



CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2025

JUDICIAL PENDENCY

Case backlog in Supreme Court hits all-time high of 88,417.

District Courts have nearly 4.6 crore pending cases and High Courts have nearly 63 lakh case pendency (National Judicial Data Grid).

Reasons for pendency of cases

- **Inadequate Judge/population ratio:** India has just 21 judges per million people against the recommended Judge to Population ratio of fifty Judges per million (120th Law Commission).
- **Ineffectiveness of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR):** ADR mechanisms have not been deployed effectively enough to meet the rising demands for justice.
 - o Gram Nyayalayas (village courts), which were proposed to handle small claims in rural areas and reduce the main judiciary's workload, have not been effectively established in most states.
- **Systemic and Procedural Inefficiencies:** Judicial delays in India stem from multiple appeals, frequent adjournments, frivolous litigation, vague laws, weak compliance and poor case management.
 - o There is often no systematic grouping of similar cases or categorisation based on urgency, leading to inefficiencies.
- **Deficiencies in Judicial Infrastructure and technology:** India's judiciary faces challenges like shortage of support staff, lack of basic amenities in lower courts limited technological equipment and poor digital adoption.
- **Financial Constraints:** India spends only 0.1% of GDP on judiciary compared to 2% on defence.
- **Government as Litigator:** Government agencies are responsible for around 50% of litigation.

Impact of Judicial pendency

- **Violation of Fundamental Rights:** The Supreme Court in *Hussainara Khatoon Vs. State of Bihar* (1979) held that the right to speedy trial is part of Article 21 (Right to Life and Liberty).
- **Social Implications**
 - o Weakening Rule of Law: Delay in criminal trials emboldens offenders and reduces deterrence.
 - o Disproportionate impact on the poor: Undertrial prisoners (about 76% of prisoners in India) remain incarcerated without conviction.
- **Economic Implications**
 - o Increased litigation cost: Parties spend heavily on repeated hearings, adjournments, and lawyer fees.
 - o Stalled projects: Land acquisition and environmental clearance cases block infrastructure development.
- **Erosion of trust:** Citizens lose confidence in the judiciary and sometimes resort to extra-legal methods for dispute resolution (Black coat syndrome).
 - o The delay in delivering justice has become so systemic that it can be perceived as a "new defense", where prolonging a case becomes a strategic advantage for one party.

Schemes/Initiatives by Government to reduce case pendency

- **National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms** (NMJDLR- 2011): Reduction of arrears & delays, infrastructure, procedural reforms.
- **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure for Judiciary:** Court halls, residential units for judges, lawyer halls, toilets, digital facilities in courts.
- **e-Courts Mission Mode Project** (Phase I, II, III): Computerisation of courts, e-filing, videoconferencing, virtual courts, Virtual Justice Clock, JustIS App for judges.



- **Commercial Courts** (under Commercial Courts Act, 2015): Faster disposal of commercial disputes, lowering pecuniary jurisdiction, electronic case management.
- **Fast Track Courts** (FTCs): Disposal of long pending and heinous criminal cases. E.g. NIA courts, POCSO courts etc.
- **Alternate Dispute Resolution** (ADR) Mechanisms: Settling disputes outside regular courts, reducing burden through Lok Adalats, Mediation, Arbitration etc.

NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION (NMC)

The National Medical Commission (NMC) recently completed five years.

About the National Medical Commission

- **Establishment:** A statutory body constituted under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019; came into force on 25 Sept 2020.
 - o Replaced the Medical Council of India (MCI), and the Board of Governors was dissolved.
- The Commission consists of the following persons to be appointed by the Central Government, namely
 - o a chairperson
 - o ten ex officio Members
 - o twenty-two part-time Members
- Four Autonomous boards under NMC:
 - o Under- Graduate Medical Education Board
 - o Post- Graduate Medical Education Board
 - o Medical Assessment & Rating Board
 - o Ethics and Medical Registration Board



SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

The 25th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit 2025, held in Tianjin, China.

