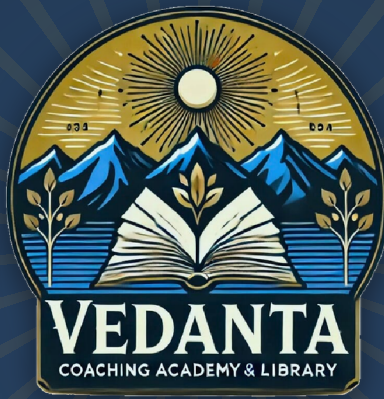




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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

THE HINDU · NEWS + STATIC LINKAGE · PRACTICE

MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2026

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COMPILED BY

Sapna Chauhan

01 Katchatheevu Belongs to Sri Lanka, Says President Dissanayake

Prelims • GS 2

The Hindu • Page 16 • International Relations / Map-based Prelims

India acknowledged Katchatheevu is ours, says Sri Lankan PM

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

New Delhi has acknowledged that Katchatheevu belongs to Sri Lanka, President Anura Kumara Dissanayake said on Sunday, while referring to the island nation's "good relations" with India.

At a rally to mark his completion of two years in office, Mr. Dissanayake pointed to the recent reference to Katchatheevu in India's Supreme Court. "We maintain good bilateral relations with India. The

Central government of India has acknowledged before the Supreme Court that Katchatheevu Island belongs to Sri Lanka," he said. Last week, India's top court heard a batch of petitions challenging the "unconstitutional ceding" of Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka in the 1970s. According to news reports, Attorney General R. Venkataramani told the court that India had "excellent relations" with Sri Lanka and did not intend reopening the Katchatheevu agreements of 1974 and 1976.

The Hindu, 12 October 2026 (Page 16)



Location of Katchatheevu in the Palk Strait

Why in News?

- ◆ Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, at a rally marking two years in office, said New Delhi has acknowledged that Katchatheevu belongs to Sri Lanka, while stressing "good bilateral relations" with India.
- ◆ He referred to the recent hearing in India's Supreme Court, where a batch of petitions challenges the "unconstitutional ceding" of the island to Sri Lanka in the 1970s.
- ◆ As per reports, Attorney General R. Venkataramani told the Court that India has "excellent relations" with Sri Lanka and does not intend to reopen the 1974 and 1976 agreements.

Fact check: The newspaper headline says "Sri Lankan PM", but the speaker quoted in the report is President Anura Kumara Dissanayake (in office since September 2024). Use "President" in answers.

Island Profile

Feature	Details
Area & status	About 285 acres; uninhabited; lies in the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka
Location	North-east of Rameswaram (~33 km from the Indian coast); ~62 km south-west of Jaffna
Habitability	Not fit for permanent settlement — no source of drinking water
Only structure	St. Anthony's Church (early 20th century); annual feast attended by devotees and priests from both countries
Origin	Formed by a volcanic eruption in the 14th century
Early rulers	Jaffna Kingdom (early medieval) → Ramnad zamindari under the Nayaks of Madurai (17th century); part of Madras Presidency in British times

Timeline of the Dispute

Year	Development
1505–1658	Sri Lanka's claim rests on jurisdiction exercised by the Portuguese , who occupied the island in this period
Until 1974	Both countries claimed the island
1974	Indo–Sri Lankan Maritime Agreement (Indira Gandhi – Sirimavo Bandaranaike) – boundary drawn in the Palk Bay ; island falls on Sri Lanka's side. Indian fishermen & pilgrims allowed to visit for rest, drying nets and the church festival
1976	Exchange of letters on the boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal ; barred fishing vessels of each country from the other's waters/EEZ – creating the fishing-rights ambiguity
2009 onwards	After Sri Lanka's civil war ended, arrests of Indian (mainly Tamil Nadu) fishermen rose, with allegations of custodial torture → renewed demands for retrieval of the island

STATIC CONNECT – CAN INDIA CEDE TERRITORY?

- ♦ **Berubari Union case (1960):** Supreme Court held that ceding Indian territory to a foreign country needs a **constitutional amendment under Article 368**; a law under Article 3 is not enough (led to the **9th Amendment, 1960**).
- ♦ **Petitioners' argument:** Katchatheevu was handed over in 1974 **without a constitutional amendment**, hence “unconstitutional ceding”.
- ♦ **Union's long-held position:** the island was always **disputed territory**, so the 1974 pact settled a boundary rather than ceding Indian land – no amendment was required.
- ♦ **Contrast:** the **India–Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement** was implemented through the **100th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2015** (exchange of enclaves).
- ♦ **Map facts:** Palk Strait connects the **Bay of Bengal** (via Palk Bay) with the **Gulf of Mannar**; **Ram Setu / Adam's Bridge** lies between Pamban (Rameswaram) and Mannar Island.

02 TRISHNA: Indo-French Satellite Set for Launch in 12–16 Months

GS 3 • Prelims

The Hindu • Page 14 • Science & Technology (Space)

Why in News?

