

## Current Affairs 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2025 by Right IAS

### Famine in GAZA

The UN confirmed that famine is underway in the Gaza Governorate and is expected to spread to Deir Al-Balah and Khan Younès by the end of September. The UN defines famine according to the following criteria: at least 20% of households face an extreme lack of food; at least 30% of children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition, and at least two people out of every 10,000 dying every day of starvation or from the interaction of malnutrition and disease.

### The Hindu

#### Great Nicobar Island Project and FRA issue

Background of the Project A ₹72,000-crore mega infrastructure project planned on Great Nicobar Island includes: A transshipment port. An airport A power plant A township Project involves diversion of 13,075 hectares of forest land.



Concerns Raised Local tribespeople (Nicobarese) raised concerns about: Forest land diversion. Impact on tribal rights and vulnerable groups. Tribal Council of Little Nicobar and Great Nicobar complained to Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram. Dispute Over Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006

Administration's claim (2022): FRA rights of tribals were already identified and settled.

Consent for diversion was taken after this. Issued a certificate dated August 18, 2022. Tribal Council's position: No process of settling forest rights was ever initiated. Hence, no valid consent could have been given. Council was not part of the Gram Sabha meeting (August 12, 2022).

Legal Confusion Protection of Aboriginal Tribes Act, 1956 (PAT56): Gives Administrator full authority to divert land. Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006: Requires settlement of rights and Gram Sabha consent before forest diversion. It is unclear whether land diversion was done under PAT56 or FRA

Centre's Stand Centre maintains due process was followed. Gram Sabha in August 2022 gave consent, as per administration. However, Nicobarese council denies participation in that Gram Sabha.

Current Situation Council submitted complaint to the Minister on July 21, 2024. Letter delivered on July 30; email also sent. No response yet from the Ministry.

Council is "exploring options" if no reply is received.

### The Hindu

#### Trade through Lipulekh pass

A decision by India and China to restart border trade through the Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand has come under fire in Nepal, as it lies in the contested Kalapani Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura region, which is claimed by

Nepal. Lipulekh Pass is a mountain pass, situated in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand, India. It serves as a vital link between India and Tibet (China) and is a significant part of the trade and pilgrimage route. The pass is nestled in the eastern part of Uttarakhand, near the Indo-Tibetan border



**Lipulekh Pass Dispute Location & Importance** Lipulekh Pass lies in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand (Pithoragarh district). It connects India with the Tibet Autonomous Region (China) and also provides access towards Nepal. Historically, it has been an ancient trade and pilgrimage route (for Kailash–Mansarovar Yatra). Strategically important as it is part of the India–China–Nepal tri-junction



**Parties Involved** India Considers Lipulekh Pass as part of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district. Claims historical, administrative, and cartographic evidence. Nepal Claims Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura as part of its Historical Background 1816 – Treaty of Sugauli (British Nepal): Defined Kali River as the western boundary of

Nepal. Dispute arises over the origin of Kali River → whether it begins at Limpiyadhura (Nepal's claim) or further downstream (India's claim). 1954: India and China signed an agreement allowing pilgrim and trade routes via Lipulekh. Nepal not consulted, which remains a point of contention. 1962 India–China War: India strengthened its military presence in Kalapani area, leading to Nepal's objections later. Recent Developments 2015: India and China agreed to use Lipulekh Pass for trade. Nepal protested, saying its sovereignty was ignored. 2019: India released a new political map after J&K reorganisation → showed Kalapani within Uttarakhand. Nepal objected. 2020: India inaugurated a new road to Lipulekh for Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims. Nepal strongly protested. Dharchula sub-district

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Darchula District, Sudurpashchim Province). Points to the Sugauli Treaty (1816) with the British, which says territory east of the Kali River belongs to Nepal. China Uses Lipulekh Pass for trade with India under bilateral agreements (since 1954 and later).

Nepal opposes India-China agreements involving Lipulekh without its consent. In response, Nepal released a new political map (May 2020) showing Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura as part of Nepal. This led to a major diplomatic rift between India and Nepal. Key Issues Boundary Demarcation: Dispute over the exact origin of the Kali River. Strategic Importance: Region is critical for India's security against China. Sovereignty Concerns: Nepal argues India and China are making bilateral decisions ignoring Nepal's rights. India–Nepal Relations: Dispute has strained ties, though both sides maintain broader cooperation.

### **The Hindu**

### **Supreme Court's Order on Street Dogs (August 2025)**

Background August 11, 2025: SC ordered all street dogs in Delhi to be rounded up and confined in shelters. August 22, 2025:

SC stayed its own order; final hearing pending. The directive was criticized as scientifically unsound, legally flawed, and morally questionable



Concerns with the Order Cruelty & Suffering: Sentenced lakhs of sentient beings to misery and eventual death. Shelter System Fails: Global experience (e.g., U.S. "pound" system) shows shelters overcrowding, aggression, high mortality. Leads to disease outbreaks (rabies, leptospirosis) and health risks for staff. Disposal of dead animals creates environmental hazards. Ecological Science Ignored: Vacuum Effect: Removing dogs leads to migration of new dogs from nearby states.



