

CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE 2026



**DAILY CURRENT
AFFAIRS NOTES**

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A landmark law in 2013, it needs a spine in 2025

- A case in **Chandigarh**, where a college professor was **sacked** after a probe by the **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** under the **POSH Act, 2013**, marks a **rare but important precedent**, exposing gaps in the law's ability to deliver **consistent and empathetic justice**.

Gaps in the POSH Act: Structural & Procedural Issues

- The Act suffers from **conceptual and procedural flaws**. Talks about **"consent"** but not **"informed consent"** — crucial where **manipulation** or **power imbalance** invalidates consent.
- Fails to account for **educated perpetrators** who exploit **trust, authority, and information asymmetry**.
- **Emotional harassment** from **deceitful or manipulative relationships** remains outside the Act's ambit.
- When consent is obtained through **fraud** or **emotional coercion**, it should be treated as harassment.
- Many accused shape behaviour to remain in the **grey zone of legality** due to lack of explicit evidence.
- The law remains bound to **visible or explicit acts**, ignoring **subtle psychological exploitation**.

Limitation Period & Its Impact on Justice

- The **three-month limitation period** for filing complaints is a major flaw.
- Survivors of **manipulation or coercion** take longer to recognise and report harassment.
- In universities, **realisation and evidence** may emerge much later.
- **Justice should not come with an expiry date** — the three-month rule strengthens perpetrators' confidence.

Language and Terminology Concerns

- The accused is termed **"respondent"**, not **"accused"**, diluting the seriousness of the offence.
- Similar conduct outside workplaces is treated as a **crime**.
- **Language matters** — softening labels normalises violations and **psychological trauma**.

Burden of Proof & Institutional Challenges

- **Vague definitions** shift the burden of proof onto women.
- Harassment often forms a **behavioural pattern**, not a single act, yet committees seek **direct evidence**.
- Need methods to assess conduct via **anonymous feedback** or **corroborative testimony**.
- Since accused enjoy protection through **multi-member committees**, equal faith should be placed in **circumstantial evidence**. Committees must **read between the lines** and recognise **informal networks**.

Inter-Institutional Complaints: A Missing Framework

- The Act is **silent** on misconduct spanning **multiple institutions**.
- Academia involves **visiting faculty, research collaborations, conferences** — creating cross-institutional spaces.
- No mechanism to **link or jointly pursue cases**, enabling **repeat offenders** to remain unchecked.

Challenges Faced by Complainants

- Filing a complaint comes after **intense internal struggle**.
- The process becomes an **ordeal** with procedural delays, institutional hesitation, and **emotional fatigue**.
- Provision for action against **"malicious" complaints**, meant as a safeguard, ends up **intimidating genuine victims**.
- The process often **retraumatizes** survivors instead of providing relief.

Digital Evidence Dilemma

- Harassment has evolved with technology — **vanishing messages, view-once photos, encrypted chats**.
- ICC members often lack **legal or technical training** to interpret such evidence.
- The law has not adapted to this **digital reality**. Requires updated **definitions**, clear **protocols for digital evidence**, and **mandatory training** for ICC members so technology does not become a **shield for offenders**.

Trump-MbS summit — \$1 trillion among friends

- The Washington Summit may provide **advanced U.S. military equipment access to Pakistan**, with which Saudi Arabia concluded a **strategic mutual defence agreement** in 2025, apparently with the U.S. **nod-and-wink**.
- India, as the world's third-largest oil importer, would prefer oil prices to be low, but **moderation and stability in the oil market** may still be preferable as it navigates for **alternative sources to Russian supplies**.

- **Soaring Saudi ambitions** for its **post-oil Vision-2030**, such as **AI data centres**, may create **economic opportunities for India**.
- **Curbing China's foray into Saudi Arabia** may open the door wider for India, and India needs to prioritise entering into a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Saudi Arabia**.
- The **emerging modus vivendi with Israel** may facilitate the work on the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor**, which transits through **Saudi Arabia**.