- ♦ **TRISHNA** – Thermal Infra-Red Imaging Satellite for High-resolution Natural Resource Assessment – will be launched in the **next 12–16 months**, said **Jasvinder Singh Khoral**, Director (Projects), ISRO's **U.R. Rao Satellite Centre (URSC)**, Bengaluru.
- ♦ It is the **third India–France satellite**, after **Megha-Tropiques** and **SARAL**.
- ♦ The project took about a decade in conceptualisation and formalisation and has now reached the “**realisation stage**”. He spoke at the **TRISHNA Water for Tomorrow** workshop.
- ♦ It is a collaboration between **ISRO** and the French space agency **CNES**.

‘Indo-French satellite set for launch in 12-16 months’

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Indo-French satellite TRISHNA (Thermal Infra-Red Imaging Satellite for High-resolution Natural Resource Assessment) will be launched in the next 12–16 months, said Jasvinder Singh Khoral, Director (Projects) of the Indian Space Research Organisation's U.R. Rao Satellite

Centre (URSC), on Sunday.

He said this was the third satellite that India and France were developing after Megha-Tropiques and SARAL (Satellite with ARGOS and ALTIKA) satellites. “This particular project has been around for a decade or so in its conceptualisation and formalisation. Now it has come to the realisation stage. It is at a point where, in the next 12–16 months, we will be due for launch,” Mr. Khoral said while speaking at the TRISHNA Water for Tomorrow workshop.

The TRISHNA mission is a collaborative endeavour between the ISRO and the French space agency CNES.

The Hindu, 12 October 2026 (Page 14)

Mission at a Glance

Aspect	Details
Partners	ISRO (satellite platform + visible/short-wave infrared payload) and CNES (thermal infrared payload)
Key capability	High-resolution thermal infrared imaging (about 57 m resolution) with frequent revisit (about 3 days)
Measures	Land Surface Temperature and evapotranspiration – how much water soil and plants lose to the air

Uses	Crop water stress & irrigation planning, drought monitoring, urban heat islands , coastal & inland water quality, glaciers, volcanic activity
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STATIC CONNECT – INDIA-FRANCE SPACE PARTNERSHIP

Mission	Launch	Purpose
Megha-Tropiques	2011	Study of the water cycle and energy exchange in the tropical atmosphere (clouds, rainfall); de-orbited in a controlled re-entry in 2023
SARAL	2013	Satellite with ARGOS and ALTIKA — ocean surface altimetry (Ka-band AltiKa altimeter by CNES) and the ARGOS data-collection system
TRISHNA	Upcoming	Thermal infrared monitoring of land and water resources

- ◆ **CNES** = Centre National d'Études Spatiales, the French space agency (est. 1961). **URSC** (formerly ISAC) is ISRO's lead centre for satellite design and building.
- ◆ **Thermal infrared basics:** every object emits heat radiation; sensors in the ~8–12 μm band read surface temperature by day and night — useful where optical sensors only see reflected sunlight.
- ◆ Do not confuse: **NISAR** is a **NASA-ISRO** radar (SAR) mission, launched in July 2025.

03 Russia–Ukraine “Energy Ceasefire” Announced by U.S. President

GS 2 • IR

The Hindu • Page 16 • International Relations

Russia and Ukraine agree to ‘energy ceasefire’: Trump

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Sunday that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to an “energy ceasefire”, but offered no details on its terms.

Mr. Trump's brief social media post said only that the ceasefire took effect immediately and that both sides had agreed to it. “Do not break it!” he wrote.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on X: “We discussed the energy ceasefire announced by President Trump. Ukraine supports the ceasefire, and it is important that Russia support it as well. We are awaiting details from the American side.”

Moscow did not immediately comment on the announcement, and The White House did not clarify the President's post.



Donald Trump

However, Mr. Zelenskyy later said that Russia had attacked an energy plant after Mr. Trump announced the “energy ceasefire” between the two countries. “The Russians struck a power plant in Kyiv with a ‘shahed’ drone,” Mr. Zelenskyy said in a social media post, adding that strikes on other energy facilities followed in the Kharkiv region.

Mr. Zelenskyy, in an interview aired on Sunday, said Ukraine was ready to

stop striking Russian refineries if Moscow halted attacks on Ukraine's energy system, and asked Mr. Trump to press the Kremlin to agree.

Mr. Trump said on Saturday it was time for Ukraine to get a new president, suggesting Mr. Zelenskyy has not done enough to end the war and blaming him for high diesel prices in the U.S.

In response, Mr. Zelenskyy said Ukraine could hold elections if Russia agreed to a 60-day ceasefire. “Give us two months, 60 days off. Total ceasefire, 60 days, and we will organize elections,” he said, adding that Ukraine would be ready to accept whatever choice its people made.

“With all respect to President Trump, it's up to our society, up to our people to choose one or another leader,” he said.

