

EDITORIALS - 12TH OCT 2026

1. Message of peace (GS Paper II International Relations)

This editorial 'Message of peace' was published in **The Hindu** on 12th Oct 2026, highlights the defence of **international law** and **accountability** through Navi Pillay's **Nobel Peace Prize**.

Recognition and Contributions

- Navi Pillay's **2026 Nobel Peace Prize** seeks to restore the Nobel Committee's **credibility** while strengthening voices defending international law.
- Born in Durban in **1941** to an Indian Tamil family, Pillay opened a law firm in the 1960s and defended **anti-apartheid** prisoners, including Nelson Mandela.
- Pillay served on the **International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda** and **International Criminal Court (ICC)**, and chaired the UN inquiry commission on occupied Palestinian territory.
- In **1998**, she co-authored the Jean-Paul Akayesu judgment, recognising **rape and sexual violence** as acts constituting genocide.
- In **2025**, her commission concluded that Israel committed **acts of genocide** in Gaza and that Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant incited genocide through speeches and statements.

Credibility of the Nobel Selection

- Pillay's defence of **international crime victims** contrasts with controversial **Nobel laureates**: Barack Obama bombed Libya after his 2009 award; 2025 winner Maria Corina Machado supported Washington's economic strangulation of Venezuela and illegal Caribbean boat strikes.

Threats to the International Order

- Russia's invasion of Ukraine challenges **sovereignty** and **territorial integrity**, while Israel's bombardment of Gaza, Syria and Lebanon and tightening occupation of Palestinian territories continue with impunity.
- The editorial identifies the US war on Iran, launched on **28 February**, and killing of its Supreme Leader as violations of **international law**; Trump's administration has also sanctioned the ICC.
- **International law** and **accountable institutions** restrain powerful states from acting arbitrarily; their weakening threatens the law-based international order.

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Structural barriers to enforcing international law

- **Jurisdictional limits**: Courts cannot investigate every violation; the ICC's 2018 Rohingya ruling relied on deportation partly occurring in Bangladesh, a member state, despite Myanmar's non-membership.

- **Enforcement dependence:** The ICC relies on national authorities for arrests; Mongolia's failure to arrest Vladimir Putin during his 2024 visit illustrates this dependence on state cooperation.
- **Veto obstruction:** Geopolitical interests can block accountability; Russia and China vetoed Syria's referral to the ICC in May 2014, despite support from 13 Security Council members.
- **Domestic primacy:** Genuine national proceedings can exclude ICC intervention; the Abdullah Al-Senussi case was declared inadmissible in 2013 because Libya was conducting the relevant domestic proceedings.
- **Evidence constraints:** Insufficient evidence can prevent prosecution despite serious allegations; charges against Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta were withdrawn in 2014, and proceedings terminated in 2015.
- **Delayed accountability:** Unexecuted warrants postpone trials and victims' remedies; Omar Al-Bashir's arrest warrants, issued in 2009 and 2010, remain unenforced, illustrating prolonged enforcement failure.
- **Political resistance:** Judicial findings do not guarantee compliance; the US vetoed a 1986 Security Council resolution seeking compliance with the International Court of Justice's Nicaragua judgment.

2. The gaps in the implementation of the RTI Act (GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial 'The gaps in the implementation of the RTI Act' was published in **The Hindu** on 12th Oct 2026, highlights weak **proactive disclosure** and transparency **audit compliance** under the Right to Information Act.

Disclosure Mandate and Audit Compliance

- The **Right to Information (RTI) Act** completed **21 years**; mandatory proactive website disclosure enables access to basic departmental information without individual applications.
- **Section 4(1)(b)** mandates regular disclosure of **16 information categories**, including officials' contacts and expenditure; additional guidelines cover procurement, public-private partnerships and RTI applications under 8 broad categories.
- Public authorities must undergo **third-party transparency audits** and submit reports to the **Central Information Commission (CIC)**; the analysis covers authorities listed on the Union government's RTI portal.
- In **2024–25**, only **1,446 of 2,303 authorities (62.7%)** submitted audit reports; over half scored Grade C or below, indicating compliance scores of 80% or less.
- **Grade E** denotes scores below **60%**; nearly 37% submitted no report, although annual submissions nearly doubled from 754 in 2020–21.

