Current Affairs - 09 November 2026

ARTICLE 22 - LIMIT FOR PRODUCING AN ARRESTED PERSON BEFORE MAGISTRATE

- The Supreme Court, in a significant ruling on **personal liberty**, reinforces Article 21 and Article 22 of the Constitution, particularly protection against arbitrary detention and custodial abuse.
- It held that the constitutional 24-hour deadline for producing an arrested person before a magistrate begins from the moment their liberty is first curtailed, not from the time of formal arrest recorded by the investigating agency.
- The SC set aside the Tripura HC's refusal of bail in a drug-smuggling case, ruling that investigative activities such as questioning, searches and seizures cannot suspend constitutional safeguards or **create an artificial gap** between detention and arrest.

Constitutional and Legal Framework:

- **Article 22(2) – Protection against arbitrary detention:**
  - Every person arrested and detained must be produced before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours of arrest.
  - The time required for the journey from the place of detention to the magistrate is **excluded**. Detention beyond 24 hours requires the magistrate's **authorisation**.
- **Section 58 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023:**
  - A person arrested without a warrant cannot be detained beyond a reasonable period.
  - Such detention cannot exceed 24 hours, excluding journey time, without the special order of a magistrate under the applicable law.
- **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985:**
  - Empowers authorised officers to search, seize and arrest persons suspected of drug-related offences.
  - Section 37 imposes **stringent conditions** for granting bail in specified serious offences.

Key Observations of the SC:

- **Actual curtailment of liberty starts the 24-hour clock:**
  - An artificial distinction between arrest and detention would dilute the fundamental protection guaranteed by the Constitution.
- **No constitutional buffer zone for investigation:**
  - The Court rejected the argument that a short investigatory hold could precede formal arrest. It also rejected the proposition that the 24-hour clock could remain suspended during searches and seizures.
  - The Constitution does not recognise any temporary disruption of liberty or investigative buffer zone that allows the executive to bypass fundamental rights.
- **Informal custody must also be reasonable:**
  - Section 58 of the BNSS imposes a **dual requirement**: detention must remain within the prescribed period and must also be reasonable.
  - Magistrates must independently examine the circumstances and reasons for detention, and can refuse police remand, if the preceding detention was unreasonable (even if an accused is produced within 24 hours).

Significance of the Judgment:

- **Strengthening personal liberty**: Prevents arbitrary detention through manipulation of formal arrest records.
- **Judicial accountability**: Strengthens the role of magistrates in scrutinising detention and police remand.
- **Preventing custodial abuse:** Reduces the possibility of torture, coercion and illegal interrogation outside judicial oversight.
- **Rule of law**: Establishes that executive convenience and investigative requirements cannot override constitutional safeguards.
- **Uniform application**: Ensures that constitutional protections apply irrespective of the nature of the offence or the special law involved.

OBC CREAMY LAYER CRITERIA - SUPREME COURT RULING AND CSE 2025

- The creamy layer refers to relatively advanced sections within the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) who are excluded from reservation benefits.
- The principle was introduced in the landmark ***Indra Sawhney v. Union of India*** **(1992)** judgment to ensure that reservation benefits reach the genuinely disadvantaged sections.
- Creamy-layer identification considers several factors, including:
    - Status and category of parents' employment
    - Constitutional and senior government positions
    - Professional and business status
    - Prescribed income and wealth criteria

Background: The 1993 and 2004 DoPT Orders

- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) issued an Office Memorandum in September 1993 establishing the criteria for identifying the OBC creamy layer.
- The framework excluded salary and agricultural income from the income/wealth test. However, a clarification issued on October 14, 2004, provided for consideration of salary income of parents employed in PSUs and private-sector organisations.
- Its implementation, particularly from the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2015, resulted in nearly 100 OBC candidates facing rejection of their caste certificates despite clearing the examination.
- Their parental salary was considered without adequately examining the status and category of their parents' posts.

Supreme Court Judgment: March 11, 2026

- In *Union of India v. Rohith Nathan* (2026), the Supreme Court held that parental salary or income alone cannot determine the creamy-layer status of candidates whose parents work in PSUs and private-sector organisations.
- The Court emphasised that:
    - The status and category of the parent's post must be considered.

