

CURRENT AFFAIRS (29-10-2026)
FOR
COMPETITIVE EXAMS
(UPSC, APPSC, TGPSC)

[Study material by EKAM IAS Academy]

Q. With reference to the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, consider the following statements:

1. It introduced special conditions for regulating certain foodstuffs under extraordinary circumstances.
2. These special provisions included specified price-rise thresholds.
3. The special provisions introduced through Section 3(1A) remain part of the current law.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Articles

- SC asks if poll panel has powers to punish voters.
- Cyclone Arna
- DPDP Act 2023
- PM vikasit gram swaraj yojana
- Tandur red gram

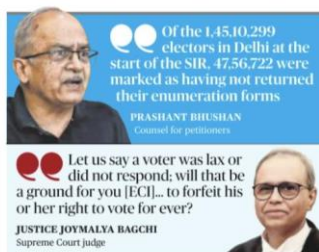
SC asks if poll panel has powers to punish voters

ECI in 'error' to force pre-existing voters whose names were deleted from rolls to apply as new electors, says SC; it asks how electors can be denied vote because they were lax or inert during SIR

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned the authority of Election Commission of India (ECI) to deprive citizens forever of their right to vote simply because they were lax in returning enumeration forms during the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which has disenfranchised nearly 13 crore voters across the country.

"Let us say a voter was lax, inert, or did not respond, will that be a ground for you, the Election Commission of India, to forfeit his or her right to vote for ever? We will answer that," Justice Joydip Bagchi, part of the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Su-



rya Kant, addressed the poll body. The court said the ECI was in "error" to force pre-existing voters, whose names were deleted from the electoral roll, to apply as new voters under Form 6 of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. Senior advocate Dama

Seshadri Naidu, for the ECI, said the court's Bihar SIR judgment on May 27 had mentioned that the poll body had "residuary powers". Justice Bagchi clarified that the Bihar judgment was not a "binding precedent" and asked why the

64.5 lakh electors 'missing' in Karnataka's rolls

Around 64.5 lakh electors are potentially missing from the final electoral rolls of Karnataka released after the special intensive revision on Tuesday, as per calculations based on Elector-to-Population ratio of 66.11, released by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer. » PAGE 9

ECI had not then used these residuary powers to reach out to voters who had not responded to enumeration forms.

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Context:

The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned the authority of Election Commission of India (ECI) to deprive citizens forever of their right to vote simply because they were lax in returning enumeration forms during the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which has disenfranchised nearly 13 crore voters across the country.

The Supreme Court questioned why people already registered as voters should be required to apply as new voters when their names were omitted during the SIR. It urged the ECI to make the process accessible and proactively contact affected voters.

Major issues highlighted

- Risk of disenfranchisement: Eligible voters may lose their opportunity to vote because of procedural difficulties.
- Migrant population: Frequent changes of residence make voter verification difficult.
- Administrative burden: Requiring previously registered voters to register afresh may create unnecessary hurdles.
- Digital and documentation gaps: People with limited access to information or documents may face difficulties.
- Transparency and accountability: Electoral-roll deletions should be explainable, verifiable and open to appropriate remedies.
- Institutional balance: The ECI must exercise its constitutional powers within the framework of applicable legislation and judicial review.

Way forward

- Provide clear notices and sufficient time for voters to respond.
- Establish accessible grievance-redressal and appeal mechanisms.
- Enable Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to contact voters whose forms have not been received.
- Publish clear, verifiable information about proposed deletions while protecting personal data.
- Simplify procedures for existing voters who have temporarily moved or changed address.
- Use technology for verification with human review and safeguards against erroneous deletion.
- Conduct periodic audits of electoral rolls and provide transparent reasons for adverse decisions.

Q1. Which Article of the Constitution vests the ECI with superintendence, direction and control of elections?

- Article 320
- Article 324
- Article 326
- Article 328

DPDP Act does not infringe on press freedom: Vaishnaw

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday said the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act did not infringe on press freedom, asserting that the Constitution guaranteed journalistic independence.

"The journalistic freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution. That freedom is absolutely available. There is not even an intention to affect the journalistic freedom," Mr. Vaishnaw said. He invited editors and media professionals to engage in an open dialogue with the government on concerns surrounding the law.

