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Dr. GINDI'S IAS ACADEMY

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Civils & Competitive Careers
TRANSFORMING ASPIRANTS INTO ACHIEVERS

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A/C CAMPUS

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. Elephant Smuggling from Nepal and the Wildlife SOS Probe

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Background:** The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) is examining an alleged cross-border trafficking of a live female elephant from Nepal. The trail leads to Wildlife SOS, an NGO running bear and elephant rescue centres in Agra and Mathura. The case follows a separate leopard poaching probe.
- **Origin of the lead:** In March 2022, the WCCB arrested a UP Police sub-inspector, his son and an accomplice in Jaipur with about 30 kg of ivory and a licensed revolver. Chats on one accused's phone referred to "Suraj Pal's elephant". Pal has worked as an elephant keeper at Wildlife SOS since 2011.
- **Smuggling route:** According to interrogation records, a 35-40-year-old elephant was smuggled through the Hathiheva (Nepal) border to Kakrava in Kushinagar (UP) during the 2020 Covid lockdown. It was sold through intermediaries for Rs 40 lakh and then Rs 70 lakh.
- **NGO's response:** Wildlife SOS says Pal was employed only briefly until 2016 and it cannot comment on his later activities. Its CEO and director of conservation deny any knowledge of the chats.
- **Ongoing action:** Two Wildlife SOS employees were arrested by MP's Special Task Force (STF) for alleged involvement in poaching 10 leopards in the Shivpuri-Morena landscape. The CEO has interim protection from the Supreme Court and must appear before investigators on September 28.
- **Concerns raised:** Wildlife crime investigators have long questioned the NGO's rescue and anti-poaching methods, including allegations that bear cubs were collected from the wild. Cross-agency coordination gaps and a lack of "smoking gun" evidence hindered earlier action.

Essential Definitions

- **Wildlife trafficking:** Illegal capture, trade, transport or possession of wild animals and their derivatives, often across borders.
- **WCCB:** A statutory body under the MoEFCC, set up under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, to combat organised wildlife crime.

- **Ivory trade:** Commerce in elephant tusks, prohibited in India under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and internationally under CITES.
- **Interim protection:** Temporary judicial relief from arrest while an investigation or legal proceeding is pending.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972:** Elephants are protected under Schedule I. The Act bars hunting, trade in animals and animal articles, and possession of ivory, with stringent penalties. The 2022 Amendment strengthened CITES compliance and regulates captive elephants.
- **Article 48A (DPSP):** The State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
- **Article 51A(g):** Fundamental duty of every citizen to protect the natural environment and have compassion for living creatures.
- **Article 21:** The Supreme Court has read the right to a healthy environment into the right to life.
- **CITES:** India is a party. Asian elephants are listed in Appendix I, which bans commercial international trade.
- **Transboundary cooperation:** The Customs Act, 1962 and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 support action against cross-border smuggling networks.
- **Judicial safeguards:** Article 32 enables the Supreme Court to grant interim protection, subject to cooperation with the investigation.



Conclusion

The case exposes gaps in monitoring captive elephants, verifying rescue centres and coordinating between central and state agencies. Strong regulation, DNA and microchip-based tracking of captive elephants, and closer India-Nepal border cooperation are essential. Accountability must extend to NGOs performing quasi-public conservation functions, while due process is respected.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** WCCB, CITES appendices, Schedule I species, Project Elephant, Elephant Reserves, IUCN status of the Asian elephant.
- **Mains GS-III:** Environment, conservation, and internal security challenges at borders.
- **Mains GS-II:** Role of NGOs and accountability, and the working of statutory bodies.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Conservation ethics, animal welfare versus commercial exploitation, and transparency in civil society organisations.

2. India-Canada Ties: Trade in Focus Ahead of PM's Likely December Visit

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Diplomatic reset:** EAM S Jaishankar and Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand met on the sidelines of the UNGA in New York and said both sides are preparing to take ties "to a higher level". Anand spoke of building renewed partnerships with large economies like India and China.
- **Proposed visit:** PM Narendra Modi is likely to visit Canada in December, when the two sides aim to finalise and sign the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). It would be his first bilateral visit there after 2015.
- **Trade push:** Negotiations are being fast-tracked, with the next round scheduled from October 5. The agreement is designed to expand bilateral trade to \$50 billion by 2030. Canada also seeks trade diversification amid tariff pressures from Washington.
- **Recovery of ties:** Relations had nosedived in 2023 after former PM Justin Trudeau alleged a possible Indian link to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a claim India rejected. This led to reciprocal expulsions of diplomats. Under PM Mark Carney (since March 2025), both sides agreed to calibrated steps, restored High Commissioners and resumed high-level engagement.
- **Recent engagements:** Carney visited India from February 27 to March 2 this year, the first visit by a Canadian PM since 2018. In July, the RCMP said it found no evidence linking Indian officials to Nijjar's killing, as part of a wider transnational organised crime probe.
- **Multilateral convergence:** India and Canada co-sponsored a multilateralism summit at the UN and support UN reforms. Canada aims to attract a trillion dollars of investment over five years.



