

ASPIRANT'S CHRONICLE

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FOR CIVIL SERVICES ASPIRANTS

SECTION 1 — COMPREHENSIVE ISSUE ANALYSIS

ISSUE 01

Delhi HC on Police Excess During CJP March: Judicial Restraint on Executive Force

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-II: Structure, organisation and functioning of the Executive and Judiciary; Government policies and interventions; Fundamental Rights (Art. 19, 21); Role of civil society.

CORE ISSUE

The Delhi High Court sought the Centre's and Delhi Police's response on PILs alleging excessive force — lathis with nails, electric batons, pellet guns — against students during the July 20 Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) march to Parliament. The Bench refused to dismiss allegations as "isolated incidents" and ordered preservation of CCTV/video evidence.

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **Constitutional friction:** Use of unauthorised weapons (pellet guns, nail-lathis) against unarmed civilian protesters raises Article 19(1)(b) [right to assemble peaceably] and Article 21 [life & dignity] concerns.
- **Accountability vacuum:** Deployment of policemen without nameplates directly violates Delhi Police SOPs and the D.K. Basu guidelines on custodial safeguards, weakening evidentiary chains against errant officers.
- **Judicial supervision:** By ordering preservation of CCTV footage, the HC invoked its writ

jurisdiction under Article 226 to prevent evidence destruction — echoing Ramlila Maidan (2012) directions that remain unimplemented as SOP.

- **Democratic backsliding signal:** An internet shutdown across 150 cell sites and closure of 16 metro stations during a peaceful protest indicates disproportionate use of state power (Anuradha Bhasin test).

DATA / FACT BOX

90+ protesters injured; 118 police personnel reportedly injured; 10 FIRs registered against unidentified persons; internet suspended across 150 cell sites; 16 metro stations closed for 7 hours; 22 individuals (including 5 minors) picked up from Nizamuddin under BNSS §163.

WAY FORWARD

- Codified national SOP on crowd control with mandatory nameplates, body cams, and audit trails.
- Independent police complaint authorities under §41 of Police Act reforms (Prakash Singh, 2006).
- Statutory limits on non-lethal weapons — banning pellet guns for crowd control (2018 J&K Committee).

ISSUE 02

NEET Paper Leak Crisis & Federalism: Stalin's Call to Trust States

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-II: Issues relating to Health & Education; Centre-State relations; GS-I: Social empowerment; Government policies and interventions in social sector.

CORE ISSUE

Former Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin argues that repeated NEET paper leaks vindicate structural concerns raised by the Justice A.K. Rajan Committee — that a single high-stakes national exam undermines federalism, disadvantages rural/state-board students, and has failed all three original promises (reducing exam burden, ending capitation fees, improving standards).

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **Meritocracy myth:** Qualifying percentile for PG/super-speciality has been reduced to zero and even negative percentiles to fill private seats — inverting the "merit" claim.
- **Coaching capture:** The multi-thousand-crore coaching ecosystem has replaced capitation fees; NEET has geographically concentrated success in urban coaching hubs.

- **Federalism deficit:** States fund medical colleges, recruit faculty, and maintain infrastructure — but have no say in admissions. The All India Quota further diverts state-funded seats to a central pool.

- **Comparative note:** The US, Canada, Australia, and Germany use school performance plus standardised assessments as ONE component — not a sole determinant.

DATA / FACT BOX

Rahul Gandhi's claim: 152 paper leaks in a decade affecting ~7.5 crore students; Indian families spend ~₹1.32 lakh crore annually on entrance coaching — nearly equal to the Union education budget of ₹1.4 lakh crore. Justice A.K. Rajan Committee (2021) recommended TN exemption from NEET; the Bill remains withheld by the Governor.

WAY FORWARD

- Statistical normalisation across State Board scores instead of single national exam.
- Cooperative federalism: allow state-specific exemptions where Assemblies unanimously seek it.

- Re-examine All India Quota to protect state investments (per 2020 SC ruling on OBC reservations in AIQ).

