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Current Affairs - 25 November 2025

WHAT IS BHARAT NCAP?



- The Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP) is an indigenous star-rating system for crash testing cars, under which vehicles will be assigned between one to five stars, indicating their safety in a collision.

- It is an ambitious joint project between the Government of India (GoI) and Global NCAP, the regulatory body behind the safety crash test ratings.

Objective: To help consumers make an informed decision before purchasing a car, thereby spurring demand for safer cars.

- Under the Bharat NCAP, cars voluntarily nominated by automobile manufacturers will be crash tested as per protocols laid down in the Automotive Industry Standard (AIS) 197.
- Vehicles tested under the Bharat NCAP are evaluated across three critical safety domains: adult occupant protection, child occupant protection, and safety assist technologies.

Applicability:

- Only right-hand drive passenger vehicles on sale in India and weighing less than 3,500 kg are eligible for consideration.
- Base variants of cars are to be tested, and ratings will be applicable for four years.
- Besides internal combustion engine (ICE) models, CNG cars as well as battery-powered electric vehicles are eligible to undergo the safety test.
- It is a voluntary programme under which the cost of the car for assessment for star rating and the cost of such assessment are borne by the respective vehicle manufacturer or importer.
- Bharat NCAP is overseen by the Ministry of Road Transport, but is an independent body.



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- The current Bharat NCAP regulations remain **valid until September 30, 2027**, after which **Bharat NCAP 2.0** is expected to be implemented by October 2027.

Bharat NCAP 2.0 Proposed Guidelines:

- It brings in **fresh mandatory tests, revised scoring methods, and updated safety verticals.**
 - Notably, **for the first time**, vehicles will be **assessed on vulnerable road user protection.**
 - The Bharat NCAP 2.0 proposal introduces a **100-point rating system across five pillars: Crash Protection, Vulnerable Road-User Protection, Safe Driving, Accident Avoidance, and Post-Crash Safety.**
 - The crash test will be expanded from two to five and will now have Male, female, and child dummies for testing.
 - The cars will go through offset frontal impact, full-width frontal impact, side impact, pole side impact, and rear impact.
 - **Electronic stability control (ESC) and curtain airbags will be compulsory** for any model seeking a star rating.
 - **Autonomous emergency braking (AEB) remains optional.** Models with side-facing seats will not be eligible for a rating.
 - **From 2027-29, a 5-star rating will require 70 points, and this would rise to 80 points from 2029-31.**
 - Minimum scores will also apply across each pillar.
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WHAT IS A SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION (SLP)?



- A SLP is a request made to the Supreme Court of India seeking special permission to appeal against any judgment, order, or decree from any court or tribunal (except military tribunals), even when the law does not provide a statutory right of appeal.



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Current Affairs - 25 November 2025

- In other words, SLP is **not a right**—it's a **privilege granted by the Supreme Court at its discretion**.
- **Article 136** states that the Supreme Court may, in its discretion, grant special leave to appeal from any judgment, decree, determination, or order from any court or tribunal in India.
- A judgement, decree, or order need not be final for an SLP. **An interim or interlocutory order, decree, or judgement can also be challenged**.
- It is a **discretionary/optional power** of the SC, and the **court can refuse** to grant the appeal at its discretion.
- The **aggrieved party can't affirm a special leave** to offer under Article 136 as a right.

SLP can be filed by:

- **Any aggrieved party** (individual or business)
 - **Government bodies**
 - Public sector undertakings
 - **NGOs** or associations (in relevant cases)
 - The key requirement is that the **party must be aggrieved by the impugned judgment** or order.
 - An SLP can be filed for any **civil or criminal matter**, etc.
 - SLP can be **filed against judgments from**:
 - **High Courts**
 - **Tribunals (except those under armed forces)**
 - **Quasi-judicial bodies**
 - **Time limit to file SLP**:
 - It can be filed **against any judgment of the High Court within 90 days** from the date of judgment or
 - It can be filed **within 60 days against the order of the High Court refusing to grant the certificate of fitness for appeal to SC**.
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HAMMER WEAPON SYSTEM



System in India.

