

# DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS 15<sup>TH</sup> DEC 2026



# NEWS ARTICLES -15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

- ▶ NHRC ORDER ON DEATH IN CUSTODY – INDIAN EXPRESS
- ▶ NEW INSURANCE BILL AND MAJOR REFORMS IT SEEKS TO BRING – INDIAN EXPRESS
- ▶ ARE METHANE EMISSIONS IN INDIA BEING MISSED – THE HINDU
- ▶ SHIP LEASING IN FULL SAIL AT GIFT CITY- THE HINDU
- ▶ WHY ELON MUSKS X PLATFORM WAS FINED \$140 MILLION BY EU?- THE HINDU
- ▶ AN UNPRECEDENTED SITUATION IN MAHARASHTRA (LOP ISSUE)- THE HINDU

# NHRC Order on Death in Custody

- ▶ **Syllabus Integration**
- ▶ **GS 2:** NHRC's role in enforcing state accountability for custodial deaths and human rights protection.
- ▶ **GS 3:** Custodial violence reflects systemic policing failures undermining rule of law.
- ▶ **Prelims:** NHRC—statutory body (1993), recommendatory powers, Paris Principles, DK Basu guidelines.

## NHRC order on death in custody is welcome

**T**HE NATIONAL Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) directive to the Uttar Pradesh government to pay Rs 10 lakh to the family of a 36-year-old man who died in police custody in 2021 marks a welcome reaffirmation of the inviolability of human dignity and the imperative of accountability. That this order arrives against a backdrop of systemic failures makes it all the more resonant: According to official data, between 2020 and 2022, over 4,400 custodial (judicial and police) deaths were recorded nationwide, with UP accounting for 952 of them. In September 2023, the Gujarat State Law Commission flagged increasing incidents of custodial death in the state as "a matter of great public concern". The Status of Policing in India Report 2025, released in March this year, showed an approval for coercive action among a sizeable percentage of police personnel, based on surveys of 8,276 officers across 17 states/UTs. The NHRC's verdict sends a much-needed, if belated, signal that institutional abdications cannot hide behind bureaucratic obfuscation.

Established in 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Act, the NHRC was conceived as a bulwark against state excess, mandated to investigate violations and negligence, recommend remedies and shape India's human-rights jurisprudence. For much of its early life, it rose to that promise: Flagging overcrowded and degrading prison conditions, issuing the country's first comprehensive guidelines on extra-judicial killings, defending labour rights, standing with victims of communal violence and pressing for compensation and redress. Over time, however, a growing deference to governments, reluctance to pursue politically sensitive cases and opacity in appointments have gradually undermined the institution's structural weaknesses: Non-binding recommendations and limited enforcement powers, for instance, that had prompted a former chairperson to describe it as a "toothless tiger". In 2024, its accreditation with the UN-recognised Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions was deferred for a second year, citing among other things, a lack of transparency and diversity in its appointments.

A cynical reading will see the NHRC's directive as a symbolic gesture. Yet, it also represents a welcome moment of assertion, and a gesture towards a recovery of purpose. A verdict cannot single-handedly redeem institutional drift, just as compensation cannot restore a life. But such interventions can re-anchor the commission to its primary task: Speaking up for the voiceless, and showing that vigilance matters.



# What's the news?



The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** has directed the **Uttar Pradesh Government** to pay **₹10 lakh compensation** to the family of a **36-year-old man who died in police custody in 2021**. The order has been interpreted as a **reaffirmation of human dignity and state accountability**, amid persistently high numbers of custodial deaths in India.

# PRELIMS-PYQ

- ▶ Consider the following organizations/ bodies in India:
  1. The National Commission for Backward Classes
  2. The National Human Rights Commission
  3. The National Law Commission
  4. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal CommissionHow many of the above are constitutional bodies?

***[UPSC Civil Service Exam – 2023 Prelims]***

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**Answer: (a)**



# Custodial deaths in India

**India continues to witness high custodial deaths despite constitutional safeguards**

**4,400+** custodial deaths  
(2020–2022) nationwide;  
Uttar Pradesh alone  
accounted for **982**.



## Reports highlight:

- Gujarat State Law Commission (Sept 2023) raising concerns on custodial violence
- Status of Policing in India Report 2023 showing troubling police approval for coercive actions



**NHRC, once a strong watchdog, is facing:**

- Reduced moral authority
- Non-binding powers
- International credibility issues (GANHRI deferral)

Prithvi Narayan Shah  
(1723-75)

## **CUSTODIAL DEATHS - LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

**Article 21 - Right to Life  
& Dignity**

**DK Basu v. State of West  
Bengal (1997)**  
Mandatory arrest and  
detention guidelines

**Nilabati Behera Case (1993)**  
Compensation as public  
law remedy



# National Human Rights Commissions (NHRC)

**Established:** 1993

**Act:** Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993

**Nature:** Statutory body

**Chairperson:** Former Chief Justice of India

**Members:**

- One former Supreme Court judge
- One former Chief Justice of High Court
- Ex-officio members from national commissions

**Powers:**

- Inquire into human rights violations
- **Recommend:**
  - Compensation
  - Prosecution
  - Visit jails and detention centres

**Limitations :**

- Recommendations not binding
- Cannot investigate cases older than 1 year
- Limited jurisdiction over armed forces

## 2. State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs)

- Established by States under PHRA, 1993
- Similar functions at state level
- Many states still lack functional SHRCs

# GANHRI

(Global Alliance of National Human Rights institutions)

**Nature:** International association of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

**Status:** UN-recognised, but not a UN body

**Established:** 1993 (as ICC of NHRIs); renamed GANHRI in 2013

**Headquarters (Secretariat):** Geneva

## Functions:

- Accredits NHRIs based on compliance with Paris Principles
- Promotes cooperation, capacity-building, and peer review among NHRIs

## Accreditation System

- A Status. Fully compliant with Paris Principles
- A Status. Partially compliant
- C Status. Non-compliant

## India-Specific Issue:

- NHRC India's A-status deferred in 2023 and 2024

## Concerns Raised by GANHRI

- Lack of transparent and participatory appointment process

# New Insurance Bill, 2024

- **Syllabus Orientation (Crisp | UPSC-Ready)**
- **GS 2 (Governance):** Role and powers of IRDAI as a sectoral regulator; state oversight vs market freedom in insurance.
- **GS 3 (Economy):** Insurance sector reforms— FDI liberalisation, reinsurance capacity, capital norms, market structure, and financial inclusion.
- **Prelims:** Insurance Act, 1938; IRDAI Act, 1999; FDI limit (100%); NOF norms for reinsurers; composite licence (not allowed).

• **ECONOMY**

## New Insurance Bill: Major reforms it seeks to bring

While several key changes have been incorporated, many crucial industry demands, like a composite licence, have been left out or diluted.



**GEORGE MATHEW**

**THE hiked FDI limit**

THERE IS little doubt that raising the FDI limit to 100% marks a decisive step toward globalising India's insurance sector.

