



# Daily Current Affairs



## To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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## Centre Seeks Review of Supreme Court Verdict on IPS Deputation in CAPFs

**Context:** In a significant development, the **Union Government** has filed a **review petition** against a landmark **Supreme Court ruling** that mandated a **"progressive reduction"** in the deputation of **Indian Police Service (IPS)** officers to senior positions within the **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)**. The move comes in the wake of a growing demand from CAPF officers for **structural reforms** and **fair promotional opportunities** within their own cadres.



The controversy traces back to **2015**, when **Group A officers of the CAPFs** approached the court demanding:

- Recognition as **Organised Group A Services**
- Implementation of **Non-Functional Financial Upgradation (NFFU)**
- A complete **cadre restructuring**
- Revisions in **recruitment rules to end the dominance of IPS deputation**

These concerns culminated in the 2025 Supreme Court case: **Sanjay Prakash & Others vs Union of India**, where the Court ruled decisively in favor of the CAPF officers.

**Supreme Court's Key Directions:**

**In its historic judgment, the apex court declared:**

- **CAPF Group A officers are to be treated as Organised Services** for all purposes, aligning them with other prestigious All India Services.
- The **deputation of IPS officers to posts up to the rank of Inspector General (IG)** should be **progressively phased out**, with a final outer limit of **two years** for implementation.

This ruling was hailed as a major step toward ensuring **institutional autonomy, professional growth, and organizational integrity** for CAPF officers.

**Current Setup: IPS Influence in CAPFs**

**The CAPFs, comprising:**

- **Border Security Force (BSF)**
- **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**
- **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**
- **Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)**
- **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)**

operate under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, which also controls the IPS cadre.

Currently, **20% of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) posts** and **50% of IG posts** in CAPFs are **reserved for IPS officers**. This has led to:

- **Career stagnation:** CAPF officers often **wait over 25 years** to become **Commandants**, a rank they should ideally attain within **13 years**.
- **Organizational inconsistency:** The **influx of IPS officers** at senior levels affects the **professional growth and institutional cohesion** of CAPFs.



- **Legal and administrative contradiction:** The government's **continued deputation** of IPS officers contradicts the Supreme Court's recognition of CAPFs as Organised Services.

### Why the Centre Is Pushing Back:

The government argues that **IPS deputation** is crucial for:

- Maintaining **operational readiness**
- Ensuring **Centre-State coordination**
- Providing **strategic leadership experience** at the national level

However, critics highlight that **long-term reliance on IPS deputation** undermines the **core capability** and **morale** of the CAPF officer cadre.

### Legal and Constitutional Concerns:

The continuation of IPS appointments **without implementing cadre reforms** is not only **administratively questionable** but may also violate **constitutional rights** under:

- **Article 14** – Right to Equality
- **Article 16** – Equal Opportunity in Public Employment

CAPF officers are essentially **denied fair competition** and **equal access** to leadership roles, despite years of service.

### Recommendations for Reform: Towards a More Professional CAPF

To address the structural imbalance and modernize CAPF leadership, the following reforms are essential:

1. **Comprehensive Cadre Review:** A full-scale **cadre restructuring** must be undertaken to establish a **merit-based and time-bound promotion system**, eliminating IPS-dominated bottlenecks.
2. **Transparent and Timely Promotions:** Introduce a **uniform promotion policy** across all CAPFs, ensuring officers progress based on service tenure and performance, not cadre bias.
3. **Tailored Leadership Training:** Develop **mid-career leadership programs** for CAPF officers, similar to those at LBSNAA or the **National Police Academy (NPA)**, to build capacity for strategic roles.
4. **Exposure to Inter-Governmental Coordination:** Enable CAPF officers to gain experience in **Centre-State coordination roles**, thereby bridging the expertise gap often cited to justify IPS deputation.
5. **Legislative and Parliamentary Oversight:** Place **CAPF cadre reform under the purview of a Parliamentary Standing Committee**, ensuring transparency, accountability, and timely implementation.

### Additional Insights: Global Best Practices

Globally, most elite paramilitary and border security forces — such as the **U.S. Border Patrol** or **France's Gendarmerie** — are led by **career officers** promoted from within. This model ensures **institutional loyalty, domain expertise, and operational efficiency** — elements India's CAPFs have long sought to emulate.

