

THE PALA

CIVIL TIMES

Civil Service Institute | Pala | Thiruvananthapuram | South India’ Premier Civil Service Coaching Institute | www.civilservicepala.org

P2. NATIONAL



100% drought likely to be declared in Maharashtra by month-end
: Maharashtra’s prolonged dry spells and rainfall deficits highlight the need for early drought assessment

P3 WORLD



Amnesty accuses M23 of abuses amounting to war crimes at Congo mines
: Amnesty International’s findings on M23-linked abuses in eastern DRC highlight armed conflict, human-rights violations, forced labour and illicit exploitation

P4. ECOLOGY



Both Houses of Karnataka Legislature adopt resolution urging Centre to confine ESA to notified forests
: reflects Karnataka’s opposition to the proposed Kasturirangan-based Western Ghats ESA

P7. ECONOMICS



Supreme Court on Methanol Regulation and Proportionality
: highlights how regulatory measures to prevent hooch tragedies must maintain a reasonable and proportionate connection

Editor’s Note

Every newspaper brings out a wide spectrum of issues and challenges confronting the nation at a given moment. In the latest edition of the Pala Civil Times, this spectrum extends from Maharashtra’s emerging drought situation and its implications for agriculture and water management to the growing need for transparency and accountability in the governance of outer space. On the national front, we examine Maharashtra’s latest methanol regulations and the Supreme Court’s intervention, alongside Karnataka’s legislative response to the proposed Kasturirangan-based Eco-Sensitive Area framework in the Western Ghats. On the international front, we look at reports of summary killings and other abuses in eastern Congo, highlighting concerns over accountability, human rights and the exploitation of critical minerals amid conflict. Our Decoded editorials also explore how AI agents developing their own communication conventions raise broader questions about understandability, oversight and accountability in emerging technologies. We hope these themes offer readers a clear and meaningful understanding of the issues shaping the present moment. Happy Reading!

Editorials Decoded

THE HINDU



Unsafe space

The U.S. admission of deploying on-orbit space-control weapons highlights the growing weaponisation of outer space

The Indian EXPRESS



AI bots are playing language games. Are humans even referees?

AI agents can develop emergent communication conventions through interaction, showing that observability of AI communication does not necessarily guarantee its understandability.

100% drought likely to be declared in Maharashtra by month-end, says Minister

Maharashtra is facing a prolonged dry spell, with 83 talukas across 20 districts receiving no rainfall for over 20 days and several districts recording 40–50% rainfall deficits. As a result, the State is considering a drought declaration and relief measures.

Water Security

Source Revival: Maharashtra's current directive to revive existing water sources and strengthen village water-supply networks reflects the need to address water scarcity at its source.

Groundwater Management: Groundwater resources should be monitored and managed alongside rainfall and surface-water availability to prevent prolonged drought from becoming a deeper hydrological crisis.

Water Planning: District-level water plans should anticipate requirements across successive periods rather than relying on emergency measures after shortages emerge.

Tankers as Relief: Water tankers can provide immediate drinking-water relief, but they should remain a contingency measure rather than the primary long-term solution.

Institutional Response

Phased Planning: Maharashtra's proposed interventions for October–December 2026, January–March 2027 and April–June 2027 illustrate the need for drought management to extend beyond immediate relief.

Centre–State Coordination: State-level drought assessments should be linked with established norms for accessing Central disaster assistance, while States continue immediate relief where necessary.

Local Participation: Village-level representatives and local institutions should participate in identifying water shortages and implementing interventions suited to local conditions.

Way Forward

Ground Verification: Crop-loss and ground assessments should be undertaken systematically to identify the severity and spatial extent of drought conditions.

Drought Indicators: Assessment should combine rainfall, soil moisture, surface-water availability, groundwater levels, reservoir levels and stream flows rather than relying only on rainfall deficiency.

Early Warning: India needs integrated drought early-warning systems that track climatic, agricultural and hydrological indicators to detect worsening water stress in advance.

Vulnerability Mapping: Drought planning should identify areas where high exposure to water shortage overlaps with vulnerable farming communities and livelihoods.

