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Daily Current Affairs · 4 Issues · PYQ Connections

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Mission X for UPSC

ISSUE 01 GS-I Indian Heritage & Culture

Ministry of Tribal Affairs' Film Festival Opens in Aizawl to Preserve Mizo Heritage

A three-day tribal film festival, inaugurated by Mizoram Art & Culture Minister C. Lalsawivunga, opened in Aizawl on 4 November, jointly organised by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the state government to showcase indigenous Mizo culture through cinema. Running through 6 November at Vanapa Hall and Lianchhiari Run Mini Theatre, it carries short-film and reel-making competitions with cash prizes for local filmmaking talent.

3-DAY	₹2L	10	3	Aizawl
FESTIVAL DURATION	TOP SHORT-FILM PRIZE	SHORT FILMS HONOURED	REEL CATEGORY WINNERS	NOV 4–6, MIZORAM

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★☆☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Festival inaugurated by Mizoram Art & Culture Minister C. Lalsawivunga on 4 November 2026.
- Organised by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs with the state's Art & Culture and IPR departments.
- Venues: Vanapa Hall and Lianchhiari Run Mini Theatre, Aizawl.
- Two competition tracks — short films (10 recognised, top prize ₹2 lakh for "Sadawt") and reel-making (3 recognised, top prize ₹30,000 for "Maurawkela").

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-I GS-II

Cinema becomes a vehicle for cultural preservation among North-East tribal communities, whose oral histories and customs rarely find mainstream documentation. The festival sits within a wider central push — spanning PM JANMAN for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, DAJGUA, and Eklavya Model Residential Schools — to pair cultural safeguarding with socio-economic upliftment of Scheduled Tribes. **GS-II | Tribal Welfare & Governance:** the Ministry's direct co-sponsorship of a state cultural event illustrates Centre-State coordination in delivering targeted welfare for tribal populations under the Fifth/Sixth Schedule framework.

Key themes: Indigenous cinema as heritage documentation; tribal sub-plan and welfare architecture; North-East cultural diversity; Centre-State coordination for ST welfare.

ETHICS LENS

"Does preserving a community's culture through state-sponsored platforms risk turning living traditions into curated performances for outside audiences?"

When government bodies fund and showcase indigenous art forms, there is a thin line between genuine empowerment and commodifying heritage for visibility, where communities may end up performing an "idealised" version of culture rather than living it organically.

***GS-IV Value: Authenticity & Dignity** — ensuring preservation efforts centre the agency and lived reality of the community represented, rather than the external optics of "showcasing" development.*

PYQ CONNECT · **UPSC Prelims** 2019

Consider the following statements about Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India: (2019)
1. PVTGs reside in 18 States and one Union Territory.
2. A stagnant or declining population is one of the criteria for determining PVTG status.
3. There are 95 PVTGs officially notified in the country so far.
4. Irular and Konda Reddi tribes are included in the list of PVTGs.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only
(c) 1, 2 and 4 only
(d) 1, 3 and 4 only

Answer: (c). Statement 3 is incorrect — only 75 PVTGs are officially notified (not 95); they are spread across 18 states and 1 UT, identified partly by a stagnant/declining population, and the list includes groups such as Irular and Konda Reddi.

ISSUE 02 GS-II Govt Policies & Social Justice

Union Cabinet Extends 850 Fast-Track Special Courts for Five More Years

The Union Cabinet on 4 November approved extending and strengthening 850 Fast-Track Special Courts (FTSCs) set up to expedite trials in rape and child sexual abuse cases, taking the centrally sponsored scheme through to 2031. State governments, including Madhya Pradesh, welcomed the move as critical to cutting pendency and delivering faster justice to survivors.

850	5 Yrs	2019	Cabinet	Centre+State
FAST-TRACK COURTS EXTENDED	EXTENSION, TO 2031	SCHEME FIRST LAUNCHED	APPROVING AUTHORITY	FUNDING MODEL

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Union Cabinet approved extension & strengthening of 850 Fast-Track Special Courts (FTSCs) on 4 November 2026.
- FTSCs handle rape and child sexual abuse cases on a priority, time-bound basis.
- Extension carries the scheme forward for five more years, through 2031.
- Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav welcomed the decision as "vital for speedy justice."

