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05 SEPTEMBER 2026

---SATURDAY---



Kolkata Topper

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AIR - 367 | CSE 2025

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OUR UPSC TOPPERS 2023



IPS LAXMAN PRATAP
RANK - 597

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CITY COLLEGE KOLKATA

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IRS SARLA JAKHER
AIR 593

CITY COLLEGE KOLKATA



IRS TANMAY
AIR 346

IIT KHARAGPUR



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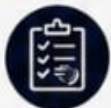


Converting Possibilities into Reality

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. India–China Border Talks: Corps Commander-Level Meeting
2. Quad Summit & Marco Rubio Visit
3. Aravalli Hills: Scientific Delineation & Conservation
4. Article 142: Supreme Court's Power to Do Complete Justice
5. Global Food Prices Rise: A New Food Security Challenge

1. India–China Border Talks: Corps Commander-Level Meeting

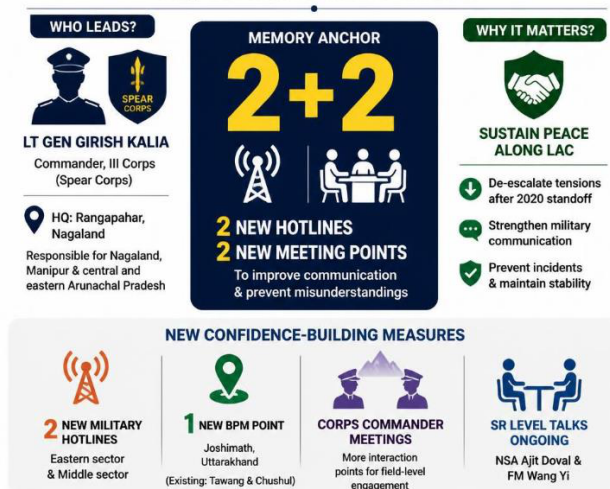
Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

India and China are expected to hold **Corps Commander-level talks** in the Northeast amid reports of tensions in the **Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district, Arunachal Pradesh**. The proposed military dialogue follows the recent boundary discussions between **NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi** in Beijing.

INDIA–CHINA CORPS COMMANDER TALKS

Step to De-escalate LAC Tensions



Key Facts

- **Lt General Girish Kalia**, Commander of the Indian Army's **III Corps (Spear Corps)**, is expected to lead the Indian side.
- III Corps is headquartered at **Rangapahar, Nagaland**, and has operational responsibilities covering **Nagaland, Manipur and the central and eastern sectors of Arunachal Pradesh along the LAC**.
- The talks are aimed at **maintaining peace, preventing escalation and improving communication** between forces deployed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

- India and China are also strengthening military communication through **new hotlines and additional Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) mechanisms**.
- The development reflects the importance of maintaining **military-to-military as well as diplomatic channels** despite the unresolved boundary dispute.

UPSC Perspective

The **LAC is not a mutually demarcated international boundary**. Differences in perception of its alignment can lead to face-offs between patrols. Hence, mechanisms such as **Corps Commander talks, military hotlines and BPMs** are important Confidence Building Measures (CBMs).

The experience of the **2020 Eastern Ladakh crisis** highlighted the risks of escalation and the need for reliable communication. Military dialogue can address immediate operational concerns, while the **Special Representatives mechanism** deals with the broader boundary question.

For India, the issue has significance under **GS-II (India–China relations and international relations)** and **GS-III (border management and national security)**. A balanced approach requires both **credible border preparedness and sustained diplomatic engagement**.

UPSC Prelims Practice

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the India–China border:

1. The Line of Actual Control is a formally demarcated international boundary.
2. Border Personnel Meetings facilitate communication between border forces.
3. The India–China boundary is broadly discussed in Western, Middle and Eastern sectors.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B

Mains Question – GS-II/III:

“Military-to-military communication mechanisms can prevent escalation along the India–China border, but cannot by themselves resolve the underlying boundary dispute.” Discuss

2. Quad Summit & Marco Rubio Visit

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is likely to visit India in **October 2026**, as both countries explore ways to strengthen bilateral ties. Separately, a **Quad Leaders' Summit in the US in December** is being explored on the margins of the **G20 Summit**, to be held under the US presidency at **Trump National Doral Miami, Florida, on December 14–15, 2026**.