PYQ COMPASS



Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

- 36% of India's districts are classified as "overexploited" or "critical" by the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA).
- CGWA was formed under the Environment (Protection) Act.
- India has the largest area under groundwater irrigation in the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 2 only
d) 1 and 3 only

See page 9 for answer

NDMA guidelines

Three Dimensions: Drought can be understood as meteorological drought from deficient precipitation, agricultural drought from inadequate soil moisture for crops, and hydrological drought from depletion of surface and groundwater resources.

Agricultural Resilience

The recent dry spell across several Maharashtra talukas, with severe rainfall deficits in districts such as Amravati, Solapur and Latur, highlights the need for district-specific drought assessment and response.

Crop Protection: Drought response should prioritise protection of crops and farmer livelihoods through timely crop-loss assessment, relief and appropriate agricultural support.

Drought-Resilient Farming: Agricultural planning should promote practices and cropping patterns that reduce dependence on uncertain rainfall and conserve available soil moisture.

Amnesty accuses M23 of abuses amounting to war crimes at Congo mines

Amnesty International has accused Rwanda-backed M23 rebels of human-rights abuses, unlawful killings and forced labour at mineral mines under their control in eastern DRC, alongside alleged trafficking of minerals into Rwanda.

Conflict Context

Prolonged Conflict: Eastern DRC has faced decades of conflict involving armed groups and government forces, driven partly by competition over mineral wealth and regional tensions linked to the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

M23 Control: Rwanda-backed M23 rebels seized Goma and Bukavu in early 2025 and continue to control significant territory in North and South Kivu.

Peace Efforts: Despite a U.S.-brokered peace agreement and Qatar-mediated talks, key provisions remain unimplemented and the conflict continues.

Humanitarian Crisis: The conflict has displaced more than seven million people, while Rwandan troops reportedly remain deployed in eastern DRC.

Critical Minerals

Mineral Wealth: M23 controls dozens of artisanal mines producing coltan, gold and other minerals essential to modern electronics and global supply chains.

Tantalum Production: The DRC produced more than half of global tantalum in the previous year, with the Rubaya mine accounting for about 15% of global production, according to Amnesty International.

Gold Production: The DRC exported more than 28 tonnes of gold during the same period, making gold another important resource in the region's mineral economy.

Human Rights Abuses

Amnesty Findings: Amnesty International interviewed 26 people about alleged abuses between January 2025 and March 2026, particularly around the Rubaya coltan and Lomera gold mines.

Reported Abuses: Interviewees reported torture or mistreatment by M23 rebels or security personnel at rebel-controlled mines.

Miner Killings: Amnesty documented 18 artisanal miners killed, with witnesses reporting 10 beaten to death, two shot and six abducted before being found dead.

International Law: Alleged summary killings, torture, arbitrary detention, forced labour and pillage could constitute crimes under international law, according to Amnesty.

Resource–Conflict Link:

Control over mineral-rich territories provides armed groups with access to valuable resources, creating a link between mineral extraction, territorial control and conflict financing.

Mineral Trafficking

Cross-Border Smuggling: Amnesty reported evidence of gold being trafficked from M23-controlled areas into neighbouring Rwanda through smuggling routes.

Rwanda Allegations: UN experts, the United States and the DRC government have previously accused Rwanda of benefiting from Congo's minerals while supporting M23, allegations that Rwanda denies.

Global Supply Chains: Since DRC minerals such as tantalum are essential for electronics, instability in the region connects local conflict with global technology supply chains.

Resource–Conflict Nexus: The DRC illustrates how valuable natural resources, weak governance, armed groups and illicit trade can reinforce one another and prolong conflict.

PYQ COMPASS



- Q. Amnesty International is a
- a) an agency of the United Nations to help refugees of civil wars
 - b) a global Human Rights Movement
 - c) a non-governmental voluntary organization to help very poor people
 - d) an inter-governmental agency to cater to medical emergencies in war-ravaged regions

- Q. About three-fourths of world's cobalt, a metal required for the manufacture of batteries for electric motor vehicles, is produced by (2023)
- a) Argentina
 - b) Botswana
 - c) the Democratic Republic of the Congo
 - d) Kazakhstan

See page 10 for answer

ECOLOGY

Kasturirangan Report: Both Houses of Karnataka Legislature adopt resolution urging Centre to confine ESA to notified forests

The Karnataka Legislature unanimously urged the Centre to restrict the proposed Western Ghats Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) to notified forests and sought one year for a physical survey before the ESA notification is finalised.