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-II

Fast-track courts were created to address chronic case pendency in crimes against women and children, where delayed trials erode both deterrence and survivor confidence in the justice system. Extending the scheme signals continuity in the post-2012 legal architecture built around special courts and amended rape laws, while raising questions about whether more courts alone can fix structural bottlenecks — forensic lab capacity, witness protection and investigation quality. **GS-II | Transparency/e-Governance:** as a centrally sponsored scheme, its real-world impact depends on how state judiciaries staff, monitor and report pendency data back to the Centre.

Key themes: Speedy trial as a constitutional value (Article 21); special courts for crimes against women & children; victim-centric criminal justice reform; Centre-State scheme implementation.

ETHICS LENS

"Can justice delayed for a child survivor ever truly be justice served, even when it eventually arrives?"

Fast-track courts exist precisely because ordinary trial timelines can retraumatise survivors of sexual violence, especially children, who must repeatedly recount their experience as a case drags on for years.

***GS-IV Value: Compassion & Justice** — balancing the accused's right to a fair trial with the state's duty to minimise secondary trauma to survivors through time-bound processes.*

PYQ CONNECT · **UPSC Prelims** 2020

In India, Legal Services Authorities provide free legal services to which of the following types of citizens? (2020)
1. Person with an annual income of less than Rs. 1,00,000
2. Transgender with an annual income of less than Rs. 2,00,000
3. Member of Other Backward Classes (OBC) with an annual income of less than Rs. 3,00,000
4. All Senior Citizens
Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3 and 4 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1 and 4 only

Answer: (a). Under Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, free legal aid reaches defined categories — including women and children, SC/ST members, and those below set income thresholds — the same access-to-justice architecture that fast-track courts for women & child safety plug into.

ISSUE 03 GS-III Industrial Policy & Infrastructure

Cabinet Clears ₹14,500-Crore Viability Gap Funding for 92 GWh of Energy Storage

The Union Cabinet approved a Viability Gap Funding scheme worth ₹14,500 crore to build 92 GWh of new grid-scale energy storage — 60 GWh of pumped hydro, 30 GWh of battery storage and 2 GWh of emerging technologies — over five years to 2030-31, about 170% of India's existing storage capacity, to firm up renewable power and enable round-the-clock supply.

92 GWh	₹14,500 Cr	60 GWh	30 GWh	40%
NEW STORAGE TARGETED	VGF OUTLAY	PUMPED HYDRO SHARE	BATTERY STORAGE SHARE	MIN. DOMESTIC CONTENT (BESS)

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Scheme spans FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31; total project investment estimated at ~₹97,600 crore.
- Capacity split: 60 GWh Pumped Storage Projects (PSP) + 30 GWh Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) + 2 GWh alternative technologies.
- Capacity allotted via tariff-based competitive bidding to public and private discoms.
- Mandatory 40% Domestic Content Requirement for BESS projects.
- India projects a need for 411 GWh of grid-scale storage by FY 2031-32.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III

Storage is the missing link that lets variable renewable power — solar and wind — substitute for round-the-clock thermal generation; without it, grid operators must keep fossil-fuel plants on standby, undermining decarbonisation goals. Backing pumped hydro, batteries and emerging technologies together, rather than just one, hedges against any single technology's cost or supply-chain risk, while the domestic content mandate nudges India toward manufacturing capability over import dependence. **GS-III | Science & Technology:** battery and pumped-storage technologies also connect to India's critical minerals push, since BESS manufacturing depends on lithium, cobalt and other inputs India currently imports.

Key themes: Renewable energy integration and grid stability; Viability Gap Funding as a de-risking tool; Atmanirbhar Bharat in battery manufacturing; pumped hydro vs. battery storage trade-offs.

ETHICS LENS

"Who bears the cost when public viability-gap funding de-risks returns for private energy storage developers?"

VGF schemes use public money to make private projects commercially attractive; this is justified when the public good — grid stability and cleaner power for all — clearly outweighs the subsidy, but it also privatises the upside while socialising the early-stage risk.