The Hindu, 12 October 2026 (Page 16)



THE WASHINGTON POST

Ukraine and its neighbourhood (map: The Washington Post)

Why in News?

- ◆ U.S. President **Donald Trump** said Russia and Ukraine had agreed to an “**energy ceasefire**” — a halt on strikes against energy infrastructure — effective immediately, but **gave no details of its terms**. Moscow did not immediately comment.
- ◆ Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** said Ukraine **supports** the ceasefire and awaits details; he later alleged Russia struck a **power plant in Kyiv with a ‘Shahed’ drone**, followed by strikes in the **Kharkiv** region.
- ◆ Ukraine offered to stop striking **Russian refineries** if Moscow halts attacks on Ukraine's energy system.
- ◆ After Mr. Trump said it was time for Ukraine to get a new President, Mr. Zelenskyy said Ukraine could **hold elections if Russia agreed to a 60-day total ceasefire**.

STATIC CONNECT – CONFLICT TIMELINE

- ◆ **2014:** Russia annexed Crimea; separatist conflict in Donbas (Donetsk, Luhansk).
- ◆ **Minsk I (2014) & Minsk II (2015):** ceasefire deals for Donbas, never fully implemented.
- ◆ **24 Feb 2022:** Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.
- ◆ **Black Sea Grain Initiative** (July 2022 – July 2023): UN–Türkiye brokered safe passage for grain exports.
- ◆ **Energy war:** repeated strikes on Ukraine's grid and on Russian refineries; Zaporizhzhia is Europe's largest nuclear power plant.

MAP FACTS & INDIA'S STAND

- ◆ **Ukraine's 7 land neighbours:** Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova.
- ◆ **Kerch Strait** links the **Black Sea** with the **Sea of Azov**; **Transnistria** is a Russia-backed breakaway region of Moldova.
- ◆ **Shahed:** Iranian-designed one-way attack (loitering) drone used by Russia.
- ◆ **India:** calls for **dialogue and diplomacy** ("this is not an era of war"), has abstained on most UN resolutions, and has sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

04 Child Marriage: Interceptions Rise, Root Causes Persist

GS 1 • GS 2

Social Issues • Vulnerable Sections • Women & Children



Representative image

Why in News?

- ◆ Despite a decline under NFHS benchmarks, **over 2,000 child marriages were intercepted in Telangana** between 2025 and mid-2026 alone.
- ◆ Field investigations show that **stopping weddings does not resolve** the underlying poverty, school dropouts and social coercion that put minor girls at risk.
- ◆ **Meaning:** any formal marriage or informal union where at least one party is below the legal age — **21 years for males and 18 years for females** in India. It curtails adolescent agency, ends schooling and exposes girls to domestic violence and early pregnancy.

Key Data

Women (20–24) married before 18	Share
NFHS-3 (2005–06)	47.4%
NFHS-5 (2019–21)	23.3%
NFHS-6 (2023–24)*	20.1%

*As reported in the source.

Telangana Snapshot

Indicator	Figure
Prevalence	23.5% → 17.9%
Rural / Urban	19.6% / 12.9%
Prevented 2025–26	1,245
Prevented Apr–Aug 2026	825
Total since 2014–15	10,710
Already school dropouts	777 children

District disparities: **Vikarabad (878)** recorded the most interventions, followed by **Mahabubnagar (759)** and **Sangareddy (715)**, against just **54 in Rajanna Sircilla**.

Drivers of Child Marriage

Driver	How it works (with field example)
Acute poverty	Daughters seen as an economic liability; marriage reduces household expenses. <i>E.g., a daily-wage single mother in Nandigama marrying her 15-year-old daughter to an older shopkeeper.</i>
Household shocks & parental illness	Loss or sickness of the breadwinner pushes girls into farm labour and early marriage. <i>E.g., a Class VI tribal girl in Nizamabad whose father contracted tuberculosis.</i>
Patriarchy & “family honour”	Policing of adolescent sexuality; girls married off soon after menarche; <i>PELLI CHUPULU</i> (bride-viewing) arranged secretly.
Intermediaries & creditors	Landlords, moneylenders and brokers exploit indebted households by brokering unequal alliances.

Legal & Institutional Framework

- ◆ **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006:** offences are **cognizable and non-bailable**; **Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs)** appointed by State governments; courts can issue **injunctions** to stop ceremonies; a child marriage is **voidable** at the option of the party who was a child (petition within **two years of attaining majority**).
- ◆ **POCSO Act, 2012:** any sexual act with a person below 18 is an offence, with no marital exemption — reinforced by **Independent Thought v. Union of India (2017)**.
- ◆ **Helplines & centres:** Child Helpline **1098**, **Sakhi One Stop Centres** for rescue, counselling and legal aid.
- ◆ **Grassroots vigilance:** Anganwadi workers, ASHAs and **District Child Protection Units (DCPUs)** track dropouts and report planned ceremonies.