- The Summit concluded with the adoption of the Tianjin Declaration.
- SCO Chairmanship for 2025–2026 Passed to the Kyrgyz Republic
- SCO Members also adopted the SCO Development Strategy until 2035.
- Merger of dialogue partners and observers has been done into a new category i.e. SCO partner countries.
- Laos has been admitted as a partner country; SCO now has 27 countries (10 members + 17 partners).
- SCO was granted Observer status with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

PALESTINIAN STATE RECOGNISED BY MULTIPLE NATIONS

The four western nations, United Kingdom, Canada, Portugal and Australia, joined over 140 UN member states in recognizing Palestine as a state.

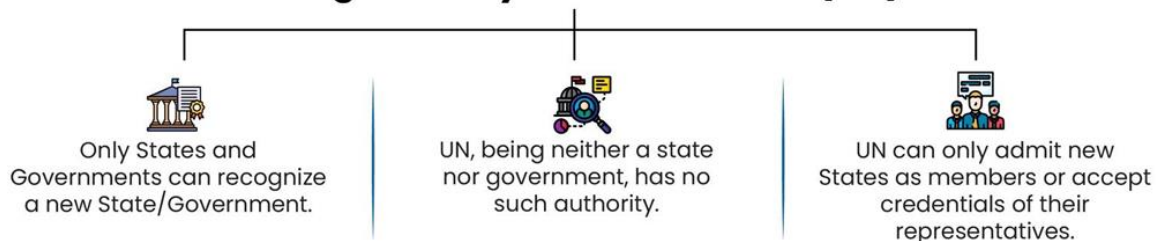
- India recognized the Palestinian State in 1988.
 - o Recently, India voted in favour of a resolution in the UN General Assembly endorsing the 'New York Declaration' on the peaceful settlement and implementation of the Two-State Solution.

Recognition of States

- The process in which a state acknowledges another entity as a state is known as recognition.
- Article 1 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States defines the criteria for statehood: Permanent population, definite territory, government and capacity to enter into relations with other states.
- Effects of State Recognition
 - o It acquires the capacity to enter into diplomatic relations with other states.

- o It acquires the capacity to enter into treaties with other states.
- o The state is able to enjoy the rights and privileges of international statehood.
- o The state can become a member of the United Nations organisation.
 - > Palestine is a UN “Permanent Observer State,” not a full member.

Recognition by United Nations (UN)



INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger recently withdrew from International Criminal Court (ICC).

In a joint statement, all three countries accused the ICC of being “a tool of neo-colonial repression controlled by imperialist powers.”

About ICC (HQ: Hague, Netherlands)

- It is the world’s first permanent international criminal court.
- **Origin:** Founded by Rome Statue (Adopted in 1998 and entered in force in 2002)
- **Jurisdiction:** investigate, prosecute, and try individuals (not groups or States) accused of committing serious crimes
 - o Crimes under ICC’s jurisdiction: Genocide, Crimes against humanity, War crimes, crime of aggression.
- **Membership:** 125 member countries
 - o India, Israel, the US, Russia and China are not parties to the Rome Statute.

- **Funding:** mainly by States Parties
- **Enforcement:** ICC's decisions are binding.

BAGRAM AIR BASE

United States is in talks with Afghanistan to regain the control of the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.

About Bagram Air Base

- The largest air base in Afghanistan located north of the capital Kabul.
- Originally built by the Soviets in 1950s and after Soviet withdrawal in 1990s, it became a frontline in war between Taliban and Northern Alliance fighters.
- After 2001 terror attack on USA, it became the centre of US operations in their war against terror in Afghanistan.
- US and NATO troops pulled out of Bagram in 2021.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST) REFORM

The 56th meeting of the GST Council has approved Next-Gen GST reform (GST 2.0) that includes rate rationalization with a simplified two-slab structure.

Evaluation of GST 1.0

- About GST: It is a single indirect tax on the supply of goods and services across India.
 - o It was Introduced by the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2017.
- Main components of GST: Central GST (CGST), State GST (SGST), Union Territory GST (UTGST) and Integrated GST (IGST).
 - o CGST, SGST and UTGST are on intra-state transactions; IGST is on inter-state transactions, collected by the Centre and shared with states

- **Destination-Based Tax:** Revenue goes to the state/UT where the goods or services are finally consumed.