### The Road Ahead:

The Supreme Court's ruling offers an opportunity to **reshape the leadership framework** of India's CAPFs, transforming them into **autonomous, professionally managed forces**. While the Centre's review petition signals institutional resistance, the broader goal remains clear: to create **equitable, efficient, and modern paramilitary services** free from **external dominance**.

## 2 Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary: Goa's Biodiversity Hotspot Faces Conservation Concerns

**Context:** Environmentalists have raised strong objections to the recent approval of an **eco-tourism resort** on the **Surla Plateau**, which lies within the **Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary** — a zone recognized as a **critical tiger habitat**. Experts warn that this development could disrupt fragile ecosystems and further endanger the region's vulnerable wildlife, including the elusive **Bengal tiger**.

**Overview of Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary:**

Nestled in the **northern part of Goa** along the **Western Ghats**, the **Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary** covers approximately **208 square kilometers**. It is named after the **Mhadei River**, a life-giving watercourse that flows through the sanctuary, supporting both biodiversity and the livelihoods of communities downstream.

The sanctuary is part of the **Western Ghats Biodiversity Hotspot**, recognized by UNESCO for its rich ecological value and high levels of **endemism**.

**Geography and Natural Landmarks:**

- **Waterfalls:** The sanctuary is home to several **scenic waterfalls**, with the **Vazra Sakla Falls** and **Virdi Falls** being the most prominent.
- **Mountain Peaks:** Goa's **three tallest peaks** — **Sonsogod (1,027 m)**, **Talvche Sada (812 m)**, and **Vagheri (725 m)** — all lie within the sanctuary's boundaries.
- The **Surla Plateau**, now the center of controversy, is a crucial part of this elevated forest landscape.

**Floral Richness: Lush and Sacred Forests**

The sanctuary's vegetation is dominated by **semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests**, teeming with:

- **Teak, Sal, and Bamboo**
- A variety of **medicinal plants** and **native orchids**
- **Sacred groves**, which are traditional forest patches preserved by local communities, often acting as **refuges for rare species**

These forests not only support biodiversity but also play a critical role in **carbon sequestration** and **watershed protection**.

**Faunal Diversity: A Haven for Wildlife**

**Mhadei** is among the few places in Goa where the **Bengal tiger** has been officially documented. Its varied terrain and forest types make it a perfect refuge for a wide range of species, including:

- **Mammals:** **Leopards, Black Panthers, Sloth Bears, Gaurs** (Indian bison), and several species of **deer**
- **Birds:** Over **250 species**, such as the **Malabar Trogon, Great Pied Hornbill**, and the **Nilgiri Wood Pigeon** — many of which are **endemic to the Western Ghats**
- **Reptiles:** A herpetologist's paradise, the sanctuary is home to all of India's "**Big Four**" **venomous snakes**:
  - **Indian Krait**
  - **Russell's Viper**



- Saw-scaled Viper
- Spectacled Cobra

A unique feature of the sanctuary is the **cliff near Vazra Falls**, which serves as a **nesting site for the critically endangered Long-billed Vulture** — a species battling extinction due to habitat loss and diclofenac poisoning.

### Ecological Importance and Threats:

The **Mhadei Sanctuary** forms a key corridor in the **Tiger Conservation Landscape** that stretches across **Goa, Karnataka, and Maharashtra**. This corridor facilitates **tiger dispersal** and **genetic exchange**, which is essential for the survival of the species.

However, **human encroachment**, **unsustainable tourism**, and **infrastructure projects** threaten to fragment this delicate habitat. Conservationists stress the need for careful planning and a **moratorium on intrusive development** in ecologically sensitive zones.

### Additional Insight: Why Mhadei Matters Globally

- Part of the **Western Ghats**, one of the **eight "hottest hotspots" of biological diversity** in the world
- Contributes significantly to **monsoon regulation** and **climate stability** in peninsular India
- The **Mhadei River** is the subject of inter-state water disputes, highlighting its strategic importance for water security in Goa, Karnataka, and Maharashtra

### The Road Ahead: Balancing Development with Conservation

As pressure mounts to exploit eco-sensitive zones for tourism and economic gain, experts emphasize the need to adopt **low-impact, community-based ecotourism models** that prioritize **ecological sustainability**.

Protecting **Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary** is not just about saving a forest — it's about preserving an **ecological legacy**, a **water source**, and a **living classroom** of biodiversity that benefits both present and future generations.