Removal of dogs → rise in rodents & monkeys → new health problems. Public Health Risk: Shelters can become epicentres for zoonotic diseases. Contradiction to Global & National Guidelines WHO and India's NAPRE (National Action Plan for Dog Mediated Rabies Elimination) recommend

sterilisation + vaccination, not culling/incarceration. Court's order went against its own 2024 judgment (Justice J.K. Maheshwari Bench) which upheld the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023.

**Social & Ethical Dimensions** Street dogs are part of India's urban ecosystem. For Delhi's homeless, dogs are often companions and protectors. Narrative of "dog lovers vs poor" is misleading; issue is about institutional apathy and governance failure. Constitutional Duty (Article 51A(g)) – Compassion for living beings. State-backed cruelty violates this principle. 5. **Governance & Political Angle** The "dog menace" debate diverts attention from real governance crises in Delhi: Alleged voter theft Crumbling infrastructure Waterlogging, corruption, inflation. MCD's failure: ABC programme poorly implemented → low sterilisation, poor vaccination, lack of funds & accountability. **Scientific & Humane Alternative**

Animal Birth Control (ABC) Programme is the proven solution. Example: Jaipur, Jodhpur → stable decline in dog population + high vaccination coverage. Targeted approach needed: Capture & observe only dogs involved in unprovoked attacks. Mass round-ups are unscientific, inhumane, and ineffective.



**Conclusion** SC's initial order was a monumental error → driven by hysteria, not science. Must shift focus to evidence-based, compassionate, and sustainable solutions (sterilisation + vaccination). Hold MCD accountable for decades of failure. Humane, scientific canine management is essential for both public health and constitutional morality.

## The Hindu

### AI use in the judiciary (Kerala High Court guidelines)

**Background** In July 2025, the Kerala High Court published guidelines for AI use in district judiciary — first such policy in India. **Aim:** improve efficiency and reduce pendency (currently ~5 crore cases). AI tools include document translation, defect identification, transcription etc.

**Opportunities of AI in Judiciary** Faster case processing, translation, transcription, and legal research. Helps reduce workload in overburdened courts. **Pilot use:** transcription of arguments, depositions. **Challenges & Risks** 1. **Accuracy Issues** Wrong translations (e.g., "leave granted" → "holiday approved").

Transcription errors (e.g., "Noel" → "no"). AI hallucinations: inventing non-existent phrases/cases. **Search & Research Bias** 3. Search engine bias may "hide" relevant precedents. AI legal models sometimes cite fake or wrong case laws. **Threat to Judicial Reasoning** AI may reduce adjudication to rule-based logic. Human judgment, context, and precedent relevance risk being ignored



Data Privacy & Dependence AI tools use sensitive and personal data without clear safeguards. Risk of dependency on vendors without sustainable adoption framework. Lack of infrastructure (internet, hardware) could worsen issues.

Ethical & Legal Risks Current tender documents show little focus on risk management. Hallucinations are an inherent feature of LLMs, requiring constant human oversight.

1. Recommendations / Way Forward  
Critical AI Literacy Judges, lawyers, and court staff need training on both uses & limitations of AI. Judicial academies and bar associations should lead capacity building. Transparency & Rights of Litigants Litigants must know if AI is being used in their cases. Right to opt-out of AI based processes if safeguards are weak. Procurement Guidelines Standardised frameworks to assess reliability, data management, explainability, and risk mitigation before adopting AI tools. Courts should check if AI is the best solution for specific problems. Institutional Support (eCourts Project Phase III) Create technology offices with specialists to guide AI adoption. Help judges and registries with vendor compliance, monitoring, and technical evaluation.



Core Principal AI should serve the ends of justice, not replace human reasoning. Efficiency must not overshadow nuanced judicial decision making. Clear guardrails and guidelines are essential for safe AI integration in courts

#### Facts

The Waorani, Waodani, or Huaorani, also known as the Waos, are an Indigenous people from the Amazonian Region of Ecuador who have marked differences from other ethnic groups from Ecuador. Yasuní National Park is a protected area comprising roughly 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> between the Napo and Curaray Rivers in Pastaza and Orellana Provinces within Amazonian Ecuador. Ukraine and southern Russia

**FACTS** → The Cossacks are a predominantly East Slavic, Eastern Christian people, originating in the Pontic–Caspian steppe of eastern Europe. Yasuní National Park is a protected area comprising roughly 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> between the Napo and Curaray Rivers in Pastaza and Orellana Provinces within Amazonian Ecuador.