CURRENT AFFAIRS — 5 NOVEMBER 2026

Thursday, 5 November 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Prelims + Mains GS-wise digest

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UPSC CSE

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Cabinet: **₹14,500 cr** VGF for **92 GWh** grid-scale storage (FY27–FY31)
- **30%** capex subsidy for **2 lithium + 2 nickel** processing plants (₹2,814 cr)
- **VISTAR** (₹4,371.10 cr) to modernise statistics; **8th Economic Census** planned
- **75%** of Agniveers get a **2-year** extension, then path to regular service
- **850** Fast Track Special Courts continue till **31 March 2031**
- SC: two-child norm has lost relevance; TFR now **1.9** vs replacement **2.1**
- **Bharatiya Vayuyan Niyam, 2026** replaces Aircraft Rules, 1937 from **1 Jan 2027**
- MeitY weighs limiting **Section 79** safe harbour for algorithm-driven platforms
- India–Canada hold **inaugural Defence Dialogue** (virtual, 3 Nov)
- Services PMI at **55.8** in October — a **four-month high**

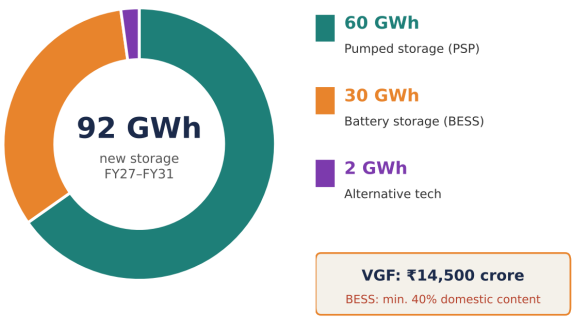
SECTION A — GS-III: SCIENCE-TECH • ECONOMY • ENVIRONMENT • SECURITY

1. Cabinet clears ₹14,500 crore VGF scheme for 92 GWh grid-scale energy storage

[ENVIRONMENT] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3 (Energy, Infrastructure)

Syllabus Linkage	GS3 – Infrastructure: Energy; Conservation. Prelims: **VGF**, **BESS**, **Pumped Storage**, **DCR**
Context	On **4 November 2026** the Union Cabinet approved a **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** scheme of **₹14,500 crore** to add **92 GWh** of new grid-scale storage between **FY 2026-27 and FY 2030-31**, to firm up renewable power.
Key Facts	■ Mix: **60 GWh pumped-storage (PSP)**, **30 GWh BESS**, **2 GWh** alternative technologies ■ Expected investment of about **₹97,600 crore**; capacity awarded by **tariff-based competitive bidding** ■ **Minimum 40% Domestic Content Requirement** for BESS projects ■ New capacity ≈ **170%** of current grid-scale storage; need is **411 GWh by 2031-32**
Way Fwd	Pair VGF with **storage-friendly tariffs**, faster PSP clearances and a domestic **cell-manufacturing** base to avoid import dependence.
Concept	**VGF** = one-time capital grant that bridges the gap between project cost and commercial viability. **Pumped storage** pumps water uphill in surplus hours and generates in peak hours — the cheapest long-duration storage.

Grid-scale storage target mix



2. ₹2,814 crore capex-support scheme for domestic lithium and nickel processing

[ECONOMY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3 (Industry, Resources)

Syllabus Linkage	GS3 – Industrial policy; Mineral resources; Energy security. Prelims: **critical minerals**, **NCMM**, **MMDR Act**
Context	The Cabinet approved a **five-year (FY27–FY31)** scheme of **₹2,814 crore** to build plants that convert lithium and nickel ores and intermediates into **high-purity compounds** for EVs, batteries, electronics and defence.
Key Facts	■ **30% capital subsidy** on eligible investment, paid in **three milestone tranches** ■ Target: **2 lithium plants (≥30,000 t each)** and **2 nickel plants (≥50,000 t each)** ■ Caps: **₹500 cr** per lithium and **₹900 cr** per nickel beneficiary ■ Two-stage selection: technical check, then **least-cost bidding**; **cobalt** as nickel by-product
Way Fwd	Secure **overseas ore supply** (KABIL-type assets), build refining skills and link plants to **battery PLI** demand.
Concept	**Midstream processing** is the chokepoint of critical-mineral chains. The **National Critical Mineral Mission (2025)** covers exploration to recycling; **24 critical minerals** sit in **Part D, First Schedule of the MMDR Act, 1957**.