GST Council



- **Constitutional Basis:** Established under **Article 279A**, the apex decision-making body on GST matters.
- **Key Role:** Recommends GST rates, exemptions, thresholds, model GST laws, special provisions for states, and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- **Meetings:** Must meet at least **once every quarter**; special sessions can be called for urgent issues.
- **Composition:** Chaired by the **Union Finance Minister**, with the Union MoS (Revenue/Finance) and Finance Ministers of all states/UTs with legislatures as members.
- **Voting:** Uses a **weighted system**; Centre has **one-third vote**, states **two-thirds**; decisions need **three-fourths majority** of weighted votes.
- **Significance:** Promotes **cooperative federalism**, ensuring uniformity and stability of GST across India.

GSTAT AND GSTAT E-COURTS PORTAL LAUNCHED

About Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT)

- It is a second appellate authority established under Section 109 of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017.
 - When a taxpayer has a dispute, the first appeal lies within the tax administration.
- **Purpose:** To hear appeals against orders passed by the GST Appellate Authorities and to provide taxpayers with an independent forum for justice.
- **Benches:** It will function through a Principal Bench in New Delhi and 31 State Benches across 45 locations in India, ensuring accessibility and nationwide reach.
- **Structure:** Each Bench of the GSTAT will comprise two Judicial Members, one Technical Member (Centre), and one Technical Member (State).
- **Significance:** Structure reflects the spirit of cooperative federalism and is designed to deliver impartial and consistent decisions.



About GSTAT e-Courts Portal

- It is a digital platform to enable taxpayers to file appeals online, track the progress of cases, and participate in hearings through digital mode.
- Developed by: Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) in collaboration with National Informatics Centre (NIC).

HALLMARKING

The Indian government has introduced voluntary Hallmarking Unique Identification (HUID)-based hallmarking for Silver jewellery under revised standard aligning with the gold hallmarking system and enhancing traceability.

Hallmarking

- Hallmarking is the accurate determination and official recording of the proportionate content of precious metal in precious metal articles.
- It ensures authenticity, consumer protection, quality and traceability of jewellery and articles.
- In India it is regulated by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) [HQ: New Delhi]

- National standards body under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs
- Established under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986, now operates under BIS Act 2016.
- Formulates standards, certifies products (ISI mark, Hallmarking) and operates testing labs.

OPIUM CULTIVATION

- Union Government has announced Annual Licensing Policy for Opium Cultivation for 2025-26.



- The licensing policy is announced annually under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Rules, 1985, framed under the NDPS Act, 1985.

About Opium

- Opium poppy plant is the source of opium gum which contains several indispensable alkaloids (naturally occurring organic nitrogen-containing compounds) such as morphine, codeine and thebaine.
 - o Morphine is commonly used analgesic (pain relieving medicine) while codeine is used in manufacture of cough syrups.
- It is also grown as a source of edible seed and seed oil.
- India is the only country authorised by the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) to produce gum opium.
 - o 11 other countries cultivate opium poppy, but do not extract gum.

EXERCISES IN NEWS

- **Exercise Bright Star:** India will participate in 2025 edition.
 - o Origin: Conceived as a bilateral US–Egypt exercise after the Camp David Accord (1977).
 - o First edition: 1980, Egypt.
 - o Expanded: Since 1995, multiple nations included.
 - o Among the largest Tri-Service multilateral exercises in the region.
- **Exercise Maitree:** The 14th edition of Exercise MAITREE-XIV commenced at Meghalaya, India.
 - o Instituted in 2006, it is one of the important joint training exercises between India and Thailand.
 - o The joint exercise will focus on company level counter-terrorist operations in semi-urban terrain under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.



- **Exercise Zapad:** India participated in the Russia and Belarus launched joint military exercise Zapad-2025, held in Russia.

- o Launched in 1999, it is a large-scale, multilateral military event conducted every four years since 2009.

- o Objective: Aims to test defense against external threats.

- **Yudh Abhyas:** Indian Army contingent is participating in the 21st edition of military exercise India-US Joint Military Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2025.

- o Since 2004, this joint Military Exercise has been held annually between India and USA militaries.

- o It will focus on UN peacekeeping operations and enhancing readiness for multi-domain challenges.

- **Pacific Reach 2025:** Indian Navy's latest indigenously designed and constructed Diving Support Vessel (DSV) INS Nistar is participating in Pacific Reach 2025 exercise in Singapore.

- o It is a biennial, multilateral exercise.