**THE REFORM** is expected to draw larger pools of foreign capital, spur product innovation, and intensify competition in underwriting, risk management, and customer experience.

**CRUCIALLY**, it will also bring access to global best practices— from sophisticated underwriting models and digital claims platforms to advanced risk-assessment tools— enhancing the industry's resilience and service quality.



Sitharaman had announced the FDI hike in the insurance sector earlier this year. **EXRESS**

**TOGETHER, THESE** shifts lay the groundwork for a more customer-centric and technologically robust insurance ecosystem.

Sompo General Insurance, said increasing the FDI limit to 100% can serve as a strong catalyst for the insurance sector. "Greater capital inflows will enable insurers to expand their business, strengthen balance sheets, and invest in advanced risk-assessment models and more efficient claims-management systems," he said.

**SOPS FOR FOREIGN REINSURERS:** The requirement of Net Owned Funds (includes equity capital, free reserves, balance in share premium account and capital reserves representing surplus) for foreign reinsurers is proposed to be reduced from Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 1,000 crore to facilitate entry of more re-insurers, building greater reinsurance capacities in the country. This has been a long-standing demand of global reinsurance companies. This easing of norms is intended to draw smaller and new-age reinsurers to India, broadening competition in a segment currently dominated by the public sector GIC Re.

**MORE POWERS FOR IRDAI:** In a significant step toward strengthening policyholder protection, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) is set to receive enhanced enforcement powers, including the authority to disgorge wrongful gains made by insurers or intermediaries. This brings IRDAI's

**Key Point**

The Bill is likely to be silent on the long-awaited proposal to allow large firms to establish captive insurance entities.

- Captive insurers — wholly owned insurance subsidiaries created to insure risks of parent companies — are widely used to manage complex exposures, lower insurance costs, and control underwriting and claims.

punitive capabilities closer to that of SEBI, which has the power to recover illegally earned profits from violators.

To further streamline industry operations and ensure uninterrupted service for policyholders, the Bill proposes a one-time registration system for insurance intermediaries, removing the need for repeated approvals. In another move aimed at easing business processes, the threshold for requiring IRDAI's approval for the transfer of paid-up equity capital in insurance companies will be raised from 1% to 8%.

A formal standard operating procedure (SOP) for regulation-making will be incorporated into the Act, ensuring a more structured and predictable rule-making process. Additionally, the Bill introduces clear criteria for levying penalties.

**MORE POWERS FOR LIC:** Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is being given greater operational freedom. The Bill proposes to empower LIC to set up new zonal offices without requiring prior government approvals, enabling faster expansion, improved administrative efficiency, and better regional oversight.

Additionally, the LIC will be allowed to restructure and align its overseas operations in line with the laws and regulatory norms of the countries in which it operates. This flexibility will help LIC adapt more quickly to foreign compliance requirements, strengthen its global presence, and reduce delays caused by navigating multiple layers of approval back home.

**What is not likely to feature in the Bill**

**COMPOSITE LICENCE:** One of the most notable omissions likely in the Bill is the absence of provisions for composite licences, a long-awaited reform that many insurers had strongly advocated. Under the existing Insurance Act, 1938, insurers are confined to rigid silos: life insurers can only offer life policies, while general insurers are barred from entering the life segment.

A composite licence would fundamentally reshape this landscape and enable insurers to design integrated, bundled offerings: for example, combining life insurance, health coverage, and general insurance products into a single package.

Had the government permitted composite licensing, several major players were poised to enter or expand into new lines of business, spurring fresh competition and innovation.

**REDUCED CAPITAL NORMS AND NEW ENTRANTS:** Another key omission likely is the proposal to lower minimum capital requirements for new insurers. Currently, the law mandates a minimum paid-up capital of Rs 100 crore for insurers and Rs 200 crore for reinsurers, which have been criticised as being too high and prohibitive, especially for regional or niche players looking to enter the market. A reduction in capital requirements would have opened the doors for new entrants that could target underserved segments, particularly rural markets, informal sector workers, micro-businesses, gig workers, and low-income households, where insurance penetration remains abysmally low.

The sector could also have seen a surge in specialised insurers, such as health-only or micro-insurance companies, creating more competition, product diversity, and consumer choice.

**Many other proposals missing**

The original Insurance Amendment Bill, which was prepared two years ago, had provisions for distributing other financial products like mutual funds, loans and credit cards, creating new revenue streams and offering integrated solutions and reduced capital requirements.

It also proposed more flexibility in re-insuring investment norms in line with market needs, potentially improving returns for policyholders.

Besides, it also proposed permission for individual insurance agents to sell policies of multiple companies, eliminating the existing restriction that limits them to one life and one general insurer.

The Bill is also likely to be silent on the long-awaited proposal to allow large corporations to establish captive insurance entities. Captive insurers — wholly owned insurance subsidiaries created to insure the risks of their parent companies — are widely used globally by major corporations to manage complex exposures, lower insurance costs, and exert greater control over underwriting and claims.

**LONGER VERSION**  
INDIANEXPRESS.COM/EXPLAINED



# PRELIMS PYQ

- **Q. In India, under cyber insurance for individuals, which of the following benefits are generally covered, in addition to payment for the loss of funds and other benefits? (2020)**

Cost of restoration of the computer system in case of malware disrupting access to one's computer

Cost of a new computer if some miscreant wilfully damages it, if proved so

Cost of hiring a specialized consultant to minimize the loss in case of cyber extortion

Cost of defence in the Court of Law if any third party files a suit

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

(a) 1, 2 and 4 only

(b) 1, 3 and 4 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (b)**



# What is the News?

The **Sabha Bima Raksha Sakha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2024** proposes major amendments to:

**Insurance Act, 1938**

**General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972** (*often referred to as GIC framework*)

**IRDAI Act, 1999**

Aim: **Liberalise FDI, strengthen IRDAI, streamline regulation, and expand insurance penetration.**

## KEY REFORMS

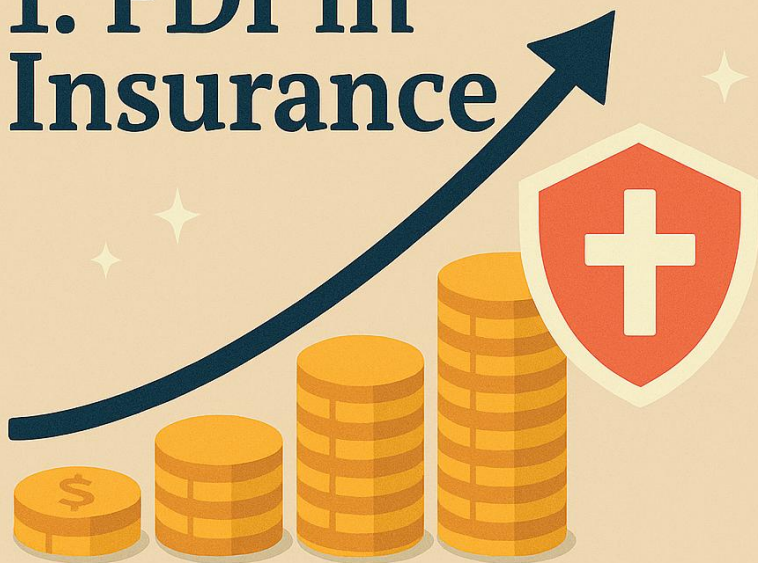
Prelims  
Facts



## ENHANCED POWERS OF IRDAI

- Disgorge wrongful gains
- Strengthen enforcement & penalties
- Brings IRDAI closer to SEBI-like regulatory authority