ISSUE 03

Sikkim Tunnel Disaster: Methane, Himalayan Ecology & Project Safety

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-III: Disaster Management; Infrastructure — energy; Environmental impact assessment; GS-I: Geographical features and their location; Himalayan geology.

CORE ISSUE

15 workers confirmed dead (25 trapped) after a suspected methane pocket rupture during excavation of the head-race tunnel of NHPC's Teesta Stage-VI hydroelectric project in Sikkim's Namchi district. NHPC's own 2024 technical paper had flagged repeated flammable gas incidents at the same tunnel faces since 2009.

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **Known but ignored:** NHPC engineers' EUROENGE0 2024 paper documented gas ignition at tunnel faces 4A and 4B — the exact area of the July 20 blast — indicating institutional awareness without mitigation.
- **Fragile Himalayan zone:** Seismic Zone-IV, young fractured rock, carbon-rich phyllite make methane trapping structurally probable; the 2023 South Lhonak GLOF that destroyed Teesta-III (100+ dead) already exposed this vulnerability.

- **EIA gaps:** The project was absorbed by NHPC after private developers went insolvent — raising questions on whether original environmental clearance conditions on gas-detection and ventilation were audited during transfer.
- **Pattern of tunnel failures:** Meghalaya illegal coal mine (Feb 2026, ~30 dead), Silkyara tunnel collapse (2023, 41 trapped for 17 days) — a systemic under-investment in geotechnical safety.

DATA / FACT BOX

Teesta-VI: 500 MW capacity; two head-race tunnels of ~13.7 km each; ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh announced per deceased; methane detected since 2009 at up to 30% of the Lower Explosive Limit; rescue involves NDRF, SDRF, and NHPC contractors.

WAY FORWARD

- Mandatory continuous gas-monitoring & forced ventilation in all Himalayan tunnelling per DGMS norms.
- Independent post-facto EIA review before resumption of any stalled Himalayan hydel project.
- Cumulative impact assessment of the Teesta cascade (Sikkim-West Bengal-Bangladesh).

ISSUE 04

India-China Reset at Manila: Multipolar Asia and the Border Question

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-II: India and its neighbourhood; Bilateral, regional and global groupings; Effect of policies of developed & developing countries on India.

CORE ISSUE

EAM S. Jaishankar's meeting with Chinese FM Wang Yi at Manila reaffirmed that "peace and tranquillity in the border areas is a pre-requisite for normal ties" — signalling incremental normalisation (Kailash Manasarovar Yatra resumed, direct flights restored, visa regime updated, border trade reopened) while insisting on "predictability of supply chains" and "fair market access."

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **Kazan framework:** The October 2024 Modi-Xi Kazan meeting introduced the "differences should not become disputes" formulation — now operationalised sector-by-sector.
- **Strategic hedging:** Simultaneous engagement with Quad FMs (Australia, Japan, US) at the same venue signals India's dual-track approach — normalisation without alignment.

- **Economic asymmetry:** India seeks rare-earth supply, TBM (tunnel boring machine) exports, and API access from China; Wall Street Journal-style dependencies remain unresolved.
- **Border reality:** Buffer zones from the October 2024 disengagement are still under monitoring; no comprehensive border management agreement has been signed post-Galwan.

DATA / FACT BOX

India-China bilateral trade FY25: ~\$118 bn (India's largest trade deficit); Ladakh disengagement points: Galwan, Pangong, Gogra Hot Springs, Depsang, Demchok; Quad members reaffirmed Indo-Pacific stability at 59th ASEAN FMM.

WAY FORWARD

- Institutionalise a "Border Peace & Tranquillity Framework 2.0" beyond 1993/1996/2005 agreements.
- Diversify critical mineral supply chains via Australia, Chile, Africa to reduce China dependency.
- Selective sectoral opening (electronics, EVs) tied to reciprocal market access.

ISSUE 05

Trump's 200% Generic Drug Tariff Threat: India's Pharmacy Diplomacy Under Fire

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-III: Indian Economy — external sector; Effects of liberalisation; GS-II: Bilateral relations; India's pharmaceutical exports.