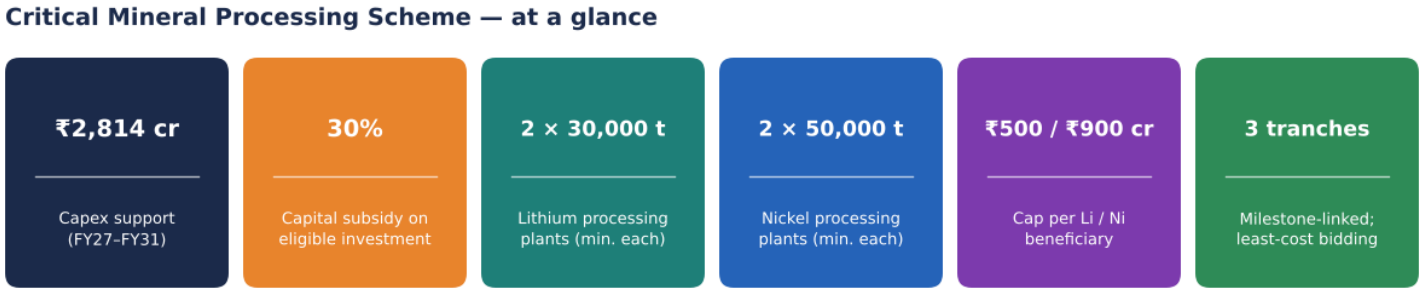


Fig. (Item 2): Stat tiles for the critical mineral processing scheme: ₹2,814 crore outlay, 30% capex subsidy, two lithium plants of 30,000 t, two nickel plants of 50,000 t, caps of ₹500 and ₹900 crore, FY27–FY31.

3. VISTAR: ₹4,371 crore plan to overhaul India's official statistical system

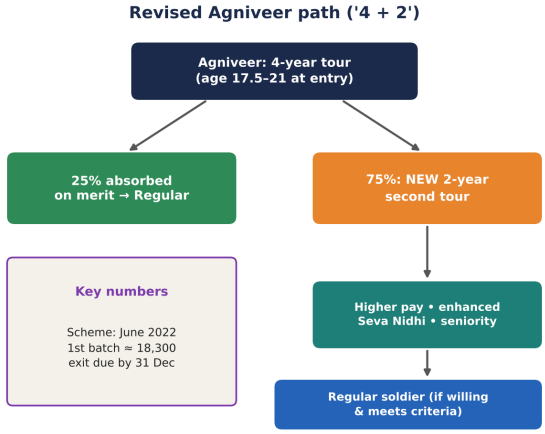
[ECONOMY] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3/GS2 (Economy, Governance)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS3 – Indian economy: data, planning; GS2 – Governance. Prelims: **MoSPI**, **NSO**, **Economic Census**
Context	The Cabinet approved **VISTAR – Viksit Bharat Initiative for Statistical Transformation, Analytics & Research** with **₹4,371.10 crore** for **FY27–FY31**, using digitalisation and **AI** to modernise official data.
Key Facts	■ **59 surveys** proposed in the **16th Finance Commission** cycle (vs **43** earlier) ■ New indicators: **Headline Index of Services Production**, **Index of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises** ■ **Eighth Economic Census** down to **Gram Panchayat and ward** level ■ A **National Statistical Business Register**; support for **district-level** economic estimates
Way Fwd	Ensure **statutory autonomy** for the statistical system, timely release calendars and open microdata to rebuild trust.
Concept	**NSO** was formed in **2019** by merging CSO and NSSO under **MoSPI**. The **Economic Census** counts all non-farm establishments; the **7th** was held in **2019-20**. The **National Statistical Commission (2005)** followed the **Rangarajan** Commission.