# 1. FDI in Insurance



- FDI limit raised: 74% → 100%
- Route: Automatic (subject to safeguards)
- Objective: Capital inflow, tech transfer, 'Insurance for All by 2047'

# Reinsurance Norms Relaxed

Net Owned Fund (NOF) for  
foreign reinsurers:

Reduced from

**₹5,000 crore**

→ **₹1,000 crore**

Objective: Increase domestic  
reinsurance capacity



# LIC Autonomy

## LIC can:

- Open new zonal offices without prior govt approval
- Improves operational flexibility



# REGULATORY STREAMLINING



- **One-time registration for intermediaries**
- **Easier transfer of paid-up equity capital**
- **Formal Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for regulation-making**

## KEY OMISSIONS



### ✗ **Composite Licence – NOT Allowed**

- Insurers cannot sell life + non-life + health together
- Separate licences continue
- Composite licence not introduced

### ✓ **Capital Norms – Unchanged**

- Minimum capital remains:  
Insurers: ₹100 crore  
Reinsurers: ₹200 crore
- Entry barrier for small & regional players remains

### ✗ **Other Missing Provisions**

- ✗ No captive insurance companies
- ✗ No multi-company agency for individual agents



# Are methane emissions in india being missed?

- **Syllabus Orientation:**
- **GS 2 (Governance):** Urban local bodies, Swachh Bharat Mission, coordination gaps with SPCBs, role of institutions like NGT and CAQM.
- **GS 3 (Science & Tech):** Use of **remote sensing & satellite data** (Carbon Mapper, SRON, ClimateTRACE) for environmental governance.
- **GS 3 (Economy):** Circular economy, Gobar-Dhan scheme, methane as a fuel, logistics of waste-to-energy projects.
- **Prelims:** Methane potency, sources of methane in India, satellite monitoring platforms, Swachh Bharat Mission, Gobar-Dhan, NGT role.

## Are methane emissions in India being missed?

Satellites show that emissions at key sites can be up to 10 times higher than estimates

### DATA POINT

Suyash Nandgaonkar

**W**hat fuels landfill fires and is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period? The answer is methane. While it is an excellent fuel for kitchen stoves, CNG vehicles, and power plants, it is also busy burning the planet. Methane is generated naturally by decomposing organic matter. The same prehistoric processes that created natural gas reserves are now at work within landfills. Managing methane means not just cleaner cities but also a significant step toward our climate ambitions.

Around 15% of India's methane emissions are from the waste sector. Unlike the agriculture or energy sectors, which require complex, long-term reforms, waste management offers immediate gains through targeted action. Crucially, the policy frameworks and incentives are already in place through national programmes such as the Swachh Bharat Mission.

Targeted action is only possible if we know exactly where the hotspots are, but tracking an invisible gas is difficult. Historically, we have relied on models that estimate emissions by tracking incoming waste volumes and applying baseline assumptions. However, this approach depends on accurate, recurring data, which is often scarce in developing countries. Because such data are aggregated at the regional or national levels and updated infrequently, it makes pinpointing individual sources nearly impossible.

The alternative is physical monitoring, which is even more challenging in the Indian context. Ground-level detection requires expensive equipment, regular maintenance, and constant oversight, making it logistically and technically difficult to scale.

As technology advances, satel-

lites are stepping into this gap. This data broadly fall into two categories: regional measurements that monitor methane over a few kilometers (frequent and useful for national trends), and fine-resolution detection that can pinpoint hotspots down to a few square meters (critical for targeted action).

### Satellite data

India has already taken the first steps toward this opportunity. Last year, a paper published by scientists from ISRO quantified anthropogenic methane emissions across the country using satellite data that was acquired in 2023. Based on these measurements, the study identified major dumpsites in Pirana (Ahmedabad), Deonar and Kanjurmarg (Mumbai), and a sewage outlet as significant emitters. The National Green Tribunal took these findings further, establishing a committee to conduct ground investigations at the flagged sites.

Over the past few years, multiple new satellite missions have emerged, such as Carbon Mapper's Tanager and the Space Research Organisation Netherlands (SRON) projects. These satellites provide public data covering major landfills across the country, including Ghazipur and Okhla in Delhi, Jawaharnagar in Hyderabad, and Dhapu in Kolkata. Platforms such as ClimateTRACE and WasteMap collate this global monitoring data, combining it with baseline statistics for advanced modeling. These newer models refine traditional calculations by integrating real-time satellite observations and updating landfill-specific estimates to reflect reality.

Globally, satellite surveys estimate that actual landfill emissions can exceed model-based predictions by around 1.8 times. In India, city-level comparisons are difficult due to a lack of granular data on waste characteristics. Consequently, we must rely on State-level estimates from 2018 for sector-wise breakdowns, as newer public data have not yet been compiled. This



The landfill at Bhalawa in northwest Delhi. PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

discrepancy between advanced satellite observations and older State models highlights a critical information gap; we currently cannot agree on the true scale of the numbers or the location of the hotspots.

### Differing data

Take Delhi as an example: its 2018 emissions inventory estimates 1.07 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent annually from the entire solid waste sector. Recent satellite observations, however, estimate emissions alone to be between 0.85 and 0.96 million tons – almost as much as the sector's entire theoretical footprint. In Mumbai, the data offer a different perspective. While calculations suggest that the Kanjurmarg landfill accounts for 11% of the city's waste emissions, an expected number given its engineered design. However, satellite data show it to be emitting 1.05 million tons. This is almost 10 times the model's estimate and approximately half of the entire State's solid waste emissions. A similar discrepancy emerges in Ahmedabad: while Gujarat estimates 0.73 million tons for the entire sector, satellite observations show the Pirana landfill alone emitting between 0.60 and 0.81 million tons.

These are not just numbers. They indicate potential leakages, accelerated methane generation, or opportunities to refine our engineered systems. Critically, these are hazards we never tackled

**By making data the backbone of our waste policy, we can turn one of our biggest environmental challenges into our smartest climate solution**

simply because we did not know they existed. Now, we can not only gauge the magnitude of the problem but, in the case of large landfills, also pinpoint the exact source of the leaks, allowing for precise, targeted solutions.

