



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

24th September 2026



Integrity of the Election Commission



CONTEXT: What does the law require of a multi-member Election Commission, and what happens if there is disagreement about whether those requirements were followed?

Election Commission of India

324. Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission

- (1) The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to Parliament and to the Legislature of every State and of elections to the offices of President and Vice-President held under this Constitution shall be vested in a Commission (referred to in this Constitution as the Election Commission).
- (2) The Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners, if any, as the President may from time to time fix and the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf by Parliament, be made by the President.

Why Election Commission is unlike an ordinary government department

Indira Gandhi v Raj Narain (1975): **Basic Structure Doctrine**

Article 326 = adult suffrage

RPA 1950 → electoral rolls and voter eligibility

RPA 1951 → conduct of elections, candidates, corrupt practices and election disputes

UPSC PYQ (P) 2017

Consider the following statements:

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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



Appointment of CEC – controversy

◆ Pre-2023 Situation

- **Appointments by:** President → on advice of **Union Council of Ministers** (PM-led).
- **No statutory law** regulating the process.

◆ *Anoop Baranwal Case, 2023* (SC)

- Held: “**Free & fair elections**” = **basic structure of Constitution**.
- Ordered: Until Parliament enacts a law, appointments must be made by a **panel of 3**:
 - ✓ Prime Minister
 - ✓ Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha
 - ✓ Chief Justice of India (CJI)

👉 Introduced a **judicial check** on executive dominance.

◆ Parliament's Response → 2023 Act

- Passed **new law** replacing SC formula with **PM + LoP + Union Minister**.
- Reduced judiciary's role → restored **executive dominance**.

The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) shall be appointed on the advice of a committee comprising the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Chief Justice of India. Where no Leader of the Opposition is available, the committee will include the leader of the largest Opposition party in Lok Sabha in terms of numerical strength.



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The **Chief Election Commissioner & Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023**

Selection Committee

- PM (Chairperson)
- LoP in Lok Sabha
- Union Cabinet Minister (nominated by PM)

Search Committee

- Chaired by Law Minister + 2 Secretaries
- Shortlists **5 names** → Selection Committee free to consider others also.

Eligibility

- Must have served as **Secretary-level officer** in Government of India.
- Integrity + election management experience.

Tenure & Service

- **6 years or till 65 years**, whichever earlier.
- Salary = **Supreme Court Judge**.
- **No reappointment** (CEC/EC).
- If EC becomes CEC → total tenure max 6 years.

Resignation & Removal

- **CEC** → same as SC Judge (via impeachment).
- **EC** → removable only on **CEC's recommendation**.
- Both can resign to President.

Removal Process

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 324(5): CEC removable only like a Supreme Court Judge**
(proven misbehavior/ incapacity).
- **Article 124(4): Requires impeachment via Parliament.**

Key Differences: CEC vs. ECs

CEC	Impeachment like SC Judge (Parliament approval).
ECs	Removed only on CEC's recommendation .

Step 1

Notice of Motion

Filed in Lok Sabha / Rajya Sabha with charges of misbehavior (e.g., bias, corruption) or incapacity.



Step 2

Investigation

Committee formed (judges / MPs) to probe the charges.



Step 3

Parliamentary Vote

Requires 2/3 majority of members present and voting in both Houses.



Step 4

Presidential Order

If Parliament approves, the President issues an order to remove the CEC/EC.

Flowchart: Vertical sequence — Notice → Investigation → Parliamentary Vote → Presidential Order.



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Recent SIR controversy

PRELIMS POINTER — Special Intensive Revision

Article 324 + Section 21(3) of the RP Act, 1950

- Why would an electoral roll require intensive revision?
- The other side of the equation: wrongful exclusion

S.I.R VOTER DELETION REGION WISE

	AVG REDUCTION	DROP IN VOTERS
STATE AVG	-4.89%	-15,809
SEEMANCHAL	-6.12%	-19,576
BHOJPUR	-5.56%	-17,927
ANGA PRADESH	-5.06%	-16,674
MITHILANCHAL	-4.94%	-16,018
TIRHUT	-4.62%	-14,572
MAGADH	-3.73%	-12,383

#ResultsWithNDTV Source: ECI, M76 ANALYTICS

Who prepares electoral roll?

ECI → Chief Electoral Officer → District Election Officer → **Electoral Registration Officer** (RPA, 1950) → Booth Level

SOLUTION? maximum accuracy with minimum wrongful exclusion.

Claims & objections

Hearings / field verification

Opportunity of appeal / review

Instructions, reasons for deletion

When a technical issue becomes a constitutional issue

Mains Keyword — Algorithmic Governance = ECINET + ERONet

The benefit: speed + scale + consistency.

The risk: cybersecurity + opacity + bias/errors + difficulty of appeal + unclear accountability.

According to the **Indian Express report**, 2 ECs objected repeatedly to decisions involving:

1. **Form 6**
2. **Centralisation**
3. **West Bengal and appeals**
4. **T.N. Seshan v Union of India (1995)**
- 5.

Goa episode: 97 voters were found eligible by the relevant EROs



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ECINET
One App for All Election Services!

A unified platform by the Election Commission of India that brings all election-related apps under one roof.

From voter registration to turnout data - everything is now just a tap away!