STATIC CONNECT

- ◆ **Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (Sarda Act)** — first law; minimum age later revised to **18 (girls) / 21 (boys)** in 1978.
- ◆ **Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021** sought to raise women's age to 21 (Jaya Jaitly Task Force); it lapsed with the dissolution of the 17th Lok Sabha.
- ◆ **HP Connect:** In **August 2024**, the **Himachal Pradesh Assembly** passed the **Prohibition of Child Marriage (HP Amendment) Bill, 2024**, raising the **minimum marriage age of women to 21** (needs Presidential assent, as it amends a central law on a Concurrent List subject).
- ◆ **Society for Enlightenment and Voluntary Action v. UoI (October 2024):** Supreme Court guidelines for preventing child marriages; said personal laws cannot override PCMA and flagged **child betrothals**.
- ◆ **Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Abhiyan** launched in **November 2024**; **SDG Target 5.3** — eliminate child, early and forced marriage by 2030.

Way forward: tie interceptions to **follow-up** (school re-enrolment, scholarships, conditional cash transfers like *Kanyashree*-type schemes), social-security cover for household shocks, action against brokers and moneylenders, and adolescent life-skills and community awareness.

05 21 Years of RTI: Gaps in Proactive (Suo Motu) Disclosure

GS 2 • Prelims

The Hindu • Page 9 • Data Point • Governance & Transparency

Why in News?

- ◆ The **Right to Information (RTI) Act** completed **21 years** (in force from **12 October 2005**). A key pillar is **suo motu disclosure** on websites so citizens need not file applications for basic information.
- ◆ **Section 4(1)(b)** lists the categories of information to be published proactively (contact details of officials to budget expenditure); **DoPT guidelines** add **eight broad categories** (procurement, PPPs, RTI applications received, etc.). An analysis shows this **is not being followed**.
- ◆ To ensure compliance, **third-party transparency audits** are mandatory and reports must be shared with the **Central Information Commission (CIC)**.

Note: The article counts 16 types; the Act's text has 17 sub-clauses, (i) to (xvii) — the last being “such other information as may be prescribed”.

Key Findings (CIC Annual Report 2024–25)

Indicator	Figure
Public Authorities (PAs) registered with CIC	2,303

Website Check (94 Ministries/Depts.)

Finding	No.
Audit report with section-wise scores	33

Submitted transparency audit reports	1,446 (62.7%)	No report found on the portal	43
Grade A / B / C / D / E	410 / 253 / 302 / 215 / 266	Complied on most categories	56
Submissions: 2020-21 → 2024-25	754 → 1,443 (doubled)	No info covered under the Act	26

- ◆ More than **50% of submitters scored Grade C or below** ($\leq 80\%$); Grade E means below 60%. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's website had no information at all.
- ◆ **Pendency is rising**: of ~23 lakh RTI requests handled in 2024-25, about **5.1 lakh (22%)** were pending from the previous year. Better Section 4 compliance would cut this load.

The gaps in the implementation of the RTI Act

Section 4 of the RTI Act lists 16 types of information which are to be disclosed by public authorities; such voluntary disclosure has not been followed

DATA POINT

Sneha Gandra
Gauri Singavarapu
Sachin Swaraj

The Right to Information (RTI) Act completed 21 years today. Besides empowering citizens to demand information from public authorities, a key aspect of the RTI Act is the provision for *suo motu* mandatory disclosure of a variety of information on their websites so that people do not have to resort to filing requests under the Act for accessing basic information regarding any department.

Section 4 (1) (b) of the Act lists 16 types of information, ranging from contact details of officials to budgetary expenditure, which are to be made public at regular intervals. Moreover, the Department of Personnel and Training has issued guidelines for the disclosure of additional information, under eight broad categories, including information related to procurement, public-private partnerships, and all RTI applications received by each department. An analysis, however, showed that such voluntary disclosure has not been followed.

With the number of official websites of the Union government and State governments running into the thousands, the scope of this analysis is restricted to the departments listed as Public Authorities (PAs) in the Government of India's online portal for filing of applications under the RTI Act and the data presented in the annual reports of the Central Information Commission (CIC). To ensure compliance with Section 4 of the RTI Act, the government has also made it mandatory for transparency audits to be conducted by third parties and the reports of such audits to be shared with the CIC.

The annual report for the year 2024-25 released earlier this year by the CIC says that of the 2,303 PAs from various departments re-

gistered with the Commission, only 1,446 had submitted third party audit reports, which is just 62.7% of the total registered (Table 1). Of those submitted, more than 50% scored Grade C or below, which meant that they had scored 80% or below in the transparency audit. Those with Grade E had scored below 60% in the audit. Though nearly 37% of the registered PAs did not submit the audit reports, a look at the trend in the last five years showed that the compliance has improved year-on-year (Chart 1). In 2020-21, only 754 had submitted. This doubled to 1,443 in 2024-25.

