



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

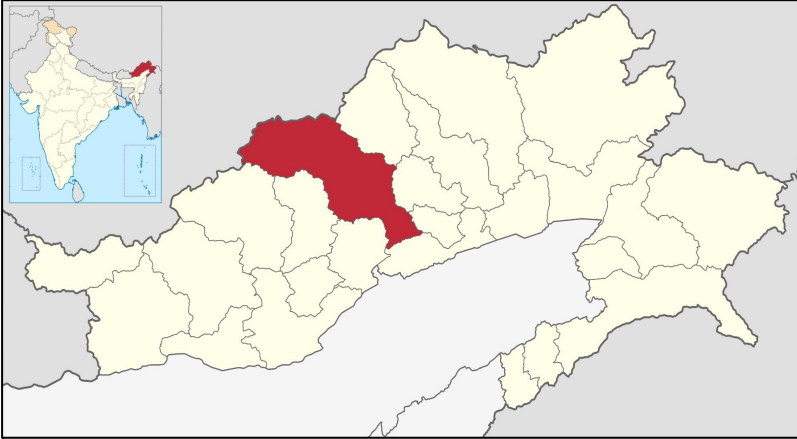
24th October 2026



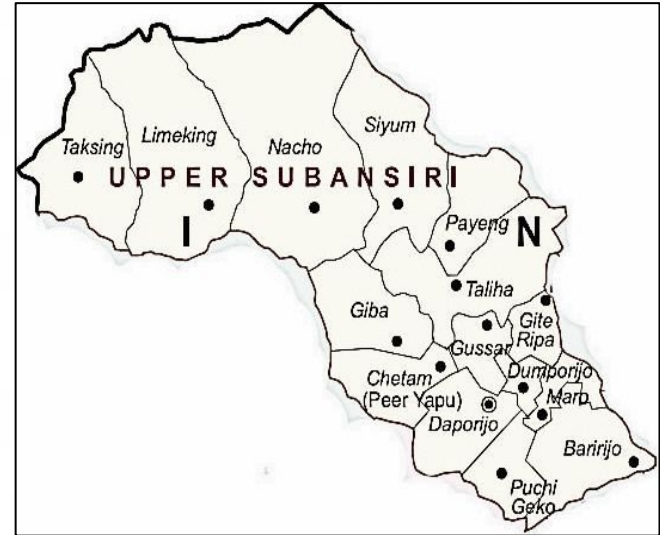
India-China Border Issue

CONTEXT: The outgoing ITBP DG, Shatrughan Kapur, admitted at the Himveer Samman Samaroh (Alwar) to “face-offs” at several locations in Arunachal that are “still ongoing”.

Relevant Places



Upper Subansiri District



Taksing Area

Geography and boundary

- **Length:** the LAC is about 3,488 km, in three sectors.
 - **Western:** Ladakh
 - **Middle:** Himachal and Uttarakhand
 - **Eastern:** Sikkim and Arunachal
- **China's perception:** Considers the LAC to be around 2,000 km long



CONTEXT: The outgoing ITBP DG, Shatrुjeet Kapur, admitted at the Himveer Samman Samaroh (Alwar) to “face-offs” at several locations in Arunachal that are “still ongoing”.

Issues

Boundary and military

- **Undefined LAC:** China has refused to exchange maps (it did so only for the Middle sector)
- **Unresolved legacy of 2020:** disengagement is done in most friction points, but **de-escalation and de-induction** (pullback of the large troop build-up) are still pending
- **Shift in focus to the east:** Arunachal is claimed by China as “Zangnan”
- **Infrastructure race:** China’s **Xiaokang border villages**, dual-use airfields and rail links to Tibet.
- **Asymmetry:** the PLA and Border Defence Regiment are better funded and modernised
- **Ambiguity in official messaging:** limited transparency on ground realities feeds public mistrust

Strategic and political

- **Tibet**
- **Water**
- **Cartographic aggression by** repeated renaming of places in Arunachal (2017, 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025) and “standard map” releases.
- **Pakistan axis:** CPEC through PoK, military and technology support to Pakistan, and the Shaksgam Valley.
- **Encirclement perception:** String of Pearls, Belt and Road Initiative, and Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean Region.

- **Multilateral friction:** China’s blocking of listings at the UN 1267 Committee, and the NSG membership block.



