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**07<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2026**

#### Headlines:

- India–China Military Talks in Arunachal Pradesh
- Judicial Integrity and Accountability in Higher Judiciary
- EOS-05: Advancing India's Earth Observation Capabilities
- BRICS 2026: India's Presidency and the Global South
- Forest Rights Act: Gram Sabha Role in Forest Diversion



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## 1. India-China Military Talks in Arunachal Pradesh

**GS Paper: GS-II – International Relations; GS-III – Internal Security & Border Management**

### Why in News?

- India and China held their first Corps Commander-level military meeting in the Eastern Sector at the Vacha-Damai Border Personnel Meeting Point (BPM) in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The talks assume significance amid tensions around the Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district, where the two sides have differing perceptions of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- The engagement comes after the 25th round of India-China Special Representatives' talks and ahead of the BRICS Summit, which the Chinese President is expected to attend.

### Key Significance

#### 1. Expansion of Military Dialogue

- Corps Commander-level talks were earlier predominantly associated with eastern Ladakh, particularly following the 2020 Galwan crisis.
- Extending this mechanism to Arunachal Pradesh strengthens sector-specific military communication and crisis management.

#### 2. Border Management & De-escalation

- Provides a direct channel to address localised face-offs, transgressions and tensions before they escalate.
- Complements diplomatic mechanisms such as the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) and Special Representatives' dialogue.

#### 3. LAC-related Challenges

- The LAC is not mutually delineated on the ground, leading to differing perceptions and recurring face-offs.
- Infrastructure development and military build-up along the frontier continue to create strategic and security concerns.

#### 4. Strategic Importance of Arunachal Pradesh

- Arunachal Pradesh is strategically significant because of its location along India's eastern frontier and its proximity to Tibet.
- China's territorial claims over Arunachal Pradesh make stability in the Eastern Sector particularly important.

#### 5. Confidence-Building Measures

- Mechanisms such as Border Personnel Meetings, military hotlines and commander-level talks can improve communication and reduce the possibility of unintended escalation.

### Way Forward

- Institutionalise regular military and diplomatic dialogue across all sectors.
- Strengthen border infrastructure, surveillance and logistical preparedness while maintaining channels for de-escalation.
- Expand hotlines, BPMs and incident-response mechanisms.
- Pursue a long-term settlement through diplomatic negotiations on boundary clarification and delimitation.
- Maintain peace and tranquillity along the LAC as the foundation for stabilising broader India-China relations.

## 2. Judicial Integrity and Accountability in Higher Judiciary

### GS Paper: GS-II – Polity & Governance | Judiciary, Judicial Appointments & Judicial Accountability

#### Why in News?

- Supreme Court Judge Justice Sandeep Mehta reportedly wrote multiple letters to the CJI seeking action against the then Acting Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court, Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma, alleging misuse of administrative powers, maladministration, improper case allocation and favouritism.
- The CJI reportedly emphasised that allegations against a sitting judge cannot by themselves be treated as findings and must be examined through established institutional mechanisms, while providing the concerned judge an opportunity to respond.
- Subsequently, the Supreme Court Collegium recommended Justice Sanjay Kumar Agrawal as the new Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court, who has since been appointed.

#### Key Dimensions

##### 1. Judicial Accountability

- Highlights the challenge of ensuring integrity and accountability in the higher judiciary while safeguarding judicial independence.
- Raises questions about the effectiveness of existing in-house mechanisms for addressing complaints against judges.

##### 2. “Master of the Roster”

- The Chief Justice exercises administrative authority to constitute Benches and allocate cases.

- Such powers are essential for judicial administration but require transparency and institutional safeguards against arbitrary exercise.

### 3. Collegium System

- Raises broader concerns regarding transparency, consistency and objective criteria in judicial appointments and transfers.
- Underscores the need to balance judicial independence with institutional accountability.

### 4. Constitutional & Legal Framework

- Articles 124(4) & 217: Provide for removal of Supreme Court and High Court judges for proved misbehaviour or incapacity.
- Article 222: Provides for transfer of High Court judges.
- Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968: Provides the statutory framework for investigating allegations of misbehaviour or incapacity against higher-court judges as part of the removal process.
- K. Veeraswami v. Union of India (1991): Established safeguards concerning criminal proceedings against higher judicial officers.

### Way Forward

- Strengthen time-bound, transparent and credible in-house procedures for addressing complaints against judges.
- Develop clearer standards for judicial conduct, appointments and transfers.
- Improve transparency in Collegium decision-making while preserving judicial independence.
- Ensure credible examination of serious allegations without permitting media trials or executive interference.
- Maintain a balance between judicial independence, accountability and institutional credibility.

## 3. EOS-05: Advancing India's Earth Observation Capabilities

### GS Paper: GS-III – Science & Technology | Space Technology, Remote Sensing & Disaster Management

#### Why in News?

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched EOS-05, an Earth-observation satellite placed into a geosynchronous transfer orbit, from where it is expected to be raised to its operational orbit.
- The satellite is expected to strengthen India's ability to monitor cyclones, floods, forest fires, crops, forests, water bodies and land-use changes.

- Its launch is significant amid growing demand for frequent Earth observation for disaster management, environmental monitoring and strategic applications.

## **Key Dimensions**

### **1. Geosynchronous Earth Observation**

- Geosynchronous orbit: An orbit with a period approximately equal to Earth's rotation, enabling repeated observation of the same broad geographical region.
- Unlike Low Earth Orbit satellites, EOS-05 prioritises frequent coverage over very high spatial resolution.
- Geostationary satellites remain apparently fixed over a region, while polar/sun-synchronous satellites generally provide finer-resolution imagery but revisit the same location less frequently.