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**3 Zographetus mathewi: New Butterfly Species Discovered in the Western Ghats**

**Context:** In a significant breakthrough for Indian biodiversity, a team of **lepidopterists** has discovered a **new butterfly species** in the **Western Ghats** — one of the world's most important biodiversity hotspots. The newly identified species has been named ***Zographetus mathewi***, adding a fresh name to the butterfly records of India.

**About *Zographetus mathewi*: A New Jewel in the Skipper Family**

Belonging to the **Hesperiidae family**, *Zographetus mathewi* is a **skipper butterfly**, known for its quick, darting flight. It becomes the **15th species** in the oriental group of the **genus *Zographetus* Watson**, and only the **fifth** to be recorded in **India**.

The suggested **common name** for this vibrant species is the “**Sahyadri Spotted Flitter**”, a tribute to the **Sahyadri Hills**, the local name for the **Western Ghats**, where it was found.

**Habitat and Distribution:**

- **Endemic Region:** *Zographetus mathewi* is found **only in the low-elevation forests of Kerala**, emphasizing the rich but fragile biodiversity of the **southern Western Ghats**.
- These forests are part of a unique **ecological corridor**, home to a variety of rare flora and fauna, many of which are **endemic** and **critically endangered**.

**Distinctive Features of the Species:**

This butterfly belongs to the ***Zographetus satwa* species group**, which is known for **specialized traits** such as:

- **Unique wing venation patterns**
- **Secondary sexual characteristics**, such as **swollen forewing veins in males**
- A **hair tuft** at the base of the **underside of the forewing**
- **Yellow-ochre scaling** on the **underside of the hindwing**
- **Genitalia structure** in both sexes that sets it apart from its close relatives

These anatomical distinctions make it **clearly identifiable** among other closely related species.

**Ecological Role of Butterflies:**

Butterflies, including species like *Zographetus mathewi*, play a **crucial role** in the ecosystem:

- Act as **pollinators**, contributing to **plant reproduction**
- Serve as **prey** for birds, reptiles, and small mammals
- Aid in **biological pest control**
- Encourage **genetic diversity** in flowering plants
- Serve as **indicators of ecosystem health**

Their **presence, population trends, and diversity** often reflect the overall **environmental well-being** of their habitat.

**Why This Discovery Matters:**

The discovery of *Zographetus mathewi*:

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- Highlights the **immense but underexplored biodiversity** of the Western Ghats
- Underlines the **need for habitat conservation** in low-elevation forests, which are often overlooked
- Reinforces the value of **taxonomic research** in understanding and preserving India's **natural heritage**
- Offers new data that can support **ecological monitoring** and **biodiversity indexing**

### A Call for Conservation:

With habitat loss and climate change threatening numerous species, findings like these remind us of the importance of **preserving forest ecosystems**. The Western Ghats, despite their recognition as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, face constant pressure from **developmental activities**, making such discoveries both **valuable and urgent**.

### Fun Fact: What Are Skipper Butterflies?

Skippers are a distinct group of butterflies known for their **fast and erratic flight**, often resembling moths. Their antennae are typically **hooked**, and they have **muscular bodies** and **strong wings**. Skippers form an evolutionary link between **butterflies and moths**, making them especially intriguing to entomologists.



## 4 RhoDIS India: DNA Mapping of Rhino Horns Begins for Stronger Wildlife Protection

**Context:** A dedicated scientific team has launched the DNA analysis of 2,573 rhino horns, aiming to integrate their genetic information into the RhoDIS India DNA database. This marks a significant milestone in India's efforts to combat wildlife trafficking and enhance rhino conservation using advanced forensic tools.



### What is the RhoDIS India Programme?

Launched in 2016, the RhoDIS India Programme is a collaborative initiative between the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), WWF India, and the forest departments of Assam, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh.

Inspired by South Africa's successful Rhino DNA Index System (RhoDIS), this Indian version aims to bring scientific precision to rhino conservation and law enforcement.

### Core Objectives of RhoDIS India:

- **Combat Wildlife Crime:** By generating unique genetic fingerprints for each rhino, the system helps track horns recovered from poaching or illegal trade.
- **Aid in Legal Investigations:** DNA evidence provides reliable forensic data that strengthens the prosecution of poachers and traffickers in court.
- **Enhance Rhino Management:** Supports better tracking, monitoring, and population management of rhinos across national parks and reserves.

### How Does RhoDIS Work?

RhoDIS uses DNA sequencing technology to create a distinct genetic identity for every individual rhino. The process involves:

- Extracting DNA from rhino horn samples
- Creating a genetic profile based on unique DNA markers
- Storing these profiles in a centralized forensic database

The protocol being followed in India has been standardized and approved by MoEFCC, ensuring consistency and accuracy across all samples.