Of course, these observations come with limitations. Cloud interference and complex weather dynamics mean that satellite data cannot fulfil its potential in isolation. Urban local bodies must complement these findings with ground-level insights, a step that is especially critical for the massive, unwieldy landfills of our metro cities. The real breakthrough lies in linking satellite detection with ground-level action.

### Feedback loop

When satellites detect a methane hotspot, ground teams can immediately investigate the cause – whether it is poor waste coverage, a gas collection failure, or illegal dumping. This creates a powerful feedback loop: space-based detection guides targeted ground interventions, while ground data validates and improves satellite accuracy. Integrating other data sources beyond just methane monitoring can further enhance the efficiency of this loop.

At open dumpsites such as Ghazipur, recording dumping and reclamation patterns provides critical insight into how human activity drives methane generation. Meanwhile, at engineered landfills such as Jawaharnagar and Kanjurmarg, infrastructure data on existing gas collection systems can help pinpoint leaks and identify hidden hotspots. Cities such as Bengaluru, with their advanced waste management systems, are well-positioned to integrate these

datasets to increase transparency. To address this, we need coordinated action on three critical fronts: expanding satellite monitoring to cover all major waste sites, establishing on-ground validation systems in metro cities, and creating standardised data-sharing protocols between urban local bodies and oversight agencies.

Currently, urban local bodies operate in silos, separate from the State Pollution Control Boards that oversee them. This disconnect hinders coordinated action on methane reduction. However, the revised municipal waste guidelines already envision a centralised data portal for bulk waste management, handling the wet waste that is the primary source of untreated methane. This portal could be expanded to connect with a standardised nationwide dataset for tracking emissions. Regional bodies such as the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the NCR can oversee this monitoring, while the Swachh Bharat Mission can integrate methane targets, aligning them with other central schemes.

This integrated approach delivers multiple co-benefits that make the investment worthwhile. Methane's potential as a fuel is already recognised in policy. Just recently, Indore has utilised the Gobar-dhan scheme to set up a Bio-CNG plant from its waste.

This strategy creates a powerful ecosystem: satellites detect hotspots, ground teams investigate and fix leaks, and standardised data sharing ensures insights reach decision-makers instantly. What is needed now is coordinated implementation across these three fronts. By making data the backbone of our waste policy, we can turn one of our biggest environmental challenges into our smartest climate solution.

Suyash Nandgaonkar is a Senior Research and Policy Associate at the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPI-India)



# What's the News?

Article highlights that **India's methane emissions from landfills are significantly under-detected and under-reported**, despite methane being **84 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> over 20 years**.

The piece argues that **satellite-based methane detection**, combined with **ground-level verification**, can unlock **quick climate gains**, especially since **~15% of India's methane emissions come from the waste sector**—a sector where policy tools already exist (Swachh Bharat Mission, waste rules, Gobar-Dhan).

## Methane Emissions & Waste Sector — PRELIMS FACTS



### Methane Basics

#### Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) is:

- A greenhouse gas
- ~84 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> over a 20-year period

#### Major sources:

- Natural: Decomposition of organic matter
- Anthropogenic: Agriculture, energy, waste sector (landfills)



### India-Specific Methane Data

~15% of India's methane emissions come from the waste sector

Waste sector offers quick mitigation gains compared to:

- Agriculture (structural reforms)
- Energy (long-term transitions)



### Landfills & Methane

Methane is generated in landfills due to:

- Anaerobic decomposition of organic waste



Global satellite surveys show actual landfill methane emissions can be up to 10× higher

## KEY SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS (2023)

**GEO scientists (2023)** used satellite data to quantify methane emissions in India Identified:

- **183 methane hotspots**
- **Across 12 primary cities**
- **Additional 84 locations** with significant emissions

### Major hubs mentioned:

- ✗ Ahmedabad
- ✗ Kanpur
- ✗ Deomkar



## Why Emissions Are Under-Reported?

### Traditional Methods (Limitations)

Model-based estimates using:



- Waste volumes
- Assumptions



### Problems:

- Poor data quality
- Aggregated reporting
- Inferquent updates

## Ground Monitoring (Challenges)



**Under-Reporting Cycle** • Expensive equipment



• Skilled manpower



• Difficult to scale in Indian cities





## INSTITUTIONS & GOVERNANCE



### National Green Tribunal (NGT):

Set up a committee for ground-level verification of satellite-flagged methane hotspots

### Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)



- Responsible for waste management
- Currently operate separately from State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)



### Global & Open Data Platforms

- Carbon Mapper (GEO)
- SRON (Netherlands Space Research Organisation)
- ClimateTRACE
- WasteMap



### Global Methane Pledge:

Uses global satellite monitoring systems

# WasteMap

## Focus Area:

Methane emissions from solid waste and landfills

## Use Case:

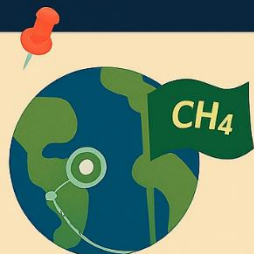
City-level and site-specific emissions mapping

## Relevance:

Helps identify under-reported landfill emissions

## Global & Open Data Platforms

- Carbon Mapper (GEO)
- SRON (Netherlands Space Research Organisation)



## GLOBAL METHANE PLEDGE

- Launched: 2021 (COP26, Glasgow)
- Led by: United States & European Union
- Target: Reduce global methane emissions by 30% by 2030 (from 2020 levels)

**Legal Nature:**  
Voluntary,  
non-binding

➤ **Not a signatory**

## GLOBAL & OPEN DATA PLATFORM

### Carbon Mapper

#### INITIATIVE BY:

Carbon Mapper Coalition (with NASA, ESA, Google.org support)

#### FUNCTION:

High-resolution satellite detection of methane super-emitters



#### KEY FEATURE:

Identifies emissions at facility level



#### DATA ACCESS:

Public



📍 Carbon Mapper is not a UN body.

🗨️ Carbon Mapper is not a UN body.



### SRON

#### FULL FORM:

Netherlands Institute for Space Research

**COUNTRY:**  Netherlands

### ClimateTRACE

**NATURE:** Independent global emissions tracking initiative

**FOUNDED:** 2021

#### TECHNOLOGY USED:

Satellites  
Artificial Intelligence  
Remote sensing

**COVERAGE:** Methane, CO<sub>2</sub>, nitrous oxide

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Open-source, public data

📍 ClimateTRACE is not government-led.

