



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 13-03-2026

Mapping Perspective

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Prelims Perspective

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3. Sharavathi Lion Tailed Macaque

Mains Perspective

4. Impeachment of CEC
5. Creamy Layer on Income basis

Devon Island

Syllabus: Prelims Bits – Mapping.

Context:

- Researchers from **NASA** are using **Devon Island** to simulate conditions similar to **Mars**.
- The island's **barren terrain, extreme cold, and polar desert environment** make it ideal for:
 - Testing **next-generation Mars rovers**
 - Conducting **astronaut training simulations**
 - Studying planetary geology similar to Mars.

Location

- Situated in the **Canadian Arctic Archipelago**, in the **High Arctic region of Canada**.
- Important geographic neighbours:
 - **Ellesmere Island** – to the **north**
 - **Baffin Bay** – to the **east**

Key Geographic Features

- **Largest uninhabited island in the world.**
- Characterized by **polar desert conditions**: Cold; Dry; Rocky terrain
- Covered by **permanent ice caps and glaciers.**



Climate Characteristics

- **Extremely harsh winters:** temperatures may fall to **-50°C**.
- **Short growing season:** around **40-55 days**.
- **Summer temperatures:** roughly **2°C to 8°C**.
- **Very low precipitation.**
- **Limited solar energy input**, restricting plant growth.

Biodiversity

- **No permanent human settlements.**
- Only a few hardy species survive due to:
 - Low temperatures
 - Short growing season
 - Scarce vegetation.

Scientific Importance

- Devon Island hosts the **Haughton Crater**:
 - About **14 miles (≈23 km) wide**.
 - Formed by a **meteorite impact millions of years ago**.
 - Terrain resembles **Martian surface geology**.
- The **Haughton-Mars Project** conducts:
 - Planetary science research
 - Rover testing
 - Astronaut training missions.

Why NASA Uses Devon Island for Mars Research

- **Closest Earth analogue to Mars conditions** because of:
 - Polar desert environment
 - Barren rocky terrain
 - Impact craters similar to Mars
 - Isolation and harsh climate.
- Used to test:
 - Robotic rovers

- Space exploration technologies
- Human mission simulations.

Right to Die

Syllabus: GS-2: Fundamental Rights and Judiciary.

Context:

- The **Supreme Court of India (March 2026)** allowed withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment for **Harish Rana**, a 31-year-old man who had been in a **permanent vegetative state for over 12 years** after a brain injury in 2013.
- The plea was filed by his parents seeking **passive euthanasia** to allow their son to “die with dignity.”
- The Court directed that the patient be moved to **palliative care at AIIMS** before withdrawal of artificial life support.

Key Concepts

Passive Euthanasia

- **Definition:** Withdrawal or withholding of life-sustaining medical treatment, allowing death to occur naturally.
- Examples:
 - Removal of ventilator
 - Stopping artificial nutrition or hydration
- Objective: Avoid prolonging life artificially when recovery is medically impossible.

Active Euthanasia

- **Definition:** Deliberate action to end life (e.g., administering a lethal drug).
- **Legal Status in India:** Illegal and considered culpable homicide.

Difference

Aspect	Passive Euthanasia	Active Euthanasia
Method	Withdrawal of treatment	Direct act causing death
Nature	Allowing natural death	Intentionally ending life
Legal status in India	Allowed with safeguards	Illegal

Constitutional Basis

- The ruling reinforces the principle of **“Right to Die with Dignity” under Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty)**.
- The Supreme Court has interpreted Article 21 to include **dignity at the end of life** and the right to refuse unnecessary medical intervention.

Evolution of Euthanasia Law in India

(1) Aruna Shanbaug Case (2011)

- Supreme Court **allowed passive euthanasia under strict judicial supervision**.
- High Courts were authorized to approve withdrawal of life support in exceptional cases.

(2) Common Cause Case (2018)

- Recognised **Right to Die with Dignity** as part of Article 21.
- Legalised **living wills / advance directives** for end-of-life care.

(3) Supreme Court Guidelines (2023)

- Simplified procedure for withdrawing life support.
- Approval by **two medical boards** instead of a lengthy judicial process.

(4) 2026 Supreme Court Decision

- First time the Supreme Court **directly allowed passive euthanasia in an individual case involving a long-term vegetative patient**, reinforcing earlier jurisprudence.