Decoding personality rights in the age of AI

- This case highlights how **AI blurs the lines between authenticity and deception**, prompting a reassessment of **legal and ethical frameworks governing personality rights**.
- Personality rights include the **right to control one's name, image, likeness, voice, and other identifiers of identity**. These rights have long been a **bulwark against unauthorised exploitation**.
- Rooted in **privacy, dignity, and economic autonomy**, these rights evolved from common law principles to address commercial exploitation.
- The emergence of **AI**, particularly **generative technologies such as deepfakes**, has amplified these vulnerabilities. **Deepfakes**, AI-generated content that swap faces or voices, **propagate misinformation, enable extortion, and erode trust**.
- While AI fosters innovation, its **unchecked use risks commodifying human identity**, demanding legal safeguards.
- Globally, personality rights differ: **Europe adopts a dignity-based model**, the **U.S. a property-based one**, and **India a hybrid approach**.
- In India, personality rights **lack codification** and stem from **Article 21 of the Constitution**, affirmed in **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)**.
- Courts have classified **AI infringements as privacy or intellectual property breaches**.
- **Amitabh Bachchan v. Rajat Nagi (2022)** recognised personality rights.
- **Anil Kapoor v. Simply Life India (2023)** banned AI reproductions of Mr. Kapoor's identity and "**Jhakaas**" for diluting brand value.
- **Arijit Singh v. Codible Ventures LLP (2024)** protected Mr. Singh's **voice from AI replication**.
- These cases indicate a **judicial shift towards a privacy-property hybrid**.
- India's framework remains **reactive**, with the **Information Technology Act, 2000**, and the **2024 Intermediary Guidelines** addressing impersonation and deepfakes.
- Enforcement is hindered by **anonymity and cross-border data sharing**.
- Scholarly discussions on personality rights in AI centre on **ethics, dignity, and autonomy**.
- **UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, 2021**, provides a **rights-based framework**.
- Its principles stress that **AI must not exploit individuals**.
- Ethical concerns include **AI recreations of deceased artists**, with Indian courts deeming **personality rights non-heritable**.

Over 80% nations got loans from China in the last two decades

- China lent **more than \$2 trillion in loans and grants to over 80% of countries and regions in the world between 2000 and 2023**.
- The **U.S. was the biggest beneficiary**. Entities in **Russia and Australia** were the **second and the third biggest beneficiaries** in the last two decades.
- China is **moving away from its role as an aid provider to relatively poorer nations**, as its focus has shifted towards **commercial lending for developed countries**.
- China's initial focus was on **infrastructural development projects in economically disadvantaged nations**.
- Chinese President launched **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013**, which helped develop **energy, infrastructure, and connectivity projects in Europe and Asia**.
- The AidData report details how **China has scaled back on its lending to such projects**; where **BRI once made up 75%** of China's lending operations, **it now makes up about 25%**.

- As of **2023**, **Indian entities have borrowed or were granted \$11.1 billion from China**, with a large amount of this dedicated to the **energy sector** and **banking and financial services**.

What does the draft Seeds Bill entail?

- **Union Agriculture Ministry** released **draft Seeds Bill**, inviting public comments. Bill aims to ensure **quality of seeds**, promote **ease of doing business**, and reduce compliance burden while retaining strong penal provisions.

History and Background

- In **2023-24**, the country had a requirement of **462.31 lakh quintals** of seeds and an availability of **508.60 lakh quintals**, leading to a **surplus of 46.29 lakh quintals**.
- The seed industry has been demanding amendments to the **Seeds Act of 1966** to incorporate **technological and scientific advancements**, and to address changes in **trade and commerce**.
- The **Federation of Seed Industry of India** called the draft a **timely and much-needed step** toward modernising seed regulation.

New Provisions in the Draft Seeds Bill

- Provides a **regulatory mechanism** for **import, production and supply** of quality seeds.
- Does **not restrict farmers' rights** to **grow, sow, re-sow, save, use, exchange, share or sell farm seeds**, except when sold **under a brand name**.
- Defines **farmer, dealer, distributor and producer** as separate entities.
- Establishes **27-member Central** and **15-member State seed committees**.
 - Central committee can recommend **minimum limits of germination, genetic and physical purity, traits, seed health** and additional standards.
 - State committee can advise on **registration** of seed producers, processing units, dealers, distributors and nurseries.
- Makes **registration of all seed processing units** with State governments **mandatory**.
- Allows Union government to set up a **merit-based and transparent Central Accreditation System** for companies operating in multiple States to promote **ease of doing business**.
- Creates the office of **Registrar** to maintain a **National Register on seed varieties**.
- Details procedure for **field trials** to assess **Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU)**.
- Provides for **Central and State seed testing laboratories** for analysis of seeds.
- Defines **role and powers of seed inspectors**, empowered under **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita** to **search or seize**. Details **punishments** for **trivial, minor and major offences** under the Bill.

