

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 26-03-2025

### Supreme Court of India Collegium

#### Syllabus

**Prelims-** Polity | Judicial system

**Mains-** GS -II - Governance | Judiciary in India

#### Why in News?

The Supreme Court Collegium has officially recommended that Justice Yashwant Varma, who is undergoing in-house investigation into claims of cash hoard discovered on his official premises, be transferred to the Allahabad HC.

- **Collegium System** - It is a system under which appointments and transfers of judges are decided by a forum of the Chief Justice of India and the 4 senior-most judges of the Supreme Court.
- In the original constitution, there is ***no mention of a collegium***.
- **Collegium of the Supreme Court** - Consists of 5 Senior most Judges including the Chief Justice of India.
- They will consider the elevation of Chief Justices/Judges of High Court to Supreme Court, elevation of Judges of High Courts as Chief Justices and elevation of Judges.
- In case of difference of opinion, the majority view will prevail.
- Since Constitution mandates consultation with the Chief Justice of India is necessary for appointments to judiciary, the collegium model evolved.
- **Constitutional Provisions** - According to **Article 124**, Supreme Court judges are appointed by the President of India in consultation with Chief Justice of India (CJI) and other judges that he deems fit.
- According to **Article 217**, High Courts judges are appointed by the President in consultation with CJI, Governor of the State and Chief Justice of that court.
- **Evolution of collegium system** - The collegium system has its genesis in a series of 3 judgments that is now clubbed together as the **3 Judges cases**.
- **Transfer of HC judge** - In case of transfers, President may move a judge from one High Court to another, after consulting the CJI.
- While the transfer of a High Court judge is a collegium decision and separate from any disciplinary inquiry,
  - The SC has underlined that in-house investigations into judicial misconduct fall ***solely under the CJI's purview***.
- The CJI, in such matters, seeks a report from the ***Chief Justice of the concerned High Court***.

- The collegium procedures do not govern such inquiries.

## Issues in Functioning of collegium system

- **No-transparency in appointments** - It is seen as a closed-door affair with no prescribed norms regarding eligibility criteria, or even the selection procedure.
- There is no public knowledge of how and when a collegium meets, and how it takes its decisions with no official minutes of collegium proceedings.
- **Nepotism and favouritism** - Allegations of nepotism and favouritism are rampant with judges in the collegium recommending their close relatives.
- **Lack of diversity** - The absence of an institutional mechanism to ensure diversity on the Bench in the judiciary is a problem.
- SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities are grossly underrepresented in the collegium picks.
- **Non-filling of vacancies** - Supreme Court judges often talk about the issue of pendency of cases, but still they are inactive in solving the problem.
- **Difference of opinion** - The conflicting opinion within the collegium members is hampering the functioning of the collegium system.
  - Recently, while CJI Lalit wanted to circulate the recommendations for appointment to the Supreme Court, two judges in the Collegium preferred deliberations in person.
- **Issues with certain conventions** - By convention, once a recommendation for the successor to the CJI's office is made, the Collegium ceases to make decisions.
- Given that the CJI is appointed by seniority, many of them have a short tenure and these sorts of convention may slow down decision-making.

## Reference

[The Indian Express | Collegium system](#)

## Baanknet Portal

### *Syllabus*

*Prelims - Economic and social development*

*Mains - GS III | Issues related to Growth and development*

## Why in News?

*Recently, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, launched the revamped e-auction portal 'Baanknet' in New Delhi.*

- It is a revamped ***e-auction portal*** that consolidates information on all properties that put up for e-auction by public sector banks (PSBs).
- It is specifically designed to enhance transparency and speed up the process of disposing of ***Non-Performing Asset (NPA)*** cases.

