CA & GK

Important Supreme Court Judgments (2025–2026) CLAT Specific

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Important Supreme Court Judgments (2025–2026) Every CLAT Aspirant Must Know

Introduction: Why Judgments Matter So Much for CLAT

Over the last few CLAT cycles, the Consortium of NLUs has made it abundantly clear that questions are drawn directly from **contemporary legal developments** — real judgments, real controversies, and real constitutional debates that are shaping India today.

A single passage on a landmark Supreme Court ruling can carry four or five questions testing your reading comprehension, your understanding of constitutional

principles, and your ability to apply legal rules to new fact patterns. This means that ignoring recent judgments is one of the costliest mistakes a CLAT aspirant can make.

1. Harish Rana v. Union of India (2026) — India's First Court-Sanctioned Passive Euthanasia

What happened: On 11 March 2026, a bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K.V. Viswanathan delivered a historic ruling permitting the withdrawal of life support for Harish Rana, a 32-year-old man who had remained in a persistent vegetative state for over 13 years following a head injury in 2013. The Delhi High Court had earlier rejected the family's plea, holding that Rana was not "terminally ill" because he was not on mechanical ventilation.

The ruling: The Supreme Court held that Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH), whether delivered through a PEG tube or nasogastric tube, is itself a form of "medical treatment" and not mere basic nursing care. Because it is medical treatment, its withdrawal falls squarely within the passive euthanasia framework the Court had laid down earlier. The Court directed that Rana be moved to the palliative care unit at AIIMS Delhi, with a structured, dignified withdrawal process supervised by medical boards.

Why it matters for CLAT: This case builds directly on two earlier landmark rulings you must already know — *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2018), which first recognised the right to die with dignity as part of Article 21, and the 2023 Constitution Bench order that simplified the procedure for passive euthanasia and Advance Medical Directives (living wills)

Supreme Court Verdict on Waqf (Amendment) Act — 15 September 2025

Aspect	Details
Date of verdict	15 September 2025
Bench led by	Then-Chief Justice of India, B.R. Gavai
Overall stay on the Act	Declined — the Act was **not** stayed in its entirety

Provision paused	Requirement that a person must have practised Islam for **at least 5 years** before dedicating property as Waqf
Protection for existing Waqf properties	Registered, unregistered, and "by user" Waqf properties protected from being **denotified or interfered with**
Duration of protection	Pending final adjudication of the matte

Why it matters for CLAT: This is a classic test of **Articles 25 and 26** (freedom of religion and the right of religious denominations to manage their own affairs), combined with questions on legislative competence and the limits of judicial review at the interim stage. It also reflects a broader theme commentators have noted in the Court's approach through 2025 — a shift toward **judicial restraint** rather than sweeping interim stays.

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3. Governors, the President, and Assent to Bills — The Article 200/201 Presidential Reference

What happened: Following an earlier ruling that had set timelines within which Governors must act on state bills, the President sought the Supreme Court's opinion under Article 143 on whether courts could impose such timelines at all.

The ruling: On 20 November 2025, a unanimous five-judge Constitution Bench led by CJI B.R. Gavai held that **no fixed timelines can be judicially imposed** on the Governor (Article 200) or the President (Article 201) for granting assent to bills, and that a Governor's decision to grant, withhold, or reserve assent is **not amenable to judicial review** in most circumstances. The Court also clarified that in this specific context, the Governor is not bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.

Why it matters for CLAT: This is essential **Indian Polity and Constitutional Law** material — testing your knowledge of Centre-State relations, the discretionary powers of Governors, and the doctrine of separation of powers. It also shows the Court walking back an earlier, more interventionist position — a good example of how CLAT often tests the *evolution* of a legal principle across cases, not just a single ruling in isolation.