Economic

- **Trade deficit:** a record **\$112 bn** in 2025–26.
- **Dependence:** active pharmaceutical ingredients, electronics and rare earths.
- **China’s curbs on rare-earth magnets, fertilisers and tunnel boring machines** show how supply chains can be **weaponized**.
- **Policy dilemma:** India needs Chinese inputs for manufacturing but is wary of Chinese FDI and apps on security grounds.

Structural

- **Trust deficit:** each thaw has been followed by a fresh flare-up.
- **Differing strategic aims:** China prefers to keep the border issue in a “proper place” in relations, while India insists **border peace is the basis** of ties.



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India–China Border Management Frameworks

1993	Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the LAC	- Neither side to use or threaten force; - both respect the LAC; - troop levels along the LAC to be kept to a minimum
1996	Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the LAC	- No firing, hazardous chemicals or blast operations within 2 km of the LAC; - no combat aircraft within 10 km without prior notice; - exchange of information, hotlines, and meetings
2005	Protocol on Modalities for Implementation of CBMs	Procedures for patrol face-offs, flag meetings, and communication
2013	Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA)	- No tailing of each other’s patrols; - no use of force; - hotlines between military headquarters; - mechanisms for meetings
Oct 2024	Patrolling arrangement for Depsang and Demchok	Patrolling and grazing to resume

What India has done Diplomatic

- Layered mechanisms:** SR talks (Doval–Wang Yi), WMCC, Corps Commander talks, hotlines, and flag meetings.
- Principle:** “peace and tranquillity on the border as the basis for the relationship”. The line is: **mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, mutual interest**.
- Calibrated thaw** since Oct 2024:
 - patrolling arrangement,
 - Kailash Mansarovar Yatra,
 - flights, and
 - agreement to explore an “early harvest” in boundary delimitation.
- Firm messaging:** repeated rejection of China’s renaming and claims on Arunachal.

Military and border management

- Infrastructure:** Darbuk–Shyok–Daulat Beg Oldie Road, Atal Tunnel, **Sela Tunnel, Arunachal Frontier Highway**, advanced landing grounds such as Nyoma, and Shinku La tunnel work.
- Force posture:** more troops and mountain strike corps; **Shaurya Commando** teams (one in each ITBP battalion, with a dedicated high-altitude battalion planned), and more border outposts.
- Technology:** about 70% of the ITBP’s ₹400 crore modernisation funds went to drones
- Reforms:** CDS and the theatre command push



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What India has done

Development of border areas

- **Vibrant Villages Programme:** reverse migration, livelihoods, and connectivity in border villages.
- **Border Area Development Programme.**

Economic and strategic

- **Curbs:** Press Note 3 (2020) screening of FDI from land-border countries, app bans, and anti-dumping duties.
- **Self-reliance:** PLI schemes and supply-chain diversification (**Atmanirbhar Bharat**, India-US and India-EU initiatives).
- **Strategic balancing:** Quad, a deeper partnership with the US, Japan and Australia, Malabar exercises, and Indo-Pacific outreach.

Way forward

- **Complete de-escalation and de-induction should be treated as** the benchmark, and avoid permanent buffer zones.
- **Clarify the LAC**
- **Update the 1993, 1996, 2005 and 2013 agreements**, which were not designed for drones, surveillance technology and mass troop deployments
- **Border infrastructure and presence:** speed up VVP, roads, tunnels and communications, keeping a “civil-military” integrated border approach
- **Economic de-risking, not decoupling**
- **Water diplomacy**
- **Multilateral engagement**

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Ques. “The India-China border relationship shows that agreements can manage a dispute without settling it.” In the light of recent face-offs in Arunachal Pradesh, critically examine the effectiveness of the existing border agreements between the two countries. Suggest measures to strengthen border management and safeguard India’s interests.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



CONTEXT: Elections to 28 seats across the Legislative Councils of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Karnataka were held

What are Legislative Councils

Concept

- Upper house of a state legislature in a bicameral state; the lower house is the Legislative Assembly
- Parallel to Rajya Sabha at the Union level:
 - a second layer of scrutiny,
 - a **permanent house** (never dissolved),
 - with one-third of members retiring every two years
- Bicameralism is **optional** for states.
- Six states have Councils: **UP, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh.**

Historical roots

- Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, 1919: bicameralism at the Centre.
- **Government of India Act, 1935:** bicameral legislatures in provinces; **the Bengal Council started in 1937.**

- **Constituent Assembly:** Brajeshwar Prasad and others argued for a house of the “wise” as a check on adult-franchise majorities. Critics saw it as elitist.