### **2. Remote Sensing Applications**

- Its sensors analyse how Earth's surface reflects different wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation.
- This helps distinguish vegetation, water bodies, soil and other land-cover categories.
- Applications include crop monitoring, forest assessment, water-resource management and land-use mapping.

### **3. Disaster Management**

- Frequent observations can support early warning, disaster assessment and response during cyclones, floods and forest fires.
- Earth-observation data can also help identify changes associated with landslides, avalanches and other hazards.

### **4. Strategic Significance**

- ISRO has described EOS-05 as a strategic satellite, highlighting the growing role of space-based Earth observation in national security, border monitoring and situational awareness.

### **5. Space-Sector Reliability**

- The successful mission demonstrates India's continuing progress in space-launch capabilities.
- Sustained launch reliability, technological robustness and mission cadence remain essential for building long-term institutional credibility.

## **Way Forward**

- Expand India's constellation of Earth-observation satellites for near-real-time monitoring.
- Integrate satellite data with AI, GIS and ground-based systems for faster analysis.

- Convert satellite imagery into actionable intelligence for disaster management, agriculture, environmental governance and security.
- Enhance launch-vehicle reliability and mission frequency.
- Promote wider use of Earth-observation data by government agencies, researchers and private-sector users.

## **4. BRICS 2026: India's Presidency and the Global South**

**GS Paper: GS-II – International Relations | Multilateralism, Global South & Global Governance**

### **Why in News?**

- India will host the 18th BRICS Summit on September 12–13, 2026, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, under its fourth BRICS Chairship.
- India's 2026 BRICS theme is "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability", with emphasis on people-centric development and practical cooperation.
- The summit assumes significance as 2026 marks 20 years of BRICS, while the grouping seeks to strengthen the voice and representation of the Global South.

### **Key Dimensions:**

#### **1. Global South & Multipolarity**

- BRICS provides a platform for emerging economies to advocate greater representation in global governance institutions.
- India can promote a multipolar and inclusive international order without turning BRICS into an explicitly anti-Western bloc.

#### **2. Economic & Financial Cooperation**

- Priorities include trade and investment facilitation, resilient supply chains, energy cooperation and financial stability.
- Greater cooperation in local-currency transactions and cross-border payment systems can reduce vulnerabilities to external financial shocks.

#### **3. Technology & Innovation**

- India can promote cooperation in Artificial Intelligence, digital technologies, advanced computing and emerging technologies.
- Technology partnerships can strengthen the collective innovation and technological resilience of developing economies.

#### **4. India's Strategic Opportunity**

- India's chairship provides an opportunity to align BRICS with development-oriented, inclusive and practical outcomes.

- More than 350 meetings and high-level engagements have been conducted across over 25 Indian cities during the chairship.

## 5. India-China Dimension

- China's support for India's BRICS presidency highlights the importance of institutional cooperation despite bilateral differences.
- India should pursue engagement with China while maintaining strategic autonomy and national interests.

### Way Forward

- Strengthen BRICS as a development-oriented and inclusive platform for the Global South.
- Promote reform of global governance institutions, including the UN and international financial institutions.
- Deepen cooperation in AI, digital public infrastructure, climate action, energy and resilient supply chains.
- Ensure BRICS remains pragmatic, consensus-based and complementary to existing multilateral institutions.

## 5. Forest Rights Act: Gram Sabha Role in Forest Diversion

**GS Paper: GS-II – Polity & Governance | Tribal Affairs, Decentralisation & Local Governance; GS-III – Environment | Forest Conservation & Sustainable Development**

### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) stated that the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 does not expressly provide for obtaining Gram Sabha consent for forest clearance, triggering debate over its role in forest diversion.
- The clarification came amid concerns from the Ministry of Power and NHPC that Gram Sabha-related requirements are delaying major hydropower and infrastructure projects.
- A Parliamentary Standing Committee considered NHPC's proposal for 70–75% “qualified super-majority” consent of affected Gram Sabhas for projects of national importance; this is a proposal, not an existing statutory requirement.

### Key Dimensions:

#### 1. Forest Rights Act, 2006

- Recognises the forest rights of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs).
- The Gram Sabha plays a central role in initiating the process of determining and recognising forest rights.

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal Ministry for implementation of the FRA.

## **2. FRA vs Forest-Clearance Framework**

- The FRA, 2006 and forest-clearance framework are distinct legal frameworks.
- The FRA does not expressly state that “Gram Sabha consent” is mandatory for forest clearance.
- However, forest-diversion procedures require completion of applicable FRA processes, including identification, recognition and vesting of eligible forest rights, before diversion.
- This has created a debate regarding the legal scope of Gram Sabha consent/NOC in forest diversion.

## **3. Gram Sabha, Tribal Rights & PESA**

- FRA strengthens community participation in forest-rights recognition and protects the interests of forest-dependent communities.
- The PESA Act, 1996 strengthens Gram Sabha-based self-governance in Scheduled Areas, making community participation particularly significant in decisions affecting tribal communities and local resources.
- Together, FRA and PESA reflect the principle of participatory and decentralised tribal governance.

## **4. Environment–Development Balance**

- Delays in hydropower and infrastructure projects highlight the challenge of balancing developmental needs, forest conservation and tribal rights.
- Weakening community safeguards may undermine tribal rights, while prolonged procedural delays can affect critical infrastructure.

## **Way Forward**

- Establish clear and uniform guidelines distinguishing FRA compliance from forest-clearance requirements.
- Ensure genuine recognition of individual and community forest rights before forest diversion.
- Streamline clearance procedures without diluting tribal rights and environmental safeguards.
- Strengthen coordination among MoTA, MoEFCC, State Governments and Gram Sabhas.
- Balance development, ecological sustainability and community participation through transparent and time-bound procedures.