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4. Association for Democratic Reforms v. Election Commission of India — The SIR (Special Intensive

Revision) Case

Aspect	Details
Case	Association for Democratic Reforms & Ors v. Election Commission of India (W.P. (C) No. 640/2025)
Bench	Chief Justice Surya Kant, along with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi
Date of final verdict	May 27, 2026
Subject matter	Constitutional validity of the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, first undertaken in Bihar
Interim direction (July 2025)	Urged the ECI to consider Aadhaar, ration card, and EPIC (voter ID) as admissible documents for verification
Interim direction (August 2025)	Directed the ECI to publish a district-wise list of over 65 lakh electors deleted from Bihar's draft roll, along with reasons for each deletion
Core legal question	Whether SIR could be struck down as "ultra vires" for departing from the ordinary roll-revision process
Final holding	The exercise is constitutional, legally tenable, and cannot be struck down merely because it differs from the ordinary process of voter-roll revision
Statutory basis affirmed	Election Commission's power under Article 324 of the Constitution and Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, to revise electoral rolls
On citizenship	The ECI's role is limited to determining eligibility for inclusion in electoral rolls and does not extend to deciding citizenship status; deletion of a person's name from the voter list does not strip that individual of citizenship
Test applied by Court	Whether the Commission has power to conduct such an exercise; whether the inquiry is founded on a legitimate purpose and whether the measures are proportionate; whether the procedure violates the

	Representation of the People Act, 1950 — all three answered in the ECI's favour
Rationale for SIR	Major demographic changes, rapid urbanisation and large-scale migration had significantly altered electoral rolls, and more than four decades had passed since the last intensive revision
Key quote	"We are equally satisfied that the object sought to be achieved by the SIR bears a direct nexus to the constitutional goal of free and fair elections"
Ongoing monitoring	Court has continued to direct that SIR in West Bengal proceed without hindrance; the process has since expanded to Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry (concluded), with operations continuing in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan

5. Sub-Classification Within Scheduled Castes — Affirmative Action Deepened

What happened: A seven-judge Constitution Bench examined whether states have the power to create sub-categories within Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of more targeted reservation benefits.

The ruling: The Court upheld the states' authority to sub-classify within SC/ST categories, reasoning that such sub-classification can serve substantive equality by ensuring reservation benefits reach the most disadvantaged sub-groups, rather than being cornered by relatively better-off sections within the same reserved category.

Why it matters for CLAT: This connects to **Articles 14, 15, and 16** and the concept of substantive versus formal equality — one of the most frequently tested doctrinal themes in CLAT Legal Reasoning. It builds on the "creamy layer" debate you should already be familiar with from reservation jurisprudence.

6. Legislators, Bribery, and Parliamentary Immunity

What happened: The question before the Court was whether members of legislatures enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution for bribery in connection with their vote or speech in the House, under **Articles 105 and 194.**

The ruling: The Supreme Court clarified that **legislators do not enjoy immunity from prosecution for bribery**, closing a controversial gap that had earlier allowed lawmakers to potentially escape criminal liability for votes cast in exchange for money.

Why it matters for CLAT: A crucial case on **legislative privilege, anti-corruption law, and separation of powers** — testing whether you understand that parliamentary privilege protects free speech and voting in the House, but was never meant to shield outright corruption.

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7. SEBI's Regulatory Authority and the Limits of Judicial Intervention

What happened: In a matter concerning market regulation, the Supreme Court examined how far courts should go in second-guessing the technical, expert decisions of a specialised regulator like SEBI.

The ruling: The Court upheld SEBI's regulatory authority and laid down boundaries for judicial intervention in matters requiring specialised economic and market expertise, reinforcing the principle that courts should be slow to substitute their own judgment for that of expert regulatory bodies unless there is a clear error of law or jurisdiction.

Why it matters for CLAT: Useful for **Administrative Law and Regulatory Law** passages — testing concepts like the "arbitrariness" standard, Wednesbury unreasonableness, and judicial deference to expert bodies.

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8. Environmental Law: Great Indian Bustard Conservation

What happened: Following earlier directions on protecting the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard from the threat posed by overhead power lines in its habitat, the Court issued further decisive directives balancing conservation needs against renewable energy infrastructure.

Why it matters for CLAT: Environmental law questions are a CLAT favourite because they combine **constitutional rights (Article 21's expanding scope to include environmental protection), the doctrine of sustainable development, and India's international conservation commitments**.

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9. Juvenile Justice: Om Prakash @ Israel @ Raju Das v. Union of India

What happened: The Court set aside a life sentence after determining that the convict had been a juvenile at the time the offence was committed, decades after conviction.

Why it matters for CLAT: Tests your grasp of the **Juvenile Justice Act**, the principle that a person's age at the time of the offence (not at the time of trial or sentencing) determines whether juvenile protections apply, and the broader theme of rehabilitation over retribution in criminal justice.

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10. Arbitration Law: Can Courts "Tweak" Arbitral Awards?