Karnataka's Demand

Forest-Based ESA: Karnataka has sought that agricultural, horticultural and plantation lands, human settlements and public-use areas be excluded from the proposed ESA.

Physical Survey: The State wants one year to conduct a physical survey and submit a revised assessment to the Centre before finalisation of the ESA.

High-Level Committee: Karnataka proposes a committee headed by a retired judge, with government officials, farmers, industry representatives and ecological experts, to examine shortcomings in the Kasturirangan recommendations.

Reduced Area: The State's proposed approach would reduce the ESA in Karnataka from 20,668 sq. km. to around 16,000 sq. km.

Six States of Western Ghats

The July 27, 2026 draft proposes a Western Ghats ESA of 56,825.7 sq. km. across Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Centre's Draft ESA

Six States: The July 27, 2026 draft proposes a Western Ghats ESA of 56,825.7 sq. km. across Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Karnataka Share: Karnataka accounts for 20,668 sq. km. across 1,449 villages, the largest State-wise area in the proposed ESA.

Regulated Activities: The draft proposes prohibiting or restricting activities including mining, quarrying, sand mining, certain industries, new thermal power projects and large construction projects, while regulating activities such as hydel power generation.

State-Centre Dispute: The notification continues to face objections from the six Western Ghats States over the precise areas to be included and the implications for agriculture, plantations, infrastructure and development.

Gadgil-Kasturirangan Framework

Gadgil Panel: The Gadgil Committee (2011) proposed treating the entire Western Ghats as ecologically sensitive with different levels of protection.

Kasturirangan Review: The subsequent Kasturirangan High-Level Working Group recommended an ESA covering about 37% of the Western Ghats, focusing primarily on identified natural landscapes.

State Concerns: States subsequently sought modifications to the recommendations, particularly regarding the identification of villages and the impact of conservation restrictions on local livelihoods and development.

Prolonged Process: Successive draft notifications have attempted to reconcile Western Ghats conservation with State-level concerns, but the ESA has still not been finally notified.

Conservation-Development Balance

Ecological Significance: The Western Ghats is a global biodiversity hotspot, supports numerous endemic species and forms the source region of major rivers including the Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery.

Livelihood Concerns: State objections centre on the potential effect of ESA restrictions on agriculture, plantations, settlements, infrastructure and other local economic activities.

Scientific Delimitation: Karnataka's demand for a physical survey reflects the State's position that ground-level land-use assessment should precede final demarcation of the ESA.

Core Issue: The prolonged dispute represents the challenge of balancing ecological protection of a biodiversity-rich landscape with the livelihood and developmental requirements of communities living within it.

PYQ COMPASS



Q 'Gadgil Committee Report' and 'Kasturirangan Committee Report', sometimes seen in the news, are related to: (2016)

- Constitutional reforms
- Ganga Action Plan
- Linking of rivers
- Protection of Western Ghats

See page 9 for answer



Unsafe space: On the U.S. and ‘on-orbit space control weapons’

The U.S. has publicly acknowledged deploying “on-orbit space control weapons” to defend against hostile actions, raising concerns over the weaponisation of outer space and gaps in international regulation.

U.S. Admission and Strategic Context

On-Orbit Weapons: U.S. Air Force Secretary Troy Meink and Space Force chief Gen. Douglas Schiess confirmed that the U.S. has deployed weapons in orbit, without disclosing their nature or deployment timeline.

Space Control: U.S. military doctrine treats space control as including both offensive and defensive operations, despite the weapons being described as defensive.

Strategic Competition: The U.S., Russia, China and India are developing counter-space capabilities as military dependence on satellites continues to expand.

Civilian Dependence: Satellites support communications, energy, financial networks and other critical systems, making attacks on space infrastructure capable of producing wider consequences.

Forms of Space Weaponisation

Kinetic Weapons: Anti-satellite missiles can physically destroy satellites or other space-based assets.

Space-Based Weapons: Weapons deployed in orbit could potentially target other satellites or ground-based targets, although the exact U.S. capability remains undisclosed.

Non-Kinetic Attacks: Jamming, cyberattacks and disruption of communication links can degrade satellite-enabled military and civilian systems without physically destroying satellites.

Counter-Space Capabilities: The U.S., Russia, China and India have demonstrated anti-satellite capabilities, while other forms of counter-space systems are also being developed.