The Hindu independently verified the websites of the 94 departments under which these PAs come under. The guidelines recommend the uploading of the transparency audit reports on the websites. However, only 33 of the 94 websites had the audit reports for the year 2024-25. While a majority of them did not have the latest audit reports, a few had older reports. An analysis on the information that is to be mandatorily disclosed under the RTI Act showed that, of the 94 departments, 56 authorities, or 62% have complied with this section on most categories, and have information from 2025-26. The websites of 26 departments did not have the information covered under the Act. For the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, there was no information available (Table 2). The remaining websites had either minimal or dated information on their websites.

Meanwhile, the number of new RTI requests and its pendency with the CIC has grown over the years (Chart 2). The Act states that PAs should provide "as much information *suo motu* to the public ... so that the public have minimum resort to the use of this Act". The efficient implementation of Section 4 can not only improve transparency but also reduce the pendency piling up with the CIC and State Information Commissions.



In defense of transparency: Workers during the laying of the foundation of the National RTI Museum in Beawar, Rajasthan. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

- 1 Section 4(1) (b) of the RTI Act mandates *suo motu* disclosure of a range of information by every government authority
- 2 Public authorities covered under the Act are mandated to conduct independent transparency audits to ensure compliance with Section 4 (1) (b)
- 3 In 2024-25, only 62.3% of the public authorities had submitted these audit reports to the CIC
- 4 Most sites checked by The Hindu had disclosed only minimal information available

Voluntary non-disclosure

Data for the charts were sourced from the Central Information Commission (CIC) and websites of 94 government departments listed in the RTI portal of the Government of India. The authors are interning with The Hindu's Data team

Table 1: Number of public authorities (PAs) who submitted transparency audit reports to the CIC and their grades

Number of PAs	2,303
Audit report submitted to CIC	1,446
Grade A	410
Grade B	253
Grade C	302
Grade D	215
Grade E	266

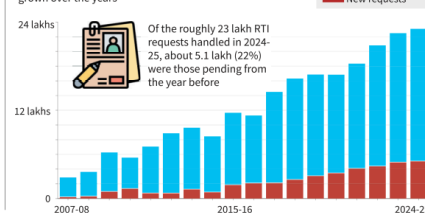
Table 2: Availability of transparency audit reports in the websites of 94 departments listed in the RTI portal

Compliance	No. of depts.
Report available with section-wise scores and required compliance classifications	33
Report available, but the latest recorded audit year is older	7
No report found in the portal material reviewed	43
While audit is mentioned or information is available, the full report or expected details are missing	7
Report reference, total score or audit mentioned without complete accessible report	3
Portal did not display the relevant audit information	1
Total	94

Chart 1: The number of public authorities (PAs) registered with the CIC and those who submitted the transparency audit reports to the Commission in the last five years



Chart 2: The number of RTI requests filed every year and the pendencies from previous years have consistently grown over the years



The Hindu, 12 October 2026 (Page 9) – Voluntary non-disclosure

STATIC CONNECT – RTI ACT, 2005

- ◆ **Roots:** *State of U.P. v. Raj Narain* (1975) – right to know is part of **Art. 19(1)(a)**; **MKSS** movement (Aruna Roy, Rajasthan); Freedom of Information Act, 2002.
- ◆ **First RTI** under the law: Shahid Raza Burney, Pune.
- ◆ **Sec 7:** reply in **30 days**; **48 hours** if life or liberty is involved.
- ◆ **Sec 8:** exemptions (sovereignty, security, foreign relations, incitement etc.); **Sec 8(2)** – disclose if public interest outweighs harm.
- ◆ **Sec 8(1)(j)** (personal information) amended by the **DPDP Act, 2023**.
- ◆ **Sec 20:** penalty ₹250/day, max ₹25,000. **Sec 22:** overriding effect. **Sec 24:** intelligence & security bodies exempt – except for **corruption and human-rights** allegations.

CENTRAL INFORMATION COMMISSION

- ◆ **Statutory, quasi-judicial** body under the RTI Act (not constitutional).
- ◆ **Composition:** Chief Information Commissioner + up to **10 ICs**.
- ◆ **Appointment:** by the **President** on recommendation of PM (chair), **Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha**, and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the PM.
- ◆ **Tenure:** as prescribed by the Centre (**RTI Amendment Act, 2019**; Rules fix **3 years**) or till **65 years**; **not eligible for reappointment**.
- ◆ **Bar:** cannot be MP/MLA, hold office of profit, be linked to a party, or carry on business/profession.
- ◆ **Jurisdiction:** Central offices, PSUs, financial institutions, UTs; States have **SICs**.

