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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 12.11.2025

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

1. Street Dog Management in India: Humane and Non-Humane Approaches

a. Introduction

Street dogs form a familiar part of India's urban and rural landscape. Their presence intersects with public health, municipal administration and ethical decision-making. As dog-human conflict and concerns about rabies continue to rise, policymakers and the public often debate two contrasting approaches. One favours removing dogs from public spaces, while the other promotes a scientific method based on systematic sterilisation and vaccination. The recurring disputes around dog removal highlight the need for solutions that are legally permissible, scientifically effective and ethically responsible.

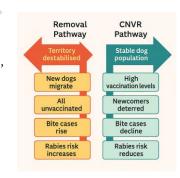
b. Why Street Dog Management Matters

Street dog populations directly influence India's high burden of rabies. Incidents near homes, schools, hospitals, markets and transport hubs lead to public anxiety and frequent demands for municipal action. At the same time, authorities must uphold legal obligations and humane standards. This makes street dog management a complex policy area that connects governance, public health and constitutional values.

c. Legal Framework Shaping Dog Management

Indian law is clear about permissible methods of dog population control. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act discourages unnecessary harm, while the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 mandate capture, sterilisation, vaccination and re-release—commonly known as the CNVR method. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita penalises cruelty, and the Supreme Court has consistently supported humane, science-based approaches.

Together, these provisions prohibit mass killing, unregulated relocation and long-term confinement of street dogs.



d. Approaches to Dog Population Control

The Removal or Killing Approach

This approach proposes eliminating or shifting dogs from public spaces. Although it may appear to offer instant relief, long-term experience shows that it fails to reduce populations sustainably.

i. The vacuum effect:

When dogs are removed, empty territories attract new, unsterilised and unvaccinated dogs. This leads to renewed breeding and conflict.

ii. Public health risks:

Incoming dogs are usually unvaccinated, increasing the likelihood of bites and rabies transmission.

iii. Practical limitations:

Municipal bodies lack the capacity to house large numbers of animals humanely. Removal often results in illegal dumping or killing.

iv. Global evidence:

Countries that attempted mass culling found it does not reduce dog bites or rabies.

The Scientific CNVR Method

The capture–neuter–vaccinate–release method is endorsed by global health agencies and mandated by Indian law.

i. Population reduction over time:

Sterilised dogs do not reproduce, gradually lowering the number of animals in each area.

ii. Improved public health:

Vaccinated dogs act as a protective barrier, preventing unvaccinated newcomers from settling.

iii. Behavioural benefits:

Neutering reduces aggression, territorial fights and mating-related chasing incidents.

iv. Economic viability:

CNVR requires investment in sterilisation infrastructure rather than large shelters, making it more feasible for municipalities.

v. Successful examples:

Bhutan's nationwide programme and several Indian cities demonstrate that CNVR reduces conflicts and improves public health.

e. Administrative Challenges in India

i. Infrastructure and capacity gaps

Many districts lack fully functional sterilisation centres, and existing shelters are often overstretched by abandoned cattle and other animals.

ii. Financial constraints

Sustained funding for multi-year sterilisation and vaccination programmes has been insufficient in several states.

iii. Unrealistic public expectations

Communities often assume municipalities can remove dogs from schools, hospitals or transport hubs. These areas are open and porous, making permanent removal impossible.

iv. Risk of irregular practices

Pressure to "remove dogs" without lawful avenues may push local bodies toward illegal or unethical methods.

f. Public Health Considerations

Rabies control is a central concern in street dog management. CNVR contributes to public health by stabilising populations of vaccinated dogs, thereby reducing the entry of unvaccinated animals. Over time, this lowers dog bites and rabies cases.

Conversely, removal destabilises territories, increases the arrival of unprotected dogs and may heighten immediate public health risks.

g. Ethical and Constitutional Dimensions

Humane street dog management aligns with India's constitutional ethos. Courts have emphasised that compassion toward animals forms part of the nation's moral and legal fabric. The right to life, as interpreted by the judiciary, extends protections to animals, while fundamental duties encourage citizens to act with kindness. Policies must therefore combine scientific rationality with respect for animal welfare. Humane approaches are not aspirational ideals—they are constitutional expectations.

h. Way Forward

- i. Strengthen district sterilisation and vaccination infrastructure with trained personnel and predictable funding.
- ii. Ensure stable financial support from central and state governments for long-term CNVR programmes.
- iii. Address the broader stray animal challenge, especially the issue of abandoned cattle linked to the unregulated dairy sector.
- iv. Promote community involvement through resident groups, NGOs and volunteers in identifying unsterilised dogs and facilitating vaccinations.
- v. Use digital mapping and tracking systems to monitor sterilised and vaccinated dogs and coordinate field operations.
- vi. Implement CNVR uniformly across districts, ensuring population reduction is systematic rather than fragmented.