CORE ISSUE

US President Trump announced a two-year zero-tariff window on generic drug imports after which tariffs will rise to 100% (year 3) and 200% (year 4+) unless companies establish US manufacturing. Indian generic makers supply ~47% of all US prescriptions but only ~30% of US generic import value — leaving India acutely exposed by volume, not by revenue share.

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **Structural exposure:** India exported \$25.8 bn of pharma in 2025; \$9.7 bn (37.7%) to the US — the single largest market.
- **Cost differential:** Indian generics are significantly cheaper than branded alternatives; even with tariffs, many may remain competitive — but higher-margin products face displacement.
- **Relocation infeasibility:** Full US-based manufacturing requires reshoring APIs (currently sourced from China/India), skilled labour, and 3-5

year capex cycles — practically infeasible in 24 months.

- **Consumer paradox:** The tariff will raise US drug prices, hurting American patients — creating political pushback that may soften enforcement.

DATA / FACT BOX

US pharma imports 2025: \$213 bn (of which \$94.1 bn finished medicines); India's share by prescription volume ~47%; by value ~30%; top affected firms: Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma, Cipla, Aurobindo, Granules India; Nifty Pharma fell 1.31% on announcement day.

WAY FORWARD

- Fast-track a bilateral pharma pact under BTA negotiations for exemption on essential generics.
- Push Indian firms toward complex generics, biosimilars, and specialty pharma (higher margin).
- Diversify export destinations — Africa, LatAm, ASEAN — to reduce single-market exposure.

ISSUE 06

Bab el-Mandeb Crisis Redux: India's Maritime Vulnerability

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-II: India's foreign policy; GS-III: Security challenges — maritime; Effects of policies of developed countries on India's interests.

CORE ISSUE

Iran has reportedly instructed the Houthis to close the Bab el-Mandeb Strait if the US attacks Iran's power plants. One-third of India's trade transits this chokepoint. In 2024, Houthi attacks pushed 2,000+ ships around the Cape of Good Hope, delayed Indian imports, and bankrupted Israel's Eilat port.

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **Chokepoint concentration:** Bab el-Mandeb + Strait of Hormuz together carry ~40% of India's oil, container, and export trade; simultaneous disruption is a first-order shock.
- **Diplomatic limits:** The 2024 Iran-mediated de-escalation channel has weakened after US-Iran hostilities; UNSC paralysed; China pursuing its own quid-pro-quo with Houthis.
- **Seafarer safety:** India has already restricted Indian mariners from Strait of Hormuz voyages —

extending this to Bab el-Mandeb affects thousands of Indian crew earning foreign remittances.

- **Task force opportunity:** France & Japan have Djibouti bases; India can lead a "Trade Protection Task Force" using its IFC-IOR maritime domain awareness node.

DATA / FACT BOX

Suez Canal lost 25% of revenue in 2024; 90% of world shipping insured by 12 P&I clubs; India's IFC-IOR hosts liaison officers from 40+ countries; Djibouti hosts French, Japanese, US, Chinese bases.

WAY FORWARD

- Build a theatre-specific "Trade Protection Task Force" with France & Japan under SAGAR 2.0.
- Engage Egypt & Saudi Arabia proactively — both have economic stakes now, unlike 2024.
- Accelerate strategic petroleum reserve build-out and alternate route contracts (Cape, Northern Sea Route).

ISSUE 07

Cauvery Basin Distress: CWMA Orders Status Quo Amid Rainfall Deficit

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-II: Inter-State relations; Statutory bodies; GS-III: Water resources; Conservation; Government policies on water.

CORE ISSUE

The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) directed Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to restrict Cauvery storage strictly to drinking water use, warning of a "distress year." Karnataka has released only 0.54 tmcft in July (against prescribed schedule); IMD forecasts continued deficit rainfall.

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **Institutional test:** The 2018 SC verdict created CWMA + CWRC (Cauvery Water Regulation

Committee) — this is one of the first true "distress year" tests of the framework.

- **Federal friction:** Karnataka's upstream position and Tamil Nadu's downstream dependency structurally conflict in low-rainfall years — political incentives worsen the standoff.
- **Climate signal:** Repeated Cauvery deficits since 2016 reflect a changed monsoon regime, not one-off aberration — requiring updated distress-sharing formula.
- **Judicial fatigue:** Every crisis reaches the Supreme Court — a sign that CWMA lacks binding enforcement power.