06 Editorial: “Rights and Wrongs” – Right to Peaceful Protest

GS 2 • Polity

The Hindu • Page 8 • Editorial (opinion of the newspaper)

Rights and wrongs

The government must not clamp down on dissent and protest

The Constitution of India guarantees all citizens the fundamental right to peaceful assembly and protest. The right to organise, assemble, and speak is at the core of democracy, and the curtailment of any of the fundamental rights is a curtailment of democracy itself. That being the promise of the Constitution to every citizen, regardless of gender, caste, or status, it is unsettling that the Government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is brazenly knocking down those rights through police high-handedness across the country, particularly in Delhi, the capital. Youth and student organisations, such as the CJP, the AISA, SFI and AISF, had called for a peaceful protest on October 10. Instead of ensuring peaceful assembly, as per the law of the land, the Centre ordered a country-wide swoop, where thousands of young people were taken into preventive detention and Delhi was locked down as if under martial law. Trains were cancelled and stopped, passengers waylaid, and journalists, activists, academics, and lawyers assaulted and detained, all in shocking misuse and weaponisation of the law against democracy itself. In the heart of Delhi, police personnel without identification badges have been recorded on video. What Delhi witnessed on Saturday was a repeat, in a greater degree, of the police high-handedness in July against youth protesters. Despite video evidence of male police personnel assaulting women protesters during that episode,

months later, neither the government nor the Supreme Court of India has held anyone accountable for the law enforcement excesses.

On October 9, the Court had said that a blanket ban on travel or assembly could not be allowed. But that is exactly what was done in Delhi, as people, including several former Chief Ministers, senior politicians, and lawyers, were rounded up from around the city. On Sunday, the Court, in its hearing, acknowledged the urgency and seriousness of the issue, and repeated its directives. But piecemeal orders and half-hearted lamentations by the Court have had no restraining impact on a government that seems to be doubling down on its practice of branding critics as foreign agents and anti-nationals instead of coming clean on its record. The BJP government is going this far in defence of an official – the Chief Election Commissioner of India, Gyanesh Kumar. Instead of calling for accountability from the Election Commission of India, which has disenfranchised millions of Indians in a clear act of illegality, the BJP and its central and State governments are deploying the strong arm of the state to defend him. That itself suggests that Mr. Kumar's relationship with the BJP is different from his relationship with all other parties. The Modi government should play by the rules, and not misuse power against citizens.

The Hindu, 12 October 2026 (Page 8) – Editorial

What the Editorial Argues

- ◆ The Constitution guarantees the **fundamental right to peaceful assembly and protest**; curtailing it is a curtailment of democracy itself.
- ◆ Student/youth groups (CJP, AISA, SFI, AISF) called a peaceful protest on **October 10**; the editorial alleges a **countrywide swoop** with thousands placed in **preventive detention**, trains cancelled, and journalists, activists, academics and lawyers detained – calling it a **misuse and weaponisation of law**.

- ◆ It notes police personnel **without identification badges** were filmed in Delhi, and that excesses against protesters in **July** have gone unaddressed.
- ◆ It cites the **Supreme Court's October 9** observation that a **blanket ban on travel or assembly cannot be allowed**, but says piecemeal orders have not restrained the government.
- ◆ It links the crackdown to protests seeking accountability from the **Election Commission** and criticises the government's defence of the Chief Election Commissioner.

Exam tip: This is the newspaper's opinion. In answers, present both sides — the citizen's right to dissent *and* the State's duty to maintain public order — and anchor the argument in constitutional provisions and case law.

STATIC CONNECT – CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- ◆ **Art. 19(1)(a):** speech & expression; **Art. 19(1)(b):** assemble **peaceably and without arms**; **Art. 19(1)(c):** form associations.
- ◆ **Art. 19(3):** reasonable restrictions on assembly only in the interests of **sovereignty & integrity of India** and **public order**.
- ◆ **Art. 22(3)–(7):** safeguards on **preventive detention** (Advisory Board review beyond 3 months).
- ◆ **Sec. 163, BNSS 2023** (formerly Sec. 144 CrPC): orders to prevent apprehended danger or nuisance.

KEY JUDGMENTS

- ◆ **Ramlila Maidan Incident (2012):** right to peaceful protest is a fundamental right; State cannot act arbitrarily.
- ◆ **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. UoI (2018):** no blanket ban on protests at Jantar Mantar/Boat Club; balance with residents' rights.
- ◆ **Anuradha Bhasin (2020):** prohibitory orders must be **proportionate**, reasoned and not used to suppress legitimate expression.
- ◆ **Amit Sahni (Shaheen Bagh, 2020):** public places cannot be occupied indefinitely; dissent must be in designated areas.

Balanced view: Protests are a democratic “safety valve”, but the State is responsible for public order and safety. The test is **proportionality** — targeted, reasoned and time-bound restrictions, accountable policing (visible IDs, judicial oversight of detentions), and protesters' adherence to non-violence.