***GS-IV Value: Fairness in Public Resource Allocation** — ensuring subsidy design (competitive bidding, domestic content rules) channels public support toward genuine public benefit rather than private windfall.*

PYQ CONNECT · **UPSC Prelims** 2024

Recently, the term "pumped-storage hydropower" is actually and appropriately discussed in the context of which one of the following? (2024)

(a) Irrigation of terraced crop fields
(b) Lift irrigation of cereal crops
(c) Long duration energy storage
(d) Rainwater harvesting system

Answer: (c). Pumped-storage hydropower (PSH) works like a giant battery — water is pumped uphill when power is cheap or abundant and released to generate electricity on demand — making it a long-duration energy storage technology, exactly the 60 GWh component the Cabinet's new VGF scheme is built around.

ISSUE 04 GS-II Transparency/e-Governance

Cabinet Approves ₹4,371-Crore VISTAR Scheme to Modernise India's Statistical System

The Union Cabinet cleared VISTAR — the Viksit Bharat Initiative for Statistical Transformation, Analytics and Research — a ₹4,371.10-crore, five-year scheme (2026-27 to 2030-31) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation to overhaul how India measures employment, output and spending, expanding to 59 surveys, two new indices and an eighth Economic Census reaching down to the gram panchayat level.

₹4,371 Cr	59	8th	2	MoSPI
VISTAR OUTLAY	SURVEYS (UP FROM 43)	ECONOMIC CENSUS PLANNED	NEW INDICES INTRODUCED	NODAL MINISTRY

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- VISTAR = Viksit Bharat Initiative for Statistical Transformation, Analytics and Research; outlay ₹4,371.10 crore over FY27-31.
- Nodal ministry: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- Survey count rises to 59, up from 43 in the previous (16th Finance Commission) cycle.
- Two new indicators: Headline Index of Services Production and Index of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises.
- Eighth Economic Census planned, with data down to gram panchayat/municipal ward level; the last completed census was 2013-14.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-II GS-III

Good governance and evidence-based policy depend on statistics that actually capture a fast-changing, increasingly informal and digital economy; India's survey architecture has long struggled with outdated base years, infrequent economic censuses, and blind spots around gig work and e-commerce. VISTAR's bet on AI-assisted validation and alternative data sources (mobile, scanner, e-commerce) aims to close these gaps faster than door-to-door enumeration alone, though its own "privacy by design" framing leaves open how such granular personal data will actually be safeguarded. **GS-III | Science & Technology:** deploying machine learning to flag inconsistent survey responses is itself a case study in using emerging tech for public administration, with all the data-governance questions that follow.

Key themes: Evidence-based policymaking; modernising India's statistical architecture; Economic Census and informal-sector measurement; data privacy in AI-enabled governance.

ETHICS LENS

"Should the state use citizens' mobile-phone and e-commerce data to build better statistics, even when consent and safeguards remain unspecified?"

Richer, more granular data can make welfare targeting and economic policy far more accurate, but when a scheme invokes "privacy by design" without laying out what data is collected, how long it is kept, or who can access it, citizens are asked to trust a promise rather than verify a safeguard.

***GS-IV Value: Transparency & Informed Consent** — public data-modernisation efforts should make their privacy safeguards as legible and verifiable as their statistical ambitions.*

PYQ CONNECT · **UPSC Prelims** 2015

In the Index of Eight Core Industries, which one of the following is given the highest weight? (2015)

(a) Coal Production
(b) Electricity generation
(c) Fertilizer Production
(d) Steel Production

Answer: (b). Among the four options, Electricity Generation carries the highest weight (19.85%) in the Index of Eight Core Industries — a reminder that India's headline economic indicators rest on exactly the kind of survey and index architecture VISTAR has now been funded to modernise.

🧠 Memory Lab

Rapid revision · High-retention formats · Today's key concepts

THU · 05 NOV 2026

✕ XTRACTS IN 30 SECONDS

1. Tribal Film Fest, Aizawl: Three-day Ministry of Tribal Affairs festival (Nov 4–6) showcases Mizo cinema & heritage, with cash prizes for short films and reels.

