Xtracts
Daily Current Affairs · 4 Issues · PYQ Connections

17 NOV 2026
Mission X for UPSC

D01 GS-I Indian Heritage & Culture

Supreme Court Halts Shifting of 135-Year-Old Central Secretariat Library's Books

On 16 November, Justices Sanjay Kumar and Sanjeev Sachdeva ordered that books of the Central Secretariat Library (CSL) — housed in Shastri Bhawan and threatened with relocation under the Central Vista redevelopment plan — must not be shifted until the next hearing on 20 November. The bench flagged an “ad hoc approach” by the Centre and asked it to “show some respect” to a collection of about 8.5 lakh books, after the amicus curiae said volumes already moved to RK Puram had lain in “atrocious condition” for 15 years.

135 yrs	8.5L	15 yrs	Nov 20	1702
LIBRARY'S AGE	BOOKS HOUSED	RK PURAM NEGLECT	NEXT HEARING	OLDEST PROVENANCE

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- CSL is housed in Shastri Bhawan, within the Central Vista Redevelopment Project footprint along Kartavya Path.
- SC took suo motu cognisance after a 29 September report titled “135-yr-old library, 8.5 lakh books – and no room in the new Central Vista plan.”
- The books at RK Puram originally belonged to the Tulsi Sadan Library; the Court asked the amicus to verify this.
- Union government's affidavit on space allocation and layout is now on record; matter listed next for 20 November.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-I GS-II

The case highlights the tension between urban redevelopment and heritage conservation in the governance of public institutions. A redevelopment meant to modernise India's seat of government risks displacing a heritage asset without adequate planning. It also carries a **GS-II | Judicial Activism** dimension — the Court's suo motu cognisance shows how constitutional courts can compel administrative accountability even without a formal petitioner. Key themes: documentation and preservation of institutional archives as civic heritage, space planning under heritage-conservation norms, and bureaucratic accountability for safeguarding public assets entrusted to the state.

ETHICS LENS

“Does administrative convenience ever justify treating a nation's intellectual heritage as disposable?”
The bench's rebuke — telling the Centre to “show some respect” to a collection it was ready to relocate without a coherent plan — surfaces a recurring tension in governance: efficiency-driven redevelopment versus the duty of care owed to a shared public inheritance. When custodianship becomes a logistical afterthought, institutional memory and public trust erode together.
***GS-IV Value: Stewardship** — the obligation of those entrusted with public institutions to safeguard, not merely administer, the resources placed in their care for future generations.*

Heritage & UNESCO recognition is a repeat favourite — most recently in **2024** PRELIMS 2024

Consider the following properties included in the World Heritage List released by UNESCO: (2024)
1. Shantiniketan 2. Rani-ki-Vav 3. Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas 4. Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodhgaya
How many of the above properties were included in 2023?

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

Answer: (b) Shantiniketan and the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2023; Rani-ki-Vav and the Mahabodhi Temple Complex were inscribed earlier.

D02 GS-II Elections & Representation of People Act

ECI Tells Supreme Court: No Prosecution for SIR-Deleted Voters Who File Form 6

In a supplementary affidavit filed on 14 November and reported on 16 November, the Election Commission told the Supreme Court that voters dropped from draft rolls during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) will not be prosecuted under Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, merely for filing Form 6 to seek re-enrolment — even if they were enrolled earlier — provided they are not already enrolled elsewhere. The clarification, first issued on 3 November, follows the Delhi High Court's 14 October ruling in *Nilotpal Datta v. ECI*, and has been sent to all Chief Electoral Officers for publicity in local languages.