## Why Satellite Data Dta Is Powerful

### Publicly accessible?

- Verifiable
- Reveals emissions 10× higher theher than official estimates in some cases



Explains why why waste methane was was “missed” earlier

### Problems:

- Poor data quality
- Aggregated reporting
- Inferquent updates



## 8<sup>8</sup> Limitations of Satellite Monitoring)

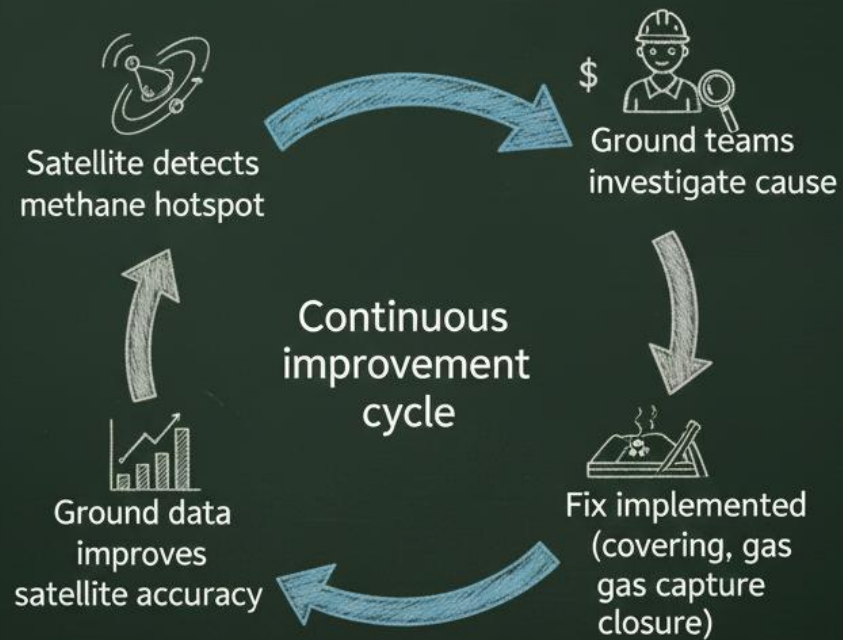
- Cloud cover
- Weather interfeence
- Urban complexity
- Cannot replace on on-ground validation





## The Core Idea: Feedback Loop Model

Explain This Clearly (Central Teaching Point)



## NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL (NGT)



Established: 2010

Statute: **National Green Tribunal Act, 2010**

Nature: Quasi-judicial body

Headquarters: New Delhi

Circuit Benches: Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata, Chennai

### Composition

- **Chairperson:** Retired Judge of the Supreme Court or Chief Justice of a High Court (location may change - HQ fixed)

### • Members:

- Judicial Members
- Expert Members (environmental science, forestry, climate, etc.)

Appointment: **By Central** Government

- **NGT has technical experts as members (unlike regular courts).**

### Jurisdiction of NGT

- ♦ Deals with civil cases only
- ♦ Must involve a substantial **question** relating to the environment



## STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARDS (SPCBs)

### Basic Facts

**Established by:** 1774

**Statute:** Water Act, 1974

**Air Act.** 1981

**Statutory Bodies** at State level



**SPCBs** issue consents, not environmental clearances (EC).

### Powers

- issue directions under Section 5 of **Environment Protection Act, 1986**
- Set emission and effluent standards
- Advise State Governments



## NGT JURISDICTION: 7 KEY ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

### Acts Covered Under NGT Jurisdiction

- 1 Water (Prevention and of Pollution) Act, 1974
- 2 Water (Prevention and Pollution) Cess Act, 1977  
*(repealed later, but historically covered)*
- 3 Forest (Conservation) Act, 1977
- 4 Air (Conservation) Act, 1880
- 5 Environment (Protection) Act, 1961
- 6 Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991
- 7 Biological Diversity Act, 2002



**MOST IMPORTANT**  
**Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 — NOT**  
**under NGT jurisdiction**





# Why X platform was fined?

## Syllabus Integration

- ▶ **GS 2 (Governance & International Relations):** EU regulatory authority, digital governance, platform accountability, and transatlantic tensions over tech regulation.
- ▶ **GS 3 (Economy & Technology):** Regulation of Big Tech, digital markets, platform transparency, and impact of compliance costs on innovation.
- ▶ **GS 4 (Ethics):** Ethical responsibility of social media platforms—truthfulness, transparency, misinformation control, and user trust.
- ▶ **Prelims:** Digital Services Act (DSA); European Commission powers; platform liability; ad transparency; researcher access obligations.

## Why was Elon Musk's X platform fined \$140 million by the EU?

X, formerly Twitter, was fined by the European Commission for breaching its transparency obligations under the Digital Services Act. At the heart of the matter is X's controversial blue check mark system, which the Commission said 'deceives users'.

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

In December 6, Tesla CEO Elon Musk used his social media platform X to call for an end to the European Union, posting, "The EU should be abolished and sovereignty returned to individual countries, so that governments can better represent their people". His outburst was triggered by a 120 million euro (around \$140 million) fine slapped by the European Commission against X a day earlier, marking the first non-compliance decision under the bloc's landmark tech regulation.

Why was Elon Musk's X fined?

X, formerly Twitter, was fined by the European Commission for breaching its transparency obligations under the Digital Services Act (DSA). The EU regulator opened formal proceedings on December 18, 2023 in order to evaluate whether X disseminated illegal information and whether it could effectively combat the manipulation of information. The investigation is ongoing, but the European Commission has fined X over platform-specific features and policies that violate its DSA.

Deceiving users with blue checkmarks, obscuring information on ads and shutting out researchers have no place online in the EU. The DSA protects users. The DSA gives researchers the way to uncover potential threats. The DSA

restores trust in the online environment," said Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, in an official press release. She added this was the DSA's first non-compliance decision, with X being held responsible for undermining users' rights and evading accountability.

What did the EU investigation find?

At the heart of the matter is X's controversial blue check mark system. Before Elon Musk bought Twitter in 2022, the social media platform assigned blue check marks to notable individuals such as government officials, celebrities, and journalists after inspecting their account credentials, to help others verify these vetted account handles on sight.

However, Mr. Musk has always criticised this legacy check mark system. After he bought Twitter in October 2022 for \$44 billion, the billionaire made the iconic verification symbol a product that anyone could buy. This led to a surge in account impersonation, as users ranging from pranksters to crypto scammers bought the blue tick mark to make themselves look more legitimate. In fact, even members of the Taliban temporarily had blue check marks. As confusion spread, X began deploying a mix of check marks – gold, blue, grey, and company logo-based ones – to differentiate verified users from unverified ones. These categories tended to overlap.

However, this resulted in even more confusion, a view which the European

Commission shared. It stated that X's blue check mark for so-called verified accounts "deceives users".

Apart from the blue verification check mark issue, the European Commission pointed to X's advertisement repository, which it said did not meet the transparency and accessibility requirements of the DSA. Furthermore, the regulator said that X failed to meet its DSA obligations to give researchers access to the platform's public data.

These two points are linked, as the regulator pointed out that X's design made it difficult for researchers to identify who was paying for certain advertisements running on X, and whether there were any risks associated with the ads. The regulator also cited excessive processing delays. "The fine issued today was calculated taking into account the nature of these infringements, their gravity in terms of affected EU users, and their duration," said the European Commission.

The regulator added X had 60 working days to inform it about measures it was taking to fix the deceptive use of blue checkmarks, and 90 working days to submit an action plan to handle issues relating to its advertising repository and researchers' access to public data.

