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1 Environment & Ecology

GS3

18 June 2026

Air Pollution · Urban Mobility

₹9,585-Crore Delhi-NCR Clean Mobility Scheme Begins Rollout

What happened: The Union Cabinet's two-year scheme to retire over 2.07 lakh BS-IV-and-older trucks and buses registered in Delhi-NCR is now moving into implementation, funded through the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, and jointly executed with the Ministries of Road Transport and Petroleum. Owners get a 5% interest subvention on replacement loans, monthly fuel vouchers up to ₹4,800, and state-level registration/tax waivers for switching to BS-VI or electric vehicles.

Why it matters for UPSC: This connects directly to GS3's pollution-and-environment theme and tests familiarity with the institutional architecture of NCR governance — a frequent area of confusion between the NCRPB, CAQM (Commission for Air Quality Management), and CPCB.

KEY FACTS

- Trucks and buses contribute 36% of transport-sector PM_{2.5} emissions despite being only 3% of the NCR vehicle fleet.
- A single pre-BS heavy vehicle emits as much pollution as 14 BS-VI compliant vehicles.

- Implementation will be monitored by an Empowered Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, with district-level oversight by District Magistrates.

TEACHING HOOK

Don't mix up NCR pollution bodies: CAQM (statutory, 2021 Act, overarching air-quality regulator for NCR and adjoining areas) sets policy; NCRPB (under MoHUA, since 1985) funds regional infrastructure projects like this one; CPCB monitors and enforces standards nationally.

PYQ LINKAGE

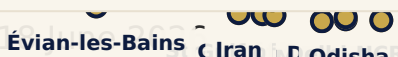
UPSC 2022 (GS3): "What is wrong with our cities? Provide remedial measures." — Vehicular pollution and fleet modernisation are central remedial pillars in any urban air-quality answer.

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Environment policy questions reward precision about which institution does what — exactly the kind of distinction Sahyog Mentorship sessions drill through one-on-one doubt clearing. Visit theiasakademia.com.

2 Places in News

8 Locations

World Map — Places in News  Evian-les-Bains Iran Odisha (ITR)

IR / DEFENCE

Strait of Hormuz

World's most critical oil chokepoint between Iran and Oman's Musandam Peninsula; carries roughly 20% of global oil and LNG trade; currently under US naval blockade.

IR / DEFENCE

Gulf of Oman

Site of the US strikes on tankers MT Settebello, MT Marivex, and MT Jalveer that killed three Indian seafarers this month.

IR

Évian-les-Bains, France

Host city of the 2026 G7 Summit, attended by PM Modi amid scrutiny of

ECONOMY

Mumbai, Maharashtra

India's response to the Gulf tanker deaths.

Venue for the Ministry of Coal's third roadshow on the ₹46,000-crore Surface Coal/Lignite Gasification Scheme.

POLITY

Bihar

Site of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls upheld by the Supreme Court on 27 May 2026.

ENVIRONMENT

Delhi-NCR

Target region of the ₹9,585-crore clean mobility scheme to retire BS-IV-and-older trucks and buses.

DEFENCE

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha

Launch site for DRDO's LRLACM cruise missile trial and the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, used for BMD interceptor and NASM-MR tests.

IR

Iran

Subject of the ongoing US naval blockade on its oil exports since April 2026, the proximate cause of the Gulf tanker strikes.

3 Ethics (GS4)

4 Case Studies

CASE 1

Protecting Citizens Abroad vs. Strategic Diplomatic Ties

Scenario: You are a senior official advising the government after three Indian seafarers are killed in a foreign power's military strike on a commercial vessel. Public anger is high, trade unions demand a strong condemnation, but the foreign power is also a critical strategic and economic partner with an upcoming high-level summit meeting scheduled.

Values: Duty to protect citizens' dignity and lives, national interest, diplomatic prudence, courage to speak truth to power, empathy for grieving families.