Download Now

Android iOS

Chief Electoral Officer, Punjab

@TheCEOPunjab f t i n www.ceopunjab.gov.in

TEN MONTHS, 14 NOTES: THE OBJECTIONS ON RECORD

Five of the 14 notes by ECs Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi were copied to Chief Election Commissioner

- 1 OCT 28, 2025 — SANDHU:**
Letters, orders in ECI's name without Commission's approval.
- 2 APR 16, 2026 — SANDHU:**
Getting to know about new IT modules, portals from media.
- 3 APR 16 — SANDHU:**
Official communications issued without Commission's approval.
- 4 APR 16 — JOSHI:**
For over a year, got no agenda before, minutes after, Commission's meetings.
- 5 APR 16 — JOSHI:**
Officers on foreign trips without Commission's approval.
- 6 APR 24 — JOSHI:**
Reiterates no official communications without Commission's approval.
- 7 MAY 16 — JOSHI:**
Don't change Form 6 (new voter) without Govt approval; Sandhu agrees on May 19.
- 8 MAY 29 — JOSHI:**
Warns electoral roll database is being centralised, needs audit; Sandhu endorses on July 13.
- 9 JUL 29 — JOSHI TO CABINET SECRETARY:**
Official redistributing work without knowledge.
- 10 JUL 29 — SANDHU TO CABINET SECRETARY:**
Reiterates work roster issue, seeks action against official.
- 11 JUL 30:**
Joshi and Sandhu strike down new allocation order.
- 12 AUG 12 — SANDHU:**
Who authorised appeals on EC's behalf were West Bengal's tribunals?
- 13 AUG 13 — SANDHU:**
Form-6 change is 'unauthorised and illegal'.
- 14 AUG 14 — SANDHU:**
Field officers can't access ECI Net system. DG(IT) has no power to restrict.

PIKITA CHOPRA



CONTEXT: What does the law require of a multi-member Election Commission, and what happens if there is disagreement about whether those requirements were followed?

Operational Controversies

MCC Enforcement (2024)

- **Hate speech** or **divisive rhetoric** by "Star Campaigners"
- 'swift censure of opposition leaders.'

The Gap in Autonomy

Independent Staff	Goswami Committee (1990)	Status
Deregistration Power	ECI (Multiple Proposals)	✗ Rejected
Cooling-Off Period	Law Commission (255th)	✗ Ignored

The "Contempt" Vacuum

Unlike the Supreme Court or High Courts, the ECI cannot punish anyone for contempt of its authority

EVM/VVPAT Verification

ECI's persistent refusal to allow a **100% count of VVPAT slips/** independent **audit of EVMs**

Source code = "State Secret"

Reforms & safeguards

Strengthening EC autonomy

CJI in selection com, **non-extendable tenure**, EC budget from CFI

Electoral roll reforms

SOPs, **geo-tagged** verification, Portal, **Blockchain**

Legal & procedural

Institutionalise dissent inside the ECI

Technology & privacy balance

AI + Human in loop, avoid over-dependence on **Aadhaar**
Strengthen independent technical audits

Political culture



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MEET THE TWO ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

SUKHBIR SINGH SANDHU



HE JOINED as Election Commissioner on March 15, 2024. A 1988-batch IAS officer of the Uttarakhand cadre, he served as Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand from July 2021 to January 2024. Prior to that, from 2019 to 2021, he was Chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). In February 2024, he briefly served as Secretary to the Lokpal. He also served as Collector of Haridwar, Gautam Buddha Nagar (NOIDA) and Udham Singh Nagar districts. He was Principal Secretary to four Chief Ministers across three

political parties between 2007 and 2014.

Sandhu completed his MBBS from Government Medical College, Amritsar, and has a Master's in History from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. He is also a Law graduate.

VIVEK JOSHI

HE JOINED as an Election Commissioner on February 19, 2025. A 1989-batch IAS officer of the Haryana cadre, he served as Chief Secretary of Haryana. He has also served in the Ministries of Textiles, Women and Child Development, and Finance. In Haryana, he was Deputy Commissioner of Jind, Hisar and Panchkula, and Divisional Commissioner of Ambala. He has been a board member of the Reserve Bank of India and the State Bank of India.

Joshi has a PhD in International Economics from the Graduate Institute, Geneva, and a B.E. in Mechanical Engineering (1987) from Roorkee University, now known as IIT Roorkee.



— DEEPAK TENGURIYA

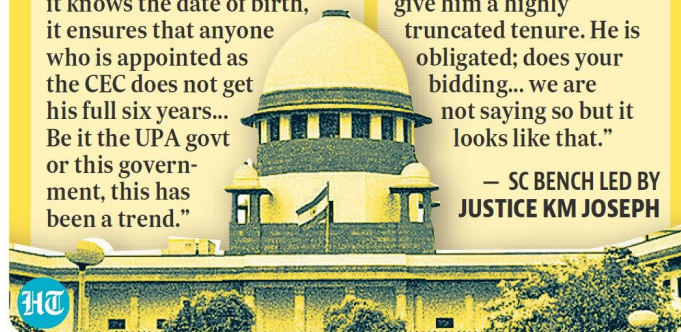
'Alarming trend': Top court

The 'silence of the Constitution' on how to pick election commissioners has been exploited, the apex court said

"After TN Seshan (who was CEC between 1990 and 1996), the slide began when no person has been given a full term. What the government has been doing is that because it knows the date of birth, it ensures that anyone who is appointed as the CEC does not get his full six years... Be it the UPA govt or this government, this has been a trend."

"This is how the silences of the Constitution can be exploited. There is no law, no check. Everyone has used it to their interest... Pick up someone and give him a highly truncated tenure. He is obligated; does your bidding... we are not saying so but it looks like that."

