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## 1. Section 66A of IT Act

**Topic: Current events of national importance.**

### Why in news?

- Over three years after it struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act as unconstitutional, the Supreme Court said it was shocked to hear that authorities still continued to book people under the now-extinct draconian provision.

### More on the topic

- A Bench led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman, who wrote the judgment in March 2015 upholding online free speech against Section 66A, said “strict action” would follow if the claims in the petition filed by the People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) were found true.
- The PUCL said Section 66A, which restricted free expression online, continued to survive and occasionally found a place in the FIRs registered by the police in complete contravention of the Supreme Court judgment in the Shreya Singhal case.
- Section 66A was contrary to both Articles 19 (free speech) and 21 (right to life) of the Constitution, therefore entire provision was struck down by the court.
- The petition file by PUCL said many officials may not even know about the Supreme Court verdict.

### Shreya Singhal Case:

- Section 66A defines the punishment for sending “offensive” messages through a computer or any other communication device like a mobile phone or tablet and a conviction of it can fetch a maximum three years of jail and a fine.
- The landmark case of **Shreya Singhal v Union of India (2015)** is a landmark case that plays a very important role in the Indian legal system. The case revolves around the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India, which challenged the constitutional validity of section 66A and led to the struck down of section 66A of the Information Technology Act 2000. Section 66A is the punishment for sending offensive messages through communication services, etc.

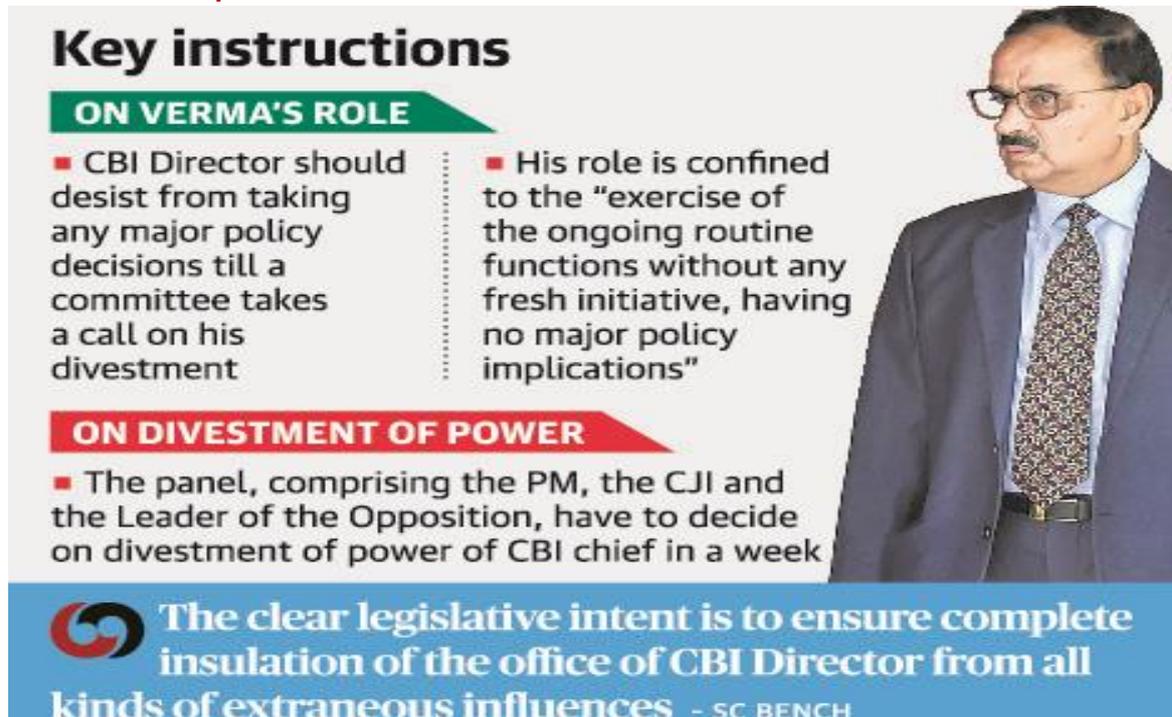
## 2. Supreme Court reinstates CBI director

**Topic: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.**

### Why in news:

- The Supreme Court on Tuesday “reinstated” exiled CBI Director Alok Verma.