- **Predecessor portal** - “e-BKray” launched in 2019.
- **Listings** - Residential properties such as flats, independent houses, and open plots, as well as Commercial properties, industrial land and buildings, shops, vehicles, plant and machinery, agricultural and non-agricultural land.
- **Salient features**
- **State-of-the-art Innovative Platform** - A cutting-edge property listing, specifically designed for banks and lending institutions to address the recovery of Non-Performing Asset (NPA) loans.
- **Robust Architecture** - Ensures seamless reliability and accessibility for users through both mobile and web interfaces.
- **Automated KYC and Secure Payment Gateways** - Integrates advanced Know Your Customer (KYC) tools and secure payment gateways, ensuring a transparent and secure auction process.
- **Comprehensive Property Listings** - Offers a convenient solution from property “search” to “sale” for all types of properties across India, streamlining the entire auction journey.
- **Simplified Navigation** - Provides an easy-to-use interface for property search and auctions, making the process user-friendly and accessible.
- **Smart Auctions and Fair Pricing** - Facilitates intelligent auction mechanisms, ensuring fair pricing and maximum value for all listed properties.
- **Bank Verified Titles** - Ensures that all property titles are verified by banks, providing authenticity and reliability in the auction process.
- Users can benefit from a dashboard feature for easy access to *‘Spend Analytics’ and various ‘MIS Reports’* at the click of a button.
- **All 12 Public Sector Banks**, and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) are using the platform for listing and auction of properties across the country.

## Reference

[PIB | BAANKNET Portal](#)

## Jnanpith Award

### *Syllabus*

**Prelims** - Current events of national importance

**Mains** - GS Paper 1 - Various facets of Indian art and culture

## Why in News?

A storyteller and eminent Hindi writer, Vinod Kumar Shukla won the Jnanpith award, 1st from Chhattisgarh to win the prize.

- It is **India’s highest literary honour**, given annually to Indian writers for their

outstanding contribution to literature.

- **Instituted in** - 1961.
- **Instituted by** - Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain, founder of ***Bharatiya Jnanpith***, the oldest and most prestigious literary accolade in India.
- It honors authors for their exceptional contributions to literature in Indian languages ***listed in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule*** (22 languages) of the Constitution.
  - English being included from the 49<sup>th</sup> award (2013) onwards.
- Once a language gets the award, it is ***not eligible*** for the award for the next 2 years.
- **Selection Procedure** - Recommendations made by various Language Advisory Committees are placed before the Selection Board it then chooses the awardee for the year.
- The award is not given posthumously, ensuring that it ***recognizes living writers*** for their literary excellence.
- **Rewards** - The Jnanpith award carries with it a cash of Rs 11 lakh, a bronze statue of the Hindu Goddess Vagdevi and a citation.

*The first recipient of the Jnanpith Award was Malayalam poet G. Sankara Kurup in 1965; the first woman to receive the award was Ashapura Devi in 1976.*

### **Contributions of Vinod Kumar Shukla**

- Jnanpith Award is being conferred upon him for his outstanding contribution to Hindi literature, creativity and distinctive writing style.
- He won the Sahitya Akademi award in 1999 for his novel Deewar Mein Ek Khirkee Rahati Thi.
- **Notable works** - Naukar Ki Kameez (1979), which was adapted into a film by director Mani Kaul, and the poetry collection Sab Kuch Hona Bacha Rahega (1992).
- His books have been translated to English, Italian and German languages.

### **Reference**

[Times of India | 59th Jnanpith Award](#)

### **Anti-dumping Duty**

#### **Syllabus**

**Prelims** - Current events of national importance

**Mains** - GS III | Economic Development | Issues related to development | Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

## Why in News?

India has recently imposed anti-dumping duties on 5 Chinese goods following recommendations made by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), the investigation arm of Ministry of Commerce.

- **Anti-dumping duty-imposed Goods**

- **Soft Ferrite Cores** (used in electric vehicles, chargers, and telecom devices) - 5 years.
  - Certain thickness of **vacuum insulated flask** - 5 years.
  - **Aluminium foil** (for 6 months)
  - **Trichloro Isocyanuric Acid** (chemical used for water treatment) - 5 years.
  - **Poly Vinyl Chloride Paste Resin**
- These products were found to be sold in India at prices below normal market value.

*China is India's second largest trading partner.*

- **Anti-dumping duties** -It is a tariff imposed on imported goods that are priced below their fair market value in the exporting country, aiming to protect domestic industries from unfair competition.
- Anti-dumping probes are conducted by countries to determine whether domestic industries have been hurt because of a surge in cheap imports.
- Probes are conducted periodically to check for the impact of cheap imports on domestic industries.
- A product is considered to be dumped when a producer exports his product at a price lower than its value in its domestic market.
- It is imposed as per multilateral regime of World Trade Organization (WTO), to ensure fair trading practices and a level-playing field for domestic producers' vis-a-vis foreign producers and exporters.
- Article 6 in the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** allows countries to take action against dumping.