— SC BENCH LED BY JUSTICE KM JOSEPH



Mains Practise Question

The Election Commission's independence depends not merely on its constitutional status but also on its internal decision-making processes and administrative autonomy. Discuss.
(15 Marks, 250 words)



SC's latest remarks on Collegium System

24th September 2026

CONTEXT: How should India design judicial appointments so that judges are independent, appointments are credible, and the process remains accountable?

PRELIMS POINTER – Collegium System

Article 124(2)

That every **Supreme Court judge** is appointed by the **President** by **warrant under his hand and seal** after **consultation** with such Supreme Court and High Court judges as the President considers necessary.

For **appointment** of a **Supreme Court judge other than the CJI**, the **CJI shall always be consulted**.

Article 217: HC Judge appointed by the President after **consultation** with:
CJI + Guv + CJ HC

Article 222: President may **transfer** a **High Court judge** after **consultation** with the Chief Justice of India

The 1970s

1973: A.N. Ray becomes CJI

1977: M.H. Beg & H.R. Khanna

Why judicial independence matters?

The Famous 3 Cases

S.P. Gupta v. Union of India (1981)

"consultation" in Articles 124 and 217 = not meaning concurrence. Consultation ≠ veto by judiciary

↓
Executive primacy

Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India (1993)

9-judge Constitution Bench
This transformed the meaning of "consultation".
Opinion of the CJI = "institutionally formed opinion after consultation with senior judges"

↓
Judicial primacy

Third Judges Case, 1998

"But who exactly is "the judiciary"?"

Presidential Reference under Article 143 = working of the Collegium
SC judge = CJI + 4 SC senior-most puisne judges
HC judge = 2 senior-most puisne judges + High Court-level process



24th September 2026

CONTEXT: How should India design judicial appointments so that judges are independent, appointments are credible, and the process remains accountable?

"Against the Collegium System of Appointment"

NJAC VS COLLEGIUM SYSTEM

WHAT'S COLLEGIUM SYSTEM

- Collegium system based on Three Judges Cases
- Under it, appointment of judges are made by Chief Justice of India and four most senior Supreme Court judges.
- Has no constitutional backing.
- Constitution of India's Article 124 says appointments to be made by President in consultation with judges as President may deem necessary.
- Critics say it is a closed-door system which lacks transparency

WHAT'S NJAC

- NJAC was a body created to end the two-decade-old Supreme Court Collegium system of judges appointing judges.
- Was passed by Lok Sabha on August 13, 2014. Was passed by Rajya Sabha a day later.
- Will consist of six people – CJI, two senior-most Supreme Court judges, Law Minister and two 'eminent' persons.
- Critics say judges in NJAC will need support of others to push a name through. They fear judicial independence being compromised.

Fourth Judges Case, 2015:
Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India, 2015

Lack of Transparency

Global democracies

"Uncle-judge" syndrome

Delay, Vacancies and Diversity

Clashes + Corruption



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CONTEXT: How should India design judicial appointments so that judges are independent, appointments are credible, and the process remains accountable?

SC: there are some "misconceptions"

Advocate considered for elevation

Step 1 — High Court Collegium

Step 2 — State-level input

Step 3 — Union Government scrutiny

Step 4 — Supreme Court Collegium

Step 5 — Law Ministry → Prime Minister → President

Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala, 1973

Preservation of Judicial Integrity Senior judges

SEASONED JUDGE NEEDED: GOVT



On January 10, the collegium had recommended the appointment of Justice K M Joseph as a Supreme Court judge and Justice Aniruddha Bose as Chief Justice of Delhi high court. The government returned the recommendation on Justice Bose (left) after 6 months

Govt's Concerns

➤ Delhi HC is a premier HC that handles important and complicated questions of law
➤ It has traditionally been headed by a seasoned and senior judge, who is already a Chief Justice in another high court and is brought in to head Delhi HC on transfer

➤ Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal has been heading Delhi HC for 15 months since April last year, one of the longest tenures for any acting CJ at any high court

SC vs Centre: Govt returns 19 names recommended by the collegium

Recently, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju posted about the acceptance of two recommendations and appointed of judges of the Bombay High Court.

By CNBCTV18.com
November 30, 2022, 2:52:07 PM IST (Published)

Reform the Collegium without replacing judicial independence

Institutionalise objective criteria:
Memorandum of Procedure + Publicly available criteria

Establish time-bound processing:
recommendation → scrutiny → reconsideration → appointment

Improve diversity + institutional reforms + funding

FUTURE Judicial Appointments Commission



SC's latest remarks on Collegium System



24th September 2026

CONTEXT: How should India design judicial appointments so that judges are independent, appointments are credible, and the process remains accountable?

Mains Practise Question

"The debate over judicial appointments in India is fundamentally a search for an equilibrium between judicial independence and democratic accountability." Discuss with reference to the Collegium and NJAC.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



24th September 2026

Newspaper : Indian Express, **Page No :** 8

J&K High Court allows 11-yr-old to terminate pregnancy

Gestational Period	Permission Required From	Conditions / Grounds
0 to 20 Weeks	1 Registered Medical Practitioner	• Risk to life/mental/physical health of the woman. • Substantial risk that the child would be born with serious abnormalities. • Failure of Contraception (Now applies to <i>any woman</i>, married or unmarried).
20 to 24 Weeks	2 Registered Medical Practitioners	Only for " Special Categories " of women (defined in Rules): • Survivors of rape/incest. • Minors. • Change in marital status (Widowhood/Divorce). • Women with disabilities. • Emergencies/Disasters.
Beyond 24 Weeks	State Medical Board	Only for Substantial Fetal Abnormalities diagnosed by the Board. (No upper time limit here).