Conclusion

India's street dog challenge cannot be resolved through mass removal, killing or confinement. These methods contradict law, ethics and scientific evidence. A humane and effective solution lies in sterilisation and vaccination, which stabilise dog populations, reduce rabies, improve public safety and align with India's constitutional commitment to compassion. In this sense, street dog management becomes both a public health priority and a reflection of responsible, dignified governance.

GS Paper II: Polity

2. Tribunals in India: Understanding the Conflict Between the Supreme Court and the Union Government

a. Introduction

Tribunals were introduced in India to ensure faster and more specialised resolution of disputes in fields such as taxation, corporate regulation, environmental governance and service matters. They were intended to reduce the burden on regular courts and provide expert adjudication where deep technical knowledge is required. However, over the years, tribunals have become the centre of a sustained institutional disagreement between the Supreme Court and the Union Government. This conflict primarily concerns the control over appointments, tenure and service conditions, and ultimately the question of how tribunal independence can be protected within the constitutional framework.

b. Why Tribunals Matter

Tribunals act as substitutes for High Courts in several specialised domains and are therefore expected to provide the same level of judicial independence. Their credibility depends on the public's belief that decisions are impartial, reasoned and free from executive influence. Since they exercise judicial power but are created and administered by the executive, a delicate constitutional balance must be maintained. Any perception of dependence on the government risks undermining their legitimacy.

c. The Core of the Conflict: Who Exercises Control

The disagreement centres on two key aspects: tenure and eligibility for appointment.

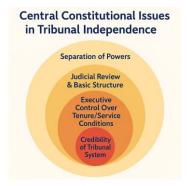
i. Tenure of Tribunal Members

- 1. The Union Government favours a shorter tenure of four years.
- 2. The Supreme Court argues for a longer tenure of at least five years without the pressure of seeking reappointment.

ii. Age and Eligibility Conditions

- 1. The government prefers a minimum age of fifty, seeking seniority and experience.
- 2. The Court believes this excludes highly capable younger professionals, including those eligible to serve as High Court judges.

The Supreme Court's concern is that short tenures combined with the possibility of renewal can create subtle dependence on the executive, weakening the independence of the tribunal system.



d. How the Conflict Evolved

i. Legislative Developments

- 1. The Finance Act, 2017 vested the executive with wide powers to frame rules governing tribunal appointments and service conditions.
- 2. The Supreme Court, in Rojer Mathew (2019), struck down several provisions, emphasising that tribunal independence must be safeguarded.

ii. Renewed Rules and Judicial Pushback

- 1. The government issued fresh rules in 2020, which again drew judicial criticism.
- 2. An ordinance in 2021 reinstated provisions the Court had previously rejected.

iii. Re-enactment Through Legislation

- 1. In July 2021, the Supreme Court struck down these provisions once more.
- 2. Parliament then enacted the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021, reintroducing the same contested elements, reopening the conflict.

The repeated re-introduction of provisions invalidated by the Court sharpened institutional concerns about separation of powers.

e. Why the Supreme Court Is Concerned

The Court's objections reflect deeper constitutional principles:

- i. Short tenures with reappointment may make members dependent on executive approval, diluting independence.
- ii. High minimum age limits exclude competent younger candidates without reasonable justification.
- iii. Re-enacting provisions that courts strike down weakens the authority of judicial review, a basic feature of the Constitution.
- iv. Since tribunals replace courts, they must maintain equally high standards of autonomy and impartiality.

The Court fears that without these safeguards, tribunals may become executive bodies in form and spirit.

f. Why the Government Defends Its Approach

The Union Government argues that:

- i. The structure and conditions of tribunals fall within legislative policy and should not be micromanaged by the judiciary.
- ii. A four-year tenure is adequate to ensure efficiency and accountability.

- iii. Senior professionals bring maturity and expertise, which justifies a higher age threshold.
- iv. Parliament retains the authority to legislate even where judicial views differ.