Recently, Bharat Electronics Limited and Safran Electronics and Defence (SED) signed a joint venture cooperation agreement for the production of the HAMMER Weapon

- The HAMMER (Highly Agile and Manoeuvrable Munition Extended Range) is an **air-to-ground precision-guided weapon system** developed by Safran, a French aerospace and defence company.
- It is also known as a **glide bomb**.
- **Features of HAMMER Weapon System:**
 - **Range:** HAMMER precision-guided munitions have a range of **up to 70 km**.
 - It can be fitted to standard bombs of **250kg, 500kg, and 1,000kg weights**.
 - It is resistant to jamming, and capable of being launched **from low altitudes over rough terrain**.
 - It is **difficult to intercept** and can penetrate fortified structures.
 - **Design and Capabilities:** It is a **precision-guided weapon system** known for its **high accuracy** and modular design, making it adaptable for **multiple platforms**, including the Rafale and Light Combat Aircraft Tejas.

What is a Precision-Guided Weapon system?

- It is a **guided weapon intended to destroy a point target and minimize collateral damage**.
- These are also known as "**smart bombs**".
- These systems incorporate a guidance system (typically in the front of the precision munition), a **payload, and fins**.



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ASIAN AND PACIFIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF DISASTER INFORMATION MANAGEMENT



ESCAP

APDIM

Asian and Pacific Centre for
the Development of Disaster
Information Management

Recently, the 10th Session of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) on Inclusive Disaster Risk Data Governance was held in New Delhi.

- It is a regional institution of the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**.
- **Vision:** To ensure **effective disaster risk information** is produced and used for sustainable development in **Asia and the Pacific**.
- **Mandate:** To **reduce human and material losses** due to natural hazards and contribute to the effective design, investment and implementation of disaster risk reduction and resilience policies.
- **Governance:** It is governed by a Governing Council consisting of **eight ESCAP member countries** elected for a **period of three years** (India is one of the members for a period from 2022 to 2025).
- **Headquarter:** Tehran, Iran.

Functions of Asian and Pacific Centre for Development of Disaster Information Management

- **Risk Information and Knowledge Repository:** It functions as a regional facility to strengthen the science-policy interface.
- **Information Capacity and Application:** It facilitates the **exchange of expertise, experiences, and knowledge** in disaster information management between and within the countries of the region.
- **Regional Cooperation and Coordination for Disaster Risk Information:** It promotes effective **regional cooperation**, facilitate dialogue.