Crime to reveal identity of woman (jail)

2009 — Suchita Srivastava vs Chandigarh Administration	First SC judgment to explicitly link reproductive choice to FR. • Reproductive choices is a dimension of personal liberty under Article 21 • Even a woman with mental illness had the right to carry her pregnancy.
2016 — Z vs State of Bihar	Held that rigid time limits cannot override a rape survivor's fundamental rights to health and dignity.
2017 — K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India	Reproductive autonomy explicitly included within the right to privacy . Constitutional bedrock for abortion rights.
2022 — X vs Principal Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Dept, Govt of NCT Delhi	SC unanimously held that unmarried women have the same right to safe and legal abortion as married women. • Struck down Rule 3B(c) of MTP Rules as unconstitutional • Held that marital status cannot be the basis to deny MTP. • Extended 20–24 week window to unmarried women.

Free Trade Agreements: India with EU + NZ

SYLLABUS: Prelims:   India–European Union FTA

  India–New Zealand FTA

Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No :** 1, 6

Levels of economic integration

A **Free Trade Agreement** is a treaty between two or more countries to reduce or **completely eliminate barriers to trade**.

MODERN FTAs:

- goods
- services
- investment
- intellectual property
- customs procedures
- government procurement
- digital trade standards
- movement of professionals
- environmental commitments
- labour standards
- dispute settlement

Trade Agreements — Types and Levels of Integration

Part A. Classification by Number of Participants

Unilateral

One country gives trade preference/restrictions

Bilateral

Two countries negotiate together

Multilateral

Three or more countries, broader global rules

Plurilateral

A smaller group within a multilateral framework

Part B. Classification by Economic Integration

Economic Union

= common fiscal/monetary coordination

Common Market

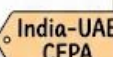
= free movement of labour and capital

Customs Union

= internal free trade + common external tariff

CEPA/CECA

= services, investment, IP, cooperation

 India-UAE CEPA

FTA

= tariffs removed on substantially all trade 

PTA

= limited tariff preferences



24th September 2026

SYLLABUS: Prelims:   India–European Union FTA

  India–New Zealand FTA

Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No : 1, 6**

Table 2: Selected Indian trade agreements currently under negotiation

Country	Type	Date negotiations began
Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand)	Free Trade Agreement (FTA)	Feb 2004
Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates)	FTA	Mar 2006; resumed in Nov 2022
European Union	FTA	Jun 2007; resumed in Jun 2022
South African Customs Union (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa)	Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)	Oct 2007; resumed in Apr 2025
Israel	FTA	May 2010; resumed in Nov 2025
Canada	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)	Nov 2010; resumed in Nov 2025
Indonesia	Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)	Jan 2011
Peru	FTA	Mar 2017; resumed in Mar 2025
Bangladesh	CEPA	Jun 2024
United States	Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)	Mar 2025
Maldives	FTA	Jul 2025
Qatar	CEPA	Oct 2025
Eurasian Economic Union (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia)	FTA	Nov 2025
Bahrain	CEPA	Nov 2025
Mexico	PTA	Dec 2025
Source: IISS analysis		©IISS



24th September 2026

SYLLABUS: Prelims:  India–European Union FTA

 India–New Zealand FTA

Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No :** 1, 6

India–EU FTA: Tariff Liberalisation

• WHO GAINS WHAT, WHAT NEXT



FOR INDIA

	Before FTA	After FTA
Marine sector	up to 26%	0%
Chemical	up to 12.8%	0%
Leather & footwear	up to 17%	0%
Plastic & rubber	up to 6.5%	0%
Textile & apparel	up to 12%	0%
Base metal	up to 10%	0%
Gems & jewellery	up to 4%	0%
Railway, aircraft, ships	up to 7.7%	0%
Furniture & light consumer goods	up to 10.5%	0%
Toys	up to 4.7%	0%
Sports goods	up to 4.7%	0%

FOR EU

	Before FTA	After FTA
Motor vehicles	110%	10% (quota of 250k/yr)
Wine	150%	20% (premium); 30% (medium)
Spirits	up to 150%	40%
Beer	110%	50%
Olive Oil	up to 45%	0%
Kiwis & pears	33%	10% (in-quota)
Machinery & electrical equipment	up to 44%	0% for most products
Aircraft & spacecraft	up to 11%	0% for most items
Iron and steel	up to 22%	0% for most items
Pharma	11%	0% for most items
Processed food (bread, biscuit, pasta, chocolate, pet-food)	up to 50%	0%

- India's labour-intensive annual exports worth \$35 billion benefit immediately
- Signing of the deal expected later this year
- Legal scrubbing to take 4-5 months

- Deal expected to come into effect by early next year
- India will receive same flexibility as US on EU's carbon tax