A recent **Quad Sherpas' meeting**, hosted by Foreign Secretary **Vikram Misri in New Delhi**, reviewed progress on existing initiatives and discussed preparations for the next leaders' meeting. The discussions focused on **maritime and transnational security, economic prosperity, critical and emerging technologies, humanitarian assistance and a free and open Indo-Pacific**.

Quad: Genesis & Evolution

The **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)** comprises **India, the United States, Japan and Australia**. It is a strategic grouping rather than a formal military alliance.

- **2007:** Quad was initiated, with Japanese PM **Shinzo Abe** playing a key role in proposing the framework.
- **2012:** Abe articulated the idea of a **"Democratic Security Diamond"** involving India, Japan, the US and Australia.
- **2017:** The four countries revived the Quad through discussions held in **Manila**, ahead of the ASEAN Summit.
- **2020:** **Australia joined the Malabar naval exercise** with India, Japan and the US, strengthening maritime cooperation.
- **2021:** Quad leaders held their first virtual summit and issued the joint statement known as **"The Spirit of the Quad."** The first in-person leaders' summit followed in September 2021.

Since 2021, the Quad has developed into a regular **Leaders' Summit mechanism**, alongside Foreign Ministers' meetings and Sherpa-level consultations.

Significance & Areas of Cooperation

The Quad seeks to promote a **free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific**. Its cooperation has expanded beyond traditional security to include:

Maritime Security: Freedom of navigation, maritime domain awareness and regional stability.

Economic Security: Resilient supply chains and cooperation in strategic economic sectors.

Critical Technologies: Cooperation in emerging and critical technologies.

Humanitarian Assistance: Disaster relief and humanitarian response.

Transnational Security: Cooperation against common non-traditional security challenges.

The grouping is increasingly important for India as it supports India's **Act East policy, Indo-Pacific vision and strategic partnerships** with major maritime powers.

Nature of the Quad & India's Interest

The Quad is a **loose strategic grouping, not a treaty-based military alliance**. Unlike NATO, it has **no collective-defence treaty, permanent secretariat or formal decision-making body**. Its functioning relies on summits, ministerial meetings, Sherpa-level consultations, information sharing, practical initiatives and exercises.

For India, the Quad provides a platform to:

- Strengthen India's position in the **Indo-Pacific**.
- Enhance **maritime security** and domain awareness.
- Diversify and secure **critical supply chains**.
- Access cooperation in **critical and emerging technologies**.
- Build partnerships with the US, Japan and Australia.
- Contribute to a **rules-based regional order**.

The Quad is also strategically significant amid China's growing economic, diplomatic and military presence in the Indo-Pacific. However, India continues to emphasise that the Quad is **not directed against any particular country**.

UPSC Prelims & Mains Practice

Prelims MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the Quad:

1. It comprises India, Japan, Australia and the United States.
2. It was initially formed in 2007 and revived in 2017.
3. Australia joined the Malabar naval exercise with the other Quad members in 2020.
4. The Quad has a permanent secretariat and a collective-defence treaty.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1, 2 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: B

Mains Question – GS-II

The Quad has evolved from an informal strategic dialogue into a multidimensional Indo-Pacific partnership without becoming a formal military alliance. Examine its significance for India and the challenges associated with the grouping.