  - Equivalence with government positions, including Group A, B, C and D categories, is relevant.
  - The prescribed income/wealth criteria must be applied in accordance with the 1993 Office Memorandum.
  - Exclusion based solely on parental salary, without considering the status of the post, may amount to hostile discrimination.
- The Court directed retrospective implementation for the candidates who were parties to the proceedings and intervenors, including through the creation of supernumerary posts where necessary.

Income Ceiling and Policy Challenges

- The OBC creamy-layer income ceiling has undergone revisions over the years and has remained at Rs. 8 lakh per annum since 2017.
- However, income is only one component of the framework. Several challenges remain:
  - **Post-equivalence:** Clear criteria are needed to compare positions across government services, PSUs and private organisations.
  - **Policy consistency:** Different treatment across employment sectors creates uncertainty for candidates.
  - **Income ceiling revision:** The unchanged Rs. 8 lakh threshold raises questions about periodic review.
  - **Administrative implementation:** Authorities require transparent procedures to apply the revised interpretation consistently.

Way Forward

- Establish objective criteria for equivalence of posts across different employment sectors.
- Issue clear DoPT guidelines to prevent arbitrary exclusion of eligible candidates.
- Review the income and wealth criteria periodically.
- Ensure uniform implementation while protecting completed appointments and service allocations.

VOTER ID VS AADHAAR: THE CONTROVERSY OVER A NEW WELFARE IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

Recently, Union Panchayati Raj Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lalan Singh) announced that voter ID cards (EPICs), combined with biometric authentication, would replace Aadhaar as the basis for identifying welfare beneficiaries and processing payments.

He argued Aadhaar cards "can be made at every street corner in five minutes," enabling fraudulent beneficiaries — a claim contested by experts and Opposition parties alike. The proposal has triggered a **political and legal controversy**, especially given its timing alongside the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Why Is This Move Controversial?

- **Legal Concerns**
  - The Supreme Court has ruled that the EPIC is a "**derivative document**" reflecting a person's place on the electoral roll — and that ECI actions on electoral rolls carry **only electoral consequences**.
  - The Court made this observation while hearing petitions against West Bengal's move to link welfare schemes to electoral rolls post-SIR.
  - Exclusion from rolls should only affect voting rights — using EPIC for welfare eligibility risks unlawfully denying benefits.
  - The Court clarified that SIR is not a citizenship enquiry, making non-electoral use of rolls legally questionable.
- **Political Concerns**
  - Opposition parties link the announcement to the SIR process, in which over 13 crore electors have already been removed from rolls.
  - Critics fear **disenfranchisement will now compound into welfare exclusion**.
  - West Bengal has already acted: In June 2026, its Food and Supplies Department linked PDS ration cards and other schemes to electoral rolls; CM-level pushback further restricted beneficiary lists to those on rolls.

- **Civil Society Concerns**
    - Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan questioned the shift: Aadhaar, linked to bank accounts, serves as a "financial address" — what purpose does EPIC serve instead?
    - Experts warned the move could create "**double exclusion**" — first losing voting rights, then welfare access.

Practical Problems with the Proposal

- The SIR process itself is flawed, having wrongly excluded large numbers of genuine citizens. Linking biometrics to welfare databases for millions of beneficiaries would create a **massive administrative burden**.
- **Biometric authentication challenges** — especially for senior citizens — could lead to wrongful denial of benefits.
- Unlike Aadhaar (a relatively stable document), **EPIC requires repeated validation** due to regular electoral roll revisions.
- Aadhaar was specifically designed for efficient welfare transfer; delinking it risks eroding its purpose.
- Critics argue that if Aadhaar has fraud problems, the government should fix Aadhaar's security, not replace it — otherwise, the real effect may be to shrink the beneficiary pool.

Conclusion

- The proposal to use voter IDs for welfare delivery sits at the intersection of administrative reform and electoral politics, raising serious legal questions given the Supreme Court's clear distinction between electoral and welfare purposes of the EPIC.
- With the SIR process already facing credibility concerns over mass exclusions, linking welfare eligibility to electoral rolls risks compounding disenfranchisement with denial of basic entitlements.
- Until the government clarifies the scope and safeguards of this formula, the move remains a contentious test of balancing fraud prevention against the constitutional right to welfare access.