SOURCE: COMMERCE & INDUSTRY MINISTRY, EUROPEAN UNION

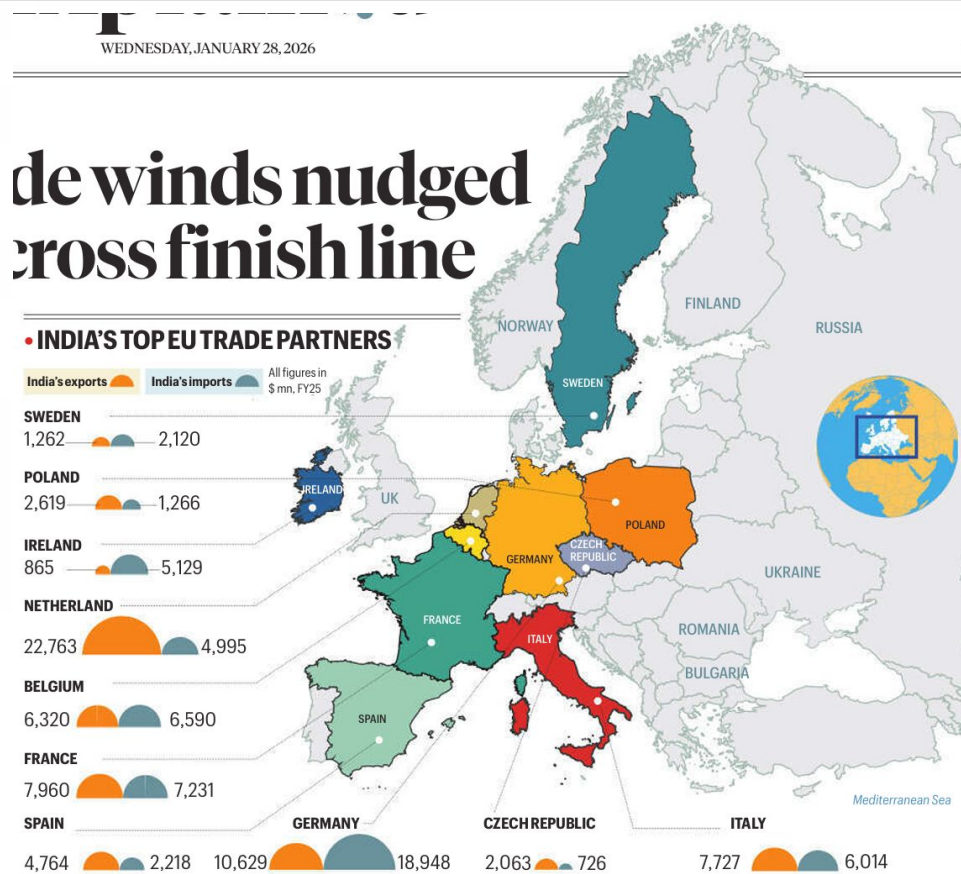


24th September 2026

SYLLABUS: Prelims:   India-European Union FTA

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Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No :** 1, 6



Other details of the deal

Services & Investment

Services Liberalisation

EU gets better access to:

-  Financial services
-  Maritime services
-  IT-enabled services
-  Business & professional services

India benefits in:

- IT & telecom
- Transport services
- Skilled mobility

CBAM

- Indian exporters **NOT exempted** from EU's CBAM (carbon tax)
- Affects:
 - a. Steel
 - b. Aluminium
 - c. Cement
 - d. Fertilisers
- EU gave **assurances of flexibility**, but no blanket waiver

What is EXCLUDED?

⊘ Sensitive sectors excluded to protect farmers & food security:

- ✗ Dairy
- ✗ Beef
- ✗ Sugar
- ✗ Rice
- ✗ Soya
- ➡ Protects **India's agriculture & rural livelihoods**



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Final touches

Negotiations on the India-EU Free Trade Agreement, dubbed the 'mother of all deals', were concluded in January 2026

The FTA will see the EU dropping tariffs on **99.5%** of Indian exports to the region, with most tariffs going down to **0%**



India will give tariff concessions on **97.5%** of the traded value between the two economies

After the signing, the deal will take 1-2 months to pass in the European Parliament, paving the way for an 'early 2027' roll-out



The India-New Zealand FTA

What India Gains

100% Duty-Free Market Access

- **textiles, apparel, leather, ceramics, carpets, and automobiles/auto components**

Binding FDI

- **\$20 billion in India over 15 yrs**

Mobility for Professionals and Students

- **Students:** 20 hours per week while studying
- **Skilled Professionals:** 5,000 visas
- **Cultural Professions:** Specific visas for Yoga instructors, Indian chefs, and Traditional Medicine

Protection

Dairy Agriculture & Others

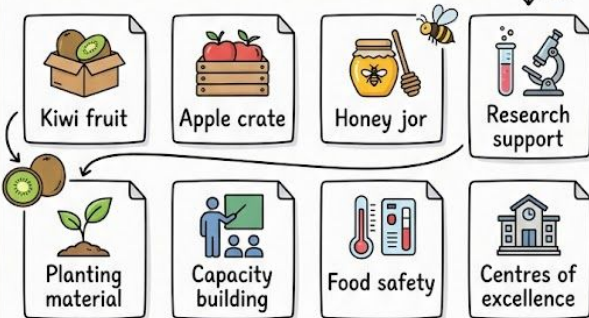
70.03% of tariff lines

FTA with Safeguards:

Agriculture and Farmers Protected

- Balancing opportunity and safeguards in agriculture between India and New Zealand

Part 1: What New Zealand supports



Part 2: What India protects



Side Note: India protects farmers and fishermen by excluding sensitive products from tariff concessions.

India in a simple ramon, it's easy to memorize like youd at a glance.