### More on the topic:



**Key instructions**

**ON VERMA'S ROLE**

- CBI Director should desist from taking any major policy decisions till a committee takes a call on his divestment
- His role is confined to the “exercise of the ongoing routine functions without any fresh initiative, having no major policy implications”

**ON DIVESTMENT OF POWER**

- The panel, comprising the PM, the CJI and the Leader of the Opposition, have to decide on divestment of power of CBI chief in a week

**The clear legislative intent is to ensure complete insulation of the office of CBI Director from all kinds of extraneous influences - SC BENCH**



- Supreme court also ordered CBI director to “cease and desist” from taking any major policy decisions till a high-power committee led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi decides the question of his divestment in a week.

## 3. NASA discovers new planet

**Topic: Current events of international importance**

### Why in news?

- NASA's latest planet-hunting probe has discovered a new world outside our solar system, orbiting a dwarf star 53 light years away.

### More on the topic

- The planet, named HD 21749b, orbits a bright, nearby dwarf star about 53 light years away, in the constellation Reticulum, and appears to have the longest orbital period of the three planets so far identified by TESS.
- This is the third new planet confirmed by the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) since its launch in April last year.
- The planet is about three times the size of the earth, which puts it in the category of a “sub-Neptune.”

### Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS)?

- The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) is a NASA-sponsored Astrophysics Explorer-class mission that is performing an all-sky survey to search for planets transiting nearby stars.
- The primary goal of TESS is to discover planets smaller than Neptune that transit stars bright enough to enable follow-up spectroscopic observations that can provide planet masses and atmospheric compositions.

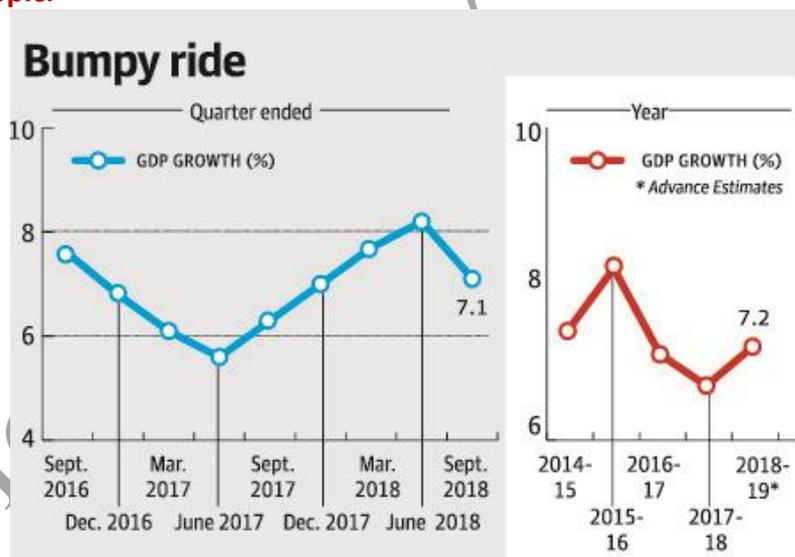
## 4. GDP growth for FY19 will be 7.2% : Government estimates

### Topic: General issues on Indian Economy.

#### Why in news:

- The government has projected GDP growth for the full year 2018-19 to come in at 7.2%, according to the first advance estimates of national income for 2018-19 released by the Ministry of Statistics.

#### More on the topic:



- GDP growth is calculated by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) under Ministry of Statistics and Program implementation.
- Releasing the first advance estimates of National Income for 2018-19, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) said, "The growth in GDP during 2018-19 is estimated at 7.2 per cent as compared to the growth rate of 6.7 per cent in 2017-18."
- The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had expanded by 7.1 per cent in 2016-17 and 8.2 percent in 2015-16.

## **National IAS Academy**

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