

Current Edge: Daily Brief

26th September 2025

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QUOTES OF THE DAY

"If the world doesn't exist, invent it; But first be sure it doesn't exist." – **CHARLES BAUDELAIRE**

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The UN, after all, is the only global forum we have for resolving conflict and safeguarding peace... There is a need to restore its credibility through reforms, including making the Security Council more representative of the wider membership." – **SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST**

News / Explained / What to know about Ladakh protests demanding statehood, autonomy from Centre

What to know about Ladakh protests demanding statehood, autonomy from Centre

Ladakh protests, Sonam Wangchuk hunger strike: The issue dates back to 2019, since Article 370 was repealed and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 was passed.

IE Explained;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity, Security [Link](#)

- **Direct Centre rule** → Local population feels excluded from decision-making.
- **Loss of powers** → Hill Development Councils weakened, job recruitment issues post-separation from J&K.



Why in News?

Ladakh protests (Sept 24, 2025): 4 killed, 30 injured; BJP office set on fire; triggered shutdown; Sonam Wangchuk ended 15-day hunger strike.

Background of Issue

- **2019 J&K Reorganisation Act** → J&K bifurcated into 2 UTs: J&K (with legislature) & Ladakh (without legislature).

Key Demands

- **Statehood** → Full legislative powers, not just UT status.
- **6th Schedule inclusion** → Autonomous District Councils for tribal-majority Ladakh (90% ST population).

- **Decentralisation** → Safeguard land, jobs, resources from industrial exploitation.
- **PSC & Jobs** → Early recruitment, Ladakh Public Service Commission.
- **Political representation** → Separate LS seats for Leh & Kargil.

Sixth Schedule Context

- **Provision** → Art. 244, 6th Schedule → ADCs in NE (Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura).
- **Powers** → Control over land, forests, water, agriculture, policing, health, etc.
- **Precedent** → 10 ADCs functional in NE; strong demand for similar setup in Ladakh.

Role of Sonam Wangchuk

- **Identity** → Engineer, innovator, Ramon Magsaysay Awardee (2018), inspiration for “3 Idiots.”
- **Advocacy** → Since 2019, demanded Scheduled Area status under 6th Schedule; backed by LAB & KDA.
- **Symbolic protests** →
 - 2024: 21-day fast in sub-zero temps.
 - Planned ‘Pashmina March’ (blocked by Sec. 144).
 - 2024: “Delhi Chalo Padyatra” with 4-point agenda.
- **Current stand** → Urging peaceful movement, warns against corporates & mining lobby exploitation.

Protest Trajectory

- **2019** → Student-led protests, LAB & KDA formed.
- **2023–24** → Hunger strikes, failed MHA talks, shepherds’ issues (land loss, Chinese activity on LAC).
- **2024 Sept** → Delhi Chalo Padyatra with 4-point charter.
- **2025 Sept** → Violent escalation, police firing, fatalities; Wangchuk ends fast to prevent derailment.

Test Your Knowledge 01

Q1. With reference to the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, consider the following statements:

- 1) It is applicable only to tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram.
- 2) ADCs under it can levy certain taxes and regulate land transfer.

- 3) The Governor of the concerned State has the power to increase or decrease the area of an ADC.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Hint: All three correct.

News / Explained / Explained Law / Supreme Court to decriminalise defamation? What the law says, how this may be possible

Supreme Court to decriminalise defamation? What the law says, how this may be possible

As the present bench has signalled, the question of whether this colonial-era offence continues to serve a purpose in a democracy remains open. In 2016, the Supreme Court had upheld criminal defamation as constitutional.

IE Explained; By Amaal Sheikh;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity [Link](#)

Why in News?

SC (Sept 22, 2025) hinted → "time to decriminalise defamation"; reconsidering 2016 *Subramanian Swamy v. UoI* ruling upholding criminal defamation.

Defamation in Law

- **Definition** (BNS §356) → words/signs/publications harming reputation.
- **Scope** → dead persons, companies, associations, ironic/alternative remarks.
- **Harm test** → lowers moral/intellectual/caste/occupation character, credit, or dignity.



Civil vs Criminal Defamation

- **Civil** → private wrong → damages/compensation.
- **Criminal** → public offence → fine + imprisonment.
- **Conditions** → defamatory nature + identifiable target + publication.
- **Mens rea** → intent/knowledge of harm essential.
- **Truth defence** → civil = absolute; criminal = only if “public good”.
- **Criticism** → chilling effect on media/activists; misuse to silence dissent.