The remarks came amid concerns from news publishers that the law could make investigative reporting more difficult. They have argued that the absence of a specific exemption for journalism could affect reporting on matters of public interest, especially investigations involving personal information collected without consent. They have also raised concerns about retaining information required as part of investigative reporting, and protecting confidential



Ashwini Vaishnaw

sources. The Minister said the privacy law "fully maintains the journalistic freedom the Constitution guarantees", adding that it was aimed at protecting personal data without undermining media freedom.

It is learnt that the government is also open to amending the law to explicitly safeguard journalistic activities, if necessary. "If hardcoding is required, we can hardcode it; it only requires an amendment... There is no problem in that because our intent is clear," a top source said. The source added that the government was willing to discuss the concerns and that any confusion could be addressed through an amendment in Parliament. Mr. Vaishnaw said the DPDP Act was introduced following a Supreme Court judgment recognising the right to privacy. (With agency inputs)

Context:

Union Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday said the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act did not infringe on press freedom, asserting that the Constitution guaranteed journalistic independence. “The journalistic freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution. That freedom is absolutely available. There is not even an intention to affect the journalistic freedom,” Mr. Vaishnaw said.

Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023

The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023, enacted in August 2023, establishes India’s legal framework for safeguarding digital personal data.

Objectives.

- Safeguarding Individual Privacy
- Ensuring Responsible Data Processing.
- Consent-Centric Data Governance.
- Balancing Privacy with Digital Innovation.
- Secure Cross-Border Data Flow

The Justice BN Srikrishna Committee was set up to study global data protection practices and recommend a comprehensive framework for India, which laid the groundwork for the initial draft of the DPDP Act.

Provisions:

- The Act permits cross-border transfer of personal data to countries approved by the government, ensuring controlled and secure data flow.
- Personal data may be retained for up to three years from the last interaction, with mandatory 48-hour prior notice to the Data Principal before erasure.
- A digital-first Data Protection Board of India (DPBI) is established to handle consent, grievances, and enforcement through an online system for faster resolution.
- Major digital platforms with large user bases, such as social media and e-commerce giants, are designated as Significant Data Fiduciaries with enhanced obligations.
- The DPDP Act 2023 prescribes stringent monetary penalties for breaches by Data Fiduciaries. The maximum fine of up to ₹250 crore is imposed for failing to implement adequate security safeguards.
- Penalties of up to ₹200 crore may apply for not reporting a data breach or violating obligations related to children’s data. For all other forms of non-compliance with the Act or its Rules, fines can go up to ₹50 crore.

Amount approved by Cabinet for PM Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana

7,395 in ₹ crore. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved an allocation of ₹7,395 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana, with Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw calling it a paradigm shift from prescription-based schemes to a model focused on local-level capacity building and planning. PTI

PM VIKASIT GRAM SWARAJ YOJANA

- The Union Cabinet, on 28 October, 2026, has approved the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana.
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for transforming rural local governance.
- The initiative aligns grassroots development with the national vision of Viksit Bharat.
- It aims to transform Panchayats into empowered, self-reliant, accountable and high-performing institutions of local self-government.
- Pradhan Mantri Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme approved for 2026-27 to 2030-31, with a total outlay of ₹7,395.55 crore.
- It covers all States and Union Territories, including eligible traditional rural local government institutions.
- The scheme seeks to strengthen Gram Panchayats as centres of integrated and participatory development planning.

- Annual targets include 2.55 lakh-plus gram development plans and 2.55 lakh-plus online audit plans.
- Each coordinated awareness intervention will aim to reach at least one crore citizens.
- Digital integration, capacity building and financial accountability are key mechanisms planned for improving grassroots governance.



Q2. Consider the following statements about PM Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana:

1. It is a Central Sector Scheme.
2. It will be implemented during 2026–27 to 2030–31.
3. It aims to strengthen Gram Panchayats through integrated planning, capacity building and digital governance.
4. It is implemented exclusively in states.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

'Arnab' takes toll on power infra in North A.P., losses put at ₹16 cr.

V. Kamalakara Rao
VISAKHAPATNAM

The Cyclone Arnab has delivered a massive blow to the power infrastructure across North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, disrupting electricity supply to 26,71,284 consumers in 3,872 villages.

The cyclone disrupted power supply in 11 districts under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Power Distribution Company of Andhra Pradesh (APEPDCL).

With estimated infrastructure damage pegged at ₹16.54 crore, restoration efforts crawled to an overall 27.4% completion rate, leaving vast areas still grappling with power outages.