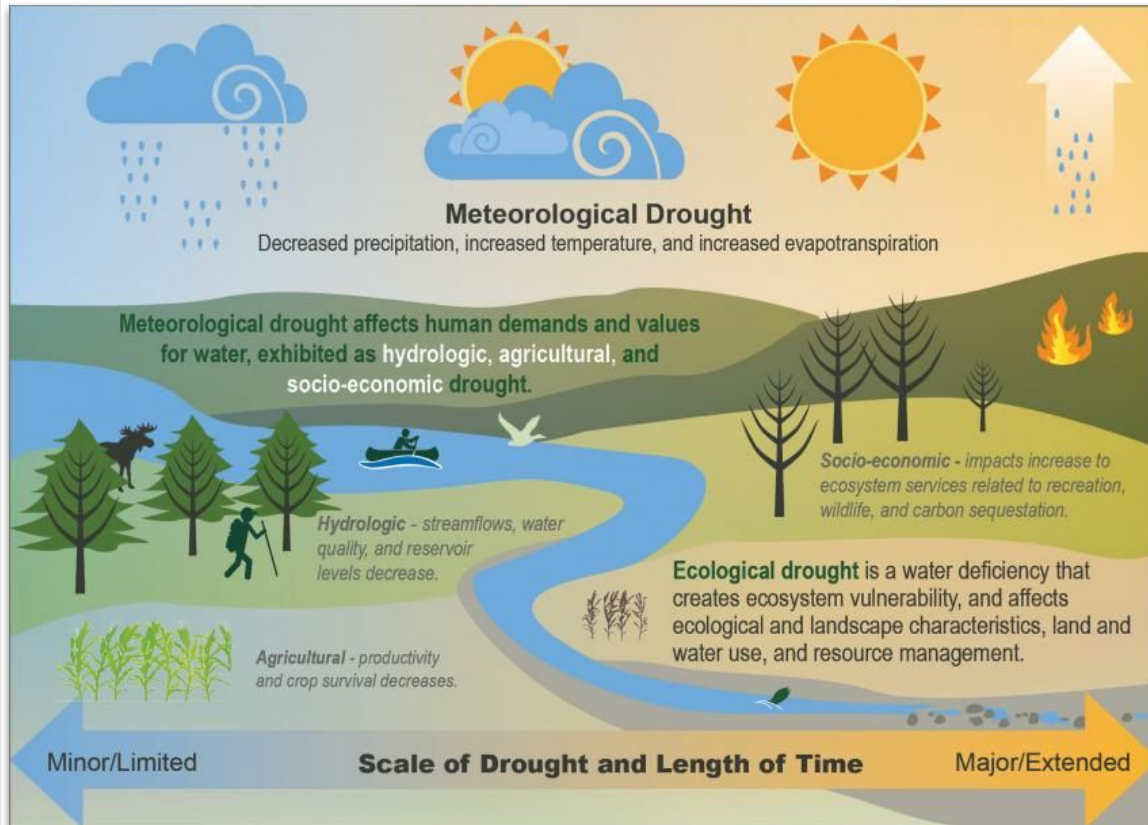
"Drought" in Maharashtra?

24th September 2026

SYLLABUS: Prelims: *What is a drought?*

Newspaper : The Indian Express, Page No : Explained

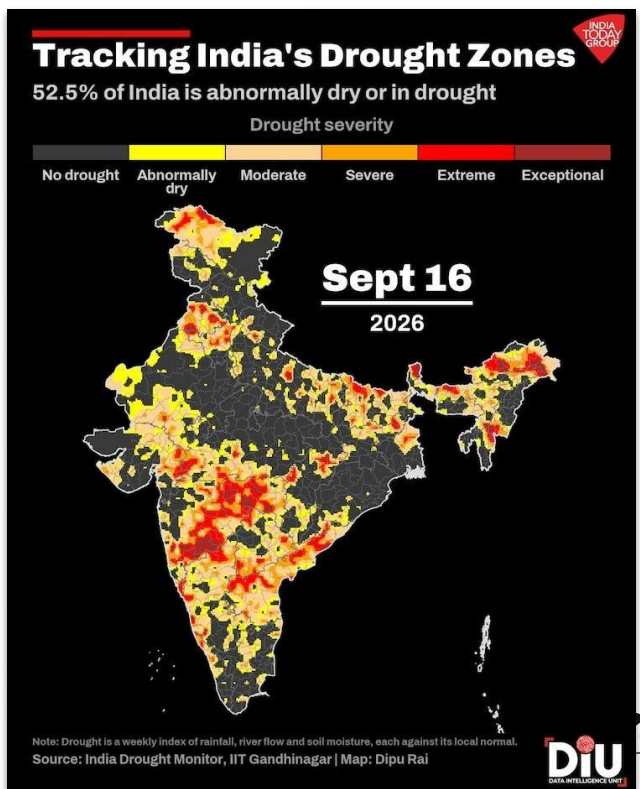
Drought grows like a domino effect over time



Trigger: Meteorological D

NEXT: Ground Impact
Hydrologic
Agricultural
Socio-economic

Final Danger = Ecological D



"Drought" in Maharashtra?