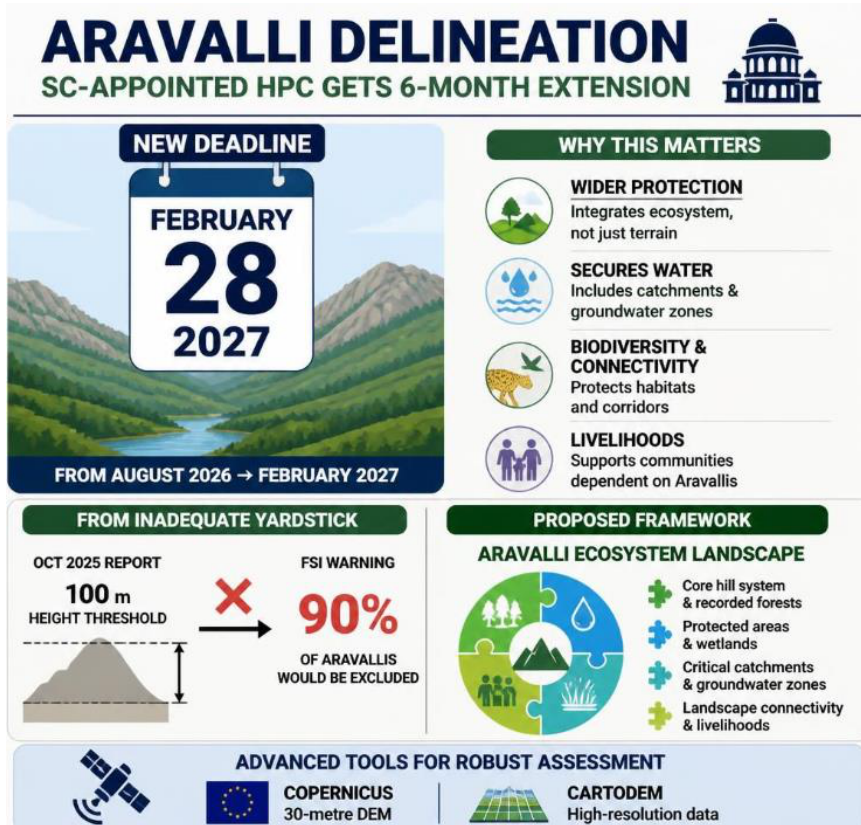
3.Aravalli Hills: Scientific Delineation & Conservation

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

A **Supreme Court-appointed High-Powered Committee (HPC)** has sought a **six-month extension up to February 28, 2027**, to scientifically determine the geographical extent of the **Aravalli Hills**. The Committee is working on an **Aravalli Ecosystem Landscape framework**, which moves away from defining the range through a single physical criterion.

The issue gained importance after the Supreme Court put on hold an **October 2025 report** that proposed a **100-metre height criterion** for identifying the Aravallis. The criterion was criticised for potentially excluding a large part of the hill system.



Key Issues & New Framework

The HPC was constituted in **May 2026** to undertake a comprehensive review of the **definition, delineation, conservation and management** of the Aravallis.

The proposed **Aravalli Ecosystem Landscape** approach recognises that the ecological significance of the range cannot be captured merely through elevation. It seeks to integrate:

- Core Aravalli hill systems
- Recorded forests and protected areas
- Wetlands and water systems
- Critical catchments
- Groundwater-recharge zones
- Biodiversity and ecological corridors
- Landscape connectivity
- Local livelihoods and human dependence on natural resources

The **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** and **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** had raised concerns about the earlier 100-metre criterion, with the FSI warning that it could potentially exclude **nearly 90% of the Aravalli hills** from the defined area.

Technology & Ecological Significance

- The HPC proposes using advanced geospatial and remote-sensing tools for accurate delineation, including the **Copernicus 30-metre Digital Elevation Model (DEM)** and **CartoDEM** data.
- The findings are also proposed to be validated by specialised institutions such as the **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)** and **ISRO**.
- A scientifically comprehensive definition is important because the Aravallis perform several critical ecological functions. They support **groundwater recharge, water catchments, biodiversity, forests and landscape connectivity**, while also helping regulate environmental conditions in the region.
- The issue is particularly significant because an inaccurate boundary could weaken regulation of activities such as **mining and land-use change**, with consequences for ecosystems as well as local communities.

UPSC Prelims Practice

Q. With reference to the Aravalli Hills, consider the following statements:

1. The Aravallis are among the world's oldest fold mountain systems.
2. Their ecological significance is limited only to their elevation and geological structure.
3. Groundwater recharge zones, forests, wetlands and biodiversity can be relevant to an ecosystem-based delineation of the Aravallis.
4. Remote-sensing and Digital Elevation Model data can assist in scientific geographical delineation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1, 3 and 4 only
- C. 2 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: B

Mains Question | GS-III

“Environmental protection requires an ecosystem-based approach rather than reliance on a single geographical or physical criterion.” Discuss with reference to the scientific delineation and conservation of the Aravalli Hills.