Framework: Apply a graduated-response model: (1) immediate humanitarian and consular support to families, (2) formal diplomatic protest through established channels (summoning envoys) without inflaming public rhetoric, (3) calibrated escalation reserved for the bilateral summit itself, and (4) long-term policy review of safety protocols for nationals working in

conflict-adjacent zones. The ethical tension is between short-term symbolic firmness and long-term strategic continuity — neither extreme (silence or public confrontation) serves citizens well; a structured, dignity-preserving middle path does.

CASE 2

Administrative Discretion in Large-Scale Electoral Roll Revision

Scenario: As a District Election Officer implementing a Special Intensive Revision, you discover that strict adherence to documentation timelines will likely exclude genuinely eligible elderly and migrant voters who cannot produce paperwork quickly, even though the exercise's stated purpose is to protect electoral integrity.

Values: Rule of law, compassion, procedural fairness, non-arbitrariness, public service motivation.

Framework: Use the proportionality test the Supreme Court itself applied: is the strict timeline a necessary means to a legitimate end, or does it impose disproportionate burden on a vulnerable group? Document gaps should trigger supplementary verification windows and outreach (camps, mobile registration units) rather than automatic exclusion — converting a rigid compliance exercise into a rights-respecting one without compromising the integrity objective.

CASE 3

Whistleblowing on Industry Resistance to Consumer Protection Reform

Scenario: As a Legal Metrology officer, you learn that several edible-oil manufacturers plan to exploit the three-month transition window by stockpiling and selling old non-standard pack sizes at a discount before the deadline, technically legal but designed to delay consumer benefit.

Values: Consumer welfare, integrity, foresight, fairness to compliant businesses, regulatory credibility.

Framework: Distinguish "letter of the law" from "spirit of the law." While the practice may be technically permissible during the transition window, a public-spirited officer should flag the pattern to senior management, recommend transparent communication to consumers about upcoming changes, and consider whether expedited monitoring (not premature enforcement) protects both consumers and law-abiding competitors who are already transitioning in good faith.

CASE 4

Transparency in Defence Testing Amid Public Curiosity and Security Needs

Scenario: As a DRDO public relations officer, you are asked by the Ministry to announce a successful missile interceptor test in a way that maximises national pride and deterrence messaging, but some technical details requested by journalists could reveal capability gaps to adversaries if disclosed.

Values: National security, public's right to information, institutional credibility, honesty without compromising strategic interest.

Framework: Apply the test of "necessary opacity, not unnecessary secrecy" — disclose what builds legitimate public confidence (test success, broad capability category, indigenous development) while withholding operationally sensitive specifics (exact range, guidance technology, vulnerabilities). The ethical line is drawn not at "more disclosure is always better" but at what serves the public interest without aiding adversaries.

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Q1. With reference to the Election Commission of India's powers, consider the following statements:

- 1. Article 324 of the Constitution vests the ECI with superintendence, direction, and control over elections.**
- 2. The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls requires a separate notification under Section 21(3) of the RPA, 1950 for each Assembly constituency.**
- 3. The Supreme Court in its May 2026 verdict held that SIR is not "manifestly excessive" or disproportionate.**

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (b) — Statements 1 and 3 are correct. Statement 2 is incorrect; the Court held a single statewide notification suffices, since the word "any" in the relevant provision can embrace "all" where circumstances are uniform.

Q2. The Strait of Hormuz connects which of the following water bodies?

- (a) Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea
- (b) Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman
- (c) Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal
- (d) Black Sea and Caspian Sea

Answer: (b) — The Strait of Hormuz links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman, which opens further into the Arabian Sea; it lies between Iran (north) and Oman's Musandam Peninsula (south).

Q3. Which of the following best describes the Naval Anti-Ship Missile-Medium Range (NASM-MR), recently flight-tested by DRDO?

- (a) A submarine-launched ballistic missile
- (b) An indigenous medium-range anti-ship strike missile
- (c) A surface-to-air interceptor for ballistic missile defence
- (d) A hypersonic glide vehicle

Answer: (b) — NASM-MR is designed to give the Indian Navy a new indigenous medium-range anti-ship strike capability, intended to bypass enemy warship air-defence umbrellas.

