ISSUE 01 GS-I Geography

Cyclone Murasu Makes Landfall in Andhra Pradesh, Reviving Focus on Bay of Bengal Cyclogenesis

Severe Cyclonic Storm ‘Murasu’ crossed the Andhra Pradesh coast near Ongole (Prakasam district) on 3 November, the latest in a run of post-monsoon Bay of Bengal systems to strike the eastern coast this season. The storm damaged over 30,000 acres of standing crop and triggered large-scale evacuation across 15 districts, renewing attention on the physical mechanisms — the retreating monsoon trough, warm sea-surface temperatures and low wind shear — that make the Bay of Bengal one of the world’s most cyclogenic basins between October and December.

15	171	10,805	30,661	Ongole
DISTRICTS ALERTED	RELIEF CAMPS	PEOPLE EVACUATED	ACRES CROP HIT	LANDFALL SITE

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- IMD names North Indian Ocean cyclones from a rotating list contributed by 13 member countries of the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones.
- IMD’s intensity scale runs depression → deep depression → cyclonic storm → severe cyclonic storm → very severe → extremely severe → super cyclonic storm.
- October–December is the Bay of Bengal’s secondary, more intense cyclone season, driven by the retreating monsoon trough and residual ocean heat.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-I | Geography GS-III | Disaster Management

The frequency and intensity of post-monsoon Bay of Bengal cyclones links physical geography to governance capacity. Geographically, the Bay’s shallow, funnel-shaped northern reaches, warm (28°C+) sea-surface temperatures and weak vertical wind shear in October–November make it more cyclogenic than the Arabian Sea, while the weakening retreating-monsoon trough supplies the initial low-pressure disturbance. Key themes: IMD’s severe-cyclonic-storm classification and the WMO/ESCAP naming protocol; possible climate-linked intensification of post-monsoon systems; last-mile early-warning dissemination. A genuine secondary connection lies in **GS-III | Disaster Management** — Andhra Pradesh’s pre-emptive evacuation of over 10,000 residents, NDRF/SDRF deployment and real-time coordination via the state’s ‘Mana Mitra’ WhatsApp channel reflect the post-2013 shift from relief-centric to prevention-and-mitigation disaster management under the NDMA.

ETHICS LENS

“Should disaster warnings prioritise administrative caution over the economic cost of evacuation to those being moved?”
Early, wide-margin evacuation orders save lives but halt fishing, farm labour and daily-wage work for days, and repeated ‘false alarms’ can erode public trust in future warnings — administrators must weigh an avoidable death against an avoidable economic loss without losing future compliance.
GS-IV Value: Non-maleficence — the duty to avoid foreseeable harm outweighs efficiency or cost, justifying precautionary evacuation provided its burden does not fall disproportionately on the poorest.

Connects to: **Bay of Bengal cyclogenesis → monsoon–ocean coupling** PYQ

With reference to ‘Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)’ sometimes mentioned in the news while forecasting Indian monsoon, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2017)
1. The IOD phenomenon is characterised by a difference in sea surface temperature between tropical Western Indian Ocean and tropical Eastern Pacific Ocean.
2. An IOD phenomenon can influence an El Nino’s impact on the monsoon.

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

Answer: (b) — Statement 1 is wrong: IOD is the SST difference between the Arabian Sea (western pole) and the eastern Indian Ocean near Indonesia (eastern pole), not the Eastern Pacific. Statement 2 is correct: IOD phases can reinforce or offset El Niño’s effect on the monsoon — the same ocean–atmosphere coupling that also modulates Bay of Bengal cyclogenesis.

ISSUE 02 GS-II Social Justice

Cabinet Extends Fast-Track Special Courts Scheme Till 2031, Network to Grow to 850 Courts

The Union Cabinet approved a five-year extension (FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31) of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Fast Track Special Courts, raising the sanctioned network from 779 to 850 courts dedicated to rape and POCSO Act cases, at a total outlay of ₹3,788.04 crore. The Centre’s ₹2,353.15 crore share continues to be financed through the Nirbhaya Fund, with states and UTs contributing ₹1,434.89 crore, as the Department of Justice seeks to cut pendency in crimes against women and children.