What happened: A long-running debate in arbitration law is how much power courts have to modify — rather than simply set aside — an arbitral award under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act.

The ruling: The Supreme Court clarified that courts **may modify arbitral awards in limited, narrowly defined circumstances**, rather than being restricted to an all-or-nothing choice between upholding or striking down an award entirely.

Why it matters for CLAT: Arbitration is an increasingly important part of the CLAT Legal Reasoning syllabus given India's push to become an arbitration hub. Understand the distinction between the court's power to "set aside" an award (limited grounds under Section 34) versus modifying it.

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11. Maternity Benefits for Adoptive Mothers — Expanding the Idea of "Family"

What happened: A case questioned whether maternity leave could be denied to a woman simply because she had earlier availed childcare leave for stepchildren, and separately, whether a three-month age cap on adopted children unfairly restricted adoptive mothers' maternity benefits under the Social Security Code, 2020.

The ruling: The Court ruled such denials discriminatory, holding that the definition of "family" must be understood broadly to include non-traditional family structures, and struck down the rigid three-month age limit as arbitrary.

Why it matters for CLAT: This is a strong **Article 14 equality** case, and also ties into labour and social security law — both frequent CLAT themes involving the rights of women in the workplace.

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12. Women in the Armed Forces — Permanent Commission and Systemic Discrimination

What happened: The Court flagged continuing systemic discrimination against women officers being considered for Permanent Commission in the Armed Forces.
Why it matters for CLAT: Builds on the well-known *Lt. Col. Nitisha* and *Babita Puniya* line of cases on gender equality in the military — a recurring CLAT theme on Article 14, 15, and 16 in the context of public employment.

13. Bail Reform: Reasonable Bail Bonds Under Section 484, BNSS (June 2026)

What happened: Courts across India routinely set extremely high bail amounts or demand multiple sureties backed by property documents — a practice that effectively denies bail to poor and marginalised undertrial prisoners even after bail is technically "granted."
The ruling: In a landmark June 2026 ruling, the Supreme Court held that bail bond conditions and surety requirements under Section 484 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) must be **reasonable and proportionate** to the accused's means, not an indirect method of denying bail that has already been granted.
Why it matters for CLAT: This is one of the most significant criminal procedure rulings of the year, directly testing your familiarity with the **new criminal law codes (BNSS, replacing the CrPC)** — a subject the Consortium is actively prioritising since these codes came into force. Expect questions on the principle "bail is the rule, jail is the exception" and on economic discrimination within the criminal justice system.

14. Mob Violence and Illegal Private Detention (June 2026)

What happened: In the context of rising incidents of vigilante action and private groups detaining individuals without lawful authority, the Supreme Court reaffirmed strict limits on any form of "citizen's arrest" or private detention that exceeds what is explicitly permitted by law.
Why it matters for CLAT: Tests your understanding of the boundary between limited statutory powers (such as a private person's power to arrest under the BNSS in specific situations) and unlawful vigilantism — an important rule-of-law theme.

Key Current Affairs Themes to Track Alongside These Judgments

Beyond specific case names, CLAT's GK and Legal Reasoning sections consistently draw on a few broader themes. Make sure you can connect these to the judgments above:

- **New criminal law codes:** The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) have replaced the IPC, CrPC, and Evidence Act. Court rulings interpreting these new codes (like the bail bond case above) are high-priority reading.
- **Electoral reforms and the ECI's powers:** The SIR controversy, questions about Aadhaar-based voter verification, and the balance between preventing electoral fraud and protecting genuine voters from disenfranchisement.
- **Centre-State relations and federalism:** The Governor's assent powers, sub-classification of reservations, and disputes over the scope of Article 200/201 all reflect an active federalism debate.
- **Right to life under Article 21:** Continually expanding to cover the right to die with dignity, environmental protection, digital accessibility, and reproductive autonomy.
- **Judicial restraint versus judicial activism:** Several 2025–26 rulings (Waqf Act, SIR, Governor's assent) show the Court consciously stepping back from expansive intervention — a shift worth understanding conceptually, since CLAT often frames passages around "how has the Court's approach changed over time."
- **Institutional integrity of the judiciary:** The in-house proceedings against a High Court judge following the recovery of unaccounted cash from his residence renewed debate on judicial accountability mechanisms — relevant to questions on judicial appointments, removal, and the in-house procedure.

Good luck with your preparation!