## Reference

[Hindustan Times | What are anti-dumping duties?](#)

## Sheathia Rosemalayensis

### **Syllabus**

**Prelims** - General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change.

**Mains** - GS- III | Conservation

## Why in the News?

A team of researchers from Mar Athanasius College, Kothamangalam, have discovered a new species of freshwater algae.

- **Sheathia Rosemalayensis** - It is a new species of ***freshwater red algae*** from the Western Ghats.
- **Discovered in** - Rosemala in Kollam district, Kerala.
- **Taxonomy**
  - **Family** - Batrachospermaceae.
  - **Scientific name** - Sheathia Rosemalayensis, which has been named after the place where it was found.
  - **Genus** - Sheathia.
- The Sheathia species are *extremely rare in India*.
- **Habitat** - It has been documented ***only in the southern Western Ghats***, a geographically distinct region.
- It is the *4<sup>th</sup> new species* of the Batrachospermaceae family described from this region.
- **Distinguished from other species** - It is distinguished based on *morphology and molecular sequence* data from previously identified 3 other new species of freshwater red algae:
  - Kumanoa chaugulei, Kumanoa periyarensis, and Macrosporophycos sahyadricus.
- **DNA barcoding** - It was performed on all 4 newly discovered species, confirming their unique identity.



- **Significance** - It is crucial to study the freshwater red algae which are thrive only in pristine (fresh) water and undisturbed habitats.
- Their presence has significant bio-geographical and environmental implications.

## References

1. [The New Indian Express|New freshwater algae species discovered in Western Ghats](#)
2. [Phycologia| Sheathia Rosemalayensis](#)

## One Liners 25-03-2025

### History, Art and Culture

#### Dekho Anna Desh Initiative

Recently Union Ministry of Tourism has issues list of states/ UTs Wise Domestic Tourist visitors.

- **Dekho Apna Desh Initiative** - Launched in January 2020, this Ministry of Tourism program promotes domestic tourism via webinars, quizzes, and social media.
- **People's Choice Poll** - Citizens engage to identify preferred tourist attractions, enhancing destination popularity.
- **Digital Platform Enhancement** - Revamped [www.incredibleindia.gov.in](http://www.incredibleindia.gov.in) provides tour and package information, collaborating with stakeholders.
- **Economic Impact** - Increased domestic tourism aims to boost local economies, create jobs, and support hospitality, fostering sustainable growth. State-wise domestic tourist visit data is available.

#### Shaheed Diwas

The PM paid tributes to Bhagat Singh, Rajguru & Sukhdev on Shaheed Diwas.

- March 23 marked the execution of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru & Sukhdev in 1931.
- **HSRA Affiliation** - Members of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, advocating for freedom.
- **Lahore Conspiracy Case** - Accused of killing John Saunders in 1928, avenging Lala Lajpat Rai's death.
- **Arrest and Sentencing** - The British government-imposed death sentences following their arrest.
- **Execution** - Hanged in Lahore Central Jail on March 23, 1931, despite protests.
- **Legacy** - Their fearless sacrifice immortalized them as symbols of Indian resistance.

#### Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia: A Legacy of Social Justice

- **Born in** - Akbarpur, UP on 23 March 1910
- **Role in Freedom Struggle** - Active in the Quit India Movement (1942), and protested against Portuguese rule in Goa, facing multiple imprisonments.
- **Social Vision** - Advocated for economic democracy to eradicate caste, class, and gender inequalities.
- **Political Philosophy** - Proposed a "6-Point Plan" for new Socialism, emphasizing maximum equality and a global standard of living.
- **Literary Contributions & Values** - Author of influential works like "The Caste System" and "Wheel of History," embodying values of justice, equality, and non-violence.

### Polity & Governance

#### Kerala's Pioneering Senior Citizens Commission

Kerala has established the nation's first Senior Citizens Commission via the Kerala State Senior Citizens Commission Bill, 2025.

- **Statutory Nature and Purpose** - This commission is a statutory body, created to protect the rights and welfare of elderly citizens.
- **Advisory Role** - It serves as an advisory body, influencing state policies related to senior citizens.
- **Core Objectives** - The commission aims to safeguard rights, ensure rehabilitation, and promote the active participation of seniors in society.
- **Focus on Inclusivity and Dignity** - A key goal is to foster inclusivity and uphold the dignity of senior citizens across Kerala. This initiative demonstrates Kerala's commitment to elderly care.