DATA / FACT BOX

Karnataka released 2.5 tmcft in June, 0.54 tmcft in July (target ~9 tmcft cumulative); KRS dam levels fast depleting; CWMA statutory body under Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal Award 2007, notified 2018; next review July 28.

WAY FORWARD

- Codify a "Distress Year Formula" with automatic proportional cuts.
- Empower CWMA with financial penalty powers.
- Integrate remote sensing-based real-time storage data for both states.

ISSUE 08

Children With Special Needs (CWSN): The Enrolment Gap

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-II: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector (Health, Education); Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; RPWD Act 2016.

CORE ISSUE

UDISE 2025-26 reports only 21.66 lakh CWSN enrolled — stagnant over 8 years — while estimates suggest 92-99 lakh CWSN aged 5-14 in India, indicating only ~22% are in school. Girls form only 43% of enrolled CWSN, and drop-out is steepest between primary→upper primary (75% retention) and upper primary→secondary (48% retention).

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **Data blindness:** Absence of Census 2021 has forced reliance on NFHS-5 estimates — official CWSN figures under-report by a factor of 4×.
- **Category mismatch:** UDISE forms still use 8 categories from Census 2011 while RPWD Act 2016 recognises 21 disabilities — new categories (learning disability, thalassaemia, autism spectrum) remain invisible.

- **Gender penalty:** Girls with disabilities face the intersectional double burden — but paradoxically show better within-cohort retention than boys, indicating that once enrolled, family support is stable.
- **Infrastructure gap:** Barrier-free schools, trained special educators, and assistive tech remain under-provisioned despite Samagra Shiksha allocations.

DATA / FACT BOX

CWSN in schools 2025-26: 21.66 lakh; Estimated CWSN population 5-14: 92-99 lakh; Girls share: 43%; RPWD Act 2016 recognises 21 disabilities vs. 8 in Census 2011; NFHS-5 basis for population estimates.

WAY FORWARD

- Update UDISE to capture all 21 RPWD Act categories.
- Conduct a special Census of PwDs pending the delayed general Census.
- Universalise Samagra Shiksha assistive-tech provisions; performance-linked funding to states.

ISSUE 09

Pellet Guns & Shock Batons: The Non-Lethal Weapons Debate Returns

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-II: Fundamental Rights; Role of civil society; Statutory bodies (NHRC); GS-III: Internal security; Role of security forces.

CORE ISSUE

A 19-year-old protester (Sahil Lochab) may lose vision in his right eye after pellet gun injuries during the July 20 CJP march — the first known civilian use of pellet guns in Delhi. Delhi Police denies use; hospital sources confirm metal pellets. RAF (a CRPF unit) was deployed alongside Delhi Police.

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **History of harm:** Pellet guns were first used in Kashmir (2010, 2016 Burhan Wani unrest) — 13 killed, 250+ blinded — leading to a "less-lethal plastic bullet" replacement in 2017. Their use on Delhi civilians represents a normalisation of Kashmir-model policing.
- **Accountability gap:** RAF operates under CRPF command but is deployed at state police request — creating jurisdictional ambiguity in FIR registration.

- **Non-lethal is a misnomer:** Pellets fired at close range or above the waist can cause permanent blindness (Palika Bazaar victim has 30-40 pellet injuries on face and body).
- **Shock batons:** MHA QRs (2021) specify 1kg weight, 1000+ quarter-second bursts — but no protocol on when and against whom they can be used.

DATA / FACT BOX

Pellets manufactured at Ordinance Factory, Ishapore; 500-yard effective range but lethal at close quarters; 1,022 CRPF personnel injured in stone-pelting July 2016; NHRC has not yet issued Delhi-specific guidelines.

WAY FORWARD

- Explicit ban on pellet guns for civilian crowd control (replicating 2018 J&K Committee).
- National protocol on non-lethal weapons — mandatory below-waist targeting, medical presence.
- NHRC audit of all "non-lethal" injuries with public reporting.