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RED FORT ATTACK EXPLAINED: THE SCIENCE BEHIND IED DETONATION

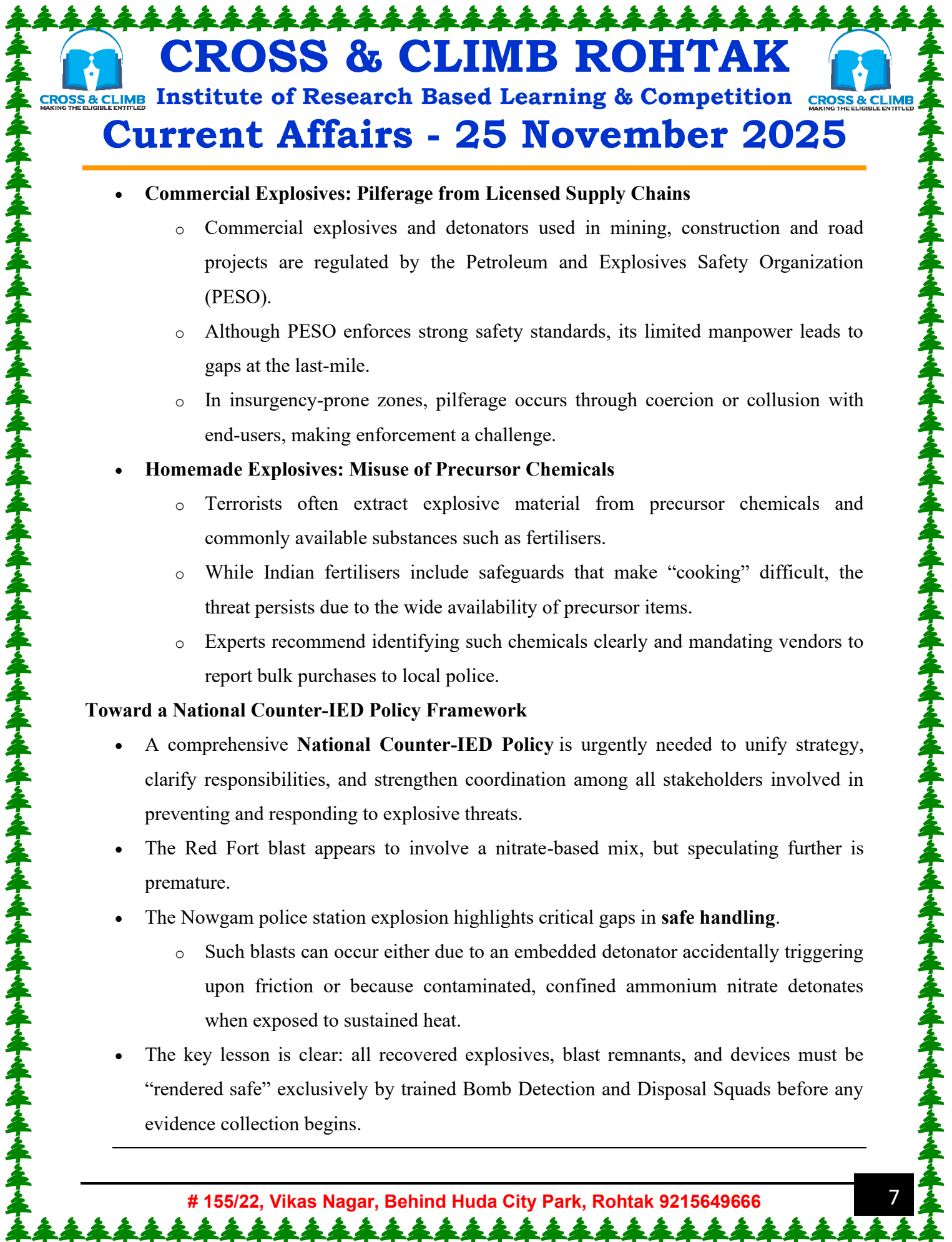
- IEDs remain the preferred weapon for terrorists because they are low-risk, high-impact, and easy to assemble using widely available materials.
- An IED typically consists of a container, battery, detonator, switch, and explosives, with added fragments like ball bearings or nails to increase lethality.
- Except for the detonator, most components can be improvised from everyday items.
- Overall, the ease of fabrication and devastating potential make IEDs a go-to tool for terror attacks.

How IEDs Reveal the ‘Signature’ of the Terror Group?

- IED components often carry identifiable patterns that help investigators trace the group behind an attack.
- The type of explosive used — military-grade like RDX/TNT, commercial explosives, or homemade mixtures such as ANFO (Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil) — offers key clues, since terror groups usually stick to familiar materials and methods.
- Additionally, the method of placement — vehicle-borne, suicide-borne, or person-borne — further refines the analysis.
- Together, these elements form a distinct “bomb signature,” enabling agencies to link an attack to likely perpetrators.
- The **National Bomb Data Centre** of the NSG maintains detailed blast records and provides expert assessments to support such investigations.

Sources of Explosives: A Persistent Cat-and-Mouse Battle

- Military-grade materials largely enter India through Pakistan-backed channels — via drones or human couriers.
- Despite stronger border surveillance, agencies must intercept every attempt, while handlers need only one success.
- This creates an unending cat-and-mouse dynamic requiring continuous technological upgrades and vigilance.