Essential Definitions

- **CEPA:** A comprehensive trade pact covering trade in goods and services, investment, market access and regulatory cooperation, going beyond a basic free trade agreement.
- **Trade diversification:** Reducing dependence on a few markets by expanding trade with several partners.
- **Strategic autonomy:** A state's capacity to take independent foreign policy decisions without dependence on any power bloc.
- **Transnational organised crime:** Serious criminal activity conducted across borders by organised groups.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 51 (DPSP):** The State shall promote international peace and security, and maintain just and honourable relations between nations.
- **Article 253:** Parliament can legislate to implement treaties and international agreements.
- **Article 73:** The executive power of the Union extends to matters on which Parliament can make laws, including treaty-making.
- **Entry 14, Union List:** Entering into treaties and agreements with foreign countries and implementing them.

- **Entry 41, Union List:** Trade and commerce with foreign countries; import and export across customs frontiers.
- **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961:** Governs diplomatic immunity, expulsion of diplomats and the persona non grata principle.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** The statutory basis for regulating India's foreign trade.

Conclusion

The renewed engagement shows that economic interests and strategic hedging are driving a pragmatic reset after the 2023 crisis. A successful CEPA can boost trade, investment, energy and technology cooperation. However, lasting stability depends on addressing security concerns, including extremism and transnational crime, while respecting sovereignty and the rule of law.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** G7, G20, CEPA versus FTA, Indo-Pacific, UNGA, Five Eyes.
- **Mains GS-II:** India and its neighbourhood and bilateral groupings, the Indian diaspora, and the effect of policies of developed countries on India's interests.
- **Mains GS-III:** Trade, investment and economic diplomacy.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Sovereignty versus diaspora politics, and pragmatism in foreign policy.

3. UP Sugar Output Falls on Red Rot; New Cane Variety Offers Hope

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Output decline:** Uttar Pradesh, India's top cane-growing state, saw sugar output fall from 126.4 lakh tonnes in 2019-20 to 89.5 lt in 2025-26. Cane crushed by the state's roughly 120 mills has dropped by over a fifth in six years.
- **Primary cause:** The widely grown variety Co-0238 (Karan 4) has become susceptible to red rot, a fungal disease. The CF13 pathotype emerged due to intensive monocropping, and the variety lost its resistance (varietal breakdown).
- **Rise and fall of Co-0238:** Developed by ICAR-SBI, Coimbatore, it made UP the top sugar producer, overtaking Maharashtra, for nearly a decade. Recovery rose from about 9 percent in 2011-12 to over 11 percent in recent years.
- **New variety:** Co-20016 (Karan 20) has been picked by the Varietal Identification Committee under AICRP on Sugarcane as a potential replacement. It goes next to the Central Varietal Release Committee, expected to meet in October.
- **Trial results:** Co-20016 averaged 144.6 tonnes per hectare against 116.4 for Co-0238, with higher sucrose content (18.7 percent versus 18.3 percent). It is resistant to the virulent CF13 pathotype. Co-21012 is also under trial.
- **Expert warning:** Over-cultivation in waterlogging-prone central, eastern and Terai belts aids the spread of fungal spores. Assembly elections are due in February-March 2027, which adds political weight to cane issues.

Essential Definitions

- **Red rot:** A destructive sugarcane disease caused by the fungus *Colletotrichum falcatum*, which rots the internal stem tissue and cuts sugar recovery.
- **Monocropping:** Repeated cultivation of a single crop or variety on the same land, increasing pest and disease vulnerability.
- **Varietal breakdown:** Loss of a variety's disease resistance as the pathogen mutates into new strains.
- **Sugar recovery:** Percentage of sugar obtained from the cane crushed.
- **Pathotype:** A strain of a pathogen distinguished by its ability to infect particular plant varieties.