24th September 2026

SYLLABUS: Prelims: *What is a drought?*

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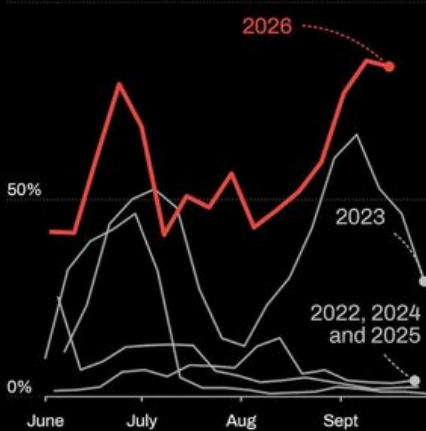
Rainfall deficit alone does NOT equal drought

Maharashtra Dries Out

The driest mid-September since 2021

↑ % of the state abnormally dry or in drought

100%



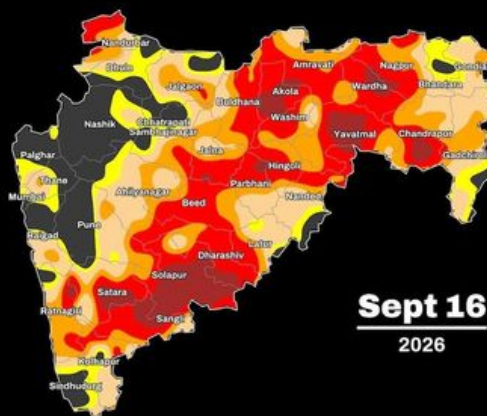
31/36 of districts are rain-deficient.

Tracking Maharashtra's Drought

84% of Maharashtra is abnormally dry or in drought

Drought severity

No drought Abnormally dry Moderate Severe Extreme Exceptional



20 districts have a deficit of 25–58%.

Role of the State Governments

NDRF norms for assistance

-  Rainfall deficit
-  Crop loss
-  Moisture Adequacy Index
-  Decline in food production
-  Labour migration
-  Sowing failure <50%
-  Drinking-water shortage
-  Groundwater
-  Fodder shortage

Why Maharashtra is particularly vulnerable



1/3rd Semi-Arid Geo

Rain Shadow

Rainfed Agriculture

Water-Intensive Cash Crops

Clayey black soil

Super El Niño to add 15,800 heat deaths in India: report

Climate Impact Lab says this year's El Niño is a 'postcard from our future', bringing temperatures climate change is projected to deliver 20 years later; national rainfall deficit is at 15% below normal



24th September 2026

SYLLABUS: Prelims: Places in news

Newspaper : The Hindu, Page No : 3

Newspaper : The Indian Express, Page No : World

Siang Upper Multipurpose Project

India-China dam race





CABINET DECISIONS
June 13, 2025

Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP)

Declared a National Project by Government of India

- 01 State Government committed to regular interactions and confidence building amongst likely **Project Affected Families**
- 02 Commitment to fair & equitable compensation and solatium
 - Committee set up** to review land & property compensation rates and design robust Rehabilitation & Resettlement Plan
- 03 Request to Gol for a **Special Development Package** for Siang & Upper Siang Districts
- 04 PWD to initiate survey for **Necklace Road** above likely submergence area along both banks of Siang river
- 05 **Approval for creation of**
 - ♦ New Yingkiong Development Authority
 - ♦ New Geku Development Authority
 - To build future-ready alternate towns

Himalayan super-dam plan

China's **Medog dam** -- mentioned in an unscheduled plan revealed in March -- would produce triple the electricity of the Three Gorges, the world's largest power station

Major dam projects

On the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra/Yarlung Zangbo, and associated tributaries

● Operational dams ● Under construction ● Planned

Medog
Proposed
60GW-capacity
Super-dam



Geopolitical "water tap."

Indian Shield: SUMP Blueprint

How the World Manages Transboundary Rivers?

1. **Mekong River**
2. **Columbia River Treaty (1964)**
3. **Rhine River (ICPR)**