Chart 2: The number of RTI requests filed every year and the pendencies from previous years have consistently grown over the years

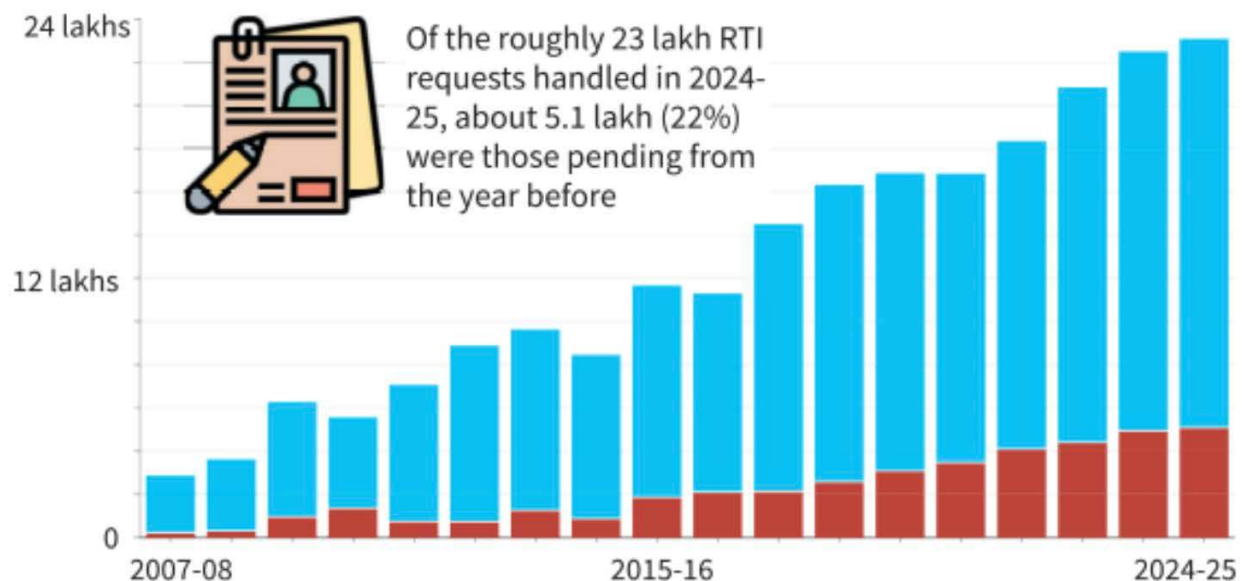
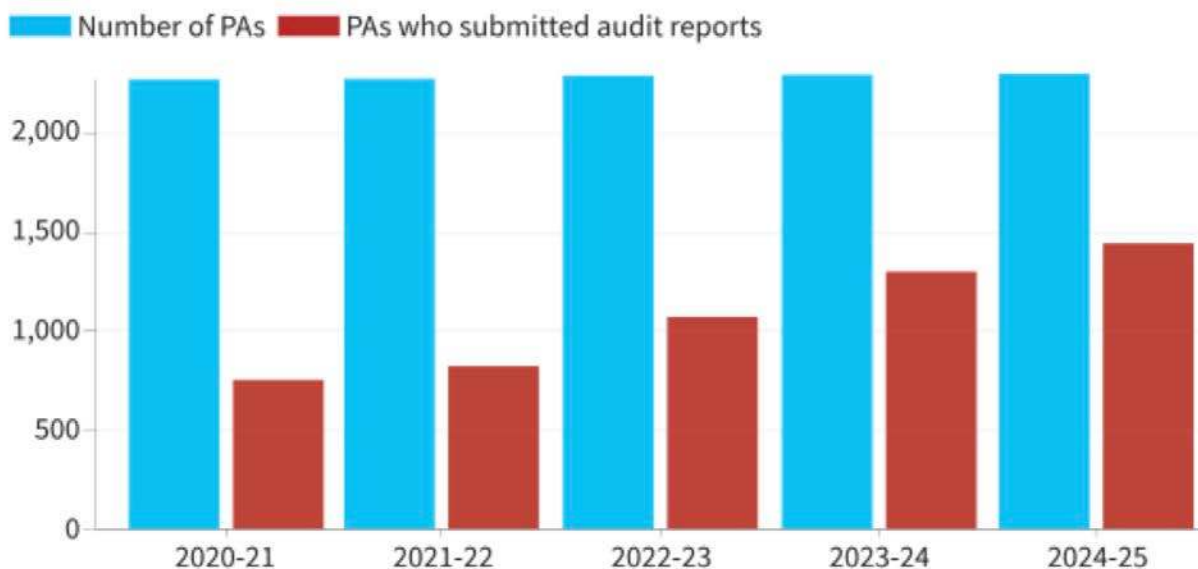


Chart 1: The number of public authorities (PAs) registered with the CIC and those who submitted the transparency audit reports to the Commission in the last five years



Website Disclosure Gaps and Pendency

- Among **94 departmental websites** checked, only **33** hosted 2024–25 audit reports; 7 carried older reports and 43 had no report in the reviewed portal material.
- **56 departments** disclosed most mandated categories with 2025–26 information; **26 departments** lacked information covered by the Act, while the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry had none available.