Q4. With reference to India's Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Programme, consider the following statements:

- 1. Exo-atmospheric interception occurs within the Earth's atmosphere.**
- 2. The AD-1 and AD-2 interceptors tested in June 2026 can engage IRBM-class targets with ranges of 2,000-5,000 km.**
- 3. India is among a select group of nations with credible interception capability against ICBM-class threats.**

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) — Statement 1 is incorrect; exo-atmospheric interception occurs in space, outside the atmosphere (endo-atmospheric is the inside-atmosphere variant). Statements 2 and 3 are correct.

Q5. The Long-Range Land-Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM) is developed as an advanced successor to which earlier DRDO programme?

- (a) Akash
- (b) Nirbhay
- (c) Prithvi
- (d) Agni

Answer: (b) — LRLACM is developed as an advanced successor to the Nirbhay cruise missile programme, led by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru.

Q6. Which Ministry/Department implements the recently mandated standard pack sizes for edible oils?

- (a) Ministry of Food Processing Industries
- (b) Department of Consumer Affairs under the Legal Metrology framework
- (c) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
- (d) Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Answer: (b) — The Department of Consumer Affairs amended its SoP under the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 to mandate standard pack sizes and dual-unit declarations.

Q7. As per the RBI's June 2026 Monetary Policy Committee decision, consider the following statements:

- 1. The repo rate was held unchanged at 5.25%.**
- 2. The RBI revised its FY27 GDP growth projection upward.**
- 3. The RBI uses the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF), not reverse repo, as its primary liquidity-absorption tool since 2022.**

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) — Statement 2 is incorrect; the RBI revised its FY27 GDP growth projection downward, from 6.9% to 6.6%. Statements 1 and 3 are correct.

Q8. The Scheme for Promotion of Surface Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects aims primarily to reduce India's import dependence on which of the following?

- (a) Crude oil only
- (b) Natural gas, methanol, and ammonia
- (c) Steel and iron ore
- (d) Lithium and cobalt

Answer: (b) — The scheme seeks to encourage domestic coal use for producing strategic industrial and chemical outputs, reducing import dependence on natural gas, methanol, ammonia, and other critical feedstocks.

Q9. With reference to the Delhi-NCR clean mobility scheme approved by the Union Cabinet, which of the following statements is correct?

- (a) It is funded entirely by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- (b) It targets the replacement of two-wheelers primarily
- (c) It is funded through the NCRPB under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- (d) It applies only to government-owned vehicles

Answer: (c) — The scheme is funded through the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) under MoHUA and implemented jointly with MoRTH and MoPNG, targeting privately owned BS-IV-and-older trucks and buses.

Q10. The "Essential Religious Practices" (ERP) doctrine, currently under review by a nine-judge Constitution Bench, originated in which landmark case?

- (a) Kesavananda Bharati case (1973)
- (b) Shirur Mutt case (1954)
- (c) Minerva Mills case (1980)
- (d) S.R. Bommai case (1994)

Answer: (b) — The ERP doctrine originated in the Shirur Mutt case (1954), which laid down the test for determining which religious practices merit constitutional protection under Articles 25-26.

Q11. Which of the following correctly pairs the missile/system with its primary function?

- 1. NASM-MR — Anti-ship strike**
- 2. LRLACM — Ballistic missile interception**
- 3. AD-1/AD-2 — Ballistic missile defence interceptors**

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

Answer: (a) — Pair 2 is incorrect; LRLACM is a land-attack cruise missile, not a ballistic missile interceptor. AD-1/AD-2 perform the interception role.

Q12. Under the revised edible oil packaging norms, which of the following package sizes is exempt from standardisation?

- (a) Packages above 5 litres
- (b) Packages below 200 ml or 200 grams
- (c) Packages between 1 and 2 litres
- (d) All imported edible oil packages

Answer: (b) — Packages below 200 ml or 200 grams ("chotey packs") remain exempt to preserve affordability for low-income consumers who buy in small daily quantities.