This reflects a classical constitutional tension between parliamentary policy-making and judicial protection of constitutional values, rather than a narrow legal dispute.

g. Practical Consequences: Vacancies and Weakening Institutions

The unresolved institutional disagreement has led to operational challenges:

- i. Many tribunals face large numbers of vacancies, crippling their functioning.
- ii. Bodies such as the National Company Law Tribunal, Armed Forces Tribunal and Income Tax Appellate Tribunal have experienced prolonged shortfalls.
- iii. Delays accumulate, and litigants are forced back to High Courts.
- iv. The very purpose of tribunals—to provide swift and specialised justice—stands undermined.

h. The Larger Constitutional Question

Tribunals perform judicial functions but do not enjoy the constitutional protections given to the High Courts and the Supreme Court. Their independence depends on how they are staffed and administered.

- i. If appointments, service conditions and continuance are controlled by the executive, perceived or actual dependence can arise.
- ii. This threatens the credibility and impartiality of the tribunal system.
- iii. Ensuring independence is essential because tribunals have the power to substitute courts and adjudicate critical matters.

Thus, the dispute is not only about tenure or age; it concerns the institutional integrity of quasijudicial bodies in a constitutional democracy.

i. Way Forward

- i. Establishing an independent tribunals commission—on the lines of global best practices—could oversee appointments, service conditions and administration.
- ii. Uniform and secure tenures, free from reappointment pressures, would safeguard independence.
- iii. Transparent selection mechanisms, with balanced judicial and executive representation, should be institutionalised.
- iv. Rationalising and consolidating smaller tribunals can improve efficiency.
- v. Filling vacancies promptly is essential to restore credibility and reduce pendency.

These reforms would strengthen the tribunal system and stabilise the relationship between the judiciary and the executive.

Conclusion

The dispute between the Supreme Court and the Union Government over tribunal reforms reflects a fundamental challenge within India's constitutional structure: balancing effective governance with the preservation of judicial independence. Tribunals can serve their purpose only when they are autonomous, adequately staffed and structurally robust. Strengthening them is vital for timely justice, specialised adjudication and the protection of the rule of law. The future of India's tribunal system depends on creating institutions that are both efficient and constitutionally sound.

GS Paper II: International Relations

3. India-Bhutan Relations and the Legacy of Jigme Singye Wangchuck

a. Introduction

India and Bhutan share one of South Asia's most stable, trusted and forward-looking partnerships. Rooted in history, geography and shared security concerns, this relationship has steadily evolved into a mature development and strategic partnership. A central architect of this evolution was Jigme Singye Wangchuck (K4), the Fourth King of Bhutan, who ruled from 1972 to 2006. His leadership modernised Bhutan, deepened ties with India and guided the kingdom's peaceful transition to democracy.

Together, his policies created a long-lasting foundation for the warmth and predictability that define India–Bhutan relations today.

b. Background of the India-Bhutan Partnership

The partnership rests primarily on the 1949 India–Bhutan Treaty of Friendship, renewed in 2007 to reflect changing priorities and a more equal relationship. Over the decades, cooperation expanded across development planning, hydropower, security coordination, and cultural linkages, making Bhutan one of India's closest neighbours.

As India adopted a neighbourhood policy grounded in trust and mutual respect, Bhutan emerged as the country with which this vision took its clearest practical shape.



c. Why K4 Remains Central to India-Bhutan Relations

i. Establishing Early Foundations of Trust

K4 was just sixteen when he ascended the throne but had already gained significant exposure working with the Bhutanese Planning Commission—often collaborating with India's planners. This helped him understand India's development ethos and align Bhutan's aspirations with Indian support.

ii. Ngultrum-Rupee parity:

One of his important institutional decisions was introducing the Ngultrum, pegged at parity with the Indian Rupee.

This ensured monetary stability, encouraged trade and created confidence in cross-border transactions.

iii. Shared developmental planning:

Through joint planning cycles, Bhutan integrated Indian technical and financial support into its national development model.

d. Hydropower as the Cornerstone of Cooperation

During K4's reign, hydropower became the economic anchor of India-Bhutan cooperation.

i. India as financier and technical partner:

India invested in Bhutan's hydropower infrastructure, provided engineers, technology and long-term purchase guarantees.

ii. Major joint projects:

Projects such as Chukha, Kurichhu and Tala emerged as symbols of a mutually beneficial partnership.

iii. Benefits for both nations:

• Bhutan: Stable revenue streams enabling investments in health, education and rural development.

India: Access to reliable, low-cost and renewable energy.