• CANE & SUGAR IN U.P. MILLS (lakh tonnes)

	Sugarcane crushed	Sugar production	Sugar recovery
2011-12	768.55	69.74	9.07%
2012-13	815.06	74.85	9.18%
2013-14	701.17	64.95	9.26%
2014-15	744.53	71.01	9.54%
2015-16	645.67	68.55	10.62%
2016-17	827.16	87.73	10.61%
2017-18	1,111.90	120.5	10.84%
2018-19	1,031.67	118.22	11.49%
2019-20	1,118.02	126.37	11.73%
2020-21	1,027.50	110.59	11.46%
2021-22	1,016.26	101.98	11.47%
2022-23	1,098.82	104.82	11.4%
2023-24	981.68	104.13	11.5%
2024-25	956.09	92.45	10.68%
2025-26	878.12	89.52	10.83%

NOTE: SUGAR RECOVERY RATES ARE WITHOUT DIVERSION TO B-HAVY MOLASSES.
SOURCE: SUGAR INDUSTRY & CANE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF UTTAR PRADESH

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Entry 33, List III (Concurrent):** Trade and commerce in, and production, supply and distribution of, products of industries under Union control, including sugar and cane.
- **Entry 14, List II (State):** Agriculture, including protection against pests and prevention of plant diseases.
- **Essential Commodities Act, 1955:** Sugar is an essential commodity, allowing regulation of production, stocks and distribution.
- **Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966:** Regulates cane supply, and fixes the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) payable by mills.
- **Destructive Insects and Pests Act, 1914 and Seeds Act, 1966:** Govern plant quarantine and notification and certification of seed varieties.
- **Article 48:** The State shall organise agriculture on modern and scientific lines.
- **Article 47:** The State shall raise nutrition levels and improve public health.

Conclusion

The crisis shows the risks of dependence on a single variety. Timely release of resistant varieties, varietal diversification, crop rotation, better drainage and farmer awareness are essential. Strengthened research-extension linkages will protect farmer incomes, mill viability and the state's role in India's sugar economy.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** ICAR, FRP, ethanol blending, sugarcane-producing states, sugar recovery.
- **Mains GS-III:** Agricultural research, cropping patterns, food processing, farm subsidies and price support.
- **Mains GS-II:** Centre-state roles in agriculture, and government policies for farmers.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Sustainable agriculture and science-driven farming.

4. CAT Member Recuses from Forest Officer's Plea: 17th Such Instance in 13 Years

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Latest recusal:** On September 21, Rajveer Singh Verma, Member (Judicial) of the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), Delhi Bench, recused himself from hearing a petition by IFS officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi on his Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR). The Registry was directed to list the matter before an appropriate Bench.
- **Pattern of recusals:** Over 13 years, 17 judges and judicial officers have stepped aside from cases involving the Uttarakhand-cadre officer. These include two Supreme Court judges, four Uttarakhand High Court judges, nine CAT members and two district judiciary judges.
- **Officer's contention:** Chaturvedi appeared in person and cited the All India Services (Performance Appraisal Report) Rules, 2007, on the APAR Accepting, Reporting and Reviewing Authorities. The order noted he kept making submissions "not connected with the issue involved", despite repeated directions to confine himself to the matter.
- **Earlier instances:** In November 2013, then SC judge Justice Ranjan Gogoi recused from a plea seeking a CBI probe into corruption allegations. In February 2024, Justice Manoj Tiwari recused from a case on documents relating to the officer's central deputation.
- **Contempt petition:** In September-October 2025, Uttarakhand HC judges Alok Verma and Ravindra Maithani recused from a contempt petition alleging wilful disobedience of a HC stay order by CAT members and its Registry.
- **Continuing litigation:** Chaturvedi, a 2002-batch officer, has been involved in several rounds of litigation over service matters, including postings, disciplinary proceedings, deputation and performance appraisal.



