hurt) covers both throwing and administration of acid, punishable from 10 years to life.
- In May, the SC invoked its **plenary powers under Article 142** to include survivors of forcible acid administration as "acid attack victims" after senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi urged that "those who suffered the extreme agony of having to forcibly ingest acid" must not be left out.
- The Court had earlier indicated the Centre should change **penal and bail laws** to punish this "most ruthless, most heinous" crime.

CONCEPT CONNECT

Article 142	SC's power to do "complete justice" — here, filling a legislative gap later ratified by executive amendment.
RPwD Act 2016	Recognises 21 disabilities (acid-attack victims included); benchmark disability; reservation in education & jobs.
Case link	<i>Laxmi v. Union of India</i> — regulation of acid sale; compensation framework.

Mains Practice — Newly Framed Questions

Q1 • GS PAPER 2 • JUDICIARY

8 MARKS • 120 WORDS

"In a constitutional democracy governed by the rule of law, the Constitution cannot fall silent at night." In light of the Supreme Court's proposal to frame an SOP for urgent life-and-liberty cases, discuss how round-the-clock access to constitutional remedies can be balanced with the practical functioning of courts.

"विधि के शासन से संचालित संवैधानिक लोकतंत्र में संविधान रात में मौन नहीं हो सकता।" जीवन और स्वतंत्रता से जुड़े अत्यावश्यक मामलों हेतु SOP बनाने के उच्चतम न्यायालय के प्रस्ताव के आलोक में चर्चा कीजिए कि संवैधानिक उपचारों तक चौबीसों घंटे पहुँच को न्यायालयों की व्यावहारिक कार्यप्रणाली के साथ किस प्रकार संतुलित किया जा सकता है।

Q2 • GS PAPER 2/3 • DEFENCE & IR

12 MARKS • 180 WORDS

India-U.S. defence cooperation has matured as a procurement partnership but far less as a mechanism for technology transfer and strengthening India's atmanirbharta. Critically examine this statement with reference to the DTTI, iCET, INDUS-X and the GE F414 engine negotiations, and suggest measures to bridge the "technology-transfer divide."

भारत-अमेरिका रक्षा सहयोग एक क्रय-साझेदारी के रूप में तो परिपक्व हुआ है, परंतु प्रौद्योगिकी हस्तांतरण और भारत की आत्मनिर्भरता को सुदृढ़ करने के तंत्र के रूप में बहुत कम। DTTI, iCET, INDUS-X तथा GE F414 इंजन वार्ताओं के संदर्भ में इस कथन का आलोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए और "प्रौद्योगिकी-हस्तांतरण विभाजन" को पाटने के उपाय सुझाइए।

ANSWER HINTS

Q1: Intro — Art. 32/226 & Art. 21 (access to justice, *Anita Kushwaha*). Body — need (late-night arrests, demolitions, deportations; irreversible consequences) vs. Justice Bagchi's "graded approach" and e-filing; administrative vs judicial side; federalism limit on HCs. Conclusion — SOP with one-hour response benchmark + digital activation as a balanced model.

Q2: Intro — \$22 bn purchases since 2002. Body — DTTI's failure, iCET's expanded agenda, INDUS-X's thin outcomes, F414 cost tripling/IP disputes, MQ-9B "purchase not partnership"; divide — India's tech-acquisition goal vs U.S. ITAR-driven control. Way forward — RDPA safeguards, co-development milestones, IP-sharing frameworks, private-sector integration. Conclusion — from buyer-seller to genuine defence-industrial collaboration.

Prelims Practice — 10 MCQs

1. With reference to the Supreme Court's recent proposal on urgent access to justice, consider the following statements:

1. The proposed SOP relates to cases affecting life and liberty, such as illegal detentions and custodial violence.
2. The Chief Justice observed that High Courts fall within the administrative ambit of the Supreme Court in a federal set-up.

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

Ans: (a) — The CJI noted High Courts do NOT come within the SC's administrative ambit in a federal set-up.

2. The term "forced labour," as adopted in India's recent import-ban notification, is defined under which of the following?

- (a) ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- (b) ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
- (c) UN Palermo Protocol, 2000
- (d) Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976

Ans: (b) — Work exacted under menace of penalty, not offered voluntarily — ILO Convention No. 29 (1930).

3. Consider the following statements regarding constitutional provisions against exploitation:

1. Article 23 prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labour.
2. Article 24 prohibits employment of children below 14 years in any employment whatsoever.
3. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 provides for Vigilance Committees at the district level.

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

Ans: (b) — Art. 24 bars children below 14 only from factories, mines and hazardous employment, not all employment.

4. The PENCIL Portal, sometimes seen in the news, is associated with:

- (a) Monitoring SO₂ emissions from thermal plants
- (b) Enforcement of the Child Labour Act and NCLP Scheme
- (c) Digital filing of urgent writ petitions
- (d) Registration of acid-attack victims under the RPWD Act

Ans: (b) — PENCIL (2017): platform involving Centre, States, districts and civil society for a child-labour-free society.

5. "MAHASAGAR," recently in the news, refers to:

- (a) A joint naval exercise between India and Australia
- (b) India's vision of Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions
- (c) A deep-ocean mineral exploration mission
- (d) The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement framework

Ans: (b) — MAHASAGAR is India's Indo-Pacific vision underpinning outreach to Australia and New Zealand.

6. Which of the following outcomes emerged from the recent India-Australia engagement?

1. A Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation
2. An Annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue
3. Australia's decision to allow uranium exports for India's civilian nuclear programme
4. A mutual logistics support agreement between the Indian Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (a) — Mutual logistics support was announced with New Zealand's Defence Force, not in the Australia declaration.

7. Arrange the following India-U.S. defence initiatives in the correct chronological order of their launch: 1. iCET 2. DTTI 3. INDUS-X

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

Ans: (b) — DTTI (2012) → iCET (2022) → INDUS-X (2023).

8. With reference to Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), consider the following statements:

1. It oxidises in the atmosphere to form sulfate aerosols, a major component of PM_{2.5}.
2. It can travel hundreds of kilometres across regional airsheds.
3. Flue Gas Desulphurisation systems can remove up to 95% of SO₂ emissions.

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

Ans: (d) — All three are correct; hence distance-based (Category C) exemptions are being questioned.

9. The recent amendment to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, regarding acid-attack victims:

1. Extends the definition to persons with internal injuries caused by ingestion of corrosive substances.
2. Applies only prospectively, from the date of notification.

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

Ans: (a) — The amendment has retrospective effect, covering internal injuries suffered before 22 May 2026.

10. Article 142 of the Constitution, recently invoked by the Supreme Court for acid-ingestion survivors, empowers the Court to:

- (a) Issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights
 (b) Pass any decree or order necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter
 (c) Transfer cases between High Courts
 (d) Review its own judgments

Ans: (b) — Art. 142: plenary power to do "complete justice"; Art. 32 covers writs, Art. 139A transfers, Art. 137 review.

ANSWER KEY — 15 JULY 2026**1** (a)**2** (b)**3** (b)**4** (b)**5** (b)**6** (a)**7** (b)**8** (d)**9** (a)**10** (b)