### Scientific Composition of Rhino Horns:

Contrary to popular myths, rhino horns are not made of bone. They are composed of keratin, the same protein found in human hair and nails, as well as:

- Sulphur-rich amino acids like cysteine
- Other amino acids: tyrosine, histidine, lysine, and arginine
- Mineral content: calcium carbonate and calcium phosphate

This makes their structure similar to horse hooves, turtle beaks, and cockatoo bills, rather than ivory tusks.

**India's Rhino Species and Horn Characteristics:** India is home to the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), also known as the Indian Rhino, primarily found in Kaziranga National Park, Manas, and Pobitora in Assam. This species is one of the two rhino species that have a single horn, unlike African species like the White and Black Rhino, which have two.





Globally, out of the **five rhino species**, three have **two horns**, while the **Indian** and **Javan rhinos** possess only **one**.

### Why RhoDIS Matters: A Model for Global Wildlife Protection

RhoDIS India represents a **landmark move** towards modernizing **wildlife law enforcement**. It enables:

- **Tracking of seized horns** back to specific individuals or protected areas
- **Identification of poaching hotspots** using forensic evidence
- Establishment of a **deterrent** effect through higher conviction rates

With **rhino poaching driven by illegal trade**, primarily for use in **traditional medicine and luxury items** in parts of Asia, this initiative serves as a **critical tool in conservation diplomacy**.

### Global Context and Future Vision:

Similar systems are now being considered for other endangered species such as **elephants, tigers**, and even **pangolins**. India's leadership in this space could contribute to creating a **pan-Asian wildlife forensics network**.

As more samples are added and technology improves, **RhoDIS India** could become a **global model** for blending **science and policy** in wildlife conservation.

**India's rhino conservation success story**, marked by population recovery in Assam and West Bengal, can now be reinforced with the **cutting-edge science** of DNA forensics — safeguarding one of Earth's most iconic species for generations to come.

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**5 Finance Minister Calls for Accelerated Growth of Global Capability Centres in India**

**Context:** The Finance Minister has urged both the industry and government to join forces in boosting the setup rate of Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India. The call aims to attract more Fortune 500 companies that have yet to establish their footprint in the country. Notably, in 2024 alone, India witnessed the launch of one new GCC every week, underscoring the sector's rapid expansion.

**India's GCC Landscape: A Global Leader in the Making**

India is currently a global powerhouse in the GCC ecosystem, hosting over 1,800 centres, which accounts for nearly 50% of all GCCs worldwide.

**Economic and Employment Impact:**

- **Direct Gross Value Addition (GVA):** Approximately \$68 billion, projected to rise to \$150–200 billion by 2030
- **Employment Generation:** Employs around 2.16 million professionals, with expectations to reach 2.5–2.8 million by 2030
- **Growth Momentum:** Operating at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11%, contributing about 1.6% to India's GDP

**What Are Global Capability Centres (GCCs)?**

Also referred to as Global In-House Centres (GICs) or Captives, GCCs are offshore delivery centres set up by multinational corporations to handle critical operations and services such as:

- Information Technology (IT) services
- Research & Development (R&D)
- Finance and accounting
- Customer experience and support
- Product development and analytics

These centres operate within the internal organisational framework of the parent company, providing strategic value and operational efficiency.

**Why India? Key Drivers Behind GCC Growth**

India has emerged as the destination of choice for GCCs due to a combination of unique advantages:

- **Cost Efficiency:** Competitive operational costs compared to Western economies
- **Talent Pool:** A highly skilled, English-speaking workforce, including top-tier STEM graduates
- **Digital and Policy Readiness:** National initiatives like Digital India, Smart Cities Mission, and Make in India have created a conducive environment
- **Expansive Consumer Market:** An ideal testing ground for global products and services
- **Time Zone Advantage:** Perfectly positioned to provide round-the-clock support for global operations

**Roadblocks Hindering Expansion:**

Despite its strengths, several challenges continue to limit the full potential of GCC growth in India:

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- **Talent Constraints in Tier-II and Tier-III Cities:** While metro cities flourish, smaller cities face a **shortage of industry-ready talent**
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Issues in **physical and digital connectivity** hinder seamless operations
- **Regulatory Complexities:** **Cumbersome approval processes and compliance hurdles** discourage new entrants
- **Cybersecurity Risks:** As digital operations scale, **data privacy and cyber threats** remain a significant concern

### Strategic Priorities for a Future-Ready GCC Ecosystem:

To retain its edge and attract **next-generation GCCs**, India needs to implement targeted interventions:

#### 1. Embrace Advanced Technologies:

- **Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing, robotic process automation, and blockchain** must be integrated across functions to future-proof operations.