Note:

Princely state of Mysore was the first Indian state to have a bicameral legislature in 1907

Constitutional provisions

- **Art. 169: Parliament can create or abolish** a Council by ordinary law if the Assembly passes a resolution by a **special majority**: a majority of its total membership and two-thirds of members present and voting. Such a law is **not an Art. 368 amendment.**
- **Art. 171:** composition and election.
- **Art. 172:** 6-year term; one-third retire every 2 years.
- **Art. 173:** minimum age 30.



Legislative Councils



CONTEXT: Elections to 28 seats across the Legislative Councils of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Karnataka were held

Composition (Art. 171)

- Strength: not more than **one-third of the Assembly**, and not less than **40**. (Exception: J&K had 36 under its earlier special arrangement.)

Share	Elected/nominated by
1/3	Local bodies (municipalities, district boards, other local authorities)
1/12	Graduates of 3+ years' standing
1/12	Teachers (secondary school or higher, 3+ years' standing)
1/3	MLAs (from among non-members)
Remainder (1/6)	Governor's nominees with "special knowledge or practical experience" in literature, science, art, cooperative movement, social service



CONTEXT: Elections to 28 seats across the Legislative Councils of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Karnataka were held

What are Legislative Councils

Method

- Proportional representation by Single Transferable Vote (STV); indirect election.
- Graduate and teacher constituencies need an enrolment form with proof of qualification.
- Elections are not fought on party symbols

Purpose of Legislative Councils

- **Revising chamber**
- **Representation of knowledge**
- **Check on majoritarianism**
- **Accommodating talent**
- **Federal and local voice**
- **Continuity**

Challenges and issues

Constitutional and legal weakness

- **Subordinate to the Assembly:**
 - Ordinary bills: can only delay by **3 months** (first time) and **1 month** (second time).
 - Money Bill: Council can only make recommendations, with a **14-day** limit.
 - No role in Presidential election or in Rajya Sabha election.

- Cannot remove the Council of Ministers (collective responsibility lies to the Assembly alone).
- Cannot vote on demands for grants.
- Joint sitting provision is absent (unlike Art. 108), so the Assembly's will prevails.
- **Weaker than Rajya Sabha**, which has a real say in non-money bills and a role in federal matters.

Political and functional

- **Accommodates defeated candidates, party loyalists and ministers who avoid direct elections.**
- **Political issue, not an institutional one:** whether to have a Council depends on the ruling party. Example: Tamil Nadu, where DMK has sought to re-establish the Council (abolished in 1986 under the AIADMK government).
- **Little visible contribution**
- **Elite and exclusionary:** graduate and teacher constituencies exclude a large share of citizens. This runs **against the one-person-one-vote norm**.
- **Voter registration hurdles:** graduates and teachers must apply with proof, so enrolment is low
- **Fiscal burden:** salaries, staff and infrastructure with limited returns.
- **Dual standards:** the Constituent Assembly view that most illiterate voters could not be trusted sits uneasily with the democratic spirit.



CONTEXT: Elections to 28 seats across the Legislative Councils of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Karnataka were held

Way forward

- **Case-by-case, not partisan:** treat the Council as a state choice.
- **Time-bound disposal:** Parliament should act on Art. 169 resolutions within a reasonable period.
- **Genuine nominations:** the Governor should follow transparent criteria for Art. 171(5), and decide on nominations in a time-bound way.
- **Better functioning:**
 - Mandatory committee scrutiny of bills and a discussion calendar on state policy.
 - Publish performance data on sittings, bills reviewed and interventions
- **Inclusion:** easier enrolment (online, auto-enrolment through university records), and consider space for women and under-represented groups.
- **Constitutional rebalancing:**
 - A longer delay period or a deliberative role on state policy and finance commission reports.

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Ques. "Legislative Councils are often described as a 'rehabilitation lounge' for politicians rather than a house of wisdom. Critically examine the relevance of Legislative Councils in India's federal democratic framework, and suggest reforms to make them more effective."