4. Article 142: Supreme Court's Power to Do Complete Justice

Source: IE

Why in News?

- The **Supreme Court** recently invoked its powers under **Article 142** to quash FIRs registered against protestors associated with the **Cocherian Janta Party (CJP)**, following an assurance given by the government to the concerned persons. The decision has renewed debate over the **scope and limits of the Supreme Court's extraordinary powers**.
- Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court to pass any **decree or order necessary for "doing complete justice"** in any cause or matter pending before it. However, the Constitution does not precisely define "complete justice" or prescribe exhaustive conditions for exercising this power, giving the Court considerable judicial discretion.

Constitutional Basis & Evolution

The provision has its roots in **Section 210 of the Government of India Act, 1935**. In the **Draft Constitution**, it appeared as **Article 118** and was adopted without substantial debate.

Article 142 enables the Supreme Court to provide remedies where ordinary legal mechanisms may not adequately address the circumstances of a case. It has been used in several significant matters, including:

- **Bhopal Gas Tragedy** – facilitating a settlement.
- **Ayodhya title dispute** – issuing directions for resolution of the dispute.
- **A.G. Perarivalan case** – facilitating the release of a convict in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

Thus, Article 142 acts as an important **constitutional safety valve**, enabling the Court to achieve substantive justice in exceptional situations.

Limits & Judicial Interpretation

- The broad wording of Article 142 does **not mean that the Supreme Court has unlimited power**.
- In **Prem Chand Garg v. State of Uttar Pradesh (1962)**, the Supreme Court held that orders under Article 142 cannot violate **fundamental rights**.
- In **Supreme Court Bar Association v. Union of India (1998)**, the Court clarified that Article 142 may **supplement existing statutory provisions but cannot supplant them**. In other words, the power cannot ordinarily be used to completely replace a statutory framework enacted by Parliament.

- The recent mass quashing of FIRs has therefore raised questions about whether individual cases require separate judicial scrutiny under the **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)** and whether expansive use of Article 142 could bypass ordinary legal procedures.

Debate & Way Forward

- **Arguments in favour:** Article 142 allows the Supreme Court to address exceptional situations, prevent injustice, fill procedural gaps and provide effective remedies where conventional law may be inadequate.
- **Concerns:** Excessive use may increase **judicial discretion**, blur the separation between judicial and legislative functions, and potentially dilute statutory procedures. Critics have also questioned the absence of clearly defined standards for determining “complete justice.”
- Former Vice-President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** and former Attorney General **K.K. Venugopal** have previously expressed concerns about the expansive use of Article 142. Venugopal famously described the provision as a “**Kamadhenu**” and suggested that its exercise be confined to **Constitution Benches**.
- The way forward lies in using Article 142 as an **exceptional constitutional power**, while respecting fundamental rights, statutory frameworks, separation of powers and the principle of judicial restraint.

UPSC Prelims & Mains Practice

Prelims MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding **Article 142 of the Indian Constitution**:

1. It empowers the Supreme Court to do “complete justice” in any cause or matter pending before it.
2. Its exercise is completely unrestricted by fundamental rights.
3. The Supreme Court has held that Article 142 can supplement but cannot supplant statutory provisions.
4. The provision has roots in the Government of India Act, 1935.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 4 only
B. 1, 3 and 4 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: B

Mains Question – GS-II

“Article 142 is a constitutional instrument for achieving substantive justice, but its expansive exercise raises concerns regarding judicial discretion and separation of powers.” Critically examine.

5.Global Food Prices Rise: A New Food Security Challenge

Source: The Hindu

According to the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, global food prices rose sharply in August 2026, with the **FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) averaging 133.5 points**, compared with 130.8 points in July. This represents the highest level since late 2022.

The latest rise highlights the growing vulnerability of the global food system to the combined impact of **climate change, geopolitical conflicts and disruptions in agricultural supply chains**.

Understanding the FAO Food Price Index

The **FAO Food Price Index** is a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of major food commodities.

It tracks five major commodity groups:

- **Cereals**
- **Vegetable oils**
- **Dairy products**
- **Meat**
- **Sugar**

The index is an important indicator of emerging pressures on **global food inflation and food security**.