4. Agnipath tweak: two-year 'second tour' for 75% of Agniveers, then regular service

[DEFENCE] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3 (Security)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS3 – Security forces and their mandate; GS2 – Government policies. Prelims: **Agnipath**, **Seva Nidhi**
Context	The Cabinet approved an **additional two-year engagement** for the **75%** of Agniveers not retained after the **four-year** term, just weeks before the **first batch of about 18,300** was due to exit by **31 December**.
Key Facts	■ Earlier rule: only **25%** absorbed on merit after **4 years**; scheme launched **June 2022** ■ After the extra **2 years**, willing Agniveers who meet criteria to be enrolled as **regular soldiers** ■ Second period brings **higher pay**, an **enhanced Seva Nidhi** and seniority benefits ■ **CDS**: the 25% absorbed at 4 years stay **senior** to those absorbed after the extension
Way Fwd	Balance **youthful profile** with experience; publish clear selection criteria and expand **lateral absorption** in CAPFs and states.
Concept	**Agnipath** recruits personnel below officer rank for 4 years (age **17.5–21**). **Seva Nidhi** is a tax-free exit corpus built from matched contributions. Aims: lower average age and pension bill.

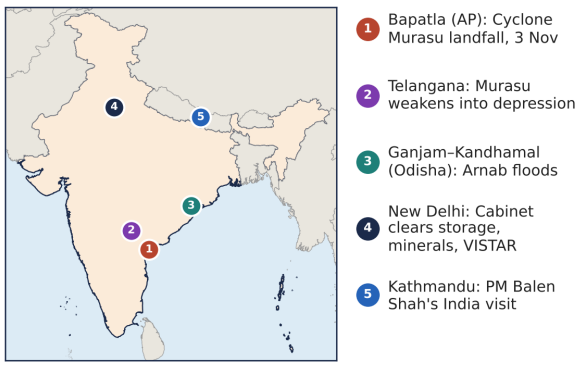


5. Cyclone Murasu crosses Andhra coast, weakens into depression over Telangana

[ENVIRONMENT] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS1/GS3 (Geography, Disaster Mgmt)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS1 – Cyclones; GS3 – Disaster management. Prelims: **cyclone naming**, **IMD**, **Bay of Bengal**
Context	Severe cyclonic storm **Murasu** made landfall near **Bapatla (Andhra Pradesh)** on **3 November** with winds of **100–110 km/h**, gusting to **120 km/h**, and has now weakened into a **depression over Telangana**.
Key Facts	■ Second Bay of Bengal cyclone in a week after **Cyclone Arnab** (landfall **28 October**) ■ Arnab caused floods and landslides in **Ganjam and Kandhamal (Odisha)** ■ Name **Murasu** ('war drum' in Tamil) was **contributed by India** ■ Schools shut and evacuations across **Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Odisha**
Way Fwd	Scale up **impact-based forecasting**, cyclone shelters and mangrove shelterbelts under the **National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project**.
Concept	North Indian Ocean cyclones are named from a list of **169 names** (2020) given by **13 member countries** of the **WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones**; **IMD, New Delhi** is the **RSMC** that assigns them.