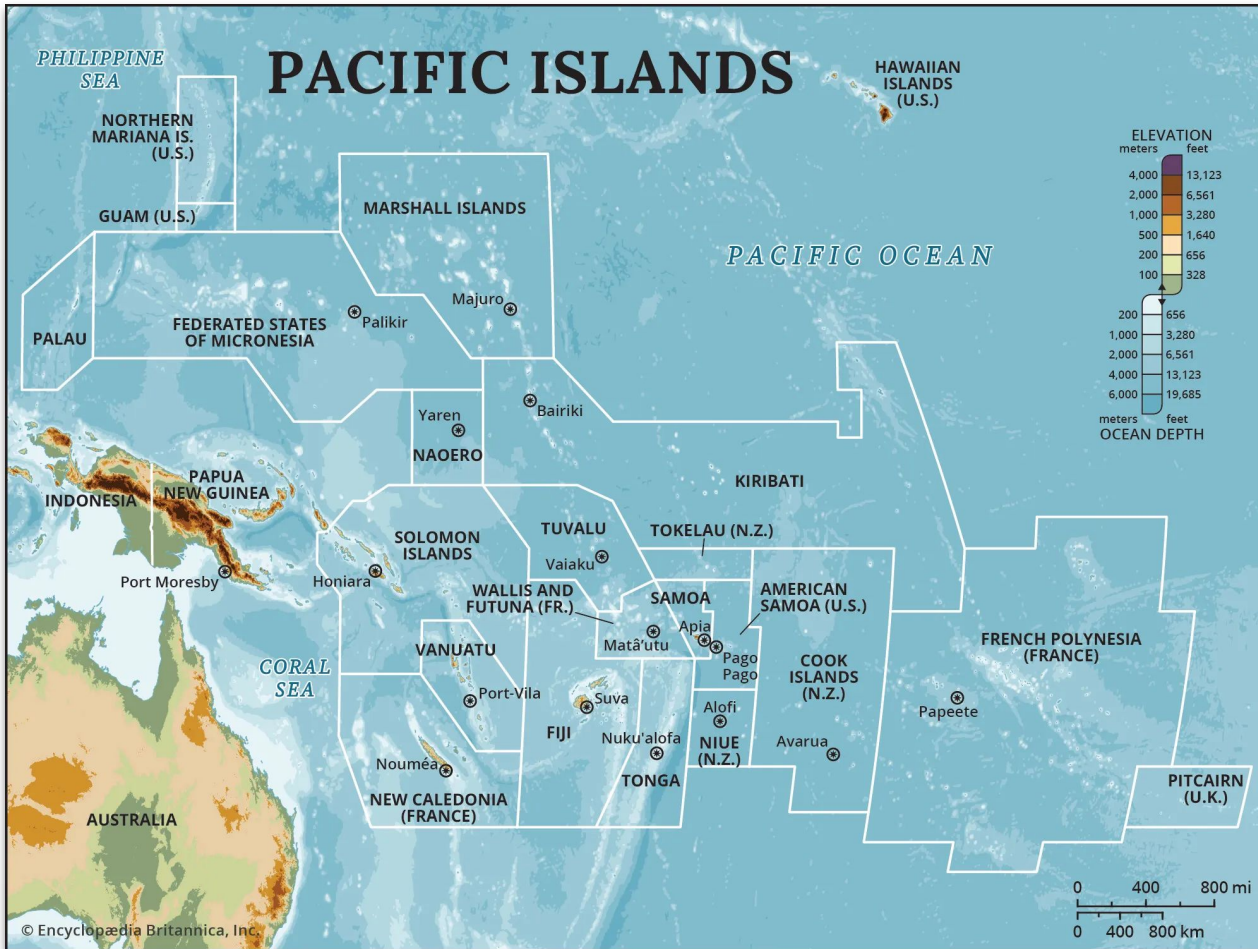
24th September 2026

SYLLABUS: Prelims: Places in news

Newspaper : The Hindu, Page No : 3

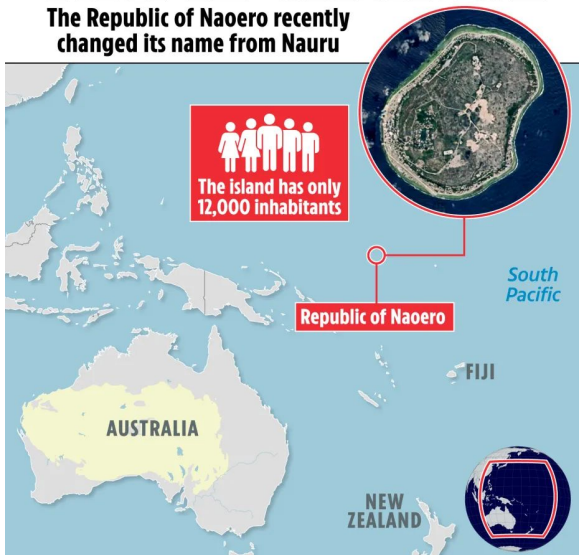
Newspaper : The Indian Express, Page No : World

Naoero, reclaiming ancestral name



NAME CHANGE

The Republic of Naoero recently changed its name from Nauru



24th September 2026

SYLLABUS: Prelims: *Important terms in news*

Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No :** 13

Newspaper : The Indian Express, **Page No :** 13

What is TRANSFER PRICING?

✗ **The "Sneaky" Way**
(Tax Avoidance + Profit Shifting)

✗ **The Legal Way**
(The Arm's Length Rule)

Section 92 of Income Tax Act, 1961

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman urged BRICS nations to share experiences on treaty interpretation and multilateral negotiations in international taxation, saying global transfer pricing disputes "disproportionately" burden developing countries.

BEPS Project & The OECD

UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation

UN Model vs. OECD Model

What is Purchasing Managers' Index?

PMI in Brief: What Does It Indicate?

Sept 2026 PMI:

57.0 → Shows continued growth, but @ **slower pace**

Still **above long-term average** of **54.1**



24th September 2026

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Collegium system in India:

1. The Collegium system for appointment of judges is explicitly provided in the Constitution of India.
2. In the transfer of High Court judges, the Collegium includes the Chief Justices of both the transferor and transferee High Courts.
3. The Union Government can seek clarifications and return recommendations of the Collegium for reconsideration.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q2. With reference to regional economic integration, consider the following statements:

1. Economic Union allows for the free movement of labour and capital across member countries.
2. Common Market implies common fiscal and monetary coordination among member states.
3. Customs Union requires internal free trade between members plus a common external tariff.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Q3. With reference to the course of the Siang River, consider the following statements:

1. The Siang originates near Mount Kailash in Tibet as the Yarlung Tsangpo and flows eastward for over 1,000 km.
2. It forms a horseshoe bend around Namcha Barwa before entering Arunachal Pradesh.
3. In Assam, the Siang merges with the Dibang and the Lohit to become the Brahmaputra.

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

Answer: d

Q4. With reference to Naoero, consider the following statements:

1. Naoero is an island country located in the southwestern part of the Pacific Ocean.
2. It consists of a raised coral island situated in southeastern Micronesia, north of the Equator.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Q5. With reference to the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), consider the following statements:

1. It is an economic indicator based on monthly surveys of purchasing managers, reflecting business activity at the input stage.
2. A PMI value above 50 indicates expansion in economic activity, while a value below 50 indicates contraction.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c





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