## Form 17C

SC of India is considering a petition by **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)**, demanding the Election Commission publish booth-wise voting data (Form 17C) on its website within **48** hours of polling.

- **Form 17C Definition** - Is a crucial election document detailing booth-wise voter turnout and election results.
- **Form 17C Structure** - It comprises 2 parts: Part 1, the 'Account of Votes Recorded,' and Part 2, the 'Result of Counting.'
- **Legal Framework** - Governed by the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- **Procedural Implementation** - Part 1 is completed post-polling by the Presiding Officer and secured. Part 2 is filled during counting by the Returning Officer.
- **Functions and Powers** - Form 17C ensures transparency, facilitates cross-verification of votes, and strengthens electoral trust. It's legally binding, requiring official signatures.

## National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC's) Women Cooperative Schemes

- NCDC supports women's empowerment via two dedicated schemes.
- **Swayamshakti Sahakar Yojna** - To provide affordable financial services, enabling women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to access bank credit for collective socio-economic activities and sustainable livelihoods.
- **Nandini Sahakar** - Offers a comprehensive framework for women cooperatives, encompassing financial aid, project formulation, capacity development, and hand-holding, excluding urban housing projects.
- **Impact** - Empowering women, bolstering their economic participation & contributing to sustainable development.

## International Relations and Issues

### Sea Dragon 2025, Naval Drill

A multilateral anti-submarine warfare exercise, *Sea Dragon 2025*, began on March 4th off the coast of Guam, hosted by the US 7th Fleet.

- **Historical Growth** - Initially a US-Australia drill in 2019, it expanded to include Japan, South Korea & New Zealand by 2020, and India in 2021.
- **Current Participant** - 2025 exercise features the US, India, Japan, Australia, and South Korea, deploying advanced Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA).
- **Indo-Pacific Focus** - Sea Dragon 2025 aims to enhance maritime security coordination in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Joint Training** - Nations engage in joint training to improve anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

### Parole Termination

Trump administration recently has announced the end of temporary legal status for over 530,000 migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua & Venezuela (CHNV). This decision terminates parole programs initiated by the Biden administration.

- **CHNV Parole Programs** - These programs offered temporary legal entry to migrants facing humanitarian crises in their home countries. They allowed a 2-year stay in the U.S.
- **Eligibility and Requirements** - Applicants underwent online applications and background checks. A financial sponsor in the U.S. was mandatory.
- **Work Authorization** - Participants received work authorization, enabling them to support themselves during their stay.
- **Program Termination Details** - A Federal Register document specifies the programs will end on April 24, 2025.

## Security

## Hawala

*The use of hawala networks has surged in recent years, particularly for illegal activities such as poaching and [money laundering](#).*

- Hawala is an informal - trust-based money transfer system, distinct from traditional banking. It allows funds to move without physical cash.
- **The Role of Hawaladars** - Central to hawala are "hawaladars," brokers who facilitate transactions. Their network operates on trust, bypassing formal financial channels.
- **Operational Process** - A sender gives money to a hawaladar, receiving a unique code or token. This token is shared with the recipient. The recipient then collects the equivalent amount from a local hawaladar.
- **Convenience vs. Regulation** - Hawala's convenience fuels its widespread use. However, its informal nature means it lacks formal regulation, making it vulnerable to abuse.
- **Illicit Applications** - Investigations reveal hawala's exploitation in illegal activities, such as poaching and money laundering, enabling criminal networks to move funds discreetly.

## Science

### Altermagnetism

*Researchers in Sweden have identified a novel type of magnetism known as altermagnetism.*

- This finding holds the promise of improving the performance of electronic devices significantly.
- **Boost Operational Speed** - Of memory devices by as much as a thousand-fold.
  - This advancement may pave the way for quicker, more efficient technologies.
  - Altermagnetism is characterized by magnetic units that are arranged in an antiparallel manner.
  - Nonetheless, these units display a slightly rotated crystal lattice.
  - This distinctive configuration sets altermagnetism apart from conventional forms of magnetism, merging attributes of both ferromagnets and antiferromagnets into a single material.