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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

If you have started your CLAT preparation, you already know that the Legal Reasoning and Current Affairs sections are no longer about memorising Bare Act provisions or static GK facts. 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. This blog compiles the **most important Supreme Court judgments from the last one year (roughly August 2025 to August 2026)**, along with the current affairs context surrounding them, explained in a way that is exam-oriented and easy to revise. Read this list multiple times, understand the "why" behind each ruling, and you will walk into your Legal Reasoning and GK sections with real confidence.

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). Harish Rana's case is the **first individual application** of that framework, so expect passages testing your understanding of the difference between active and passive euthanasia, and the "best interests" test used by courts when a patient cannot express their own wishes. Note also that active euthanasia remains illegal in India — a distinction CLAT loves to test.

2. Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 — Supreme Court's Partial Relief, Partial Restraint

What happened: The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 removed the concept of "Waqf by user" (where long, continuous religious use of a property could establish it as Waqf property without formal documentation) and introduced new registration and composition requirements for Waqf Boards. Over 65 petitions were filed challenging the Act, including by AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and various religious and political organisations.

The ruling: In its 15 September 2025 verdict, a bench led by then-CJI B.R. Gavai declined to stay the Act in its entirety, but paused certain specific provisions — most notably, the requirement that a person must have practised Islam for at least five years before dedicating property as Waqf. The Court also protected existing Waqf properties (registered, unregistered, or by user) from being denotified or interfered with pending final adjudication.

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

What happened: In June 2025, the Election Commission of India announced a Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar ahead of the state's assembly elections, later extending the exercise to other states including West Bengal. Petitioners, including the Association for Democratic Reforms, argued the exercise was rushed and risked large-scale disenfranchisement of genuine voters.

The ruling: Through 2025, the Court issued a series of interim directions — urging the ECI to accept Aadhaar, ration cards, and EPIC (voter ID) as valid documents for verification, and directing publication of a district-wise list of over 65 lakh electors deleted from Bihar's draft rolls, along with reasons. In a decisive verdict, a bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant ultimately upheld the constitutional validity of the SIR exercise, holding it "legally tenable" under Article 324 and Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and rejecting the argument that it was invalid merely because it departed from the ordinary roll-revision process. The Court has continued to monitor implementation, including directing that the SIR in West Bengal continue without hindrance.

Why it matters for CLAT: This is a goldmine topic combining **electoral law, the Election Commission's constitutional powers, and the right to vote**. Expect passages testing Article 324, the balance between administrative efficiency and preventing disenfranchisement, and the Court's evolving supervisory role over the ECI.

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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.

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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.

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**.

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.

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.

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.

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.

How to Use This List Effectively for CLAT Preparation

1. **Don't just memorise case names — understand the constitutional article or legal principle at stake.** CLAT passages will rarely name the case directly in the question; you need to recognise the underlying principle from a fact pattern.
2. **Track the "why now" of each ruling.** Examiners love asking questions that test whether you understand the social or political context that made a case significant.
3. **Connect new judgments to older landmark cases.** Almost every 2025–26 ruling above builds on an earlier precedent (Common Cause for euthanasia, Nitisha/Puniya for gender equality in the forces, M. Siddiq for Waqf by user). Building these chains in your notes will help you answer inference-based questions.
4. **Revise weekly, not just once.** Spend 30–45 minutes a few times a week going through current affairs and judgments rather than cramming everything in the final month.
5. **Practice with passage-based mock questions**, not just factual recall, since that is the actual CLAT format.

Conclusion

The period from August 2025 to August 2026 has been an unusually rich one for Indian constitutional and legal jurisprudence — from the country's first judicially sanctioned passive euthanasia order, to a redefinition of Governor's powers, to a significant bail reform under the new criminal codes. For CLAT aspirants, these are not just "extra" facts to memorise — they are the very material from which your Legal Reasoning passages, GK questions, and even essay-writing prompts (for those attempting CLAT PG or allied law exams) will be drawn.

Keep this list as a living document — revisit it, add follow-up developments as they happen, and most importantly, practice applying these principles to new fact patterns. That is ultimately what will set you apart on exam day.

Good luck with your preparation!