Q13. The G7 grouping, in whose 2026 summit PM Modi participated as an outreach invitee, comprises which of the following permanent members?

1. United States
2. India
3. Japan
4. Germany

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

Answer: (b) — India is not a permanent G7 member; it attends as an outreach/invited partner. The G7's permanent members include the US, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Q14. Which body chairs the Empowered Committee monitoring the implementation of the Delhi-NCR clean mobility scheme?

- (a) NITI Aayog CEO
- (b) Cabinet Secretary
- (c) Union Minister of Road Transport

(d) Lieutenant Governor of Delhi

Answer: (b) — The Empowered Committee is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, with the NITI Aayog CEO and relevant Ministry secretaries as members.

Q15. Consider the following statements regarding the Indian seafarers killed in the Gulf of Oman in June 2026:

- 1. The vessels struck were flagged to India.**
- 2. India's response included summoning a senior US diplomat to register a protest.**
- 3. The incident occurred amid a US naval blockade on Iranian oil exports that began in April 2026.**

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) — Statement 1 is incorrect; the struck vessels (MT Settebello, MT Marivex, MT Jalveer) were flagged to Palau and Guinea-Bissau, not India, though their crews included Indian nationals. Statements 2 and 3 are correct.

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5 Mains Questions

6 Questions with Frameworks

GS1

Q1. Discuss how chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz shape the geopolitics of energy security for import-dependent economies such as India.

Framework: Introduction (define maritime chokepoints) → Body: (a) India's oil/LNG import dependence through Hormuz, (b) vulnerability during regional conflict, (c) diversification strategies — strategic petroleum reserves, alternate suppliers, alternate routes (Chabahar, pipelines) → Conclusion: balancing energy security with strategic autonomy.

GS1

Q2. "Physical geography often dictates strategic vulnerability." Examine this statement with reference to the Musandam Peninsula and its role in regional maritime security.

Framework: Introduction (Musandam's location at the world's busiest oil chokepoint) → Body: (a) geographic narrowness enabling blockade/interdiction, (b) Oman's neutral positioning amid Iran-US tensions, (c) implications for third-country shipping including Indian-crewed vessels → Conclusion: geography as a permanent strategic constant amid shifting politics.

GS2

Q3. Critically examine the Supreme Court's verdict upholding the Special Intensive Revision of Bihar's electoral rolls. Does it adequately balance electoral integrity with the fundamental right to vote?

Framework: Introduction (SIR's stated objective and the legal challenge) → Body: (a) the Court's proportionality reasoning, (b) safeguards built in (show-cause notices), (c) counter-arguments — exclusion risk for vulnerable groups, timing relative to elections → Conclusion: institutional design lessons for future revisions.

GS3

Q4. Analyse the significance of India's recent ballistic missile defence interceptor trials for its strategic deterrence posture in a multipolar security environment.

Framework: Introduction (BMD as a defensive deterrence layer) → Body: (a) exo/endo-atmospheric interception capability gained, (b) regional context — Pakistan's missile programme, China's capabilities, (c) implications for strategic

stability and arms-race dynamics → Conclusion: deterrence through denial versus deterrence through retaliation.

GS3

Q5. Evaluate the effectiveness of regulatory interventions like standardised packaging in addressing "shrinkflation" in India's FMCG sector.

Framework: Introduction (define shrinkflation and its consumer-welfare implications) → Body: (a) mechanics of the edible-oil packaging reform, (b) expected benefits — price transparency, fair competition, (c) limitations — transition-period loopholes, enforcement capacity → Conclusion: regulatory transparency as a market-correcting tool short of price control.

GS4

Q6. "Diplomatic restraint in the face of public anger is not weakness but statecraft." Critically evaluate this statement in the context of India's response to the killing of its nationals abroad.

Framework: Introduction (define the ethical tension between assertiveness and prudence) → Body: (a) values at stake — courage, national interest, citizen dignity, (b) graduated-response ethics, (c) risk of either extreme — appeasement or escalation → Conclusion: ethical statecraft as calibrated, not passive, restraint.