- o The exercise is split into two main phases:

- > Harbour Phase: Includes subject matter expert exchanges (SMEE), medical symposium, cross-deck visits, and detailed discussions on submarine rescue systems.

- > Sea Phase: Involves intervention and rescue operations at sea with participating assets.

- **Exercise Siyom Prahar:** The Indian Army conducted Exercise Siyom Prahar in Arunachal Pradesh.

- o Aim: To validate drone integration in tactical operations under battlefield-like conditions.

- o Drone types used: For surveillance, battlefield reconnaissance, target acquisition, and precision strikes.

- **Exercise Yudh Kaushal:** Indian Army has conducted Exercise Yudh Kaushal 3.0 in the Kameng region in Easter Himalayas.



OPERATION BLACK FOREST

'Operation Black Forest' is the biggest anti-Naxal operation ever conducted on Karregutta hill situated along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border.

Other anti-Naxal mission

- **Mission Sankalp:** launched on sprawling hills of Karregutta and adjoining hills along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border
- **Operation Green Hunt:** Began in late 2009. It takes place across five states - West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa and Chhattisgarh.

UN 'HIGH SEAS' TREATY

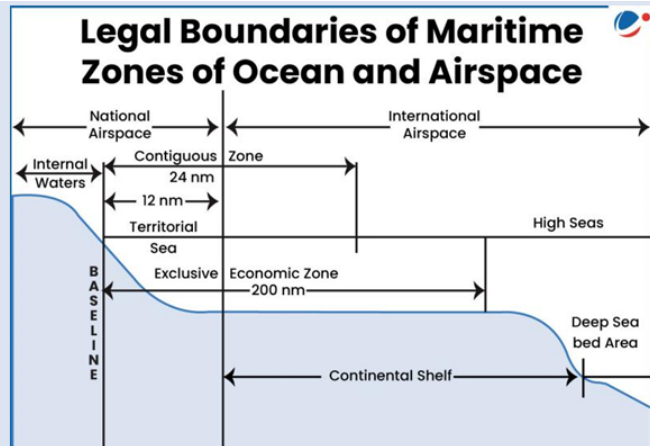
Treaty for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ agreement) also known as the High Seas Treaty is set to enter into force after ratification by 60th country.

About BBNJ Agreement

- BBNJ treaty is aimed at ensuring the conservation and sustainable utilisation of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, i.e. area beyond economic exclusive zone.
- It is an international treaty under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

- **UNCLOS** often called the “**Constitution of the Oceans**”, is the primary international treaty governing use of the seas and oceans.
 - Adopted in **1982**, it entered into force in **1994**.
- **State Parties**: 171 State parties (including India) have ratified it. Kyrgyzstan ratified it on 20th September 2025
- **Maritime Zones**
 - **Territorial Sea**: up to **12 nautical miles (nm)** from baseline → full sovereignty of the coastal state.
 - **Contiguous Zone**: up to **24 nm** → enforcement rights for customs, immigration, sanitation, and security.
 - **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**: up to **200 nm** → sovereign rights for exploration and use of marine resources.



SUPER TYPHOON

Philippines was affected by Super Typhoon Ragasa.

About Super Typhoon

- It is a tropical cyclone with maximum wind speed exceeding 185 kph or more than 100 knots.
 - Tropical cyclones are warm-core low pressure systems associated with a spiral inflow at the bottom level and spiral outflow at the top level.
 - They always form over oceans where sea surface temperature is greater than 26°C.
 - They develop at latitudes usually greater than 5° from the equator.

Terms for Tropical Cyclones:

- Hurricane – North Atlantic, Eastern North Pacific and South Pacific Ocean.
- Cyclone – Indian Ocean.
- Typhoon – Western North Pacific Ocean.
- Willy-willy: Eastern part of the Southern Indian Ocean.

HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECTS IN NEWS

- Sawalkote Project: A run-of-the-river project proposed on the river Chenab.
 - o Location: District Ramban & Udhampur of UT Jammu & Kashmir.
- Heo and Tato-I: Projects on Siyom River, in Arunachal Pradesh, close to the border with China.
 - o Siyom River originates from the eastern Himalayas and flows for much of its range from West to East, before joining the Siang (name used for Brahmaputra River in Arunachal Pradesh).
- Oju Hydroelectric Project: Project on Subansiri River near the India-China Border.
 - o Subansiri River originates in Tibet and is Largest tributary of the Brahmaputra. It is a trans-Himalayan antecedent river.
 - > Enters Arunachal Pradesh, India, flows into Assam, and joins Brahmaputra.
 - > The River is also called the “Gold River” because of the gold dust found in its waters

BARREN ISLAND VOLCANO

Fresh Eruption Reported at Barren Island Volcano, Andaman Islands.

About Barren Island

- Location: Situated in the Andaman Sea, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India. Northeast of Port Blair
- Status: India's only active volcano.
- Type: Stratovolcano, part of the Andaman volcanic arc.

GEN Z PROTEST IN NEPAL

Sushila Karki was appointed as interim Prime Minister of Nepal until 2026 elections after the fall of the government due to “Gen Z protest” in Nepal.

Reasons for Gen Z protests in Nepal

- **Nationwide Ban on Social Media Platforms:** Government suspension of 26 major social media platforms (WhatsApp, Instagram etc.) was widely seen as an attempt to curb freedom of expression and violate citizens' fundamental rights.
- **Corruption and Lack of Accountability:** Entrenched corruption, high-profile scams, and lack of progress on legal reforms led to public mistrust.
 - o Viral social media posts highlighted gap between struggling ordinary youth and luxurious lifestyles of children of political leaders.
- **Other reasons:** Extreme State Response; Youth Bulge as Nepal's 21% population is between (15–24 years), Inspirations from Global Youth Movements such as Bangladesh, history of Political protests such as Jana Andolan in 1990 and 2006 etc.
- The Gen Z protests highlighted the changing nature of protests and role played by young population.

PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT (PWDVA), 2005

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 has completed 20 years.

About the PWDV Act, 2005

- The act aimed to ensure the fundamental rights of women guaranteed under Articles 14, 15 and 21.
- India, as a signatory to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), was required to legislate specifically against domestic violence, recognizing it as a violation of human rights.



Key provisions of the Act

- **Wide definition of Domestic Violence (DV):** Includes actual abuse or threat of abuse including physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, and economic abuse.
 - o Harassment by way of unlawful dowry demands to women victim or her relatives also constitutes DV.
- **Scope:** Applies to all women in domestic relationships: marriage, live-in relationships, familial ties, and shared households.
- **Rights of Women:**
 - o Right to reside in shared household (irrespective of ownership).
 - o Provides temporary custody of child.
 - o Reliefs include protection orders to prevent acts of domestic violence, Monetary Orders for maintenance for herself and her Children, and Compensation order for damages caused to her.
- **Institutional Framework**
 - o Protection Officers: Appointed to assist victims, coordinate support, provide legal aid, and ensure enforcement of orders.
 - > They are required to report the cases of DV to the Magistrate upon receipt of complaints and to assist Magistrate in discharge of functions.
 - o Service Providers: NGOs and government agencies to provide counselling, shelter, medical assistance, and legal help.
 - o Government Duties: Promote awareness, training, and coordination among stakeholders.
- **Procedure and Enforcement**
 - o Time-bound justice: Woman victim can get immediate civil remedies within 60 days.
 - o Evidence: Sole testimony of the aggrieved woman is admissible as proof, easing the burden on the victim.

- o Penalties: Breach of court orders punishable with imprisonment/fine.

DECLINE IN FERTILITY RATE IN INDIA

- According to the Sample Registration System (SRS) statistical report, 2023 shows Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for rural
- India for the first time touched 2.1, the replacement rate.

Key Highlights of the report

- TFR indicates the average number of children a woman would have during her reproductive life
 - o National Level: The TFR for India in 2023 is 1.9.
 - > 18 States and UTs had reported a TFR of below the replacement level TFR of 2.1.
 - o Rural vs. Urban: The TFR in rural areas is 2.1, while in urban areas it is 1.5.
 - > This is the first time that TFR in rural India has touched replacement rate.
 - o Highest TFR: Bihar (2.8)
 - o Lowest TFR: Delhi (1.2)
- TFR by Education: There is an inverse relationship between the mother's education level and the Total Fertility Rate
 - o The TFR for illiterate women in India was 3.3 while the TFR for literate women was 1.8.