India in News — 5 November 2026



Map not to scale; boundaries as per India's official position

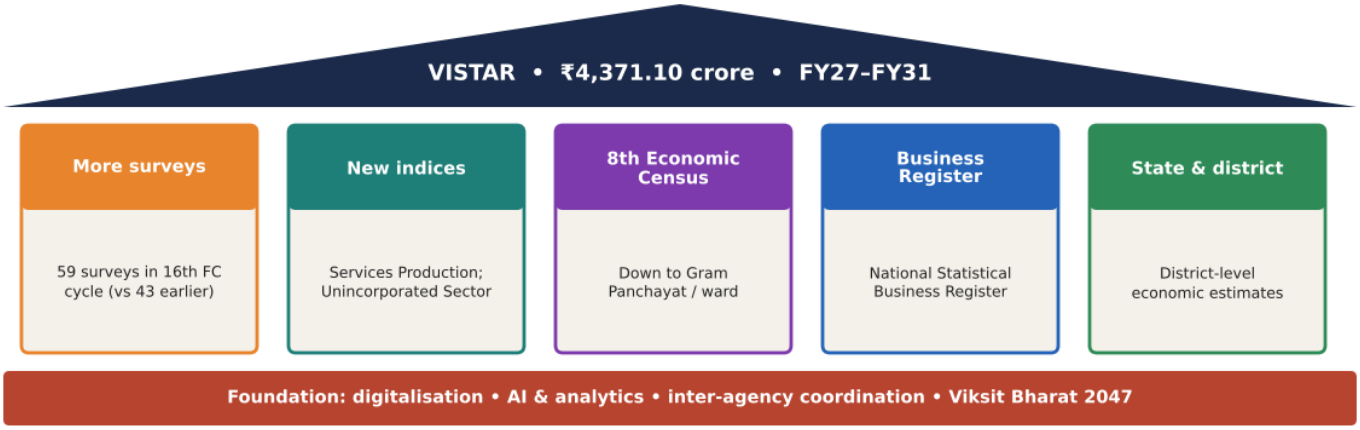


Fig. (Item 3): Pillar diagram of VISTAR (₹4,371.10 crore, FY27–FY31) with five pillars: more surveys (59 vs 43), new indices, 8th Economic Census, National Statistical Business Register, and state and district statistics, on a base of digitalisation and AI.

SECTION B — KEY ECONOMY DATA POINT OF THE DAY

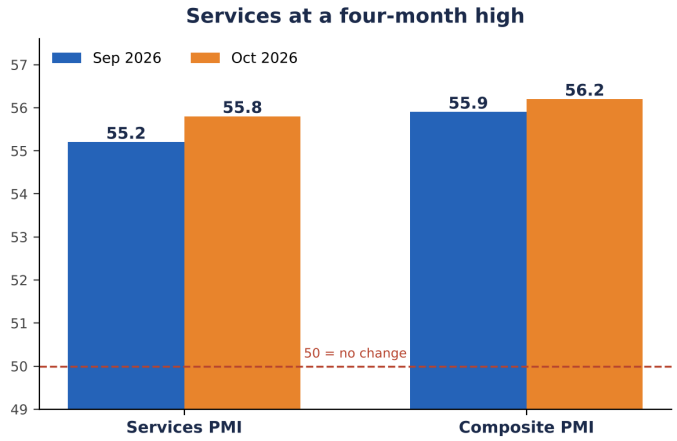
INDIA SERVICES PMI — OCTOBER 2026

55.8

expansion zone (above 50)

Up from **55.2** in September — a **four-month high**; Composite PMI **56.2** (from **55.9**). Input-cost inflation slowest since **August 2020**, but hiring cooled to a four-month low and export orders grew at the slowest pace since **February 2023**. Above **50** = expansion.

Concept: PMI is a monthly survey-based diffusion index of purchasing managers; **50** separates expansion from contraction. It is a **leading indicator**, unlike the lagging **IIP**.



SECTION C — GS-II: GOVERNANCE • POLITY • JUDICIARY • INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

6. SC: two-child norm for panchayat polls has 'lost relevance'; Javed (2003) sent to larger bench

[POLITY] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2 (Polity, Local Govt)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – Fundamental Rights; Local bodies; GS1 – Population. Prelims: **Art 21**, **Art 243F**, **TFR**
Context	A bench of **Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe** set aside a sarpanch's disqualification under the **Maharashtra Village Panchayat Act, 1959** for a third child, and asked a **larger bench** to reconsider **Javed v. State of Haryana (2003)**.
Key Facts	■ **Javed (2003)**: a **3-judge bench** upheld Haryana's two-child bar, finding no **Art 14** violation ■ India's **TFR** fell from **3 (2003)** to **1.9** now — below replacement level **2.1** ■ Court: such laws infringe **reproductive autonomy** under **Article 21** ■ Provision examined: **Section 14(1)(j-1)**, applicable from **13 September 2000**
Way Fwd	States should review **coercive population laws**; shift to incentives, **ageing-society** planning and women's health.
Concept	**Art 243F** lets State legislatures prescribe disqualifications for panchayat membership. **TFR** = average children per woman; **2.1** is the **replacement level**. Reproductive choice was recognised under Art 21 in **Suchita Srivastava (2009)**.