ISSUE 10

Internet Shutdowns Under New Telecom Act: The Anuradha Bhasin Test

SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS-II: Fundamental Rights (Art. 19); Government policies; Judicial review; GS-III: Cyber security & digital rights.

CORE ISSUE

Mobile internet shutdown across 150 cell sites in central Delhi during the CJP protest raises questions on whether the government followed the new procedural framework under §20 of the Telecommunications Act 2023 and the Temporary Suspension of Services Rules 2024, or reverted to the older Telegraph Act 1885 framework.

DEEP ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN

- **New law, old habits:** Several state governments continue invoking the Telegraph Act 1885 and 2017 Rules despite the 2024 Rules being in force — undermining the procedural safeguards Parliament added.
- **Anuradha Bhasin (2020):** SC held internet access as integral to Art. 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g); orders must be published, time-bound, proportionate, least restrictive, and reviewed by a competent committee.

- **Protest ≠ Emergency:** §20(2) allows suspension only in "public emergency" or "public safety" — a peaceful protest does not automatically meet the threshold.
- **India's global rank:** Access Now 2025 recorded 65 shutdowns across 12 States/UTs — India has led the world in internet shutdowns for 5 consecutive years.

DATA / FACT BOX

J&K: 449 shutdowns since 2012 (highest); Rajasthan 115; Manipur 62; 2026 shutdowns: 24 (as of July 22); Under 2024 Rules, suspension cannot exceed 15 days; orders must be published and reviewed by a competent committee.

WAY FORWARD

- Mandatory automatic publication of shutdown orders in official gazette + Ministry website.
- Judicial pre-clearance for shutdowns beyond 24 hours.
- Independent Digital Rights Commission on the lines of NHRC.

SECTION 2 — EDITORIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Cockroach Dilemma: A New Generation's Political Awakening

Varghese K. George | The Hindu Op-Ed

CORE ARGUMENT

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest represents a horizontally distributed, socially diverse mobilisation of India's Instagram-generation youth in BJP heartlands — a demographic bulge manifesting as disenchantment rather than hope. Unlike Anna's movement or the farmers' protest, this cohort cannot be easily communalised or sectorally isolated.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS-II (Polity & Governance): Public anger and its channelling; role of civil society. GS-I (Society): Generational shifts, urban middle class politics. Comparative reference: JP Movement 1974, Gujarat Navnirman 1974, Anna Hazare 2011.

COUNTER-VIEW

Apolitical mobilisations historically fragment before consolidating politically — the AAP absorbed Anna's momentum, but the Congress has been the historical loser. Whether the Opposition (particularly Congress) can convert protest energy into electoral capital remains untested.

All Is Not Well: The Cost of State Deafness

The Hindu Editorial

CORE ARGUMENT

The July 20 violence was avoidable. Recurring paper leaks (NEET, CBSE), the three-language friction, joblessness, and stagnant wages have crystallised into a wider youth discontent. The Modi government's course-corrections have historically been timed to elections, not to civil

society signals — a self-defeating strategy that deepens democratic disillusionment.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS-II: Governance responsiveness; role of civil society; comparative democratic movements (Sri Lanka Aragalaya, Nepal Gen Z revolt, Bangladesh 2024).

COUNTER-VIEW

Sustained electoral mandates give governments legitimate space to prioritise long-term reform over reactive concession; equating protest with policy failure risks incentivising street veto over parliamentary process.

Buried Questions: Himalayan Hydroelectric Recklessness

The Hindu Editorial

CORE ARGUMENT

The Teesta Stage-VI methane tragedy is not an isolated misfortune. It follows Meghalaya's illegal coal mine deaths (Feb 2026, ~30), the Silkyara tunnel collapse (2023), and the Teesta-III GLOF (2023). Environmental clearances for Himalayan projects need forensic post-facto audits — not just future EIA reforms.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS-III: Disaster management; Environmental impact assessment; infrastructure-ecology trade-off in fragile zones.

COUNTER-VIEW

Halting hydropower in the eastern Himalayas cedes strategic hydrological space to China's upstream Brahmaputra projects — India's energy security requires calibrated risk-taking, not blanket retreat.