Concerns of Farmers

- The **All India Kisan Sabha** claims the Bill will **increase cost of cultivation** by enabling corporates to engage in **predatory pricing**.
- Fear that the Bill is part of a larger political project to **dispossess small farmers** and undermine **seed sovereignty**, favouring **multinational and domestic monopolies**.
- Demand that the draft must complement existing safeguards under the **Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001**, and align with India's commitments under the **Convention on Biological Diversity** and the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**.
- Concern that the Bill introduces a **heavily centralised and corporatised regulatory system**, risking the weakening of **farmer-centered protection**.

What is the row over selecting Head of Police Force in T.N.?

- In **Prakash Singh versus Union of India (2006)**, the Supreme Court laid down detailed guidelines for the **selection of State DGPs/HoPF**.
- **The Court mandated that:** DGP of the State shall be selected by the State Government from amongst the three senior most officers of the department who have been empanelled for promotion to that rank by the UPSC, on the basis of their length of service, very good record, and range of experience for heading the police force.

- It further ruled that the **selected officer must be granted a minimum tenure of two years**, irrespective of their **date of superannuation**.
- **State governments** are required to send proposals to the UPSC at least three months before the anticipated vacancy of the DGP.

Custodial torture: SC raps govt. over CCTV compliance

- The Centre's **lack of response** to a judicial direction to **install CCTV cameras** in the offices of agencies like the **CBI, ED, and the NIA** to prevent **custodial torture** prompted the Supreme Court to ask if it was taking the top court **"very lightly"**.
- It has been **five years** since a Supreme Court judgment made it **mandatory** for the police and Central probe agencies to **fix and maintain CCTV cameras** at police stations and offices of Central law enforcement agencies with powers of **interrogation**.
- In **2020**, a three-judge Bench had directed the Centre to **compulsorily install CCTV cameras and recording equipment** in police stations as a deterrent against **custodial torture**. The court had ordered **similar surveillance** in the offices of Central agencies which conduct **any kind of interrogations**.

'Rupee is Asia's worst performing currency'

- At a **sharp depreciation of 4.3%** against the U.S. Dollar (USD) in this calendar year (January-December 2025), the **Indian Rupee (INR) has become the worst performing currency in Asia**.
- It may **further slide to 90** against the **USD** if the trade deal with the U.S. does not happen in the near future.
- INR's performance has been **weaker compared with peers like the Chinese Yuan and the Indonesian Rupiah**.
- It is still **faring better than structurally weak currencies like the Japanese Yen and Korean Won**, which continue to battle domestic policy challenges.
- The **3.6% appreciation of the USD** over the last two months has put pressure on most currencies, including the INR. India is facing twin external shocks: U.S. tariffs and high precious metal prices. The combination of **adverse geo-economic and geopolitical environments** is weighing upon India's **merchandise trade deficit**.
- **US imposed 50% tariff on India**, hurting exports and leading to a **record \$41.7 billion trade deficit in October**, triggering a rupee slide.
- A **sharp spike in gold price** this year has triggered huge investment in gold and Gold ETFs, leading to a **200% increase in demand for gold in October**, causing the **gold import bill to spike to \$14.72 billion in October**.

Net FDI negative for second straight month in September

- The **sum of money repatriated out of the country by foreign companies and invested abroad by Indian companies was \$2.4 billion more than the foreign investment entering India in September 2025**.
- These figures refer to **direct investment**, which constitutes **investment into assets**, rather than **portfolio investment**, which has to do with **shares in a company**.
- The analysis shows that the **FDI picture looks better over a longer period**.
- **Gross FDI was 15.4% higher** in the **July-September 2025 quarter** than in the same quarter of the previous year.

Wide exit

Gross FDI coming into India stood at \$6.6 billion in September 2025, about 4.3% higher than in September last

■ This amount was **9.1% higher** than it was in August

■ Strong inflows were outpaced by the outflows, particularly when it came to foreign investments done by Indian companies