- Remaining websites carried **minimal or outdated information**, limiting **proactive disclosure** despite statutory requirements.
- New applications and **pendency** have increased; of roughly **23 lakh requests** handled in 2024–25, about 5.1 lakh (22%) were pending from the previous year.

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Role of RTI in empowering marginalised citizens

- **Welfare access:** RTI can help elderly beneficiaries investigate delayed or denied pensions; Rajasthan's Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) identifies information requests as a tool for questioning pension irregularities.
- **Corruption exposure:** Access to expenditure records enables workers to challenge false payments; MKSS's Rajasthan public hearings during 1994–1998 used official records to expose corruption, preceding the national RTI Act.
- **Social audit support:** Record access strengthens community oversight; Section 17 of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act requires muster rolls, bills and vouchers to support Gram Sabha social audits.
- **Food security:** Information requests can support collective action; in Karnataka's Channagiri, villagers used RTI petitions and public hearings to secure their ration quota in 2006.
- **Affordable access:** Fee exemptions reduce financial barriers; Section 7(5) exempts Below Poverty Line applicants from information fees, although establishing eligibility still requires supporting proof.
- **Literacy inclusion:** Inability to write need not prevent access; Section 6(1) requires Public Information Officers to help reduce oral requests to writing, supporting applicants with limited literacy.
- **Procedural protection:** Applicants can question withheld information through appeals; the statutory appeal route provides a means to challenge refusals without depending solely on the original official's discretion.

3. US IT salvo opens new front for India (GS Paper II International Relations)

This editorial 'US IT salvo opens new front for India' was published in **The Indian Express** on 12th Oct 2026, highlights mounting US pressure on India through **immigration restrictions**, **energy-related tariffs** and stalled **trade negotiations**.

Immigration Restrictions and Services Exports

- Suspension of major Indian IT firms from the **PERM programme**, a permanent residency pathway, extends the US crackdown on **foreign labour**, following the \$100,000 H-1B visa fee introduced in 2025.
- **ICICI Securities** estimates limited immediate impact: Indian IT firms accounted for **less than 2%** of 1,17,849 PERM applications during October 2024–September 2025; broader work-visa restrictions pose greater risks.

- Restrictions weaken **business sentiment** and increase uncertainty for firms dependent on skilled foreign workers, threatening a sector whose **services exports** earned \$221 billion in 2025–26.

Energy Pressure and Trade Stalemate

- A new US law enables **tariffs up to 100%** on major **Russian energy buyers**, including India and China, intensifying pressure to reduce Russian oil purchases.
- During **December 2022–August 2026**, China bought roughly half of Russia's crude exports and **India 37%**, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air; Trump nevertheless announced a Russian diesel supply deal for US and global markets.
- Prospects for an **India-US trade agreement** remain uncertain: US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer ruled out an imminent deal, while India's Finance Minister described a **negotiating plateau** with little room for further concessions.

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Building resilience in India's IT export model

- **Market diversification:** Expanding beyond the US can spread geographical risk; Nasscom reports that Indian technology small and medium enterprises have diversified into Japan, Australia and Southeast Asia.
- **Higher-value services:** Specialised offerings can strengthen competitiveness beyond low-cost staffing; Infosys Topaz and Cobalt illustrate investment in artificial intelligence and cloud-based enterprise transformation.
- **Domestic demand:** Indian infrastructure projects can broaden business opportunities; the TCS-led consortium's BSNL 4G deployment in 2025 demonstrates demand for advanced technology capabilities within India.
- **Local hiring:** Building overseas workforces can reduce reliance on visa-based deployment; Infosys reports localisation investments across the US, Europe, Japan, Canada and Australia, though higher costs remain a trade-off.
- **Offshore delivery:** Delivery centres in India can support overseas clients with less employee movement; Infosys's GIFT City centre, opened in June 2025, serves global financial-sector clients.
- **Proprietary products:** Reusable software can diversify earnings beyond staffing contracts; Infosys Finacle's banking platform serves institutions in over 100 countries, illustrating the reach of Indian technology products.
- **Workforce reskilling:** Training can support movement into emerging services; Infosys reported over 2,75,000 employees trained in artificial intelligence at varying proficiency levels in its 2025 filing.