#### 2. Reskill and Redefine Talent Strategy:

- Establish **nationwide upskilling programmes** in AI, cybersecurity, data science, and **emerging digital tools**
- Promote **hybrid and flexible work models** to attract global talent

#### 3. Simplify Regulatory Frameworks:

- Create a **single-window clearance system** for setting up and operating GCCs
- Strengthen **data protection laws** and promote **ease of doing business**

#### 4. Address Geopolitical and Market Volatility:

- Encourage **agile governance models** to help companies navigate **global trade shifts** and **regulatory changes**

#### 5. Drive Sustainability:

- Align GCC operations with **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** norms to meet global sustainability benchmarks and investor expectations

### Looking Ahead: India as the World's GCC Superpower

With the right mix of **policy support, digital infrastructure, and talent readiness**, India has the potential to become the **undisputed global leader** in the GCC space. Tapping into this potential not only strengthens the nation's **economic growth trajectory** but also reinforces its position as a **technology and innovation powerhouse** on the world stage.

## 6 Australia in Focus: Strengthening Ties with India Through Maitri Grants 2025

**Context:** Australia and India are set to expand their strategic and cultural collaboration under the **2025 Maitri Grants** initiative. This program, overseen by the **Centre for Australia-India Relations**, aims to **enhance exchanges in education, research, and culture**, reinforcing the growing partnership between the two Indo-Pacific democracies.

**About Maitri Grants:**

The **Maitri Grants** program is designed to **promote mutual understanding** and strengthen people-to-people connections. It supports joint projects in:

- **Academic Research**
- **Artistic and Cultural Exchange**
- **Higher Education Partnerships**
- **Innovation and Technological Cooperation**

The initiative reflects both nations' commitment to building a **resilient and future-ready alliance**.

**Australia: A Snapshot of the Nation****Political and Geographical Identity:**

- Located in the **Southern Hemisphere**, Australia is both a **continent and a sovereign country**.
- It holds the distinction of being the **smallest continent** yet the **sixth-largest country** in the world by land area.
- Bordered by two major oceans:
  - **Indian Ocean** to the west
  - **South Pacific Ocean** to the east

**Strategic Significance:**

Australia plays a vital role in **Indo-Pacific geopolitics** and is a member of several international alliances, including:

- **QUAD** (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with India, USA, and Japan)
- **CPTPP** (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership)
- **OECD, G20, and Commonwealth of Nations**

**Geographical Marvels of Australia:**

- **Highest Peak: Mount Kosciuszko**, located in **The Great Dividing Range** (also known as the Eastern Highlands), stands as the highest point on mainland Australia.
- **The Great Barrier Reef:** Situated off the **coast of Queensland**, this is the **largest coral reef system** in the world.
  - Spanning over **2,300 km**, it is home to a staggering variety of marine life.
  - Recognized as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981**, it is a global treasure facing serious threats from **climate change and coral bleaching**.





### Natural Wealth and Resources:

Australia is a **resource-rich country**, known for its vast mineral reserves, including:

- **Gold, iron ore, nickel, and zinc**
- **Uranium**, crucial for nuclear energy
- **Rutile and zircon**, important for industrial applications
- One of the world's largest exporters of **coal and liquefied natural gas (LNG)**

These resources have played a major role in Australia's **economic resilience** and **global trade significance**, especially with partners in **Asia**.

### Cultural & Educational Ties with India:

- Australia is home to a **vibrant Indian diaspora**, with over **700,000 people of Indian origin**, making it one of the largest immigrant communities in the country.
- It is a top destination for **Indian students**, contributing to the growing **educational and cultural exchange**.
- Joint research projects and university collaborations are increasing across fields like **climate science, AI, clean energy, and public health**.

### Looking Ahead: A Stronger Indo-Australian Bond

The Maitri Grants and initiatives like the **Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (AI-ECTA)** are paving the way for a **multi-dimensional partnership**. From **defence and trade to climate action and education**, both nations are committed to shaping a **stable, inclusive, and innovative Indo-Pacific region**.

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