Although the August 2026 level is significantly higher than in recent months, it remains nearly **17% below its record level recorded in March 2022**, when global food markets were severely disrupted following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Why Are Global Food Prices Rising?

1. Climate Change and Extreme Weather

- Agriculture remains highly dependent on climatic conditions. Extreme heat, droughts and irregular rainfall can reduce crop yields and livestock productivity.
- In Europe, extreme heat and drought have affected the prospects for **maize and sugar-beet production**, while also putting pressure on livestock output.
- Such weather-related supply shocks can quickly translate into higher international commodity prices.
- **Climate change is therefore increasingly becoming an economic and food-security issue, rather than merely an environmental concern.**

2. El Niño and Global Agricultural Production

- The anticipated return or strengthening of **El Niño conditions** has raised concerns about agricultural production in several parts of the world.
- El Niño involves abnormal warming of the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean and can alter rainfall and temperature patterns across different regions.
- For global food markets, concerns have particularly emerged over the production of **palm oil and sugar in parts of Asia**.
- Thus, a climatic event occurring in one geographical region can influence food prices across the world because agricultural commodities are traded through interconnected global markets.

3. Geopolitical Conflicts and the Black Sea

- The **Black Sea** region is strategically important for global grain trade.
- Russia and Ukraine are major agricultural producers and exporters, particularly of cereals. Continuing conflict and attacks affecting shipping infrastructure have disrupted grain movements and increased uncertainty over supplies.
- The episode demonstrates an important feature of modern food security:
- Food availability depends not only on production but also on the ability to transport agricultural commodities safely across borders.

4. Fertiliser Supply Concerns

- Modern agriculture depends heavily on fertilisers, particularly nitrogen, phosphate and potash-based inputs.
- Geopolitical tensions can disrupt the production, transportation and international trade of fertilisers. Any prolonged disruption can raise input costs for farmers and potentially reduce agricultural production in subsequent seasons.
- This creates a **second-round effect**:

- **Geopolitical conflict → Fertiliser disruption → Higher input costs → Lower agricultural production → Higher food prices**
- **The Return of “Risk Premium” in Food Markets**
- One of the important concepts associated with the recent increase is the return of a **risk premium** in global food markets.
- When traders anticipate possible disruptions in agricultural supplies, they factor the potential risk into commodity prices even before an actual shortage occurs.
- The current situation reflects the convergence of multiple risks:
- **Climate shocks + Geopolitical tensions + Trade disruptions + Input insecurity**
- This combination can produce greater volatility than any single shock acting independently.

Implications for Global Food Security

Rising international food prices have serious consequences for developing and food-importing countries.

- **Food Inflation:** Higher global commodity prices can increase domestic food prices, particularly in countries dependent on imports.
- **Nutritional Security:** Poorer households spend a larger proportion of their income on food. Persistent price increases can therefore reduce their ability to afford nutritious diets.
- **Agricultural Costs:** Higher prices of fertilisers, fuel and other inputs can increase the cost of agricultural production.
- **Vulnerability of Import-Dependent Countries:** Countries heavily dependent on food or fertiliser imports become particularly vulnerable to global supply disruptions.

India and the Global Food Price Shock

For India, the issue has implications for both **inflation management and food security**.

India is a major producer of cereals, milk, sugar and several other agricultural commodities. However, it is also integrated into global agricultural markets and remains dependent on imports for certain commodities and agricultural inputs.

Global food-price volatility can therefore affect:

- Domestic food inflation
- Fertiliser costs
- Agricultural input prices
- Farmers' incomes
- Consumer welfare
- Government food-security expenditure

India's relatively large domestic food production provides some protection against external shocks, but climate variability and dependence on imported agricultural inputs remain important vulnerabilities.

Way Forward

A resilient global food system requires a shift from a **“production-centric” approach to a “resilience-centric” approach.**

- 1. Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Promote drought-resistant, heat-tolerant and water-efficient crops.
- 2. Diversification of Supply Chains:** Countries should avoid excessive dependence on a single geographical source for food, fertilisers or other critical agricultural inputs.
- 3. Strategic Food Reserves:** Adequate reserves can help governments respond to temporary supply disruptions and price shocks.



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