Sec 31	Nov 14	Oct 14	7	Form 6
RP ACT, 1950 CLAUSE	ECI AFFIDAVIT FILED	DELHI HC RULING CITED	STATES/UTS GIVEN ASDD RELIEF	RE-ENROLMENT FORM

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- SIR (Special Intensive Revision) is the ongoing nationwide exercise to update and clean up draft electoral rolls.
- ASDD — Absent, Shifted, Dead or Duplicate — is the category used to flag voters likely for deletion from draft rolls.
- Form 6 is prescribed under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 for inclusion in, or transfer of, electoral roll entries.
- The petition, *Rakesh Kumar Singh @ Rakesh Singh v. Union of India*, is pending before the Supreme Court.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-II

The episode shows how election machinery must balance roll accuracy with safeguarding the franchise of genuine electors. Clarifying that filing Form 6 will not itself invite prosecution removes a chilling effect that could have discouraged legitimate re-enrolment — bearing directly on political participation in a representative democracy. A further strand falls under **GS-II | Judiciary**: the Delhi High Court's *Nilotpal Datta* ruling shaping ECI policy nationwide illustrates how constitutional courts steer election administration. Key themes: the ECI's Article 324 mandate to superintend free and fair elections, statutory safeguards under the Representation of the People Acts of 1950 and 1951, and Centre–Commission–state coordination in roll revision exercises.

ETHICS LENS

“Should an honest mistake in paperwork cost a citizen their vote?”
Large-scale roll revisions inevitably sweep up genuine voters alongside ineligible or duplicate entries. Threatening a re-enrolling citizen with prosecution for a bona fide Form 6 application — even absent any intent to deceive — risks punishing the vulnerable for a process they did not design, and could deter the very electors the exercise means to protect.
***GS-IV Value: Proportionality** — safeguards against fraud must be calibrated so the remedy never becomes more punitive than the risk it guards against, especially where a fundamental civic right is at stake.*

A UPSC Prelims 2017 classic on the Election Commission's composition and powers PRELIMS 2017

Consider the following statements: (2017)
1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and by-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognized political parties.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) The ECI ordinarily functions as a three-member body (CEC + two ECs) and decides its own election schedule independent of the Home Ministry; it does adjudicate disputes over splits/mergers of recognised parties under the Election Symbols Order, 1968 — making only statement 3 correct.

D03 GS-III Climate Change & International Negotiations

India Pledges “Constructive Role” to COP31 Presidency as Antalya Climate Talks Progress

On 16 November, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav met Chris Bowen, COP31's President of Negotiations, and UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell on the sidelines of the UN Climate Change Conference in Antalya, Turkey (9–20 November), assuring India's “support and constructive role” to the Turkish presidency led by Murat Kurum. Discussions centred on simplifying negotiations around mitigation, adaptation, just transition and climate finance, as parties work toward outcomes consistent with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal and a 2050 net-zero horizon.

Nov 9–20	Antalya	1.5°C	2050	2
COP31 DURATION	HOST CITY, TURKEY	WARMING TARGET	NET-ZERO HORIZON	KEY UNFCCC MEETINGS HELD

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- COP31, the 31st UNFCCC Conference of Parties, is being held in Antalya, Turkey (9–20 Nov 2026); Turkey holds the Presidency (Murat Kurum), with Australia's Chris Bowen as President of Negotiations.
- Simon Stiell is the UNFCCC Executive Secretary.
- COP31 follows COP30, held in Belém, Brazil, in the annual UNFCCC Conference-of-Parties cycle.
- Core negotiation strands at COP31: mitigation ambition, adaptation finance, “just transition,” and a simplified negotiation process.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III GS-II

India's engagement at COP31 reflects a dual posture in global climate governance — supporting multilateral consensus-building while insisting that developed nations honour their climate finance, technology-transfer and capacity-building obligations before ambition is ratcheted up domestically. This also carries a **GS-II | International Relations** dimension: India's role as a bridge-builder between developed and developing-country blocs within UNFCCC negotiations. Key themes: India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and net-zero-by-2070 pledge, the climate finance architecture (Green Climate Fund, Article 6 carbon markets), and the Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR-RC) principle.