Hydropower thus became a model of "win-win" regional development.

e. Security Cooperation and 'Operation All Clear'

By the early 2000s, insurgent groups from India's North-East had established camps inside Bhutan. Despite never having undertaken operations of this scale, Bhutan—under K4's leadership—launched Operation All Clear (2003–04).

i. Decisive and coordinated action:

The operation dismantled militant camps, restored territorial control and pushed insurgents back into India.

ii. Impact on bilateral trust:

This bold action demonstrated Bhutan's commitment to India's national security and significantly elevated mutual confidence.

f. Foreign Policy Expansion with Strategic Sensitivity

Under K4, Bhutan widened its diplomatic outreach while maintaining transparency with India.

i. International engagement:

Bhutan strengthened relations with South Asian countries, East Asian nations and several European states. It also played a constructive role in SAARC (1985) and contributed actively at the UN.

ii. China boundary talks with transparency:

Crucially, Bhutan maintained consistent openness with India during boundary negotiations with China, ensuring that regional strategic stability remained intact.

g. Guiding the Transition to Democracy

K4's voluntary decision to step down and transition Bhutan from an absolute to a democratic constitutional monarchy is considered one of his most visionary contributions.

i. Planned and peaceful transition:

The process—from draft constitution to mock elections—was carefully phased to ensure national unity.

ii. 2007 Treaty Revision:

Reflecting Bhutan's new political identity, the India-Bhutan Treaty was revised to remove the clause referencing India's guidance in external affairs.

The relationship was now explicitly based on equality, sovereignty and mutual cooperation.

h. Significance for the Bilateral Relationship

K4's legacy provided structural strength to India-Bhutan ties:

- i. Hydropower became a long-term development engine.
- ii. Security coordination gained unprecedented depth, especially after Operation All Clear.
- iii. Diplomacy with transparency fostered strategic trust.
- iv. Democratisation strengthened institutions and ensured continuity in policy.

Together, these developments made Bhutan one of India's most dependable and strategically aligned neighbours.

i. Contemporary Relevance

Even after 2006, K4 remains a respected figure whose guidance carries weight in Bhutan's political and diplomatic circles.

i. Role in sensitive issues:

He continues to be consulted on boundary negotiations, national planning and regional diplomacy.

ii. Symbol of stability:

For India, he represents continuity in a geopolitically sensitive Himalayan landscape.

j. Key Challenges for the Future

i. Boundary Issues with China

Negotiations remain sensitive and carry implications for the eastern Himalayan security architecture.

ii. Hydropower Delays and Sustainability

Cost overruns, environmental concerns and project delays need coordinated solutions.

iii. Economic Diversification

Bhutan seeks growth beyond hydropower—tourism, digital services and skill-based industries are key focus areas.

iv. Regional Geopolitics

Growing great-power competition in the Himalayas demands careful diplomacy and consistent India–Bhutan coordination.

k. Way Forward

- i. Strengthen and modernise hydropower cooperation, while exploring solar, wind and green hydrogen.
- ii. Support Bhutan's economic diversification, especially in tourism, information technology and digital connectivity.
- iii. Enhance intelligence sharing and border management, especially in vulnerable mountain corridors.
- iv. Expand educational and youth-centric exchanges to deepen societal linkages.
- v. Maintain close consultation on Sino-Bhutan boundary talks to safeguard regional stability.

Conclusion

Jigme Singye Wangchuck occupies a foundational place in India–Bhutan relations. His visionary leadership—expanding hydropower cooperation, undertaking decisive security actions, conducting transparent diplomacy and steering Bhutan's shift to democracy—created a partnership grounded in trust and shared strategic comfort.

His legacy continues to guide bilateral cooperation, ensuring that India and Bhutan remain among the closest and most resilient partners in the Himalayan region.

GS Paper III: Security

4. Urban Terrorism in India: Nature of the Threat and Key Lessons

a. Introduction

Urban terrorism involves planned acts of violence in densely populated cities with the objective of generating fear, paralysing normal life, disrupting economic activity and challenging state authority. India has faced this threat for many decades, shaped by cross-border support to extremist groups, internal radicalisation and covert support structures within cities. While major attacks have reduced

in recent years, incidents such as the one near the Red Fort demonstrate that terrorism does not disappear; it reorganises, remains dormant and resurfaces when conditions allow.

b. The Nature of the Terror Threat in India

Terrorism operates not as an isolated event but as a sustained ecosystem. Even when visible violence declines, the supporting machinery often continues to exist. This includes financiers and hawala networks, criminal syndicates, radicalisers, recruiters, digital communication channels, narcotics-linked revenue chains, overground workers and handlers located abroad, especially in Pakistan. A temporary reduction in attacks therefore reflects dormancy rather than disappearance.