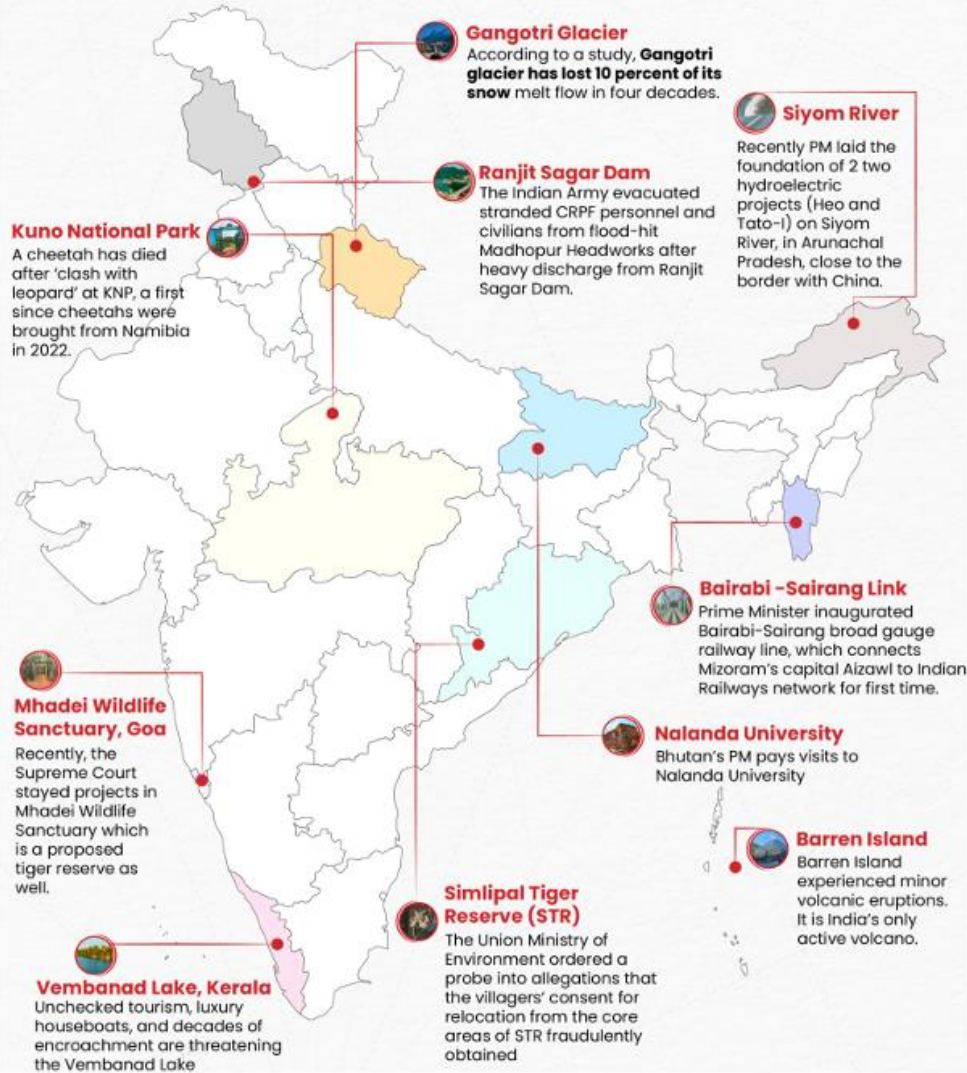
SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013 (POSH ACT)

The Supreme Court upheld that political parties cannot be treated as “workplaces” excluding them from POSH act.

About POSH act 2013

- **Judicial precedent:** Based on Vishaka judgement 1997
- **Scope:** Applies to all workplaces: government, private sector, NGOs, educational institutions, hospitals, sports facilities, etc.
 - Covers domestic workers as well.
- **Internal Complaints committee (ICC):** Mandatory in every workplace with 10 or more employees.
 - At least 50% of members and presiding officer shall be women.
- **Local complaints committee (LCC):** In each district to deal with complaints in workplace with less than 10 employees.
- **Complaint:** To be made within a period of 3 months from the date of incident to ICC or LCC which are to complete inquiry within 90 days.

Places in News India



Places in News World