Risks from Dual-Use Space Systems

Dual-Use Assets: Commercial satellites increasingly serve both civilian and military users, making their role in conflicts difficult to distinguish.

Escalation Risk: Unclear definitions of “hostile action” and poorly specified weapons can create uncertainty when satellites operate in close proximity.

Autonomous Systems: Future satellites using onboard AI could independently interpret another satellite’s actions and potentially trigger unintended defensive responses.

Civilian Impact: Military attacks or disruptions against interconnected satellite networks could affect essential civilian services beyond the immediate conflict.

Outer Space Treaty

The 1967 treaty prohibits nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in orbit but does not comprehensively prohibit conventional weapons in space.

Legal and Governance Gaps

Outer Space Treaty: The 1967 treaty prohibits nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in orbit but does not comprehensively prohibit conventional weapons in space.

International Law: Article III requires space activities to comply with international law, but existing rules provide limited clarity for modern dual-use and autonomous systems.

Accountability: The Liability Convention may not provide straightforward answers when an autonomous or commercially operated space asset causes unintended damage.

Arms Race Prevention: UN discussions on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) have not yet produced a comprehensive international treaty.

Need for Multilateral Space Governance

States could disclose the intended functions of deployed orbital weapons to reduce strategic uncertainty. International rules need clearer definitions of hostile action, defensive response and escalation in space. Existing initiatives such as the Artemis Accords provide platforms for discussion, but stronger rules are needed to address emerging military technologies.

PYQ COMPASS

Q. In which of the following areas can GPS technology be used? (2018)

1. Mobile phone operations
2. Banking operations
3. Controlling the power grids

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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



AI bots are playing language games. Are humans even referees?

A study by Emergence AI found that groups of AI agents spontaneously developed new vocabulary, meanings and communication conventions that sometimes became difficult for humans to interpret.

The Experiment

Emergent Language: A study by Emergence AI examined how AI agents communicate when groups of autonomous agents are allowed to interact continuously in simulated environments. The agents were not instructed to create a new language, yet they developed new vocabulary, shorthand and communication conventions.

Leading Models: The experiment involved AI models including Claude, Gemini, Grok, OpenAI, Qwen, DeepSeek and Mistral, allowing researchers to observe whether different models developed different forms of communication.

Different Languages: The communication patterns evolved differently across simulated groups. Some remained understandable to humans, while others became increasingly terse, compressed, metaphorical and context-dependent.

Human Difficulty: Within the first few days, the share of messages whose meaning humans could not reliably determine reached around 55% for Gemini, 50% for OpenAI and over 40% for Claude. DeepSeek reached around 20%, while Qwen and Mistral remained largely understandable.

A study by AI start-up Emergence found that autonomous agents powered by Claude, Gemini, Grok and other models developed shorthand and new word meanings on their own — with up to half their messages becoming unintelligible to humans.

Emergent Meanings

New Vocabulary: Agents developed expressions such as “mouthless action-change” and “True Kintsugi”, demonstrating that their communication could move beyond ordinary human linguistic conventions.

Shared Conventions: Some expressions acquired specific meanings within an agent group. For example, Mistral agents used “ledger remembers who” to indicate that past actions remained on record.

Repeated Usage: These meanings were not explicitly programmed into the agents. Instead, expressions became established through repeated interaction, with “ledger remembers who” appearing almost 5,000 times.

Model-Specific Terms: Other examples included “cold read” for independent verification by an uninvolved party, while Claude agents used “name-first” to indicate attaching a person's name to a claim as a signal of accountability.

Language-Games

Wittgenstein: The phenomenon can be viewed through Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of “language-games”, which emphasises that the meaning of a word depends on how it is used within a particular activity or context.

Contextual Meaning: In Wittgenstein's example of a builders' language-game, words such as “block”, “pillar”, “slab” and “beam” communicate more than their dictionary definitions because participants understand their role within a shared activity.

This raises the possibility that groups of AI agents can develop communication systems whose rules and meanings evolve through interaction, rather than being completely determined beforehand by human programmers. The experiment highlights a distinction between observability and understandability. Effective AI oversight may require humans to understand not only what AI systems communicate, but also how meanings emerge and change within their interactions.