7. Fast Track Special Courts scheme extended to 2031; courts raised from 779 to 850

[SOCIETY] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2 (Judiciary, Vulnerable Sections)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – Judiciary; Mechanisms for protection of vulnerable sections. Prelims: **Nirbhaya Fund**, **POCSO**, **CSS**
Context	The Cabinet continued the centrally sponsored **Fast Track Special Courts (FTSC)** scheme for rape and **POCSO** cases from **1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031**, expanding it from **779 to 850** courts.
Key Facts	■ Total outlay **₹3,788.04 crore** ■ Central share **₹2,353.15 crore** from the **Nirbhaya Fund**; States/UTs **₹1,434.89 crore** ■ 850 courts include **exclusive POCSO courts** ■ Scheme began **2 October 2019** following the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018**
Way Fwd	Fill judicial and **forensic-lab** vacancies, ensure **child-friendly courtrooms** and track disposal-time targets.
Concept	**POCSO Act, 2012** is gender-neutral and mandates **special courts**. The **Nirbhaya Fund (2013)** is a non-lapsable corpus for women's safety. Justice delivery is in the **Concurrent List** (Entry 11A).

8. Centre weighs narrowing Section 79 'safe harbour' for algorithm-driven social media

[POLITY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2/GS3 (Governance, Cyber)

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – Govt policies; GS3 – Challenges to internal security via communication networks. Prelims: **IT Act, 2000**, **intermediary**
Context	**MeitY** has begun preliminary talks on whether **Section 79** immunity under the **IT Act, 2000** should cover only **'mere conduit'** intermediaries, not platforms whose **algorithms rank and recommend** content.
Key Facts	■ Rationale: such platforms are **'no longer passive carriers'**; concern over minors' exposure ■ Also proposed: users may directly seek removal of **deepfakes** and **non-consensual intimate images** ■ Any change needs an **amendment to the IT Act** by **Parliament**, after stakeholder consultation ■ No decision yet — discussions are **preliminary**
Way Fwd	Calibrate liability to **algorithmic amplification**, with transparency audits, while protecting **free speech** under Art 19(1)(a).
Concept	**Safe harbour** shields intermediaries from liability for third-party content if they observe **due diligence**. **Shreya Singhal (2015)** read 'actual knowledge' as a **court order or government notification**. Due diligence is detailed in the **IT Rules, 2021**.

9. Bharatiya Vayuyan Niyam, 2026 notified; replaces Aircraft Rules, 1937 from 1 January 2027

[POLITY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2/GS3 (Governance, Infrastructure)

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – Regulatory bodies; GS3 – Infrastructure: airports. Prelims: **DGCA**, **Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024**, **ICAO**
Context	The Civil Aviation Ministry notified the **Bharatiya Vayuyan Niyam, 2026**, a modern rulebook that will replace the nearly **nine-decade-old Aircraft Rules, 1937** from **1 January 2027**.
Key Facts	■ Covers **registration, airworthiness**, design approvals, maintenance and **personnel licensing** ■ **Flight and duty time limits** for pilots and cabin crew to curb fatigue ■ **Fare transparency**: airlines must show base fare, taxes, fees and refund rules ■ Also covers **aerodrome licensing**; tariffs stay under **DGCA** oversight
Way Fwd	Align fully with **ICAO SARPs**, build DGCA capacity and use **digital licensing** to cut compliance time.
Concept	The **Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024** replaced the **Aircraft Act, 1934**; these Niyam are its subordinate rules. **ICAO** (Montreal) was set up under the **Chicago Convention, 1944**.

10. India and Canada hold inaugural Defence Dialogue; industry and R&D top priorities

[IR] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2 (IR)

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – Bilateral relations; Effect of policies of developed countries on India. Prelims: **G7**, **Indo-Pacific**
Context	India and Canada held their **first Defence Dialogue** virtually on **3 November 2026**, carrying forward the **Modi–Carney joint statement of 2 March 2026** to expand defence and strategic ties.
Key Facts	■ Co-chairs: **Amit Telang** (JS, International Cooperation, MoD) and **Scott Millar** (ADM Policy, Canada's DND) ■ Priorities: **defence industrial cooperation**, **military-technical** ties and **defence R&D** ■ Sides exchanged views on **strategic outlooks** and discussed specific deliverables ■ Marks continued **normalisation** of ties after the **2023-24** diplomatic downturn
Way Fwd	Institutionalise the dialogue annually; explore **critical minerals**, **Indo-Pacific maritime** cooperation and co-development.
Concept	**Canada** is a **G7** member and has an **Indo-Pacific Strategy (2022)**. It hosts one of the largest **Indian diasporas**; Canada is also a key source of **uranium** and **potash** for India.