Medical and Ethical Principles Involved

Four ethical principles often cited in euthanasia debates:

- **Autonomy:** Respect for patient’s wishes.
- **Beneficence:** Acting in the patient’s best interests.
- **Non-maleficence:** Avoiding harm or prolonged suffering.
- **Justice:** Fair medical decision-making.

Procedure for Withdrawal of Life Support (India)

Typical safeguards include:

- Certification by **medical experts that the condition is irreversible**.
- Evaluation by **multiple medical boards**.
- **Consent of family members** or advance directive.

- Transition to **palliative care** to ensure dignity in death.

Significance of the Judgment

- Reinforces **constitutional protection of dignity in death**.
- Clarifies legal position on **passive euthanasia in India**.
- Highlights the importance of **palliative care and humane end-of-life decisions**.
- May push the **government to enact a comprehensive law on euthanasia**.

Issues and Concerns

- Ethical dilemmas regarding sanctity of life.
- Possibility of **misuse or coercion**.
- Lack of awareness about **living wills / advance directives**.
- Limited **palliative care infrastructure in India**.

Way Forward

- Enact a **clear statutory framework on end-of-life decisions**.
- Promote **advance directives (living wills)**.
- Expand **palliative care services**.
- Develop transparent hospital protocols and ethical review boards.

Sharavathi Lion Tailed Macaque

Syllabus: GS-3: Wildlife – Species in news.

Context:

- Recently, the Karnataka High Court directed the **state government** that **no ground-level activities should be carried out** within:
 - the **Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary**, and
 - its **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)**.
- The directive aims to **protect the fragile ecosystem** of the sanctuary and the habitat of the **endangered Lion-tailed Macaque**.

Location

- Situated in **Karnataka**.
- Lies within the **Western Ghats**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

- The sanctuary shares its **south-western boundary with the Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary.**



Formation

The sanctuary was created by **merging multiple protected areas**, namely:

- Sharavathi Valley Wildlife Sanctuary
- Aghanashini Lion-Tailed Macaque Conservation Reserve
- Adjoining reserve forest blocks

Objective:

- To create a **large continuous habitat** for the **lion-tailed macaque**, a **Western Ghats endemic primate.**

Physical Features

Terrain

- Highly **undulating landscape.**
- **Altitude range:** about **94 m - 1102 m** above sea level.

Vegetation

- Dominated by **tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests.**
- Also includes:
 - **Moist deciduous forests**
 - **Grasslands and savanna patches**

Flora

Important tree species include: Dhoopa; Gulmavu; Surahonne; Mavu; Nandi

These forests form part of the **biodiversity-rich Western Ghats ecosystem**.

Fauna

Flagship species: Lion-tailed Macaque (Endangered, IUCN)

Other mammals: Bengal Tiger; Indian Leopard; Dhole (Wild dog); Sloth Bear; Sambar Deer; Barking Deer; Mouse Deer

Importance

- **Critical habitat for lion-tailed macaques**, one of India's most **endemic primates**.
- Strengthens **landscape connectivity** in the **central Western Ghats**.
- Supports **high biodiversity and evergreen forest ecosystems**.
- Important for **watershed protection** of the **Sharavathi River basin**.

Impeachment of CEC

Syllabus: GS-2: Election Commissioners

Context:

- Opposition parties are planning to move an impeachment motion against **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar** in Parliament.
- MPs from several opposition parties are gathering signatures to submit a notice for his removal.
- The move follows allegations of **bias in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls**, particularly concerning voter list revisions in West Bengal.

Key Allegations by the Opposition

- **Biased conduct of the Election Commission** under the CEC.
- Alleged irregularities in the **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls.
- Claims that the revision process led to **deletion of voter names and potential disenfranchisement** of certain voters.
- Allegations that the Election Commission **did not adequately address opposition concerns** regarding voter roll revisions.

Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls

- A nationwide exercise conducted by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** to ensure **accuracy and updation of electoral rolls**.
- Announced in 2025 and implemented in phases across several states.
- Objectives:
 - Remove duplicate or deceased voters.
 - Update voter information.
 - Improve integrity of electoral rolls.

Constitutional Provisions for Removal of the CEC

Article 324(5) of the Constitution

- The **Chief Election Commissioner can be removed in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court**.

Grounds for Removal

- Proved misbehaviour
- Incapacity

Special Protection

- Ensures independence of the Election Commission from political interference.