What was Elon Musk's reaction?

Since December 6, Elon Musk has both posted and re-shared multiple comments, memes, and infographics insulting the European Union and calling for it to be

broken up. "The EU Commission should be disbanded in favor of an elected body and the EU President should be directly elected. The current system is rule by bureaucracy, not democracy," he posted on December 10. Mr. Musk also reshared a post criticising the EU for not fining Meta on similar grounds, since the WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook-parent also has a paid blue check mark verification system. Furthermore, X executive Nikita Bier claimed that the regulator had violated platform rules while announcing its fine against X, and said that its ad account was terminated as a result.

U.S. President Donald Trump also reacted to the news of the X fine, calling it "nasty" and noting that "Europe is going in some bad directions". He added that it had to be "careful" but clarified that Mr. Musk did not ask him to intervene in the matter. Trump administration officials including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice President J.D. Vance both criticised the move as well. U.S. Ambassador to the EU, Andrew Puzder, slammed "EU regulatory overreach targeting American innovation" and said that the Trump administration would "challenge burdensome regulations that target US companies abroad."

Mr. Musk claimed that the EU imposed the "crazy fine" on both X and him personally, suggesting that he might in turn respond not just to the EU but also individual regulators.

It is not yet clear if he intends to formally pursue legal action.

# PRELIMS PYQ'S



Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: The European Parliament approved The Net-Zero Industry Act recently.

Statement-II: The European Union intends to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 and therefore aims to develop all of its own clean technology by that time.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements? [UPSC Civil Services Exam – 2024 Prelims]

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II explains Statement-I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, but Statement-II does not explain Statement-I
- (c) Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect
- (d) Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct

**Statements-I:** Recently, the United States of America (USA) and the European Union (EU) have launched the 'Trade and Technology Council'.

**Statement-II:** The USA and the EU claim that through this they are trying to bring technological progress and physical productivity under their control.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements? [UPSC Civil Services Exam – 2023 Prelims]

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- (d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

# What's the news?

- ▶ The **European Commission** fined X (formerly Twitter) **€120 million** for violating provisions of the **EU's Digital Services Act (DSA)**—marking the **first non-compliance decision** under the DSA. The fine relates to **deceptive blue check verification, lack of ad transparency, denial of data access to researchers, and moderation delays**. In response, **Elon Musk publicly attacked the EU**, calling for its dismantling, triggering strong political reactions from the U.S. leadership.





€120 MILLION (S140 MILLION)

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION FINES X FOR DSA VIOLATIONS

DECEMBER 5-6, 2025: FIRST NON-COMPLIANCE DECISION UNDER DSA



DECEPTIVE  
BLUE CHECK MARK  
VERIFICATION



LACK OF  
TRANSPARENCY IN  
AD REPOSTORES



RESTRICTING  
RES. ARCHER ACCESS  
TO PUBLIC DATA

## DIGITAL SERVICES ACT (DSA)

ADOPTED: 2022, EFFECTIVE: 2023



TRANSPARNCY IN  
ADVERTISING



ACCOUNTABILITY  
FOR ILLEGAL CONTENT



ACCESS FOR  
RESEARCHERS



SCOPE: PLATFORMS OPERATING IN EU,  
INCLUDING NON-EU COMPANIES





## WHY IT MATTERS



### LANDMARK EU REGULATION

Digital Services (DSA) to govern Transparency, misinformation, accountability.



### X'S BLUE CHECK CHECK SYSTEM

Paid feature. Allowed impersonation, misled users.



### REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT

EU fine signals action on tech giants, including non-European companies.



### INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

US politicians reacted. Global tech regulation vs innovation debate

A CRUCIAL MOMENT FOR DIGITAL ACCOUNTABILITY





# Ship leasing in full at GIFT city

## Syllabus Integration

**GS 2 (Governance & Institutions):** Role of **IFSCA** as a unified regulator; regulatory oversight in IFSCs; ease of doing business in specialised financial jurisdictions.

**•GS 3 (Economy & Infrastructure):** Maritime finance and ship leasing as part of **logistics and port-led development**; GIFT IFSC as an offshore financial hub; capital flows, asset leasing, and infrastructure financing.

**•Prelims:** GIFT City; IFSC; IFSCA; ship leasing types (financial, operating, sale-and-leaseback); difference between ship and aircraft leasing; Indian vs foreign ship registry.

## Ship leasing in full sail at GIFT City

Today, bulk carriers account for 43% of the ships leased or purchased from GIFT IFSC, with the value of assets leased rising to \$1.47 billion, according to data shared by International Financial Services Authority (IFSCA), the unified regulatory in GIFT City

### NEWS ANALYSIS

Avinash Nair

In just two years since ship leasing took off at GIFT City in Gujarat, the numbers are already turning heads. As of October this year, 27 registered ship-leasing entities are operating from the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at India's first global finance enclave, and the number of vessels leased or purchased has more than doubled to 30 in the past year (16 ships purchased and 14 ships leased).

The shift is significant. Until recently, India had no dedicated platform for leasing ocean-going vessels. After Ripley Shipping India IFSC Pvt. Ltd. became the first entity to lease a bulk carrier in June 2023, GIFT IFSC is fast emerging as one of the few financial centres globally to host a comprehensive, regulator monitored ship-leasing regime. The services covered include financial leases, operating leases, hybrid structures and sale-and-leaseback transactions.

Today, bulk carriers account for 43% of the ships leased or purchased from GIFT IFSC, with the value of assets leased rising to \$1.47 billion, according to data shared by International Financial Services Authority (IFSCA) – the unified regulatory in GIFT City. In all, 13 bulk carriers, ranging from 75,500 DWT



Launch pad: Until recently, India had no dedicated platform for leasing ocean-going vessels. FILE PHOTO

to 106,000 DWT, have been leased or purchased to date. The single largest vessel leased from the IFSC is a 150,000 DWT Suezmax crude oil carrier (34- to 38-month lease). Suezmax represents the maximum size of tanker that can transit the Suez Canal when fully loaded. Beyond bulkers, the fleet leased through GIFT includes six ethane gas carriers, five container ships, one medium-range product tanker, three LPG tankers, and an additional tanker.

### Relocation of finance

Of the 30 ships leased or purchased, 17 are Indian-flagged vessels; the foreign flags include Marshall Islands (six vessels), Panama (one), Portugal (one), and Singapore (five). For an in-



GIFT IFSC is fast emerging as one of the few financial centres globally to host a comprehensive, regulator monitored ship-leasing regime

dustry long reliant on leasing structures in foreign jurisdictions, the shift marks a strategic relocation of maritime finance to Indian oversight, underscoring the fact that a ship's flag is far more than symbolic – it determines its nationality, regulatory standards, and the global jurisdictions under which it can operate legally and safely. GIFT City, in comparison with ship

leasing stalwarts such as Singapore or Europe, is still nascent. Its ship leasing activity is dwarfed by its aircraft leasing counterpart, with hundreds of aviation assets already on lease. As on September 30, as many as 37 aircraft leasing entities have leased about 253 assets from GIFT IFSC, including 98 aircraft, 70 engines and 85 aircraft auxiliary power units. GIFT IFSC's ability to host both aviation and maritime leasing under a unified regulatory authority is drawing attention from global financiers. "So far, nine ship leasing entities have borrowed \$7.1 million from financial institutions operating within GIFT City," K Rajaraman, chairperson, IFSCA, told *businessline*. GIFT IFSC now offers

the facility to create Indian-domiciled lessors operating under a globally aligned framework.