07 Prelims Pointers — Persons, Places & Terms in News

Prelims

Quick-revision facts drawn from today's news • 12 October 2026

Persons in News

Person	Why in News	Static / Key Facts
Anura Kumara Dissanayake	Said India has acknowledged Katchatheevu as Sri Lankan; completed 2 years in office	9th President of Sri Lanka (since Sept 2024); leader of JVP / National People's Power (NPP) . Sri Lanka has an executive presidency (1978 Constitution)
R. Venkataramani	Told the SC that India will not reopen the 1974 & 1976 Katchatheevu agreements	Attorney General of India — Art. 76: highest law officer; appointed by the President; qualified to be an SC judge; right of audience in all courts; can speak in Parliament but no vote (Art. 88)
Jasvinder Singh Khoral	Announced TRISHNA launch within 12–16 months	Director (Projects), U.R. Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) , Bengaluru — ISRO's lead satellite-making centre (renamed after Prof. U.R. Rao in 2018)
Volodymyr Zelenskyy	Backed the energy ceasefire; offered elections after a 60-day ceasefire	President of Ukraine since 2019; capital Kyiv ; currency hryvnia
Donald Trump	Announced Russia–Ukraine “energy ceasefire”	47th President of the U.S. (second, non-consecutive term from January 2025; earlier the 45th)
Gyanesh Kumar	Named in the editorial on protests	Chief Election Commissioner (since February 2025); first CEC appointed under the CEC & Other ECs Act, 2023 (selection panel: PM, LoP in Lok Sabha, a Union Minister); ECI — Art. 324
Shahid Raza Burney	RTI at 21 years	Filed the first RTI application under the Act (Pune, 2005)
Aruna Roy	RTI movement (National RTI Museum, Beawar)	Co-founder of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) , 1990, Rajasthan; Ramon Magsaysay Award 2000

Places in News

Place	Location	Why in News / Key Facts
Katchatheevu	Palk Strait (India–Sri Lanka)	285-acre uninhabited volcanic island; St. Anthony's Church; ceded under the 1974 agreement
Rameswaram	Pamban Island, Tamil Nadu	Nearest Indian town to Katchatheevu (~33 km); linked by Pamban Bridge ; Ramanathaswamy Temple (one of the 12 Jyotirlingas)
Jaffna & Mannar Island	Northern Sri Lanka	Jaffna ~62 km from Katchatheevu (Tamil-majority); Ram Setu / Adam's Bridge runs between Mannar and Pamban
Gulf of Mannar	South of Palk Strait	Marine National Park (1986) and Biosphere Reserve (1989) – rich in coral reefs, seagrass and the dugong
Kyiv	North-central Ukraine	Capital, on the Dnieper River ; power plant hit by a Shahed drone after the ceasefire announcement
Kharkiv	North-east Ukraine	Ukraine's second-largest city , near the Russian border; energy facilities struck
Crimea	Peninsula on the Black Sea	Annexed by Russia in 2014 ; Kerch Strait separates it from Russia and links the Black Sea to the Sea of Azov
Beawar	Rajasthan	Foundation laid for the National RTI Museum ; site of the 1996 MKSS dharna for the right to information
Vikarabad, Mahabubnagar, Sangareddy	Telangana	Top three districts for child-marriage interventions; Rajanna Sircilla the lowest (54)

Organisations & Institutions

Body	Key Facts
CNES	French space agency (1961), HQ Paris; ISRO's partner in Megha-Tropiques, SARAL, TRISHNA
URSC	ISRO centre, Bengaluru; formerly ISRO Satellite Centre (ISAC)
Central Information Commission	Statutory body under RTI Act, 2005; CIC + up to 10 ICs
NFHS	Survey by MoHFW ; IIPS, Mumbai is the nodal agency; NFHS-1 in 1992–93
Sakhi One Stop Centres	Support for women affected by violence; launched 2015 under the Nirbhaya Fund
DCPU	District Child Protection Unit under Mission Vatsalya

Acts, Terms & Concepts

Term	Meaning
Suo motu disclosure	Proactive publication of information without a request – Sec. 4(1)(b), RTI Act
Transparency audit	Third-party audit of Sec. 4 compliance; reports go to the CIC
Evapotranspiration	Water lost by evaporation from soil plus transpiration from plants
Land Surface Temperature	Skin temperature of land, measured by thermal infrared sensors
EEZ	Up to 200 nautical miles from baseline (UNCLOS 1982)
Shahed drone	Iranian-designed one-way attack drone (Russian version: Geran-2)
Preventive detention	Detention to prevent a future act, not to punish – Art. 22(3)–(7)

Important Days & Anniversaries

Date	Significance
12 October	RTI Act, 2005 came fully into force (2026 = 21 years); the Act was passed in June 2005
11 October	International Day of the Girl Child (UN, observed since 2012) – linked to the child-marriage story
Child Helpline 1098	24×7 emergency outreach for children in distress (with Sakhi OSCs for rescue and legal aid)



Practice Zone — Prelims MCQs

10 Questions

1. Consider the following statements about Katchatheevu:

1. It lies in the Palk Strait, north-east of Rameswaram.
2. It has a perennial freshwater source that supports a small fishing settlement.
3. Its only structure is St. Anthony's Church, whose annual festival draws devotees from India and Sri Lanka.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

2. In the *Berubari Union* case (1960), the Supreme Court held that ceding Indian territory to a foreign country requires:

- (a) A resolution of both Houses of Parliament (b) A law under Article 3
(c) A constitutional amendment under Article 368 (d) An order of the President under Article 73

3. With reference to the TRISHNA mission, consider the following statements:

1. It is a joint mission of ISRO and the French space agency CNES.
2. It will use thermal infrared imaging to estimate land surface temperature and evapotranspiration.
3. It is the first satellite jointly developed by India and France.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

4. Consider the following pairs:

Satellite	Main purpose / partner
1. Megha-Tropiques	Tropical water cycle and energy budget
2. SARAL	Ocean surface altimetry
3. NISAR	Joint mission of ISRO and CNES

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) All three (d) None

5. Which of the following countries share a land border with Ukraine?

1. Moldova
2. Slovakia
3. Bulgaria
4. Hungary
5. Lithuania

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only (b) 1, 3 and 5 only
(c) 2, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 4 and 5 only

6. With reference to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, consider the following statements:

1. Offences under the Act are cognizable and non-bailable.
2. Child Marriage Prohibition Officers are appointed by the Central Government.
3. A child marriage is voidable at the option of the contracting party who was a child at the time of marriage.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

7. In 2024, which State Legislative Assembly passed a Bill raising the minimum age of marriage for women to 21 years?

- (a) Rajasthan (b) Himachal Pradesh
(c) Kerala (d) Gujarat

8. With reference to the Right to Information Act, 2005, consider the following statements:

1. Section 4(1)(b) obliges public authorities to publish certain information suo motu.
2. Information concerning the life or liberty of a person must be provided within 48 hours.
3. Intelligence and security organisations in the Second Schedule are fully exempt, including for allegations of corruption.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

9. With reference to the Central Information Commission, consider the following statements:

1. It is a constitutional body.
2. Its members are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee chaired by the Prime Minister.
3. A Chief Information Commissioner is not eligible for reappointment.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

10. Under Article 19(3) of the Constitution, reasonable restrictions on the right to assemble peaceably and without arms can be imposed in the interests of:

1. Sovereignty and integrity of India
2. Public order
3. Friendly relations with foreign States

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

✓ Answer Key with Explanations

Prelims

Q	Ans	Explanation
1	b	The island is uninhabited because it has no drinking-water source ; statements 1 and 3 are correct.
2	c	Cession needs an amendment under Art. 368 → 9th Amendment, 1960. Art. 3 covers only internal reorganisation.
3	a	TRISHNA is the third India–France satellite, after Megha-Tropiques (2011) and SARAL (2013).
4	b	NISAR is a NASA-ISRO mission, not ISRO–CNES. Pairs 1 and 2 are correct.
5	a	Ukraine borders Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. Bulgaria and Lithuania do not touch Ukraine.
6	b	CMPOs are appointed by State Governments (Sec. 16). Annulment petition can be filed within two years of attaining majority.
7	b	HP Assembly passed the Prohibition of Child Marriage (HP Amendment) Bill, 2024 in August 2024.
8	a	Under Sec. 24, exempted organisations must still give information on corruption and human-rights violations .
9	b	CIC is a statutory body created under the RTI Act, 2005; statements 2 and 3 are correct.
10	a	“Friendly relations with foreign States” is a ground under Art. 19(2) (speech), not 19(3) (assembly).



Mains Practice

GS 2 • GS 1

Q1. Twenty-one years after its enactment, the RTI Act's promise of proactive disclosure remains largely unfulfilled. Examine the gaps in the implementation of Section 4 and suggest measures to strengthen transparency. (12 marks • 200 words)

Answer pointers:

- ◆ **Intro:** RTI as a tool of accountability; Sec. 4(1)(b) designed so citizens need not file applications.
- ◆ **Gaps:** only 62.7% of PAs submitted transparency audits; over half graded C or below; 43 of 94 departments had no report on the portal; outdated websites; pendency of ~5.1 lakh cases; vacancies in Information Commissions; dilution concerns (2019 amendment, DPDP Act changes to Sec. 8(1)(j)).
- ◆ **Measures:** statutory deadlines and penalties for non-disclosure; standardised, machine-readable dashboards; CIC monitoring under Sec. 25; timely appointments; linking compliance to departmental performance; citizen social audits.
- ◆ **Conclusion:** proactive disclosure reduces pendency and builds trust — “transparency by default”.

Q2. “Preventing a child marriage is not the same as protecting a child.” Discuss in the light of the socio-economic drivers of child marriage in India. (8 marks • 120 words)

Answer pointers:

- ◆ Decline in prevalence (47.4% → ~20%) but persistent interceptions (e.g., 2,000+ in Telangana since 2025).
- ◆ Drivers: poverty, health shocks, patriarchy and “honour”, school dropout (777 cases), exploitative intermediaries.
- ◆ Interception without follow-up → re-arrangement, secret ceremonies, dropout.
- ◆ Way forward: school re-enrolment, conditional cash transfers, social security, DCPU tracking, SC's 2024 guidelines, community engagement.