850	₹3,788 Cr	2031	399	Nirbhaya Fund
COURTS TARGET	TOTAL OUTLAY	EXTENDED TILL	POCSO-EXCLUSIVE	CENTRE'S SHARE

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- The FTSC scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme jointly funded by the Centre (via the Nirbhaya Fund) and states/UTs, implemented through the Department of Justice.
- POCSO = Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012; ‘exclusive POCSO courts’ try only offences under this Act.
- The Nirbhaya Fund was set up in 2013, after the December 2012 Delhi gang-rape case, as a non-lapsable corpus for women’s safety schemes.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-II | Social Justice GS-I | Indian Society

Fast-tracking rape and POCSO trials sits at the intersection of judicial reform and social justice. Key themes: the constitutional guarantee of a speedy trial read into Article 21’s ‘life and liberty’; India’s high pendency of crimes-against-women cases in sessions courts; the shift from a punitive to a survivor-centric criminal-justice architecture (in-camera trials, victim compensation, child-friendly courtrooms under POCSO). A genuine secondary connection lies in **GS-I | Indian Society**, since delayed justice in sexual-offence cases disproportionately affects women and children from economically weaker sections who cannot sustain prolonged litigation — making speedy disposal itself a social-equity instrument and not merely a legal one.

ETHICS LENS

“Does ‘fast’ justice risk becoming a trade-off against ‘fair’ justice?”
Compressing trial timelines to ease victims’ suffering is a legitimate state response, but speed achieved by cutting corners — truncated cross-examination, under-resourced defence counsel, or judges handling unsustainable caseloads — can convert a rights-protecting reform into a due-process risk for the accused.
GS-IV Value: Procedural justice — the integrity of a fair hearing for all parties must be preserved even while compressing timelines, since the legitimacy of an outcome depends on the fairness of the process that produced it.

Connects to: **Legal Services Authorities → access to justice for victims** PYQ

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

(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 covers low-income persons, women and children, SC/ST members, transgender persons and disaster/trafficking victims — not OBC status or senior citizenship by itself. This NALSA network is what gives FTSC verdicts practical reach for under-resourced victims.

ISSUE 03 GS-III Infrastructure

Cabinet Clears ₹14,500-Crore Scheme for 92 GWh of Grid-Scale Energy Storage

The Union Cabinet approved a ₹14,500 crore viability-gap-funding (VGF) scheme to add 92 GWh of new grid-scale battery and pumped-storage capacity between FY 2026-27 and FY 2030-31, aimed at smoothing the variability of India's rapidly expanding solar and wind fleet and cutting curtailment losses as renewable capacity scales toward the 500 GW non-fossil target.

₹14,500 Cr	92 GWh	FY27–31	VGF	500 GW
TOTAL OUTLAY	NEW STORAGE	SCHEME WINDOW	FUNDING MODEL	2030 RE GOAL

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Viability Gap Funding (VGF) is a capital subsidy — used earlier for solar and offshore wind — that bridges the gap between a project's market-viable tariff and its actual cost, rather than funding the full project cost.
- Grid-scale storage includes battery energy storage systems (BESS) and pumped-storage hydropower (PSH); PSH is officially recognised as a long-duration energy storage technology.
- India's installed non-fossil capacity target under its NDC-linked goals is 500 GW by 2030.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III | Infrastructure GS-III | Science & Tech

Storage is the binding constraint on India's renewable transition, making this a core **GS-III | Infrastructure** theme — intermittent solar and wind generation needs dispatchable backup to avoid grid instability and curtailment, and VGF-based de-risking is the model India already used to scale utility solar tariffs down sharply. A genuine secondary connection lies in **GS-III | Science & Technology**: battery-chemistry choices (lithium-ion versus emerging sodium-ion cells), round-trip efficiency, and siting constraints for pumped-storage schemes are live technology-policy questions the scheme must navigate alongside the capital subsidy.

ETHICS LENS

"Who should bear the upfront cost of a cleaner but currently more expensive grid?"
Storage-backed renewable power still costs more upfront than unabated thermal generation; funding that gap through the exchequer effectively asks today's taxpayers to subsidise tomorrow's cleaner, cheaper grid — a genuine intergenerational and inter-class equity question about who pays now for benefits realised later.
GS-IV Value: Intergenerational equity — the duty to protect future generations' interests can justify present fiscal cost, provided the transition's burden does not fall disproportionately on today's poorest energy consumers.