Essential Definitions

- **Recusal:** Voluntary withdrawal of a judge from a case owing to a conflict of interest or a reasonable apprehension of bias.
- **APAR:** Annual Performance Appraisal Report, the official assessment of an officer's performance used in promotions and postings.
- **Contempt of court:** Wilful disobedience of a court order or conduct that lowers the authority of the court.
- **Bench:** A judge or group of judges hearing a case.
- **Nemo judex in causa sua:** Natural justice principle that no person should be a judge in their own cause.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 323A:** Empowers Parliament to create administrative tribunals for recruitment and service conditions of public servants.
- **Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985:** Establishes the CAT and State Administrative Tribunals, and provides for Judicial and Administrative Members.
- **Article 226 and Article 227:** High Courts' writ jurisdiction and superintendence over tribunals in their territory.
- **L Chandra Kumar v Union of India, 1997:** Tribunal decisions are subject to High Court review, and judicial review is part of the basic structure.
- **Article 14 and Article 21:** Fair hearing and impartial adjudication are part of equality before law and due process.
- **Article 311:** Safeguards for civil servants against dismissal, removal or reduction in rank without an inquiry.
- **All India Services Act, 1951:** Governs the recruitment and service conditions of IAS, IPS and IFS officers.
- **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971:** Provides for punishment of civil and criminal contempt.
- **Ranjit Thakur v Union of India, 1987:** A reasonable likelihood of bias vitiates proceedings.

Conclusion

Repeated recusals delay justice and strain judicial resources. Clear recusal guidelines, transparent reasons and timely reassignment by the Registry are needed. Officers must use grievance mechanisms responsibly, while the judiciary must safeguard both impartiality and access to justice.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** Article 323A and Article 323B, CAT composition, natural justice, contempt of court, All India Services.
- **Mains GS-II:** Judiciary, tribunals, quasi-judicial bodies, civil services accountability and performance appraisal.
- **Mains GS-IV:** Integrity, impartiality, conflict of interest and public service ethics.
- **Essay:** Justice delayed and judicial accountability.

5. Railways Shelves Uri-Baramulla Rail Line Amid Ecological Concerns

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Project shelved:** The Railways has shelved the proposed 40-km Uri-Baramulla new line, meant to connect the border region of Uri with Baramulla, the last point of the existing rail line in the Valley. The Qazigund-Srinagar-Budgam (74 km) doubling project has also been shelved.
- **Official communication:** A Joint Director (Works) at the Railway Board wrote to the General Manager, Northern Railway, that both projects were returned by the Cabinet Secretariat and are no longer under consideration.

- **Wider pattern:** The decision comes six months after the railway ministry put on hold the Anantnag-Pahalgam and Anantnag-Shopian rail links following farmers' protests.
- **Strategic rationale:** The line was planned as an extension of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL). It was seen as a strategic link, giving faster movement of troops, equipment and military logistics to forward areas near the Line of Control.
- **Ecological concerns:** The alignment would bisect Baramulla town and some village habitations, and pass through orchards, fragile highland and mountains lying in high-seismic Zone 5. The corridor is also vulnerable to extreme weather.
- **Local response:** Baramulla MLA Javed Hassan Baig welcomed the move and opposed the line. He moved a resolution in the Assembly seeking abeyance until a comprehensive, independent geological, geotechnical and seismic assessment is done.

Essential Definitions

- **Seismic Zone 5:** The most earthquake-prone zone in India's seismic zoning map (BIS), with the highest hazard and a very high damage risk.
- **Doubling of rail line:** Laying a second parallel track to raise line capacity and train frequency.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** A process of evaluating the likely environmental effects of a project before approval.
- **Sustainable development:** Development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
- **Geotechnical assessment:** A study of soil and rock conditions to judge the stability and safety of a project site.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 48A (DPSP):** The State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
- **Article 51A(g):** Fundamental duty of citizens to protect and improve the natural environment.
- **Article 21:** The Supreme Court has read the right to a clean environment and the right to livelihood into the right to life.
- **Entry 22, Union List:** Railways, including strategic lines, fall under Union jurisdiction.
- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and EIA Notification, 2006:** Regulate environmental clearance for projects, with public consultation.
- **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013:** Governs land acquisition, consent, and rehabilitation of affected families.
- **Railways Act, 1989:** Provides the legal framework for construction and operation of railways.
- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Provides for disaster risk reduction in vulnerable regions.

- **Principle of precaution:** Recognised by the Supreme Court in Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum, 1996 as part of environmental law.

Conclusion

The decision shows the difficult balance between strategic connectivity and ecological safety in a fragile Himalayan region. Development in seismic and ecologically sensitive areas needs scientific assessment, public consultation and transparent decision-making. Alternative alignments and tunnel-based or elevated options should be studied so that security needs and local livelihoods are both protected.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** USBRL, Chenab Bridge, seismic zones of India, EIA, Article 48A.
- **Mains GS-III:** Infrastructure, environment, disaster management, and border area development.
- **Mains GS-II:** Union-UT relations, and issues of governance in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Development versus environment, and intergenerational equity.