ETHICS LENS

“Who bears the moral burden of a crisis that developing nations did the least to cause?”
Even as India assures “constructive engagement,” it continues to press wealthier nations on their historical responsibility for cumulative emissions. The ethical core of these talks is intergenerational and international justice — balancing the urgency of collective climate action against the unequal capacity, and unequal culpability, of nations to bear its costs.
***GS-IV Value: Distributive Justice** — fairness demands that the burden of climate mitigation be apportioned according to a nation's historical contribution to the problem and its present capacity to act, not applied uniformly regardless of circumstance.*

A direct 2016 Prelims question on the vocabulary of climate negotiations — PRELIMS 2016

The term ‘Intended Nationally Determined Contributions’ is sometimes seen in the news in the context of (2016)

(a) pledges by European countries to rehabilitate Middle East refugees
(b) plan of action by countries to combat climate change
(c) capital contributed to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
(d) plan of action by countries regarding Sustainable Development Goals

Answer: (b) NDCs are the Paris Agreement mechanism through which each country sets out its own climate-action pledges — exactly the kind of national commitment being negotiated and reviewed at COP31.

D04 GS-III River Pollution & Environmental Governance

Supreme Court Warns States, UTs of Penalties as Yamuna Pollution Rises Despite Heavy Spending

Hearing a long-running suo motu matter, Justices Manoj Misra and Manmohan observed that pollution in the Yamuna “has only increased” despite large sums spent on cleaning the river, and warned states, union territories and local authorities of penalties if they fail to curb discharge from the roughly 520 drains feeding it. The bench directed that Zone ‘O’ — the Yamuna's floodplain under the Delhi Master Plan 2047 — be kept a protected green zone, extended upstream and downstream where feasible, with no new permanent construction and existing unauthorised structures removed, while sewage from unplanned colonies is tapped and treated at source.

520	2	Zone 'O'	2047	Suo Motu
DRAINS INTO THE RIVER	JUDGES ON BENCH	PROTECTED FLOODPLAIN	MASTER PLAN HORIZON	NATURE OF SC CASE

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

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- The Yamuna is a tributary of the Ganga, originating from the Yamunotri Glacier on the Bandarpunch massif in Uttarakhand.
- Zone ‘O’ is the Yamuna floodplain designated under the Delhi Master Plan, meant to stay largely free of permanent construction.
- This Supreme Court proceeding is distinct from National Green Tribunal (NGT) cases; CPCB and state Pollution Control Boards remain the technical monitoring agencies on the ground.
- Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) is the standard parameter used to assess the organic pollution load of a river.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III GS-II

The order highlights the gap between funds allocated for river-cleaning programmes and actual improvement in water quality — a recurring theme also seen in the Ganga Action Plan and Namami Gange. A further strand falls under **GS-II | Centre–State Relations**: effective river cleaning demands coordinated action across state boundaries and local bodies, an area constitutional federalism often slows down. Key themes: urban-planning failures in regularising unauthorised colonies that lack sewage infrastructure, the judiciary's expanding role in environmental governance through suo motu intervention, and the “polluter pays” and precautionary principles rooted in Article 21's implicit right to a clean environment.

ETHICS LENS

“Does spending money on a problem discharge the duty to actually solve it?”
The Court's rebuke — that pollution rose despite “huge sums” spent — exposes a gap between outlay and outcome that recurs across India's environmental programmes. When accountability is measured by expenditure rather than results, public money can become a substitute for public responsibility rather than a means of discharging it.
***GS-IV Value: Accountability** — public authorities owe not just the expenditure of allocated funds but a demonstrable, measurable improvement in the public good those funds were meant to serve.*

A 2018 Prelims question distinguishing the two key institutions of river-pollution governance — PRELIMS 2018

How is the National Green Tribunal (NGT) different from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)? (2018)
1. The NGT has been established by an Act whereas the CPCB has been created by an executive order of the Government.
2. The NGT provides environmental justice and helps reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts whereas the CPCB promotes cleanliness of streams and wells, and aims to improve the quality of air in the country.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) The NGT was established by the NGT Act, 2010, but the CPCB is also statutory — created under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, not by executive order. Only statement 2, on their differing functions, is correct.

🧠 Memory Lab

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

TUESDAY · 17 NOV 2026

✕ XTRACTS IN 30 SECONDS

1. Library Heritage Standoff: SC halts shifting of the 135-yr-old Central Secretariat Library's 8.5 lakh books pending a 20 Nov hearing, rebuking the Centre's “ad hoc approach.”