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Current Affairs - 25 November 2025

- **Commercial Explosives: Pilferage from Licensed Supply Chains**
 - Commercial explosives and detonators used in mining, construction and road projects are regulated by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO).
 - Although PESO enforces strong safety standards, its limited manpower leads to gaps at the last-mile.
 - In insurgency-prone zones, pilferage occurs through coercion or collusion with end-users, making enforcement a challenge.
- **Homemade Explosives: Misuse of Precursor Chemicals**
 - Terrorists often extract explosive material from precursor chemicals and commonly available substances such as fertilisers.
 - While Indian fertilisers include safeguards that make “cooking” difficult, the threat persists due to the wide availability of precursor items.
 - Experts recommend identifying such chemicals clearly and mandating vendors to report bulk purchases to local police.

Toward a National Counter-IED Policy Framework

- A comprehensive **National Counter-IED Policy** is urgently needed to unify strategy, clarify responsibilities, and strengthen coordination among all stakeholders involved in preventing and responding to explosive threats.
 - The Red Fort blast appears to involve a nitrate-based mix, but speculating further is premature.
 - The Nowgam police station explosion highlights critical gaps in **safe handling**.
 - Such blasts can occur either due to an embedded detonator accidentally triggering upon friction or because contaminated, confined ammonium nitrate detonates when exposed to sustained heat.
 - The key lesson is clear: all recovered explosives, blast remnants, and devices must be “rendered safe” exclusively by trained Bomb Detection and Disposal Squads before any evidence collection begins.
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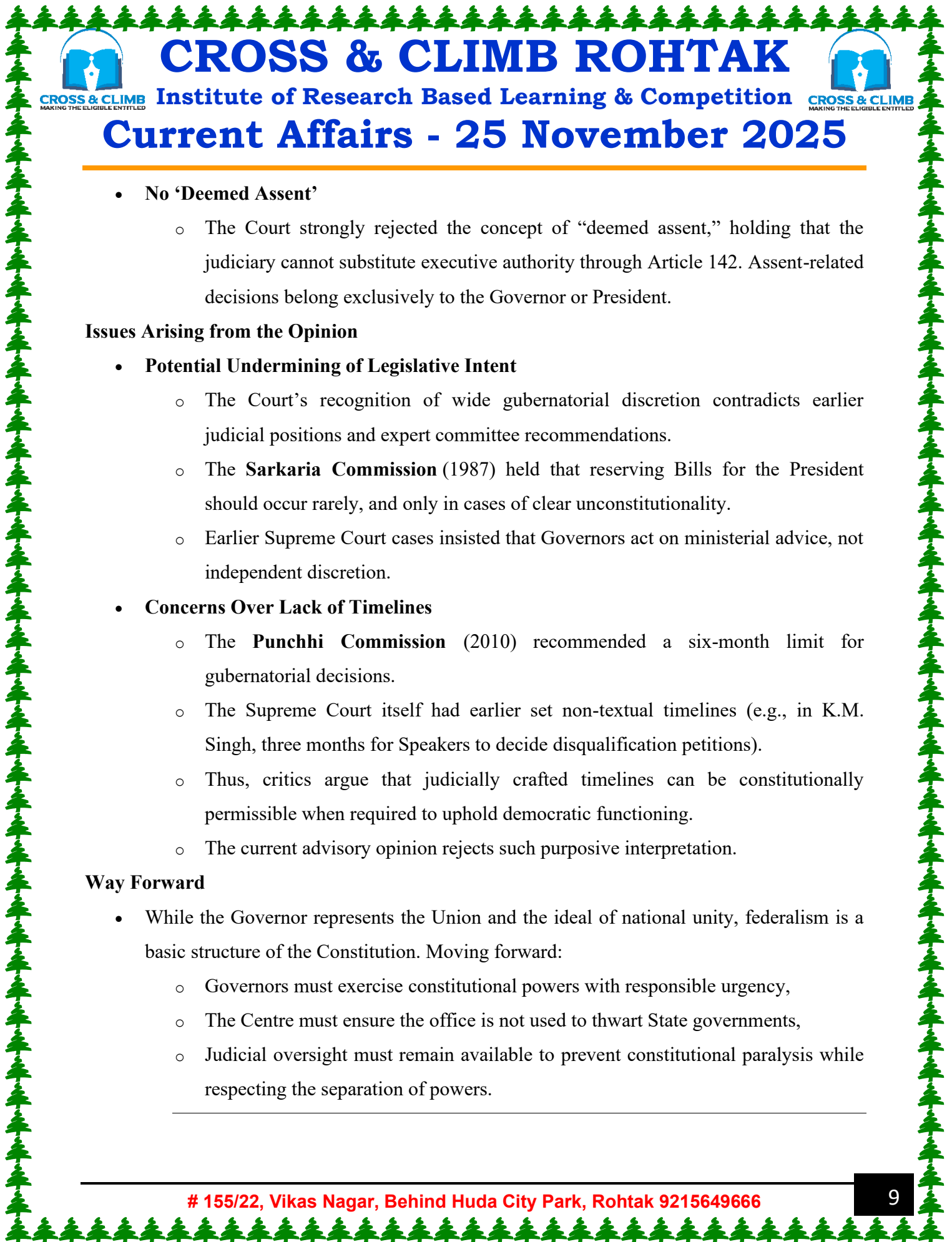