A Budget Without a Proper Government (Puducherry)

CORE ARGUMENT

Puducherry Ministers have taken oath but have no portfolios two months after the NDA (AINRC-BJP) took office. A permanent Speaker is not yet appointed; a Budget is imminent. This tests the outer limits of hybrid UT governance where the

LG's constitutional role and elected government's mandate remain unresolved.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS-II: Union Territories governance; Centre-UT relations; Article 239 & 239A; parliamentary accountability.

SECTION 3 — QUICK REVISION POINTERS

- **GS-II** Delhi HC invokes Ramlila Maidan (2012) SOP direction on crowd control — implementation still pending after 14 years.
- **GS-II** Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita §163 = old CrPC §144 (assembly of 5+ persons prohibited).
- **GS-II** Justice A.K. Rajan Committee (Tamil Nadu, 2021) recommended NEET exemption — Bill withheld by Governor since 2022.
- **GS-II** All India Quota (AIQ) for medical seats: 15% UG + 50% PG contributed by states to central pool.
- **GS-III** Teesta-VI = 500 MW; part of a cascade of 6 hydel projects on Teesta river (Sikkim-West Bengal-Bangladesh).
- **GS-III** 2023 South Lhonak GLOF destroyed Teesta-III dam — glacier-hydro nexus in Zone-IV.
- **GS-II** Kazan Summit (Oct 2024): Modi-Xi meeting on sidelines of BRICS — reset framework.
- **GS-II** Kailash Manasarovar Yatra resumed in 2025 after 5-year Covid + Galwan suspension.
- **GS-II** Quad = US, India, Japan, Australia; ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partnership signed 2021.
- **GS-III** Bab el-Mandeb = between Yemen and Djibouti/Eritrea; connects Red Sea to Gulf of Aden.
- **GS-III** Strait of Hormuz carries ~20% of global oil; Bab el-Mandeb ~12%; Suez Canal ~12% of global trade.
- **GS-III** IFC-IOR (Information Fusion Centre — Indian Ocean Region) at Gurugram, hosts 40+ liaison officers.
- **GS-III** SAGAR = Security and Growth for All in the Region (India's Indo-Pacific doctrine, 2015).
- **GS-II** Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) + Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) — 2018 notification.
- **GS-II** RPWD Act 2016: recognises 21 disabilities (up from 7 in the 1995 Act).
- **GS-II** UDISE = Unified District Information System for Education, under Ministry of Education.
- **GS-II** Telecommunications Act 2023 replaced Indian Telegraph Act 1885 & Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933.
- **GS-II** Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020): Internet access under Art. 19(1)(a) & 19(1)(g).
- **GS-III** Ordinance Factory Ishapore (WB) manufactures pellet cartridges — under Munitions India Ltd (post-corporatisation).
- **GS-II** FCRA Bill 2026: introduces "designated authority" to manage assets of suspended NGOs.
- **GS-III** Trump's tariff structure: 0% (Y1-2) → 100% (Y3) → 200% (Y4+) for imported generics.
- **GS-III** India's pharma exports FY25: \$25.8 bn; US share \$9.7 bn (37.7%).
- **GS-II** BSF: raised 1965; guards India-Pak and India-Bangladesh borders; MHA-administered.

SECTION 4 — PRELIMS MCQS & MAINS PRACTICE

Q1. With reference to the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA), consider the following statements:
 1. It was constituted by the Central Government following the Supreme Court's 2018 verdict.
 2. It is empowered to impose financial penalties on non-compliant riparian states.
 3. The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee assists CWMA in monitoring storage and releases. 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
Ans: (b) — CWMA lacks direct penalty powers; enforcement goes through the Supreme Court.

Q2. Which of the following statements about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 is/are correct?
 1. It recognises 21 disabilities, up from 7 in the 1995 Act.
 2. It provides for 4% reservation in government jobs for persons with benchmark disabilities.

3. Autism spectrum disorder and thalassaemia are among the newly recognised categories.
 (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 3 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
Ans: (d) — All three statements correct. (Note: UDISE forms still use only 8 categories from Census 2011.)