2. 850 Fast-Track Courts Extended: Cabinet extends special courts for rape & child-abuse cases by five years, through 2031.

3. 92 GWh Energy Storage VGF: ₹14,500-crore scheme funds 60 GWh pumped hydro + 30 GWh battery storage + 2 GWh alternative tech by 2030-31.

4. VISTAR Statistics Overhaul: ₹4,371-crore, AI-enabled modernisation of India’s surveys, indices and the 8th Economic Census.

🔥 NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

850 FAST-TRACK COURTS EXTENDED	**5 Yrs** FTSC EXTENSION, TO 2031	**92 GWh** NEW ENERGY STORAGE CAPACITY
₹14,500 Cr STORAGE VGF OUTLAY	**60 GWh** PUMPED HYDRO SHARE	**₹4,371 Cr** VISTAR OUTLAY
59 SURVEYS UNDER VISTAR	**3-Day** MIZORAM TRIBAL FILM FEST	**40%** BESS DOMESTIC CONTENT MANDATE

🟣 ETHICS QUICK REFERENCE

ISSUE 01 — CULTURAL PRESERVATION

Showcasing tribal art must empower communities, not merely display them for outside audiences. **Value: Authenticity & Dignity.**

ISSUE 02 — JUSTICE DELIVERY

Fast courts must speed up trials without trading away fairness to the accused. **Value: Compassion & Justice.**

ISSUE 03 — PUBLIC SUBSIDY

Viability Gap Funding must serve public benefit, not private windfall. **Value: Fairness in Resource Allocation.**

ISSUE 04 — DATA GOVERNANCE

Richer statistics are worth little without real, verifiable privacy safeguards. **Value: Transparency & Consent.**

🔗 CONNECTING THE DOTS

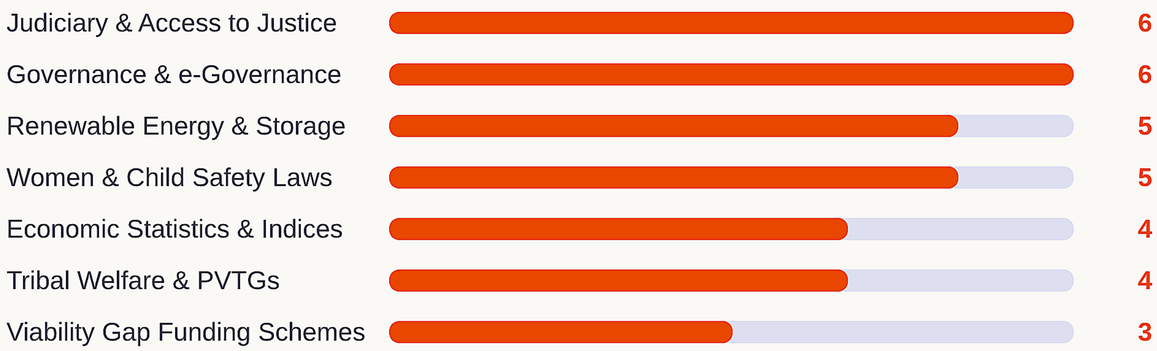
One Cabinet meeting, three governance threads

Today’s judicial, energy and statistical decisions all came from a single 4 November Union Cabinet sitting — a reminder that Mains answers can often link separate-looking issues under one Viksit Bharat @2047 governance umbrella.

◎ QUICK REVISION CHECKLIST

- ☐ PVTGs: 75 groups (not 92/95), across 18 states + 1 UT.
- ☐ Fast-Track Special Courts: extended for crimes against women & children to 2031.
- ☐ Pumped-storage hydropower = long-duration energy storage (2024 PYQ).
- ☐ 92 GWh storage target = 60 GWh PSP + 30 GWh BESS + 2 GWh alternative tech.
- ☐ BESS projects need ≥40% Domestic Content Requirement.
- ☐ VISTAR run by MoSPI; outlay ₹4,371.10 crore, FY27-31.
- ☐ 8th Economic Census will reach gram panchayat/ward level.
- ☐ Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 — free legal aid to women, children, SC/ST, low-income groups.

📊 PYQ FREQUENCY — 10-YEAR VIEW



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