6 Value Addition

"The object sought to be achieved by the SIR bears a direct nexus to the constitutional goal of free and fair elections."

— Supreme Court of India, *Association for Democratic Reforms v. ECI*, 27 May 2026

"India is now part of a select group of countries possessing the capability to defend against ballistic missile attacks, including threats posed by long-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles."

— Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister

"The continuing incidents of attacks on shipping in the region are deeply worrisome. The targeting of commercial shipping and civilian infrastructure in the region must end."

— Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

"This consumer-centric reform strengthens transparency, promotes fair competition and empowers every household to make informed purchases."

— Prahlad Joshi, Union Minister of Consumer Affairs

"We remain confident to withstand shocks with minimum pain amid heightened global uncertainties."

— Sanjay Malhotra, RBI Governor

Indicator	Value (June 2026)
RBI Repo Rate	5.25% (unchanged)
FY27 GDP Growth Projection	6.6% (revised down from 6.9%)
FY27 CPI Inflation Projection	5.1% (revised up from 4.6%)
Delhi-NCR Clean Mobility Scheme Outlay	₹9,585 crore (2-year scheme)
Coal Gasification Scheme Outlay	₹46,000 crore (cumulative)
Bihar Electoral Roll (Pre- to Post-SIR)	7.89 crore → 7.42 crore

Case / Committee	Relevance
ADR v. Election Commission of India (2026)	Upheld Bihar SIR; clarified Article 324/326 scope
Nine-Judge Bench (Sabarimala Reference)	Re-examining ERP doctrine and PIL jurisdiction in religious matters
Shirur Mutt Case (1954)	Origin of the Essential Religious Practices doctrine

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7

Direct Hit Tracker

12 Topics · Exam Probability

GS2

★★★★★

Bihar SIR Verdict

Article 324 powers, proportionality test, electoral roll integrity.

GS2

★★★★★

Gulf Tanker Strikes & Indian Seafarers

Diaspora protection, consular diplomacy, IOR significance.

GS3

★★★★★

DRDO BMD Interceptor Trials

Exo/endo-atmospheric interception, strategic deterrence.

GS3

★★★★☆

LRLACM Cruise Missile Trial

Nirbhay lineage, terrain-following navigation, multi-platform launch.

GS3

★★★★☆

Coal Gasification Scheme

Import substitution, syngas chemistry, energy security.

GS3

★★★★☆

RBI Monetary Policy (June 2026)

Repo rate, SDF/MSF corridor, GDP/CPI revisions.

GS3

★★★★☆

Delhi-NCR Clean Mobility Scheme

NCRPB, BS-VI transition, PM2.5 source apportionment.

GS3

★★★★☆

Edible Oil Packaging Mandate

Legal Metrology Rules, shrinkflation, consumer protection.

GS2

★★★★☆

GS2

★★★★☆

Sabarimala Nine-Judge Reference

ERP doctrine, Articles 25-26, constitutional morality.

G7 Summit & India's Outreach Diplomacy

G7 vs G20 distinction, multilateral fora, partner-country status.

GS1

★★★★☆

Strait of Hormuz Geography

Maritime chokepoints, physical geography of West Asia.

GS4

★★★★☆

Diplomatic Ethics in Citizen Protection

Graduated response, national interest vs symbolic firmness.

VERIFIED · PART II

Proof of Precision

Every item mapped. Every claim verified.

11

NEWS ITEMS

4

ETHICS CASES

15

MCQS GENERATED

6

MAINS
QUESTIONS

8

PLACES MAPPED

0

REPEATED TOPICS

Environment

Ethics

Polity

IR

Defence

Economy

✓ All news sourced from PIB, Ministry releases, Supreme Court Observer, RBI statements, and verified wire reports (CNN, Al Jazeera, Business Standard, CBS News)

✓ Every topic cross-checked against the 25-year UPSC question bank for thematic linkage

✓ News Freshness Rule applied — first edition of this product; no repeat topics to flag

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