6. India Working Towards Sixth-Generation Fighter Jets, Says Defence Minister

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Sixth-generation push:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at the News Channel Defence Summit that India is working towards developing sixth-generation fighter jets. He acknowledged challenges on this path but said the resolve remains unwavering.
- **Message to Pakistan:** He said that as long as the neighbouring country persists with a state policy of terrorism, India remains fully free to carry out all forms of strikes against it.
- **Nature of warfare:** He noted that the world is in an era of fifth-generation warfare, which blends cyber, information, economic and psychological tools with conventional force.
- **Supply chains as conflict zones:** Supply chains are becoming a new ground of geopolitical conflict. This strengthens the case for self-reliance in defence manufacturing and critical technologies.
- **India's global position:** Singh described India as neither a status quo power nor a revisionist power, but a civilisational power. This reflects a stance of strategic autonomy and rules-based order without seeking to overturn the existing system.
- **Link to indigenisation:** The programme fits with Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence, including the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), the fifth-generation stealth fighter project, and the Tejas programme.

Essential Definitions

- **Sixth-generation fighter:** An advanced aircraft concept featuring AI-assisted decision-making, advanced stealth, manned-unmanned teaming, directed-energy weapons and network-centric operations.
- **Fifth-generation warfare:** Conflict conducted through non-kinetic means such as cyber attacks, disinformation and economic pressure, alongside conventional operations.
- **Status quo power:** A state that seeks to preserve the existing international order.
- **Revisionist power:** A state that seeks to alter the existing international order or its rules.
- **State-sponsored terrorism:** Support by a state, through funds, training or shelter, to groups that carry out terrorist violence.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 51 (DPSP):** The State shall promote international peace and security, and just and honourable relations between nations.
- **Article 52 and Article 53:** The President is the head of the Union, and the supreme command of the Defence Forces is vested in the President, exercised as per law.
- **Article 246 and Entries 1 and 2, Union List:** Defence of India and the armed forces fall under exclusive Union jurisdiction.
- **Article 355:** The Union has a duty to protect states against external aggression and internal disturbance.
- **Article 51A(d):** Fundamental duty to defend the country and render national service when called upon.
- **Article 33:** Parliament can restrict fundamental rights of armed forces personnel to ensure discipline.
- **Article 51 and Article 2(4) and Article 51 of the UN Charter:** India's actions must be seen against the international law on use of force and the right of self-defence.
- **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967:** The primary domestic law against terrorism and unlawful associations.
- **Defence Acquisition Procedure, 2020:** Provides for indigenous design, development and manufacture, with the Buy (Indian-IDDM) category as top priority.

Conclusion

India's emphasis on next-generation air power reflects the shift towards technology-driven, multi-domain warfare. Sustained investment in R&D, private-sector participation, secure supply chains and skilled manpower is essential. A firm counter-terror doctrine, together with strategic autonomy and self-reliance, will strengthen national security and India's standing as a responsible civilisational power.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** AMCA, Tejas, generations of fighter aircraft, DAP 2020, iDEX, Defence Corridors, Article 355.
- **Mains GS-III:** Indigenisation of defence technology, internal and external security challenges, cyber warfare and terrorism.
- **Mains GS-II:** India's neighbourhood policy, strategic autonomy and India's role in the global order.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Technology and national security, and peace versus deterrence.

7. Monsoon Session Becomes 3rd-Longest Sine Die Adjournment in History

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Current status:** The Eighth Session of the 18th Lok Sabha began on July 20 and was adjourned sine die on August 13. At 46 days and counting, it is the third-longest sine die adjournment in Parliament's history. It is also the longest since the NDA government came to power in 2014.
- **Record adjournments:** The longest was 76 days (May 12 to July 27, 1987, Eighth Lok Sabha) and the second-longest 61 days (1989, Fourteenth Session of the same Lok Sabha), both linked to the Bofors controversy. The 1950-51 gap of 45 days now ranks fourth.
- **Cause of disruption:** The session was marked by repeated disruptions over NEET paper leak, an alleged theft at Ram temple and demands that the Union Home Minister respond to youth protesters.
- **No prorogation:** Unlike earlier NDA-era sessions, the House has not been prorogued, which fuels speculation about a fresh session in October. Debate centres on the numbers needed for a constitutional amendment linked to delimitation and women's reservation.
- **Bofors precedent:** In 1987 the Speaker reconvened the House from July 27 to August 28 using the proviso to Rule 15. The LS adopted a motion on August 6 to form a 30-member JPC on the Bofors deal. In 1989, Opposition MPs resigned en masse after the CAG report, and the House was prorogued on October 20.
- **Comparison:** The longest NDA-era gaps earlier were 28 days (2015) and 20 days (2021), with the 2023 Monsoon Session prorogued the day after adjournment.