Connects to: **Long-duration storage → pumped-storage hydropower** PYQ

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 works like a giant battery, pumping water uphill during surplus generation and releasing it to generate power on demand — exactly the long-duration storage capability the new 92 GWh scheme is designed to scale up.

ISSUE 04 GS-III Industrial Policy

Cabinet Approves ₹2,814-Crore Scheme to Build Domestic Critical Mineral Processing Capacity

The Union Cabinet cleared a ₹2,814 crore capital-expenditure support scheme over five years (FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31) to build domestic processing and refining capacity for critical minerals, aimed at cutting import dependence on inputs vital to clean energy, electronics and defence manufacturing, and strengthening the wider National Critical Mineral Mission ecosystem.

₹2,814 Cr	FY27–31	Processing	Capex Support	2023
TOTAL OUTLAY	SCHEME WINDOW	STAGE TARGETED	FUNDING MODEL	MSP MEMBERSHIP

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- 'Critical minerals' are minerals essential to modern technology (lithium, cobalt, graphite, rare earths, etc.) whose supply is concentrated in few countries, making them strategically vulnerable to disruption.
- India joined the US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) in 2023 to secure diversified, responsible critical-mineral supply chains.
- Parliament's 2023 amendment to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 empowered the Centre to exclusively auction mining leases for specified critical minerals.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III | Industrial Policy GS-II | Int'l Relations

This scheme targets the processing/refining bottleneck rather than mining itself — India holds some critical-mineral reserves but lacks midstream refining capacity, so raw ore is often exported and re-imported as processed material at a premium, exactly the vulnerability the National Critical Mineral Mission is meant to close. Key themes: reducing import dependence for clean-energy and defence supply chains; building a 'mine-to-cell' value chain domestically; capital support rather than tariff protection. A real secondary connection lies in **GS-II | International Relations**, since India's push for mineral self-reliance runs alongside plurilateral groupings like the Minerals Security Partnership that explicitly aim to reduce China-centric concentration of critical-mineral refining capacity.

ETHICS LENS

"Does resource nationalism in critical minerals conflict with the ideal of open global trade?"
Building domestic processing capacity is a legitimate response to supply-chain concentration risk, but if every major economy pursues the same strategic self-sufficiency at once, the resulting fragmentation could raise costs and slow the clean-energy transition globally — pitting national economic security against collective climate goals.
GS-IV Value: Distributive justice — balancing a nation's legitimate right to secure strategic resources against the shared global interest in an efficient, low-cost clean-energy transition that benefits countries without mineral wealth of their own.

Connects to: **Minerals Security Partnership → critical mineral self-reliance** PYQ

Consider the following statements: (2025)
I. India has joined the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) as a member.
II. India is a resource-rich country in all the 30 critical minerals that MSP has identified.
III. The Parliament in 2023 has amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, empowering the Central Government to exclusively auction mining leases and composite licenses for certain critical minerals.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) I and II only
(b) II and III only
(c) I and III only
(d) I, II and III

Answer: (c) — India joined the MSP in 2023 and Parliament amended the MMDR Act the same year to let the Centre auction critical-mineral blocks — but India is not resource-rich in all 30 MSP-identified minerals, which is exactly why this processing-capacity scheme targets minerals India must still import and refine.

🧠 Memory Lab

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

DAY · 06 NOV 2026

1. Cyclone Murasu — made landfall near Ongole (AP) on 3 Nov; 30,661 acres crop damage, 10,805 evacuated, no deaths reported — IMD credits the retreating monsoon trough for the Bay of Bengal's active Oct–Dec cyclone window.

2. 850 Fast-Track Courts — Cabinet extended the FTSC scheme to 2031 at ₹3,788 crore, growing the network from 779 to 850 courts for rape and POCSO cases, funded via the Nirbhaya Fund.

3. ₹14,500-Cr Storage Push — a new viability-gap-funding scheme targets 92 GWh of grid-scale battery and pumped-storage capacity by FY31 to firm up India's solar and wind fleet.