This helps reduce reliance on offshore leasing centres while enabling competitive financing. The clarity and depth of the IFSCA framework are an added attraction. With prescribed capital requirements – from \$200,000 for operating lease entities to \$3 million for financial or hybrid activities – and permission to transact in freely convertible foreign currencies, GIFT offers a structure typical of mature global leasing hubs.

### Challenges

However, experts see some hurdles. Surya Sreenivasan, Partner, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, says, "India is a closed registry and multiple stakeholders have indicated that the most attractive global shipping hubs offer shipowners the flexibility to flag their vessels with registries that are lighter on regulatory compliances. From a liquidity perspective, stakeholders are also keenly awaiting the notification of shipping as an infrastructure sub-sector to obtain the financing benefits that are currently provided to other capital-intensive sectors. Extended procedures and timelines for the creation and enforcement of mortgage have also been identified as an area of improvement."

Amil Oza, director, Astramar Shipping and Trad-

ing Services, concurs. "The key challenges are in streamlining the import process of Indian flag ships in IFSC. Rule 29b of SEZ Act requires ships to file bill of entry and shipping bill every time a ship is leased in or out of IFSC. This rule is fine for aircraft as that is a different business with long-term charters, but is a deal breaker for ship operators as they literally charter hundreds of ships a year on short-term charter. The rule should be amended for import only and the lease component should be deleted," he said.

He also called for clarity on ancillary services like ship-broking and ship management, activation of commodity trading and container leasing, dedicated ship finance desks at banks' and other capital providers.

The regulatory framework for ship lease was issued in 2021 and later modified to mandate that only lessors holding ownership or leasehold rights over a ship may engage in activities such as voyage charters and affreightment contracts. Further, there were restrictions on the transfer of vessels from India residents to IFSC entities solely to service Indian clients. However, lessors were permitted to acquire new ships from Indian shipyards. IFSC-based ship lessors are now permitted to share office space and personnel.

(The writer is with *The Hindu businessline*)



# What's the news ?

- ▶ Ship leasing activity at **GIFT City IFSC** has gained rapid momentum within just two years of launch. As of October, **27 ship-leasing entities** have leased or purchased **30 vessels**, with asset value touching **\$1.47 billion**. Bulk carriers dominate the portfolio. With a unified regulatory framework under **IFSCA**, GIFT IFSC is emerging as India's regulated maritime finance hub, reducing dependence on foreign leasing centres like Singapore and Europe, though regulatory and procedural challenges remain.

## Ship Leasing at GIFT IFSC

### GIFT City



India's first international financial services centre (IFSC)

### Regulator



International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) – unified regulator for financial services in GIFT City)

### Key Feature



Enables cross-border financial services, including aviation and maritime leasing

### Prescribed Capital Requirements for Leasing Entities:



Operating lease entities:  
\$200,000



Financial or hybrid lease entities:  
\$ million

Transactions can be in freely convertible foreign currencies.



## Ship Leasing Facts (as of FY 2025-26)

30

Total ships leased/purchased  
from GIFT IFIC: 30 ships

Entities operating  
in ship leasing:

27 registered

### Types of vessels:

#### Bulk carriers:

43% of total leased: 13 vessels  
75,500 DWT – 106,000 DWT



#### Single largest vessel:

150,000 DWT Panamax crude oil carrier  
(34-38 month lease)



6 ethane gas carriers 5 container ships 1 medium-range product tanker 3 LPG tankers

Total asset value leased: \$1.47 billion



## Regulatory & Policy Framework

IFSCA Ship Leasing Regulations: Issued 2022, modified later for:

### Ownership & Rights



Only IFFC-based entities can hold ownship/leasehold rights for activities like: Equity charters, Affreightment contracts

### Transfer Restrictions



Restrictions on transfer of vessels from Indian residents  
IFFC entities solely for servicing Indian clients

### Office & Personnel



Permits office space & personnel sharing among IFFC-based ship lessors

### Key Principle



Promoting IFSC as global maritime finance hub under unified regulation.

### Key Advantages



Globally aligned framework



Reduces reliance on offshore leasing centres



Competitive financing opportunities



Comprehensive opportunities



Comprehensive, regulatory-monitored hub

### Challenges / Issues



India is a closed registry



Regulatory clarity for status



Regulatory clarity for infra status



SEZ Act Rule 329 (cumbersome for short charters)



Ancillary services clarity

**Navigating the Future of Maritime  
Finance in GIFT IFSC**

## 2. What is GIFT City?

Components	Feature	Detail
	Area	Detail
1. IFSC (International Finance Zone), 2. Domestic Finance Zone, 3. Smart City Infrastructure	886 acres	Both INR (domestic & foreign currency, IF15 onwards)
	886 acres	Banking, insurance and capitals, asset/fund management, ship & aircraft leasing
Inauguration	Both INR (construction begin); IFSC operational 2015 onwards	
Currency Transactions	Sectors Operated	
Sectors Operates	- 100% income tax exemption on profits for years for IFSC units IFSC under Act, Exemption Dividend Distribution Tax	
Global Comparison	- Exemption from Dividend Distribution financial hubs	

**GIFT City: India's Global Financial Hub**



## 1. What is an IFSC?

### Purpose:

- Promote international financial
- Reduce reliance on offshore financial centres (like Singapore, Dubai, London)
- Facilitate exports of financial services

### Key Features:

- Enables banking, insurance, capital markets
- Enables banking, capital markets, and fund management for foreign currencies.

### Regulatory Benefits

- Tax incentives (Income tax exemption for years under SEZ rules IFSCA)
- Separate from domestic, operates like an offshore financial hub within India

Full Form: International Financial Services Centre

# An unprecedented state in Maharashtra

## Syllabus Integration

- ▶ **GS 2 (Polity & Governance):** Role and importance of the Opposition; Speaker/Chairman's discretion; conventions vs rules in parliamentary democracy; State Legislature functioning.
- ▶ **GS 2 (Constitutional Bodies):** Statutory basis of LoP (State law), recognition by Presiding Officers, checks and balances in legislatures.
- ▶ **GS 4 (Ethics):** Democratic values—accountability, dissent, and institutional propriety; ethical conduct of ruling and opposition parties.
- ▶ **Prelims:** LoP definition under Maharashtra law; 10% seat rule as **convention (not mandatory)**; powers of Speaker/Chairman; bicameral State Legislature basics.