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SUPREME COURT'S ADVISORY OPINION ON GOVERNOR'S POWERS

- The five-judge Bench delivered a comprehensive opinion, which reshapes constitutional understanding on several fronts.
- **Governor's Options Under Article 200**
 - The Court clarified that a Governor has three constitutionally recognised choices when presented with a Bill:
 - Assent,
 - Reserve the Bill for Presidential consideration,
 - Withhold assent and return the Bill to the legislature with observations.These options are explicitly grounded in the constitutional text.
- **Discretion of the Governor**
 - The Court held that the Governor enjoys discretion in choosing among these options and is not bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers regarding assent-related decisions.
 - This interpretation marks a significant shift from earlier decisions such as **Shamsher Singh (1974)** and **Nabam Rebia (2016)**, which emphasised the primacy of ministerial advice.
- **Limited Justiciability**
 - Governor's actions under Article 200 are generally not justiciable,
 - However, in cases of "glaring prolonged and unexplained inaction", courts may issue a limited mandamus directing the Governor to act,
 - Courts cannot review the validity of the Governor/President's decision before a Bill becomes law.
- **No Judicial Timelines**
 - A key reversal of the April 2025 judgment: the Court held that in the absence of constitutional timelines, the judiciary cannot prescribe time limits for Governors or the President to act on Bills.



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- **No 'Deemed Assent'**

- The Court strongly rejected the concept of “deemed assent,” holding that the judiciary cannot substitute executive authority through Article 142. Assent-related decisions belong exclusively to the Governor or President.

Issues Arising from the Opinion

- **Potential Undermining of Legislative Intent**

- The Court’s recognition of wide gubernatorial discretion contradicts earlier judicial positions and expert committee recommendations.
- The **Sarkaria Commission** (1987) held that reserving Bills for the President should occur rarely, and only in cases of clear unconstitutionality.
- Earlier Supreme Court cases insisted that Governors act on ministerial advice, not independent discretion.

- **Concerns Over Lack of Timelines**

- The **Punchhi Commission** (2010) recommended a six-month limit for gubernatorial decisions.
- The Supreme Court itself had earlier set non-textual timelines (e.g., in K.M. Singh, three months for Speakers to decide disqualification petitions).
- Thus, critics argue that judicially crafted timelines can be constitutionally permissible when required to uphold democratic functioning.
- The current advisory opinion rejects such purposive interpretation.

Way Forward

- While the Governor represents the Union and the ideal of national unity, federalism is a basic structure of the Constitution. Moving forward:
 - Governors must exercise constitutional powers with responsible urgency,
 - The Centre must ensure the office is not used to thwart State governments,
 - Judicial oversight must remain available to prevent constitutional paralysis while respecting the separation of powers.
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