Q3. The Bab el-Mandeb Strait, frequently seen in the news, is located between:
 (a) Iran and Oman (b) Yemen and Djibouti/Eritrea (c) Egypt and Saudi Arabia (d) Turkey and Cyprus
Ans: (b) — Connects Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden; carries ~12% of global maritime trade.

Q4. With reference to the Telecommunications Act, 2023, consider the following:
 1. It replaces the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933.
 2. Under Section 20, telecom services can be suspended only in a "public emergency" or "in the interest of public safety."

3. The 2024 Rules cap any suspension order at 15 days.

Which of the above are correct?

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

Ans: (d) — All correct. Anuradha Bhasin (2020) principles are codified in the 2024 Rules.

Q5. Consider the following pairs:

1. Teesta Stage-VI Hydroelectric Project — Sikkim

MAINS QUESTIONS

Mains Q1 (GS-II, 15 marks): "Peaceful protest is a constitutional right, but state responses to it reveal the true health of a democracy." In light of the Delhi High Court's observations on the CJP march, examine the adequacy of India's institutional safeguards against excessive use of force by police.

Skeleton: (1) Constitutional framework — Art. 19(1)(b), Art. 21, Ramlila Maidan (2012), D.K. Basu (1997), Anuradha Bhasin (2020). (2) Institutional gaps — SOP non-implementation, nameplate norms, RAF/state-police jurisdictional ambiguity, NHRC weakness. (3) Comparative — UK ACPO guidelines, US DoJ oversight. (4) Way forward — Prakash Singh (2006) police reforms, independent complaints authority, mandatory body cams, ban on pellet guns for civilian control.

Mains Q2 (GS-III, 15 marks): The Sikkim tunnel disaster and the 2023 Teesta-III GLOF highlight the risks of high-impact infrastructure in fragile ecological zones. Critically evaluate India's environmental clearance framework for

2. Silkyara tunnel collapse (2023) — Uttarakhand
3. South Lhonak GLOF (2023) — Himachal Pradesh

Which pairs are correctly matched?

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

Ans: (a) — South Lhonak Lake is in North Sikkim, not Himachal Pradesh. GLOF destroyed Teesta-III.

Himalayan hydroelectric projects and suggest reforms.

Skeleton: (1) EIA 2006 regime & 2020 draft amendments. (2) Site-specific vulnerabilities — Seismic Zone IV/V, glacier-hydro nexus, methane in phyllite. (3) Case studies — Teesta-III (100+ dead), Silkyara, Meghalaya coal. (4) Reforms — cumulative impact assessment, independent post-facto audits during ownership transfers, DGMS-style gas monitoring, glacier-lake mapping, community disaster preparedness.

Mains Q3 (GS-II, 10 marks): "India's normalisation with China after Galwan reflects strategic pragmatism, not strategic trust." Discuss with reference to recent India-China engagements.

Skeleton: (1) Post-2020 baseline — Galwan, buffer zones, disengagement rounds. (2) Kazan (2024) framework — "differences ≠ disputes." (3) Sectoral resumption — flights, Kailash yatra, visas, border trade. (4) Unresolved friction — supply chain asymmetry, rare earths, Brahmaputra. (5) Strategic hedging via Quad + ASEAN. (6) Conclusion — normalisation without alignment.

SECTION 5 — VOCABULARY BANK

Ghastly /ˈɡɑːst.li/

Meaning: Very shocking, frightful, or horrible.

UPSC usage: "The Solicitor described the alleged assault on women protesters as ghastly and warranting judicial intervention." (Editorial / GS-II Q on custodial dignity.)

Mollify /ˈmɒl.i.fai/

Meaning: To calm or soothe someone who is angry or upset.

UPSC usage: "The Congress leadership sought to mollify INDIA bloc allies after the unilateral dharna at the PM's residence." (GS-II — coalition politics.)

Perverse /pəˈvɜːs/

Meaning: Contrary to accepted standards; unreasonable and unacceptable.

UPSC usage: "The petitioner called the Speaker's

circular ex facie unconstitutional and perverse." (GS-II — parliamentary procedure.)