4. Critical Mineral Processing — a ₹2,814-crore scheme will build domestic refining capacity for critical minerals, tackling India's processing-stage import dependence under the National Critical Mineral Mission.

🔥 NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

30,661 ACRES CROP DAMAGE — CYCLONE MURASU	**10,805** PEOPLE EVACUATED — CYCLONE MURASU	**171** RELIEF CAMPS OPENED
850 FAST-TRACK COURTS BY 2031	**₹3,788 Cr** FTSC SCHEME OUTLAY	**92 GWh** NEW GRID STORAGE TARGET
₹14,500 Cr ENERGY STORAGE OUTLAY	**₹2,814 Cr** CRITICAL MINERAL SCHEME OUTLAY	**2031** COMMON SCHEME HORIZON (FY31)

🔮 ETHICS QUICK REFERENCE

ISSUE 01 — CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS

Early evacuation orders cost livelihoods even when a storm proves milder than forecast.
Value: Non-maleficence — foreseeable harm must be avoided even at material cost.

ISSUE 02 — FAST-TRACK JUSTICE

Compressing trial timelines to help victims must not come at the cost of the accused's right to a fair hearing.
Value: Procedural justice — a fair process is owed to all parties regardless of the urgency of the outcome.

ISSUE 03 — CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION COST

Subsidising grid storage today asks current taxpayers to fund tomorrow's cleaner grid.
Value: Intergenerational equity — today's burden must be weighed against tomorrow's benefit.

ISSUE 04 — RESOURCE SELF-RELIANCE

Pursuing mineral self-sufficiency domestically can conflict with the shared global interest in a low-cost energy transition.
Value: Distributive justice — national strategic interest must be balanced against collective global welfare.

QUICK FACT

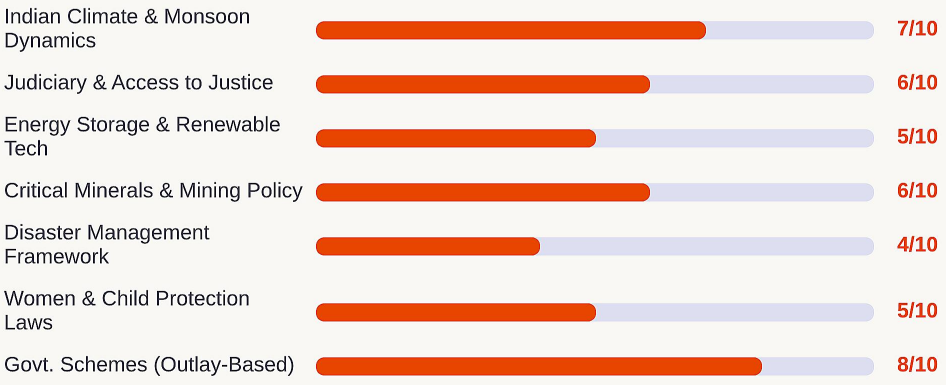
WMO/ESCAP Cyclone Naming

Cyclones in the North Indian Ocean are named from a rotating list contributed by 13 member countries of the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones — India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Yemen and Iran. 'Murasu' (Tamil for 'drum') was a name proposed by India.

◎ QUICK REVISION CHECKLIST

- ☐ FTSC scheme: 779 → 850 courts; ₹3,788.04 cr; Centre ₹2,353.15 cr (Nirbhaya Fund) + States ₹1,434.89 cr.
- ☐ Energy storage VGF scheme and the critical mineral scheme share the same FY27–FY31 window as FTSC.
- ☐ 92 GWh target = new grid-scale battery + pumped-storage capacity by FY31.
- ☐ Critical mineral processing scheme (₹2,814 cr) targets refining, not mining — the midstream gap.
- ☐ India joined the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) in 2023; not resource-rich in all 30 MSP-listed minerals.
- ☐ 2023 MMDR Act amendment: Centre can exclusively auction leases for specified critical minerals.
- ☐ Cyclone Murasu: Severe Cyclonic Storm, landfall near Ongole, Prakasam district, 3 Nov.
- ☐ Bay of Bengal's Oct–Dec cyclone season is driven by the retreating monsoon trough + residual ocean heat.

📊 PYQ FREQUENCY — 10-YEAR VIEW



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