(15 marks, 250 words)



Newspaper: The Indian Express **Page Number :** 19

Labour survey changes planned to gauge gig, unpaid house work

Institutional and Survey Facts

- **PLFS** is done by the **NSSO** under **MoSPI**.
- **Sampling design changes** are proposed from **January 2027**; the survey schedule will also change.
- **Second Stage Stratum (SSS)**: a new stratum identifies households with at least one digital platform worker.
 - 4 SSS in rural areas, 5 in urban areas.
 - 14 households canvassed per First Stage Unit (FSU).
 - Aim: better coverage of platform workers and more comprehensive data.
- **A new questionnaire** entry asks whether any household member did **digital platform work** in the reference period.
- Additional questions will measure **labour underutilisation**.

Gig and Platform Workers

- Platform examples: Ola, Uber, Zomato, Amazon, Urban Company.
- Questions cover:
 - work in the last 365 days
 - goods or services provided
 - multi-platform work
 - reasons for taking up platform work
 - challenges faced
- **NITI Aayog 2022 report**: gig and platform workers are estimated to rise to **2.35 crore by 2029-30**.
- Platform workers are a **subset** of gig workers.

Voluntary vs Compulsion Dimension

- New questions will ask whether unpaid work is **by choice or out of responsibility or constraint**.
- Additional questions:
 - Did members seek work in the previous 30 days?
 - Do they want to work now?
 - What is the main reason for not seeking work?
- This connects to the **"availability but not seeking work"** idea and to **hidden unemployment**



Newspaper: The Indian Express **Page Number :** 19

Labour survey changes planned to gauge gig, unpaid house work

Unpaid Work and Time Use Data

Indicator	Male	Female
Minutes/day on unpaid domestic and caregiving work, 2019	36	280
Minutes/day on unpaid domestic and caregiving work, 2024	37	283

- Women's burden is roughly **7.5 times** men's, and there was **almost no change** between 2019 and 2024.
- MoSPI does **not** run the Time Use Survey annually, so the PLFS is being used to capture the same information.
- **Concept note: unpaid household and caregiving work** contributes significantly to household well-being and enables other members to take up paid work. It has **not been measured separately in PLFS until now**.
- Questions are added on own-use production of goods, unpaid household and caregiving activities, volunteer work and trainee work.



Voter's Right to prosecute candidates



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Polity

Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number :** 05

Prelims Pointers

SC on Citizens' Right to File Complaints Against Candidates

- Ordinary private citizens can file **criminal complaints** against candidates for **giving false information or concealing information in nomination papers**.
- The Court said the **law does not insist that only public servants or competent authorities can lodge such complaints**.

Legal provisions

- **Section 125-A, Representation of the People Act, 1951:** penalty for filing false affidavit or concealing information.
 - Punishment: imprisonment up to **6 months**, fine, or both.
 - Offence is **non-cognisable and bailable**.

Concept

- **Locus standi:** the right to approach the court. The judgment gives it to the citizen-voter in this context.

Static linkages

- Disclosure of criminal antecedents, assets and education: **Union of India v. ADR (2002)** and **PUCI v. Union of India (2003)** established the voter's right to know. **Lok Prahari v. ECI (2018)** extended it to disclosing sources of income.
- **Right to vote** is a statutory right, but the **right to information** about candidates flows from **Article 19(1)(a)**.
- **Filing of nomination and affidavit (Form 26)** is governed by the **Representation of the People Act, 1951** and the **Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961**.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Science

Newspaper: The Indian Express **Page Number :** 17

Prelims Pointers

What is Shamonda virus?

- The Shamonda virus is **mainly found in livestock**, especially cattle, sheep, goats, horses and alpacas.
- It is **part of Simbu group of viruses**

How does Shamonda virus spread?

- The virus is **thought to spread between animals by the bites of a midge**, which is a small fly-like insect
- Vector-borne disease

In which other countries has Shamonda virus been detected?

- **First detected in cattle in Nigeria in 1965**, it has since been found in **parts of Africa and Asia**.
- **First identified in Europe in late July**, by October 20 cases had been reported in more than a dozen European countries, including in top cattle breeders **France, Germany, Spain and Ireland**.

How dangerous is Shamonda virus for animals?

- **Symptoms include fever, diarrhoea and reduced milk production.**
- **More serious complications include abortions and severe foetal malformations.** Neurological disorders have also been reported in some horses.