Present Case (JNU Prof. vs The Wire)

- **2016** → Wire linked prof. to dossier (sex racket/separatist claims).
- **2017** → Magistrate summons.
- **2023** → SC sent matter back for review.
- **2024** → fresh summons upheld by Delhi HC.
- **2025** → Appeal before SC, reopening debate.

2016 SC Ruling (*Subramanian Swamy v. UoI*)

- **Held** → criminal defamation constitutional.
- **Reasoning** →
 - Art.19(1)(a) not absolute; Art.19(2) allows restriction.
 - Reputation = dignity = part of Art.21 (life & liberty).
 - Harm to individual → harm to society.
 - Proportionality test satisfied (exceptions for fair comment, reports, criticism).
 - Truth + “public good” as safeguard.
- **Rejection** → chilling effect argument dismissed; emphasized dignity, fraternity, stability.

Path to Decriminalisation

- **Current hurdle** → 2016 precedent + 2024 Law Commission reaffirmation.
- **Procedure** →
 - Fresh constitutional challenge by accused.
 - Two-judge bench can’t overrule; must refer to CJI.
 - CJI may constitute ≥5-judge Constitution Bench (Art.145(3)).
- **Shift needed** → Court must rethink balance: free speech (Art.19(1)(a)) ♦ reputation (Art.21).

Test Your Knowledge 01

Q2. In the context of Indian constitutional law, the principle of proportionality is applied to determine whether:

- (a) Fundamental Rights can be suspended during national emergency.
- (b) A restriction on a Fundamental Right is reasonable under Article 19(2).
- (c) Directive Principles can override Fundamental Rights.
- (d) Parliament can amend Fundamental Rights under Article 368.

Hint: Think → how SC tests “reasonableness” of restrictions on rights (esp. Art.19 cases).

Q3. Which of the following correctly distinguishes civil defamation from criminal defamation in India?

- 1) Civil defamation requires proof of malice, whereas criminal defamation does not.
- 2) In civil defamation, truth is an absolute defence; in criminal defamation, truth must also serve public good.
- 3) Civil defamation is treated as a private wrong; criminal defamation is considered a public offence.

Select the correct answer:

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

Hint: Recall → difference lies in (i) truth defence rule and (ii) private vs public wrong; “malice” is not mandatory in civil law.

NEWS IN SHORT

GSTAT Launched: Unified GST Appellate Tribunal Launched by FM

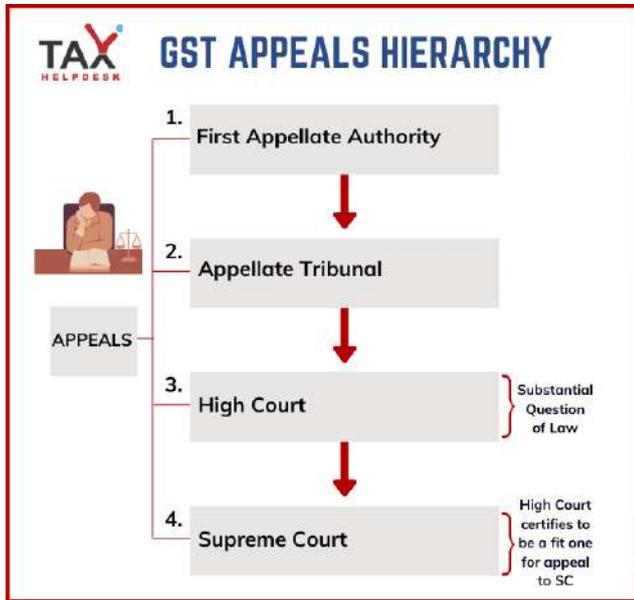
Why in News?

FM Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) to streamline GST dispute resolution.

GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) Background & Need

- GST law had envisaged an appellate tribunal, but it was never operationalized since 2017

- Multiple High Courts used to be the forum for GST appeals, causing fragmentation, delays, and inconsistent rulings
- Backlog is significant: ~4+ lakh appeals pending before existing appellate authorities



Key Features & Structure

- **Unification:** First and only national tribunal for GST appeals, integrating central & state jurisdictions
- **Composition:** Judicial + technical members; representation from Centre & States
- **Benches & Reach:** 116 members envisaged, 32 benches, 45 locations nationwide
- **Principal Bench:** In New Delhi, with state benches across the country
- **Digital & Procedural Reforms:**
 - **e-Courts portal** for e-filing, case tracking & virtual hearings
 - **Simplified formats**, checklists, plain language rulings
 - **Time standards** for listing, hearing & pronouncement emphasized