While coastal towns scrambled to pick up the pieces, West Godavari and Konaseema districts are



Power restoration work in progress near Bendamurlanka in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district on Wednesday after Cyclone Arnab makes a landfall. V. RAJU

the worst-hit, plunging hundreds of habitations into the darkness.

Power supply has been restored to 6,37,778 non-agricultural services, ac-

counting for 25.18% of the affected connections, and 20,989 agricultural services, or 22.22%. Electricity has also been restored to 1,874 villages, accounting

for 46.66% of the total affected villages. Heavy winds brought down 3,079 11-KV poles, 3,191 LT poles and damaged 374 distribution transformers and five

Supply to 26.71 lakh consumers disrupted; while restoration work in Vizag is progressing swiftly, waterlogging in Konaseema is posing logistical challenges, says APEPDCL CMD

power transformers.

"The severe gale and inundation caused extensive damage to the power distribution network, particularly downing hundreds of 33KV feeders and low-tension poles in the Godavari belt. Our priority is restoring critical health and water supply services. We have deployed 700 specialised field teams and mobilised additional manpower

from neighbouring circles to work round-the-clock," APEPDCL Chairman and Managing Director I. Prudhvi Tej told *The Hindu*.

While restoration work in urban circles such as Visakhapatnam is progressing swiftly, waterlogging in Konaseema and West Godavari is posing significant logistical challenges.

"We appeal to consumers to keep patience as our field staff navigate hazardous conditions to restore power safely," he said.

Helpline

Mr. Prudhvi Tej appealed to the public not to touch snapped power lines or fallen electric poles. Consumers can report power interruptions and emergencies by calling the toll-free number 1912.

Why is Cyclone Arnab in the news?

- The cyclone caused deaths and widespread disruption in Andhra Pradesh as it weakened over land. The IMD expected it to become a cyclonic storm by evening and a deep depression by night.
- Meanwhile, the IMD expected the system to move north-northwestwards over the following 48 hours. Heavy rain was forecast across Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

What damage did the storm cause?

Cyclone Arnab damaged crops, power infrastructure and transport services. The following figures describe distinct impacts reported on 28 October:

- **Rainfall:** Garividi in Vizianagaram district recorded 26 cm in the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m.
- **Crops:** About 70,900 hectares of paddy and 10,450 hectares of horticulture crops were underwater or damaged, according to the Chief Minister's letter.
- **Power:** Supply to 25.33 lakh non-farm connections was interrupted across 11 districts served by the eastern distribution company. Moreover, 6,270 electric poles fell.
- **Flights:** Visakhapatnam airport cancelled 38 flights; Vijayawada cancelled 17 services.

What response measures followed?

Andhra Pradesh announced compensation and organised relief for affected residents. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) said about 57,000 people had moved to relief camps.

- **Financial assistance:** Families of the five deceased will receive ₹5 lakh each. In addition, partly damaged house owners will receive ₹10,000.
- **Camp support:** Residents in relief camps will receive ₹1,000 per person, subject to ₹3,000 per family.
- **Damage assessment:** Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu sought a Central team to assess losses. Meanwhile, Odisha moved over 30,000 people from low-lying and landslide-prone areas.



First tranche of Tander red gram flagged off to Australia

The first consignment of GI-tagged Tander red gram from Telangana was flagged off from Hyderabad, Telangana, to Australia on Wednesday. It was facilitated by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Tander red gram is the first agricultural product from the State to receive Geographical Indication (GI) registration. It has more protein content than cereals. The export shipment is a step towards exploring new overseas markets.

Context:

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, facilitated the first-ever export shipment of GI-tagged Tander Redgram from Telangana to Australia. The export consignment was flagged off from Hyderabad, Telangana, to Australia in hybrid mode on 28 October 2026.

Tander Redgram: Telangana's Unique GI-Tagged Agricultural Product

- Tander Redgram is the first agricultural product from Telangana to receive Geographical Indication (GI) registration.
- It is primarily cultivated in the rainfed tracts of four mandals in the Tander region namely Tander, Basheerabad, Peddemul and Yelal.
- The distinctive characteristics of Tander Redgram are associated with the region's fertile deep black soils, the presence of attapulgitic clay mineral deposits, and substantial limestone deposits.

- Tandur Redgram contains approximately 22–24% protein, nearly three times the protein content of cereals.
- It is valued for its excellent taste, superior cooking quality, and enhanced keeping quality.
- Its GI identity offers an opportunity to strengthen product recognition, improve market visibility, and generate greater value through access to domestic and international markets.