Apolitical /,eɪ.pəˈlɪt.i.kəl/

Meaning: Not connected with or interested in politics.

UPSC usage: "The CJP protest describes itself as apolitical, but its impact on the political landscape is unavoidable." (GS-I / GS-II — civil society movements.)

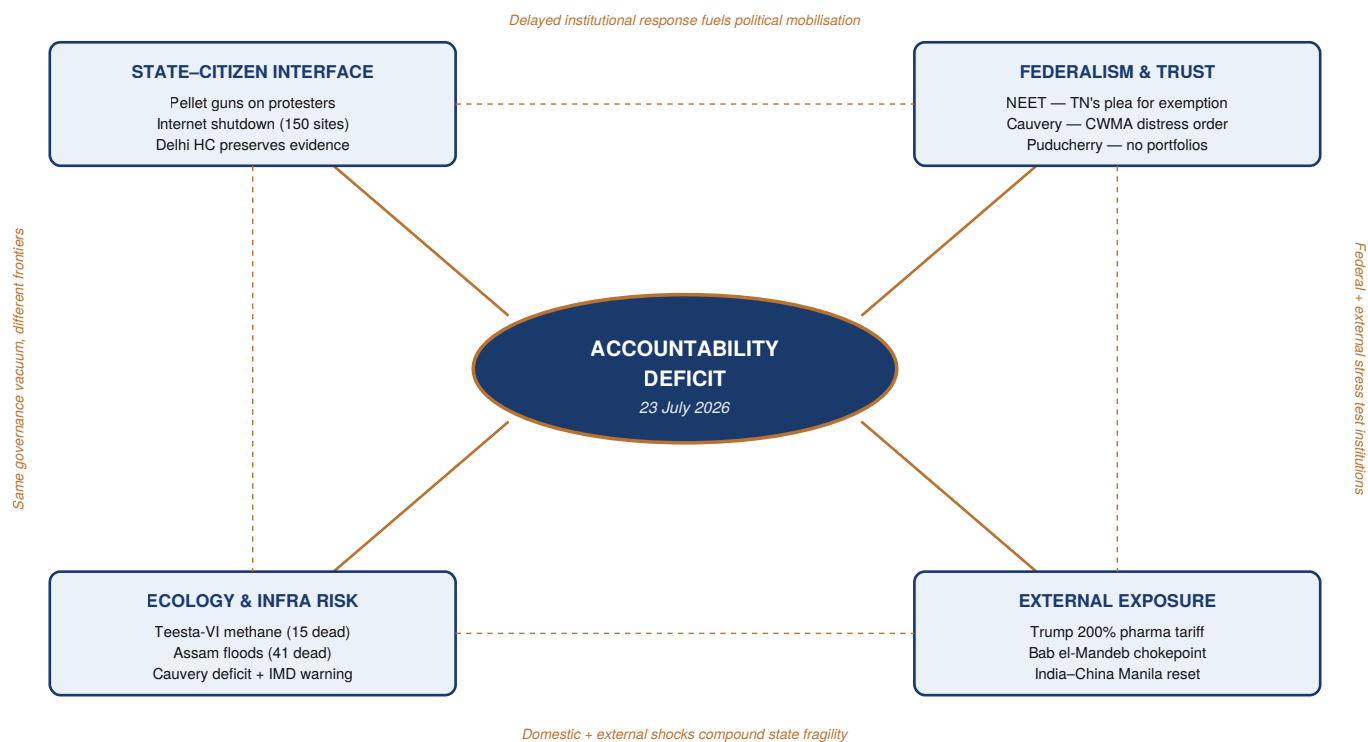
Reprieve /rɪˈpriːv/

Meaning: A cancellation or postponement of a punishment; a brief relief.

UPSC usage: "The two-year zero-tariff window offers Indian generic makers only a temporary reprieve before crushing US duties kick in." (GS-III — external sector.)

SECTION 6 — SYNTHESIS MIND MAP

Unifying Thread: THE ACCOUNTABILITY DEFICIT — When Institutions Delay, Citizens Bear the Cost



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