2. SIR Voters Get Relief: ECI assures the SC that Form 6 re-enrolment after SIR deletion won't attract prosecution under Section 31 of the RP Act, 1950.

3. India at COP31: Bhupender Yadav pledges “constructive role” to the Antalya presidency on mitigation, finance and just transition.

4. Yamuna Pollution Warning: SC threatens penalties on states/UTs as river pollution rises despite heavy cleanup spending; orders Zone ‘O’ protection.

🔥 NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

135 YRS — LIBRARY'S AGE	**8.5L** BOOKS IN COLLECTION	**Nov 20** NEXT SC HEARING, LIBRARY
Sec 31 RP ACT, 1950 CLAUSE	**7** STATES/UTS GIVEN ASDD RELIEF	**Nov 9–20** COP31 DURATION, ANTALYA
1.5°C PARIS WARMING CEILING	**520** DRAINS INTO THE YAMUNA	**2047** DELHI MASTER PLAN HORIZON

🟣 ETHICS QUICK REFERENCE

ISSUE 01 — LIBRARY HERITAGE

Centre showed urgency to shift the library's books without a coherent space plan. **Value: Stewardship.**

ISSUE 02 — SIR / FORM 6

Threat of prosecution could deter genuine voters from re-enrolling after draft-roll deletion. **Value: Proportionality.**

ISSUE 03 — COP31

Developed nations' historical responsibility weighed against the urgency of collective climate action. **Value: Distributive Justice.**

ISSUE 04 — YAMUNA POLLUTION

Heavy spending on river-cleaning hasn't translated into cleaner water. **Value: Accountability.**

PRELIMS TIP

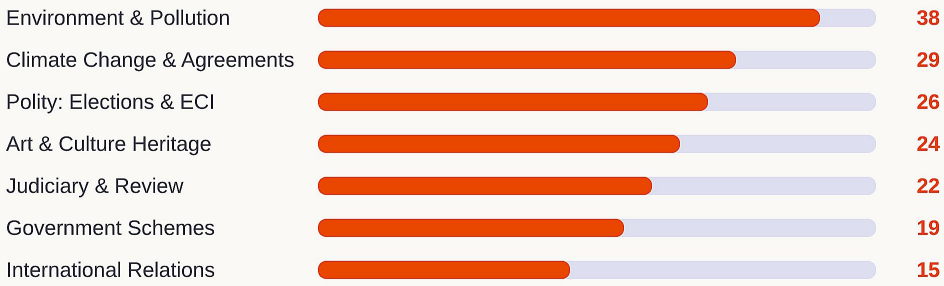
Don't confuse the two RP Acts

RP Act, **1950** governs preparation of electoral rolls (Form 6, Section 31); RP Act, **1951** governs the actual conduct of elections and disqualifications.

◎ QUICK REVISION CHECKLIST

- ☐ CSL = Central Secretariat Library, 135 yrs old, ~8.5 lakh books, housed in Shastri Bhawan.
- ☐ Central Vista Redevelopment Project threatens the library's space; SC took suo motu cognisance.
- ☐ SIR = Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls; ASDD = Absent/Shifted/Dead/Duplicate.
- ☐ Form 6 is filed under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 for roll inclusion/correction.
- ☐ COP31 (Antalya, Turkey, 9–20 Nov) is the 31st UNFCCC Conference of Parties; Presidency: Turkey.
- ☐ Paris Agreement goal: limit warming well below 2°C, pursue 1.5°C; global net-zero by 2050.
- ☐ Yamuna's Zone ‘O’ is its protected floodplain under the Delhi Master Plan 2047.
- ☐ CPCB (Water Act, 1974) ≠ NGT (NGT Act, 2010) — different origins, different functions.

📊 PYQ FREQUENCY — 10-YEAR VIEW



Join Mission X on Telegram

Daily CA decoded against PYQs · GS angles · Prelims + Mains + Ethics · Free

t.me/MissionXUPSC · +91 79025 80728