### *An unprecedented situation in Maharashtra*

For the first time, there was no LOP in both Houses during the winter session

#### DATAPOINT

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**T**he week-long winter session of the Maharashtra Legislature concluded on December 14 in Nagpur. For the first time in the history of the State, there was no Leader of the Opposition (LOP) in both the Houses. The 10% seat strength is not a rule, but a convention for a party to be formally recognised as the official Opposition party and to have a LOP. The Congress has 10% seats in the Upper House. As the ruling dispensation overlooks precedents and the Opposition fails to put together a united front, a key question arises: is the appointment of an LOP a democratic necessity or the Speaker's discretion?

"In a democracy, the Opposition is not only tolerated as constitutional, but must be maintained because it is indispensable. The best servants of the people, like the best valets, must whisper unpleasant truths in the master's ear," police commentator Walter Lippmann said in an essay. The Indispensable Opposition, in 1939.

In Maharashtra, the Opposition has been rallying against the government to seek the LOP position since last year in the Legislative Assembly, and over the last few months in the Legislative Council. During the winter session of the Assembly, the State witnessed an unprecedented situation for the first time since its formation in 1960: both Houses did not have an LOP.

The last Opposition leader in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly was Vijay Wadettiwar from the Congress. His term expired on November



26, 2024. In the Legislative Council, the term of Shiv Sena UBT leader Ambadas Danve as LOP ended on August 29, 2025. Maharashtra's legislative history shows that a LOP has, until now, generally been appointed without much delay.

Under the Leaders of Opposition in Maharashtra Legislature Salaries and Allowances Act, 1978, "The Leader of Opposition" in relation to either House of the State Legislature, means that member of the State Legislative Assembly or the State Legislative Council, as the case may be, who is for the time being the Leader in that House of the party in opposition to the State Government having the greatest numerical strength and recognised as such by the Speaker of the Assembly or the Chairman of the Council, as the case may be."

Last year, when the Speaker did not appoint an LOP after Mr. Wadettiwar's term ended, Shiv Sena UBT leader and contender for the post, Bhaskar Jadhav, wrote a letter to the Legislature Secretariat seeking in writing the rules and laws under which the appointment is made. In reply, Subhash Nalawade, Deputy Secretary of the Maharashtra Legislature Secretariat, said on December 9, 2024, "There is no specific provision for the choice of the Opposition Leader in the Maharashtra Legislature Assembly Rules. The honourable Speaker takes this

decision after taking into consideration the prevalent parliamentary conventions and precedences." Political scientist Subhas Palshikar observed that precedents, convention, and goodwill play an important role during proceedings.

While the 10% majority is a convention, it has been overlooked in the past. In 1962, the Congress had a brute majority of 215 in a House of 264 seats. The single largest Opposition party was the Peasants and Workers Party of India, with 15 seats. Opposition parties then came together to form the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, which was granted the status of the official Opposition party and Krishnarao Dhulap was declared the LOP. Similar instances occurred in 1967 and 1972 as well.

This time, not only has the State's legislative precedent been overlooked, but the Opposition parties too have failed to come together to stake claim to the position. In the 2024 Assembly elections, the Shiv Sena UBT secured 20 seats, the Congress 16, and the NCP SP 10. But the letter for the LOP position has been given only by the Shiv Sena UBT. The current strength of the Legislative Assembly is 288.

In the upper House, the Congress has 10% of the total seats. It submitted a letter proposing the name of Bunty Patil for the position, on September 2. In a House of 78, the Congress has 8 MLAs, Shiv Sena UBT 5, and the NCP SP 2.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis has maintained that it is the discretion of the Speaker and the Chairperson of both the Houses to take the decision. Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar said that the Opposition party staking claim to the position should have 10% seats in the House.

# PRELIMS PYQ'S

► **Q. Consider the following statements:**

1. In the first Lok Sabha, the single largest party in the opposition was the Swatantra Party.
2. In the Lok Sabha, a “Leader of the Opposition” was recognised for the first time in 1969.
3. In the Lok Sabha, if a party does not have a minimum of 75 members, its leader cannot be recognised as the Leader of the Opposition.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- **[A] 1 and 3 only**
- **[B] 2 only**
- **[C] 2 and 3 only**
- **[D] 1, 2 and 3**

**ANSWER -B**



# What is the News?

- ▶ For the **first time since Maharashtra's formation in 1960**, both Houses of the State Legislature functioned without a Leader of the Opposition (LoP) during the Winter Session (ended December 14, 2024).

The absence stems from a mix of **Speaker/Chairman discretion**, **reliance on the 10% seat convention (not a statutory rule)**, and the **Opposition's failure to unite**, raising questions about whether appointing an LoP is a **democratic necessity or a procedural choice**.

# Leader the Opposition (LoP)

Complete UPSC Master Notes



## Constitutional Status

- Not a constitutional post
- Recognised through statutes + parliamentary conventions
- \* LoP = constitutional authority like Speaker, PM, or CAG !



## Statutory Recognition

### At the Union Level:

- Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977
- Gives: Salary & perks equal to Cabinet Minister, Official recognition
- Separate Acts in many States (e.g., Maharashtra (1978), Tamil Nadu, West Bengal)
- \* Acts define who is LoP, not how many seats required 📍



## Who Appoints the LoP?

House	Appointing Authority	
Lok Sabha	Speaker	
Rajya Sabha	Chairman	(Vice-President)
State Assembly	Speaker	
State Council	Chairman	Chairman

- Appointment based on recognition, not automatic entitlement



## 10% Rule

- Not a constitutional rule
- Not a statutory rule
- Merely a parliamentary convention
- Origin: British parliamentary practice
- Applied inconsistently across India

## Historical Precedents (India)

Complete UPSC Master Notes



### Historical Precedents (India)

- 1969–1977: No LoP in Lok Sabha (opposition lacked 10%)
- 16th Lok Sabha (2014–2019): Congress (44 seats) denied LoP status



### States

- Coalitions sworn in as opposition low numbers
- Coalitions recognised Bills, low numbers
- Precedent often overrides numeral rigidity



### Roles & Functions of LoP



#### Inside Legislature

- Leads opposition strategy
- Scrutinises: Bills, Budget Executive actions



#### Outside Legislature

- Represents dissent
- Channels and alternative views

- Precedent often overrides numeral rigidity



**INSTITUTIONAL & CONSTITUTIONAL IMPORTANCE**

MEMBER OF STATUARY COMMITTEES

LOP is part of selection committees for:

- Lokpal
- CBI Director
- Vidhiya Commissioner & balances

📍 **Absence of LOP affects**

- NHRC Chairperson
- CIC (RTI Act)

**9 Powers & Privileges**

- Salary & status equivalent to Cabinet Minister
- Official residence, staff protocol
- Consulted in bipapasan appointments

CHECKS & BALANCES

*Thank You* 😊