PYQ COMPASS



Q. Which of the following statements with regard to Large Language Models (LLMs) used in machine learning is/are correct?

1. LLMs assign probabilities to the next possible words and then pick the one with the highest probability.

2. LLMs process data through mathematical optimization to minimise prediction errors.

3. LLMs produce unbiased outputs.

Select the answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only

(b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Supreme Court on Methanol Regulation and Proportionality

The Supreme Court struck down Maharashtra rules requiring methanol sold to non-drug manufacturers to contain colourant and bitterant, holding that the restrictions were disproportionate and violated Articles 14 and 19(1)(g).

Background of the Case

Methanol: Methanol is a highly toxic substance widely used as an industrial raw material in chemicals, paints, resins and pharmaceuticals.

1991 Tragedy: Maharashtra introduced stricter controls after a 1991 Mumbai hooch tragedy in which around 93 people died after consuming spurious liquor containing methanol.

2011 Rules: Maharashtra amended its Poisons Rules, 1972 by introducing Rules 18A and 18B to regulate the purchase, sale and possession of methanol.

Industrial Impact: Manufacturers argued that the mandatory colourant and bitterant could contaminate products and make them unsuitable for paint, pharmaceutical, laboratory and other industrial applications.

Supreme Court's Constitutional Examination

Article 14: The Court examined whether the restrictions were arbitrary, unreasonable and inconsistent with the requirement of fairness and non-arbitrariness.

Article 19(1)(g): The restrictions were also tested against the fundamental right to practise any profession or carry on any occupation, trade or business.

State's Power: The Court recognised that States can regulate the possession and sale of poisons under the Poisons Act, 1919.

Proportionality: The issue was whether the restrictions were suitably connected and necessary to achieve the legitimate objective of preventing methanol misuse.

Why the Rules Were Struck Down

Rule 18A(1): Mandatory verification of the purchaser's Form A licence was held disproportionate because it did not establish how the methanol would actually be used.

Rule 18A(2): Mandatory colourant and bitterant were struck down because the State failed to establish a reasonable and proximate connection between the additives and prevention of methanol diversion into illicit liquor.

Regulatory Gap: The Court observed that the rules imposed a continuous burden on legitimate industries without effectively addressing misuse occurring in the unregulated field.

Rule 18B: Confiscation of methanol possessed without a Form A licence could conflict with lawful possession under a Form B permit and make the latter effectively redundant.

Proportionality and Constitutional Limits

Legitimate Aim: Preventing deaths caused by methanol-adulterated liquor was recognised as a legitimate State objective.

Suitability: A restriction must have a meaningful connection with the objective it seeks to achieve.

Necessity: The State must demonstrate that the measure is necessary and does not impose an excessive burden compared with the objective.

Constitutional Review: Applying the proportionality framework associated with K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017), the Court held that the impugned rules failed the required standards and violated Articles 14 and 19(1)(g).

Guidelines for Preventing Hooch Tragedies

Inter-Departmental Coordination: Prohibition, Excise, Police, Transport, Industries and Health departments should coordinate with NGOs to identify illicit liquor networks and monitor vulnerable areas.

Licence Management: Licences should follow proper verification and periodic review, while industrial users should maintain stock and consumption records and return unused or excess methanol.

Safe Handling: Methanol should be transported through dedicated tankers under Excise supervision with safeguards against theft, diversion and tampering.

PYQ COMPASS



Q. A legislation which confers on the executive or administrative authority an unguided and uncontrolled discretionary power in the matter of application of law violates one of the following Articles of the Constitution of India?

- (a) Article 14
- (b) Article 28
- (c) Article 32
- (d) Article 44

PYQ Compass



Q 'Gadgil Committee Report' and 'Kasturirangan Committee Report', sometimes seen in the news, are related to: (2016)

- a) Constitutional reforms
- b) Ganga Action Plan
- c) Linking of rivers
- d) Protection of Western Ghats

Ans : d

Both the Gadgil Committee Report and the Kasturirangan Committee Report are related to the protection of the Western Ghats.

Kasturirangan Committee Report:

The Kasturirangan Committee was formed in 2012 to review the recommendations of the Gadgil Committee. The committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasturirangan, a former ISRO chairman, proposed a more balanced approach to conservation by recommending that only 37% of the Western Ghats be designated as ecologically sensitive areas, compared to the larger area recommended by the Gadgil Committee.