Shamonda Virus

- **France confirmed the first known human case of Shamonda virus (October 2026).**
- **Detection:** markers found in the **cerebrospinal fluid**. After death, the whole genome was sequenced from brain samples and confirmed as **SHAV-EU1**.
- **Transmission: presumed midge bite** in eastern France, where the virus was circulating in animals in spring and summer.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Current events

Newspaper: The Indian Express **Page Number :** 05

Prelims Pointer

Civil Defence Network

- A civil defence network of about **60,000 volunteers** in **12 states/UTs**, run as a **pilot project**.
- **Nodal ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- **Novelty:** The first-of-its-kind **joint training with the Indian Army**.
- **Phase 1:** A **3-day specialised training** for **civil defence master trainers** from the participating states/UTs.
- **A cascade model:** a small group is trained in depth, then trains volunteers at scale. This is the model behind reaching 60,000 volunteers.
- **Origin:** The PM's **Independence Day speech**, which announced a vision of a civil defence network with modern systems, technologies and contemporary preparedness capabilities for emerging security challenges.
- A **limited-scale trial to test design and feasibility** before a nationwide rollout.

What is Civil Defence?

- **Non-military measures to protect civilians, property and essential services from hostile attack** (air raids, missiles, drones, sabotage), and to limit damage and restore normalcy.
- **Legal basis:** the **Civil Defence Act, 1968**, which created a volunteer-based structure.

- The **Civil Defence (Amendment) Act, 2009** added **disaster management** to its scope, so it is no longer war-only.
- Implementation is largely by **states**, under a scheme coordinated by the MHA.
- It operates in notified **"civil defence towns"** (categorised by vulnerability), with Civil Defence Wardens and Volunteers.
- Volunteers are **not regular government employees**. They are trained, voluntary, and generally unpaid.

Civil Defence vs Home Guards

- **Civil Defence:** governed by the 1968 Act, **focused on protection from enemy attack and now disasters, and active in notified towns**.
- **Home Guards:** governed by **state Home Guards Acts** (originating from the Bombay Home Guards Act, 1947), **a voluntary auxiliary to the police for law and order, traffic, and disasters**.
- **Both are administered at the Centre by the MHA's Directorate General of Fire Services, Civil Defence and Home Guards**.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Science and Technology
Newspaper: The Indian Express **Page Number :** 08

Prelims Pointer

Oskar Klein Medal

The award

- Awarded to **Ashoke Sen** (International Centre for Theoretical Sciences, Bengaluru), the **first Indian** to win it.
- Awarded every year since **1988** by **Stockholm University** and the **Nobel Committee for Physics of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences**.
- Field: theoretical physics.
- Lecture delivered as part of the award: "Gravity from Strings and Strings from Gravity" (Stockholm University).

Ashoke Sen

- Known for work on **string theory**.
- Other honours: **Dirac Medal** (earlier), **Boltzmann Medal**, **Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics**.
- The only Indian to win both the Dirac Medal and the Boltzmann Medal.

String theory

- An effort to reconcile **quantum theory with gravitation**.
- Aims at a grand unified theory explaining all particles and forces at every scale, from subatomic particles to galaxies.

Related recent honours for Indian physicists

- **Deepak Dhar**: named this year's **Dirac Medal** winner, the second Indian to win it after Sen.



Q1. With reference to electoral rights and candidate disclosures in India, consider the following statements:

1. A private citizen can file a criminal complaint against a candidate for concealing information in an election affidavit.
2. The voter's right to know the antecedents of candidates is a fundamental right, although the right to vote is statutory.
3. The non-cognisable nature of an offence prevents a Magistrate from entertaining a private complaint.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q2. With reference to the Shamonda virus, consider the following statements:

1. It belongs to the Simbu group of viruses and is transmitted primarily through biting midges.
2. Infection in pregnant livestock may cause abortions and congenital malformations in offspring.

Which of the statements given above are incorrect?

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

Answer: d

Q3. With reference to Civil Defence in India, consider the following statements:

1. Civil Defence involves non-military measures to protect civilians against hostile attacks and disasters.
2. The Ministry of Defence is the nodal ministry responsible for coordinating Civil Defence activities in India.

3. Both Civil Defence volunteers and Home Guards primarily function as auxiliary forces to the police.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. The Oskar Klein Medal recognises contributions to theoretical physics and is associated with Stockholm University.
2. Ashoke Sen, known for his contributions to string theory, is the first Indian recipient of the medal.
3. String theory seeks to reconcile quantum mechanics with gravity by treating fundamental particles as point-like entities.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: c

Q5. Which one of the following groups consists entirely of States having Legislative Councils in India?

- a) Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Odisha
- b) Bihar, Maharashtra, Telangana, Rajasthan
- c) Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh
- d) Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal

Answer: c





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