Ten Longest Parliament Adjournments

	Period of Adjournment	Total Days
1	May 12, 1987, to July 27, 1987	76 days
2	August 18, 1989, to October 11, 1989	54 days
3	December 22, 1950, to February 5, 1951	45 days
4	December 11, 1962, to January 21, 1963	41 days
5	August 13, 2015, to September 10, 2015	28 days
6	August 7, 1975, to September 3, 1975	27 days
7	August 28, 1993, to September 23, 1993	26 days
8	September 5, 1988, to September 30, 1988	25 days
9	September 7, 1990, to October 1, 1990	24 days
10	December 16, 1988, to January 5, 1989	20 days
10	August 11, 2021, to August 31, 2021	20 days

Essential Definitions

- **Adjournment:** Postponement of a sitting for a fixed period, whether hours, days or weeks, without ending the session.
- **Adjournment sine die:** Ending a sitting without fixing a date for the next meeting. The session is not terminated.

- **Prorogation:** Formal termination of a session by an order of the President.
- **Dissolution:** Ending the life of the Lok Sabha, which only the President can do, after which fresh elections follow.
- **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC):** An ad hoc committee with members from both Houses, formed to probe specific issues.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 85(1):** The President summons each House at intervals of not more than six months between two sittings.
- **Article 85(2):** The President may prorogue the Houses and dissolve the Lok Sabha.
- **Article 85(2)(b) and Article 83(2):** Lok Sabha's normal term is five years from its first sitting.
- **Article 100:** Sets quorum and voting rules, with one-tenth of the total membership as quorum.
- **Article 108:** Joint sitting of both Houses in case of a deadlock over an ordinary bill.
- **Article 118:** Each House makes rules of procedure and conduct of business.
- **Article 368:** Procedure for constitutional amendment, needing special majority in Parliament.
- **Rule 15, Rules of Procedure of Lok Sabha:** The Speaker may call a sitting before the date to which the House has been adjourned or after it has been adjourned sine die.
- **Parliamentary norms:** Parliament is expected to sit for about 100 days a year, though recent years have seen fewer sittings.

Conclusion

A long sine die adjournment without prorogation reflects a legal flexibility, but it also raises concerns about parliamentary accountability. Frequent disruptions weaken debate, legislation and executive scrutiny. A minimum sitting-days norm, structured debates and consensus between the government and the Opposition are needed to keep Parliament effective.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** Adjournment versus prorogation versus dissolution, Article 85, Rule 15, JPC, Bofors.
- **Mains GS-II:** Parliament, functioning and conduct of business, powers and privileges, and legislature-executive relations.
- **Essay:** Parliamentary democracy and the role of the Opposition in a democracy.

8. Xi-Trump Summit: Little to Show, Much for India to Watch

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Summit outcome:** US President Donald Trump hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping in Washington on September 23 with a military flyover and a rare airport welcome. The result

was modest: a two-month extension of the trade truce, due to end in November, and an agreement on China providing two giant pandas to the Atlanta zoo.

- **Trade truce:** The US Treasury said the Busan Agreement is extended until January 10, 2027, with both sides avoiding new tariffs and trade restrictions on each other. Analysts see this as a pause rather than a settlement of the disputes behind the tariff war.
- **India's vulnerability:** On September 18, Trump signed a Bill allowing 100 percent tariffs on top buyers of Russian energy, primarily China and India. With China shielded by the truce, India remains exposed. India has not signed a trade agreement with the US, though a framework deal was agreed in February.
- **AI concerns:** No substantive agreement was reached on monitoring large language models or curbing AI progress. The two sides agreed to hold a dialogue on AI risks, with talks slated for November, and to set up a communication link for AI-related incidents. Xi pushed for human control of AI.
- **Fault lines:** Taiwan remains the major unresolved issue. The US has paused a record 14-billion-dollar arms sale to Taiwan amid Chinese pressure. Export controls on advanced chips and China's technological self-reliance also remain contentious.
- **Strategic framing:** Beijing speaks of "constructive strategic stability" and mutual respect, while Washington stresses reciprocity and competition. The pattern is stabilisation without settlement, and China's leverage through Rare Earths and critical minerals has made coercion costly for the US.