The Kasturirangan Report took a more pragmatic approach by suggesting that areas with human settlements and agricultural activities be excluded from the ecologically sensitive zones, focusing more on biodiversity hotspots.

Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. 36% of India's districts are classified as "overexploited" or "critical" by the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA).
 2. CGWA was formed under the Environment (Protection) Act.
 3. India has the largest area under groundwater irrigation in the world. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 and 3 only
 - c) 2 only
 - d) 1 and 3 only

Ans : b

Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has been constituted under Section 3 (3) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to regulate and control development and management of ground water resources in the country. Statement 3 is correct – India has the world's largest groundwater well equipped irrigation system.

PYQ Compass



Q. Amnesty International is a

- a) an agency of the United Nations to help refugees of civil wars
- b) a global Human Rights Movement
- c) a non-governmental voluntary organization to help very poor people
- d) an inter-governmental agency to cater to medical emergencies in war-ravaged regions

Ans : b

Although it is primarily a Non-Governmental Organisation, it's official website states, "Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people who take injustice personally. We are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.

Q. About three-fourths of world's cobalt, a metal required for the manufacture of batteries for electric motor vehicles, is produced by (2023)

- a) Argentina
- b) Botswana
- c) the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- d) Kazakhstan

Ans : C

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the largest producer of cobalt globally, accounting for approximately 70–75% of the world's supply. This metal is critical for the manufacture of lithium-ion batteries used in electric vehicles, making the DRC central to the global energy transition.

Q. In which of the following areas can GPS technology be used? (2018)

- 1. Mobile phone operations
- 2. Banking operations
- 3. Controlling the power grids

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans : d

GPS technology is integral to mobile phone operations, especially for navigation, location-based services, and emergency response systems. It plays a role in banking operations by providing time synchronization for secure transactions. GPS technology is also used in power grids for time stamping and synchronizing grid operations.

PYQ Compass



Q. Which of the following statements with regard to Large Language Models (LLMs) used in machine learning is/are correct? (2026)

1. LLMs assign probabilities to the next possible words and then pick the one with the highest probability.
2. LLMs process data through mathematical optimization to minimise prediction errors.
3. LLMs produce unbiased outputs.

Select the answer using the code given below:

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

Ans : b

LLMs are known to produce biased outputs because they are trained on large corpora of text data from the internet that contain inherent biases related to gender, race, culture, and other factors. Bias in training data leads to biased outputs. Hence only statement 3 is not correct.

Large Language Models (LLMs) like GPT work by predicting the next token/word in a sequence. They assign probability distributions over possible next words and typically select based on highest probability (or use sampling strategies).

Q. A legislation which confers on the executive or administrative authority an unguided and uncontrolled discretionary power in the matter of application of law violates one of the following Articles of the Constitution of India?

- (a) Article 14
- (b) Article 28
- (c) Article 32
- (d) Article 44

Ans : a

A legislation that confers unguided and uncontrolled discretionary power on the executive or administrative authority violates Article 14 of the Constitution of India. Article 14 guarantees equality before the law and the equal protection of laws. Such arbitrary powers violate the principle of rule of law and equality, which requires that discretion must be exercised within defined boundaries.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Gadgil Committee and Kasturirangan Committee:

- 1.The Gadgil Committee recommended treating the entire Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area with graded levels of protection.
- 2.The Kasturirangan Committee recommended a smaller area of the Western Ghats for ecological protection than the Gadgil Committee.
- 3.The Kasturirangan approach sought to distinguish natural landscapes from areas with significant human habitation and agricultural activity.

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

Ans: d

The Gadgil Committee proposed protection across the entire Western Ghats with graded regulation. The Kasturirangan Committee recommended a smaller ecologically sensitive area and adopted a more landscape-based approach, giving greater consideration to human settlements and agricultural areas.

Q. With reference to drought, consider the following statements:

- 1.Meteorological drought is associated with a significant deficiency in precipitation from the normal level.
- 2.Hydrological drought involves depletion of surface and subsurface water following prolonged meteorological drought.
- 3.Agricultural drought primarily refers to inadequate soil moisture or rainfall for satisfactory crop growth.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: d

All three statements correctly describe the major forms of drought discussed in the context of drought management guidelines by NDMA.