11. India–Nepal: big-ticket projects and old disputes ahead of PM Balen Shah's first bilateral visit

[IR] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2 (India & Neighbourhood)

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – India and its neighbourhood; GS3 – Energy. Prelims: **ICPs**, **Mahakali Treaty**, **1950 Treaty**
Context	India and Nepal have stepped up engagement ahead of **PM Balen Shah's** maiden bilateral visit — his **first foreign bilateral trip** — expected in the **second half of November** for about **three days**.
Key Facts	■ Likely inaugurations: **Bhairahawa ICP**, Nepal Police Academy (Panauti), **Mahakali** bridge ■ Starts: **Dodhara Chandani ICP**, **Lower Arun** hydro, **Siliguri–Jhapa** petroleum pipeline ■ Hydro with **NHPC**: **West Seti 750 MW**, **Phukot Karnali 480 MW**, **Seti River-6 450 MW** ■ Thorny issues: **boundary**, **Pancheshwar**, extra **air-entry points**, trade imbalance
Way Fwd	Deliver projects on time, deepen **cross-border power trade**, and handle the boundary issue through **dialogue**.
Concept	**1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship** underpins open borders. **Mahakali Treaty (1996)** covers **Pancheshwar**. **Motihari–Amlekhganj (2019)** was South Asia's **first cross-border petroleum pipeline**.

India–Nepal: projects on the visit agenda



1. West Seti hydro 750 MW
2. Seti River-6 hydro 450 MW
3. Phukot Karnali hydro 480 MW
4. Dodhara Chandani ICP
5. Darchula: Mahakali bridge
6. Bhairahawa ICP
7. Kathmandu
8. Lower Arun hydro
9. Siliguri–Jhapa pipeline

Hydro projects with NHPC. Locations indicative; map not to scale; boundaries as per India's official position

SECTION D PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE — QUICK FACTS

01 **QS Asia University Rankings 2027**: **IIT Delhi 66th** (best in India); **325** Indian institutions ranked; **Univ. of Hong Kong** No. 1	04 Petition against **Section 16** of the **CEC & ECs Act, 2023** (immunity for CEC/ECs) pending in SC
02 **Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase II** extended to **March 2028**	05 **Bhutan** set a Guinness record by erecting **108 stupas in nine hours**
03 **US midterms (3 Nov)**: Democrats won control of both **House and Senate**	06 **Nirmala Lakshman** won a **Sharjah** book award for '**The Tamils**'

SECTION E PRACTICE CORNER — PRELIMS MCQs + MAINS QUESTION

Prelims MCQ 1. With reference to the grid-scale energy storage scheme approved on 4 November 2026, consider the following statements:
1. It provides Viability Gap Funding for 92 GWh of storage.
2. Battery storage forms the largest share of the targeted capacity.
3. BESS projects must meet a minimum 40% domestic content requirement.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) — The 92 GWh target is led by **60 GWh pumped storage**, not batteries (**30 GWh**); so statement 2 is wrong. The **40% DCR** applies to BESS.

Prelims MCQ 2. Which Article of the Constitution empowers State Legislatures to prescribe disqualifications for membership of Panchayats, such as the two-child norm?

(a) Article 243D
(b) Article 243F
(c) Article 243K
(d) Article 243G

Answer: (b) — **Art 243F** deals with disqualifications; **243D** = reservation of seats, **243K** = State Election Commission, **243G** = powers and functions of Panchayats.

Mains Practice (GS3): Energy storage is the missing link in India's renewable transition. Examine the significance of the 92 GWh storage VGF scheme and the challenges in scaling pumped-storage and battery storage. (GS3, 15 marks, 250 words)

Hint: Intro: RE intermittency and the **411 GWh by 2031-32** need. Body: scheme design (**₹14,500 cr**, 60/30/2 GWh mix, **40% DCR**), benefits (grid stability, RTC power); challenges (land/forest clearances for PSP, cell imports, tariffs). Conclude with manufacturing and market reforms.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Storage **92 GWh / ₹14,500 cr** • Li-Ni processing **₹2,814 cr, 30%** • **VISTAR ₹4,371 cr** • Agniveer **4+2** • FTSC **850 till 2031** • TFR **1.9** — Javed to larger bench • Services PMI **55.8**

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team
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