Essential Definitions

- **Trade truce:** A temporary agreement to suspend new tariffs and trade restrictions during negotiations.
- **Secondary tariffs:** Penalty duties imposed on a country for trading with a third country under sanctions.
- **Strategic stability:** A managed relationship in which competition continues within limits and confrontation is avoided.
- **Decoupling:** Reducing economic and technological interdependence between two economies.
- **Rare Earth Elements:** A group of 17 critical minerals used in electronics, defence and clean energy, where China dominates processing.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 51 (DPSP):** The State shall promote international peace and security and maintain just and honourable relations between nations.
- **Article 73 and Entry 10, Union List:** The Union has executive power over foreign affairs, and diplomatic and consular matters.
- **Entry 41, Union List:** Trade and commerce with foreign countries.
- **Article 253:** Parliament can legislate to implement international agreements.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Empowers the Union to regulate imports and exports and respond to trade measures.

- **Customs Tariff Act, 1975:** Provides the basis for tariff and countervailing duties.
- **WTO Agreements (GATT 1994, Article I and II):** Most-favoured-nation treatment and bound tariff commitments.
- **Export controls:** India's SCOMET list and the Wassenaar Arrangement regulate dual-use technologies.

Conclusion

The summit shows that great-power competition is being managed, not resolved, and that smaller partners can be caught between shifting truces. India must diversify markets, conclude balanced trade agreements, strengthen strategic autonomy and protect energy security without yielding to tariff pressure. Building domestic AI and critical mineral capacity will reduce vulnerability.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** Busan Agreement, Rare Earths, Taiwan, secondary tariffs, WTO, SCOMET, Wassenaar Arrangement.
- **Mains GS-II:** Bilateral groupings and agreements involving India, effects of policies of developed countries on India's interests, and India-US and India-China relations.
- **Mains GS-III:** Trade, energy security, technology and AI governance.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Strategic autonomy in a multipolar world and global governance of emerging technology.

9. Poompuhar Underwater Excavations Reveal Tamil Links to West Asia

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Fresh excavation:** An 18-day underwater exploration off Poompuhar (Kaveripoompattinam), Mayiladuthurai district, Tamil Nadu, was conducted by the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA) with the Indian Maritime University. It recovered a fragment of a West Asian "torpedo jar", four terracotta ring wells and over 250 ceramic fragments.
- **Ancient port:** Poompuhar lay at the mouth of the Kaveri, where it meets the Bay of Bengal, and is believed to have been the capital of the early Cholas. Carbon dating of a wood log suggests the city existed from the 5th-4th century BCE. It had three divisions: Maruvurpakkam (seashore), Pattinappakkam (west) and Nalangadi (between the two).
- **Trade links:** Merchandise exported from the port was stamped with a tiger symbol, the Chola emblem. Goods from the Ganges region, and food products from Ceylon and Java, were imported. The torpedo jar, used to carry wine and olive oil, points to links with West Asia and the Mediterranean.
- **Sangam-era remains:** Earlier finds include brick structures, terracotta ring wells, storage jars and clay patches, probably the remains of a public building, wharf and reservoir. A 1996 study noted that ships for Southeast Asia, Arabia and Rome sailed from here.
- **Submerged habitation:** Megalithic pottery found offshore suggests habitation extended beyond the present shoreline. Ring wells on the seabed may indicate a buried palaeochannel, later submerged by coastal erosion and rising sea levels.

- **Lost city debate:** Floods in the 4th-5th century CE swallowed major parts of the city. The Manimekalai tradition attributes the loss to the sea goddess's wrath, and some studies suggest a tsunami around the 3rd century CE. Scholars consider partial submergence more probable than total loss.

Essential Definitions

- **Underwater archaeology:** The study of human past through sites, ships and artefacts lying beneath seas, rivers or lakes.
- **Torpedo jar:** A narrow, elongated ceramic vessel used in ancient trade to carry liquids such as wine and oil.
- **Ring wells:** Wells lined with stacked terracotta rings, usually built on dry land for freshwater.
- **Palaeochannel:** An abandoned river channel, later buried or filled by sediments.
- **Sangam period:** The early historic phase of South India, roughly 3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE, known for Tamil literature and maritime trade.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 49 (DPSP):** The State shall protect monuments and places of artistic or historic interest declared to be of national importance.
- **Article 51A(f):** Fundamental duty to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.
- **Entry 67, Union List:** Ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites declared by Parliament to be of national importance.
- **Entry 12, State List:** Libraries, museums and other institutions, and ancient monuments not declared national.
- **Entry 40, Union List:** Archaeological sites of national importance.
- **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958:** Regulates protection, excavation and conservation, and covers underwater sites within territorial waters.
- **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972:** Regulates trade and export of antiquities.
- **UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, 2001:** Provides for preservation of underwater heritage; India is not a party.