INDIA'S PUSH TO INDIGENISE 100 CRITICAL ITEMS: FROM CHEMICALS TO CAPITAL GOODS

Amid China's proposed export curbs on critical capital goods and technologies, India's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has launched a fresh drive to **indigenise 100 critical items** spanning intermediates and capital goods across sectors.

This push reflects India's strategy to reduce import dependence and build supply-chain resilience amid rising global trade tensions.

Background: China's Export Curbs

- China's Ministry of Commerce is set to introduce an export licensing regime from November 2026 **covering capital goods** used in solar equipment and heavy machinery, including tunnel boring machines (TBMs).
- In response, India has:
    - Set up a TBM manufacturing plant in Tamil Nadu, with production expected to begin soon.
    - Advanced plans to indigenise select petrochemical products, partly driven by the West Asia crisis.
    - Begun preparing guidelines for solar module waste recycling, following stakeholder consultations by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

Solar Manufacturing: A Capacity Gap

- India's solar value chain runs from **polysilicon → ingots → wafers → cells → modules**, but capacity is uneven across this chain:
    - **Module manufacturing**: ~233 GW annual capacity — robust.
    - **Solar cell manufacturing**: only ~30 GW — far behind, despite India adding ~50 GW of solar capacity annually.
    - **Ingot and wafer manufacturing**: just ~2 GW installed — the weakest link, heavily import-dependent.

- Industry voices note a silver lining: companies with completed **cell capacity expansion** have limited exposure to China's new technology-import curbs, since restrictions mainly target capital goods and technology for new plants.
    - However, sourcing equipment from alternatives like **Europe or Japan** could raise costs by 20-40%, given limited availability and higher technology costs outside China.

Petrochemicals: Reducing Import Reliance

- The government is prioritising domestic production of key petrochemicals — PVC, polyethylene (LDPE/LLDPE), polypropylene, polystyrene, and ABS — critical for packaging, pipes, containers, and consumer goods.
- Other targeted high-value imports include phosphoric acid, ammonia, acetic acid, and toluene (used in agriculture, food, and industrial manufacturing), along with plastics like polycarbonates and propylene copolymers (used in automotive, packaging, and medical devices).
- In August 2026, the Commerce and Industry Ministry imposed a Minimum Import Price (MIP) of $0.766/kg on PVC Suspension Resin to protect domestic producers.
- **Industry Response**:
    - Adani Group is entering the PVC sector via Mundra Petrochem Ltd in Gujarat.
    - Reliance Industries, which controls 51% of domestic PVC manufacturing, plans to expand capacity to 1.5 MMT/annum by 2026-27.

Conclusion

India's indigenisation push for 100 critical items signals a strategic shift from reactive trade defence to proactive self-reliance, particularly in sectors where China dominates global supply chains.

While progress is visible in solar cell capacity and PVC manufacturing, persistent gaps — especially in ingot-wafer production and dependence on Chinese capital goods and technology — mean India's path to genuine supply-chain resilience will require sustained investment, policy support, and time, even as rising global trade tensions make this transition increasingly urgent.

Current Affairs - 09 November 2026

NAMIKA LA PASS



- It is a **high mountain pass** located in the Union Territory of
- Also known as the '**Pillar of the Sky Pass'**, it lies in the **Zanskar Range** of the **Himalayas**.
- Located on the **Srinagar-Leh Highway (NH-1),** the Namika La Pass is situated **on the way to the Mulbek Valley.**
- It is **one of the 2 high passes** that **connect Kargil and Leh**, the **other being** the **higher Fotu La Pass.**

BEGONIA SIANGENSIS



Botanists have discovered a new species of wild flowering plant growing along a secluded mountain stream in Arunachal Pradesh and named it as Begonia siangensis.

- It is the new species of **wild flowering plant discovered in Arunachal Pradesh.**
- The plant's scientific name, Begonia siangensis, honours the **Siang River Valley** in Arunachal Pradesh, the river canyon where it was originally found.
- It belongs to the diverse **Begonia section Platycentrum** and closely resembles another regional species called Begonia iridescens,
- It has been assessed as **'Data Deficient' (DD),** pending comprehensive assessment in the future.

Cross And Climb