Procedure for Removal (Impeachment-like Process)

➤ Notice of Motion

- Must be signed by:
 - 100 MPs in Lok Sabha, or
 - 50 MPs in Rajya Sabha.

➤ Submission

- Motion submitted to the **Speaker (Lok Sabha)** or **Chairman (Rajya Sabha)**.

➤ Admission

- Presiding officer decides whether to admit the motion.

➤ Investigation

- A **committee is constituted** to examine the charges.

➤ Parliamentary Voting

- If charges are proven, both Houses vote on the motion.

➤ Special Majority Required

- Majority of **total membership of the House**, and
- **Two-thirds of members present and voting.**
- **Final Removal**
 - If both Houses pass the motion, the **President issues the removal order.**

Legal Framework

- **Constitution of India** – Article 324(5)
- **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023** – provides statutory framework for appointment and removal.

Significance

- Removal of a CEC is **extremely rare and constitutionally difficult** due to high voting thresholds.
- Reflects **growing political contestation around electoral processes** and institutional accountability.
- Raises broader questions about:
 - Independence of constitutional bodies
 - Integrity of electoral rolls
 - Role of Parliament in oversight of institutions

Creamy Layer on Income basis

Syllabus: GS-2: Social Justice – Reservations.

Context:

- The **Supreme Court of India (2026)** held that **parental income alone cannot be the sole factor** to determine whether an individual belongs to the “**creamy layer**” among **Other Backward Classes (OBCs)**.
- The Court stated that such an approach would be “**unsustainable in law**” and inconsistent with the objective of reservation policies.
- The judgment emphasised that **social and educational advancement must also be considered**, not just economic criteria.

Creamy Layer – Meaning

- **Creamy layer** refers to the **socially and economically advanced members within OBCs** who are **excluded from reservation benefits**.
- Introduced in the landmark **Indra Sawhney vs Union of India (1992)** case.
- Objective:
 - Ensure that **reservation benefits reach the truly backward sections**.
 - Prevent relatively advanced OBC groups from monopolising benefits.

Supreme Court Observations in the Present Case

- **Income cannot be the only yardstick** to determine creamy layer status.
- Determination should consider:
 - Social status
 - Educational advancement
 - Occupational position of parents
- The Court observed that the purpose of excluding creamy layer is:
 - To **prevent socially advanced sections from capturing benefits**,
 - Not to create **artificial distinctions among similarly placed members** of a backward class.

Existing Criteria for Creamy Layer (General Framework)

Under government guidelines and judicial interpretation:

A. Income/Wealth Test

- Current **income ceiling: ₹8 lakh per year** (subject to revision).
- Income usually considered from **sources other than salary and agriculture**.

B. Status-Based Exclusion

Children of the following are automatically treated as creamy layer:

- Constitutional post holders
- **Group A / Class I officers**
- **Group B officers** in certain cases
- High-ranking defence officers
- Professionals and business owners with high income

C. Parental Status Principle

- Creamy layer status is based on **parents' position and income**, not the candidate's own income.

Constitutional Basis

Relevant constitutional provisions:

- **Article 14** – Equality before law
- **Article 15(4)** – Special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes
- **Article 16(4)** – Reservation in public employment

The creamy layer concept ensures **substantive equality** by targeting benefits toward the **most disadvantaged groups**.

Key Judicial Precedents

Indra Sawhney vs Union of India (1992)

- Introduced the **creamy layer exclusion** principle.
- Upheld **27% reservation for OBCs**.

Ashoka Kumar Thakur Case (2008)

- Upheld OBC reservations in educational institutions with creamy layer exclusion.

Recent Supreme Court Judgment (2026)

- Clarified that **income alone cannot determine creamy layer status**.

Significance of the Judgment

- Prevents **over-simplification of backwardness based solely on income**.
- Reinforces the **multi-dimensional nature of social disadvantage**.
- May influence:
 - Future guidelines on OBC classification
 - State policies on creamy layer determination
 - Ongoing debates about applying the **creamy layer principle to SC/ST categories**.

Criticisms & Issues in Creamy Layer Policy

- **Income ceiling outdated** relative to inflation.
- **Regional disparities in income levels**.
- Debate on **including/excluding salary and agricultural income**.
- Question of extending creamy layer to **SC/ST reservations**.