Conclusion

The excavations strengthen evidence of India's ancient maritime networks and the Tamil contribution to Indian Ocean trade. Regular scientific surveys, stronger legal protection for underwater sites, and coastal management are needed. Combining archaeology with climate and sea-level studies will also enrich understanding of past human adaptation.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** Sangam age, Cholas, Poompuhar, Keezhadi, Arikamedu, ASI, ancient ports of India.

- **Mains GS-I:** Indian heritage, art and culture, ancient maritime trade and Indian Ocean linkages.
- **Mains GS-III:** Coastal erosion, sea-level rise and disaster management.
- **Essay:** Heritage preservation and lessons from the past.

10. AI in Disaster Management: From Nepal to India

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Nepal example:** During the recent Nepal disaster, an AI-powered web portal built by IT engineer Niraj Bhushal of Nepal's Finance Ministry matched crowdsourced data on missing persons with official lists of the dead and injured. The tool also helped map damaged buildings. Drone operator Manish Maharjan used thermal cameras to detect human-shaped heat signatures in debris and guide rescue teams.
- **Growing actors:** Disaster management is no longer limited to designated authorities. Technology firms such as Google, telecom providers and satellite companies are now integral players. AI can process large volumes of data through natural language, speech and video on an almost real-time basis, which is vital when time is critical.
- **Early warning:** AI models trained on vast past weather data learn how the atmosphere behaves and produce forecasts much faster than physics-equation-based methods. This makes hyperlocal forecasts possible in almost real time, as IIT Bombay is attempting for heavy rainfall events in Mumbai.
- **Flood forecasting:** Google's Flood Hub uses a prediction model first applied to floods in India in 2018 and can issue advisories up to seven days earlier. Forecasts must be combined with hazard maps to assess risk, where AI can integrate multiple datasets for threat assessment.
- **Response and post-event:** Smartphones and drones act as force multipliers, generating large volumes of data. AI can parse unstructured data, even in local languages. Specialised tools help locate disconnected habitations, assess road conditions, identify helicopter landing sites and prioritise food and relief distribution.
- **Human dimension:** Success still depends on human expertise, strong institutions and governance frameworks. As the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction notes, the real measure is whether AI enables timely, equitable and trusted protection for the most vulnerable.

Essential Definitions

- **Disaster management:** The cycle of preparedness, mitigation, response, relief and recovery aimed at reducing disaster risk and impact.
- **Early warning system:** A set of tools and processes that detect hazards and communicate timely alerts to people at risk.
- **Hazard mapping:** Identifying and mapping areas exposed to hazards such as floods, earthquakes and landslides.

- **Force multiplier:** A tool that increases the effectiveness of existing resources without increasing their numbers.
- **Hyperlocal forecast:** A weather prediction for a very small area and short time span.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Provides for NDMA, SDMA and DDMA, and a legal framework for planning, mitigation and response.
- **Article 21:** The right to life includes the right to safety, and the State's duty to protect citizens from disasters.
- **Entry 23, Concurrent List:** Social security and welfare, and Entry 29 on prevention of the extension of infectious or contagious diseases, relevant to relief measures.
- **Article 355:** The Union has a duty to protect states against external aggression and internal disturbance.
- **National Disaster Management Plan, 2019:** Aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
- **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023:** Governs the processing of personal data, relevant to crowdsourced and missing-person data.
- **Information Technology Act, 2000:** Provides the base for data and cyber-security regulation.
- **Sendai Framework:** Emphasises early warning systems and risk-informed governance.

Conclusion

AI can make disaster management faster, more anticipatory and more inclusive, but it cannot replace institutions and community knowledge. India needs reliable data systems, data privacy safeguards, local-language models and capacity building at district level. Human oversight and accountability should remain central to technology-led resilience.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** NDMA, Sendai Framework, Flood Hub, early warning systems, DPDP Act 2023, Cyclone and flood forecasting agencies.
- **Mains GS-III:** Disaster management, science and technology, applications of AI, and cyber and data security.
- **Mains GS-II:** Governance, institutions and role of the private sector in public service delivery.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Technology with a human face, and equity in technology-driven governance.

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