c. Why Urban Terrorism Persists

Terror groups often function in cycles. They remain inactive when intelligence pressure is high and reemerge once networks regenerate or external handlers invest fresh resources. Extended periods of calm can lead to institutional complacency, which terrorist groups exploit. India's cities have experienced relative stability for several years, but this should not be mistaken for the end of the threat. Cross-border support in the form of training, propaganda and funding continues to sustain the underlying structure of urban terror.

d. Emerging Trends in Urban Terrorism

i. Recruitment and Radicalisation

Urban terror modules increasingly attract educated youth, including engineers, medical professionals and individuals with technical skills.

- 1. Radicalisation through encrypted platforms allows direct access to vulnerable individuals.
- 2. Propaganda networks work across borders, ensuring a steady ideological supply line.

ii. Funding and Criminal Linkages

The narcotics-terror nexus has strengthened, with profits from drug trafficking channeled into extremist activity.

- 1. Decentralised funding streams reduce the visibility of transactions.
- 2. Criminal syndicates provide logistics, safehouses and false documents.

iii. Operational Adaptation

Sleeper cells now operate in small, dispersed units.

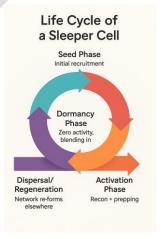
- 1. Their low visibility makes detection difficult.
- 2. Urban spaces offer anonymity, easy movement and symbolic targets.

e. The Significance of the Red Fort Incident

The Red Fort incident highlights enduring vulnerabilities in urban security.

- i. Symbolic locations remain high-value targets because they represent national identity and unity.
- ii. Dense urban spaces with complex movement patterns cannot be completely sealed despite improved policing.
- iii. The incident indicates that dedicated support networks exist beyond traditional conflict zones, often involving radicalised professionals and access to explosive material.

This demonstrates that the covert ecosystem enabling terrorism continues to function even during periods of relative calm.



f. India's Strengths in Combating Urban Terrorism

India's counter-terror framework has strengthened considerably since 2008.

- i. Intelligence-sharing between agencies is faster and more coordinated.
- ii. The national counter-terror grid is more integrated and responsive.
- iii. Crisis-management mechanisms and response teams act with greater speed.
- iv. The number of militants in Jammu and Kashmir has declined, reducing the operational reach of major groups.
- v. Metropolitan police forces have enhanced surveillance capacity and situational readiness.

These improvements, however, need continuous reinforcement as terrorist strategies evolve.

g. Persistent Challenges

i. Technological Adaptation of Terror Cells

Small, technologically skilled groups using encrypted communication are difficult to trace.

ii. Online Radicalisation

Young individuals are exposed to sophisticated propaganda that operates beyond traditional monitoring systems.

iii. External State Support

Pakistan's sustained backing of extremist networks maintains long-term risk.

iv. Criminal and Narcotics Linkages

Drug trafficking generates reliable funds that fuel urban terror modules.

v. Vulnerable Public Spaces

Markets, malls, railway stations and bus terminals cannot be completely secured because of their open nature, making them recurring soft targets.

h. Way Forward

- i. Integrating advanced tools such as artificial intelligence-based analysis, predictive policing and interconnected national databases can enhance early detection.
- ii. Human intelligence must remain central, as local shopkeepers, commuters and residential communities often notice early signs of unusual behaviour.
- iii. Support networks that provide financing, propaganda, logistics and concealment must be dismantled systematically.
- iv. Urban preparedness needs steady improvement through frequent audits of critical locations, realistic emergency drills and well-trained response teams.
- v. Diplomatic outreach must continue to expose and counter external state support, particularly from countries that sponsor terrorism.
- vi. Counter-terror strategies must avoid overreaction, communal tensions or heavy-handed policing, as these undermine long-term stability.

Conclusion

Urban terrorism evolves continually and survives through networks of ideology, funding and cross-border backing. India's challenge is not only to prevent individual attacks but to weaken the broader ecosystem that enables them. A secure future requires constant strengthening of intelligence systems, coordinated policing, diplomatic efforts and community vigilance. A measured, technologically informed, whole-of-nation strategy remains India's most reliable defence against the shifting landscape of urban terrorism.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
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- Prelims-style MCQs
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This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

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Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

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- visual cues

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