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MONTHLY MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2026 | WIDE COVERAGE EDITION



GS I | GS II | GS III | GS IV | ESSAY | PRELIMS

All the month's major stories, with original analysis, maps, charts and practice

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Days and Themes of August 2026

Top stories this month

- **Nation:** 80th Independence Day; 78 gallantry awards; India fourth at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games.
- **Diplomacy:** a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Uzbekistan, India-China boundary talks and the PM at Bishkek.
- **Polity:** Monsoon Session ends with 11 bills; Supreme Court at 38; 'Keralam'; a National Tribunals Commission.
- **Economy:** GDP grows 7.8% in Q1; forex reserves at a record US$729 billion; repo held at 5.25%.
- **Climate:** hottest August since 1901, a 16% rain deficit and a possibly 'historic' El Nino.

How to read this magazine

Did you know?
Map
Chart
Prelims pointer
Key points
Revision tick box

About this issue

- The August 2026 wide-coverage issue: every GS paper, Essay and Prelims, with maps, charts, fact boxes, an ethics case study and practice questions.
- Facts are as reported up to 31 August 2026. The SCO declaration, the BRICS summit and the Copernicus August bulletin came in September; we flag them where used.
- Maps are location diagrams (points by latitude and longitude, no boundaries). Use an official Survey of India map for India's boundaries.

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01 | HISTORY GS 1

80th Independence Day and Partition Horrors Remembrance Day

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Modern India; freedom struggle; GS2: Government policies

Context

India marked its **80th Independence Day** on **15 August 2026**. The Prime Minister spoke from the Red Fort for about 75 minutes. On **14 August**, the country observed **Partition Horrors Remembrance Day** for the sixth time, remembering those who suffered and died in the Partition of 1947.

Announcements in the speech (as reported)

- AI training for 1 crore young people and free online coaching for competitive exams.
- A national sports talent hunt for children aged 5-15.
- Seven to eight semiconductor plants to start working within one to two years.
- 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047, with five new reactors in six to seven years.

Remembering Partition

- About 1-1.5 crore people were displaced and several lakh killed in 1947, one of the largest migrations in history.
- The Radcliffe Line divided Punjab and Bengal; the award was published on 17 August 1947.
- **Debate:** supporters say remembrance honours victims; critics worry it may revive old divisions. Historians stress the shared suffering of all communities.

Date	Event
3 June 1947	Mountbatten Plan announced partition
18 July 1947	Indian Independence Act received royal assent
15 August 1947	India became independent; Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' speech the night before
17 August 1947	Radcliffe boundary award made public

Prelims Pointers

- Partition Horrors Remembrance Day was notified in 2021.
- Sir Cyril Radcliffe chaired both Boundary Commissions (Punjab and Bengal).
- The Indian Independence Act, 1947 ended British paramountcy over the princely states.

02 | HISTORY GS 1

Quit India at 84 and Tagore Remembered

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Modern Indian history; national movement; personalities

Context

8-9 August 2026 marked the 84th anniversary of the **Quit India Movement** (1942). **7 August** was the 85th death anniversary of **Rabindranath Tagore** (died 1941), and also **National Handloom Day**, which recalls the Swadeshi Movement launched on 7 August 1905.

Feature	Quit India Movement
Resolution	AICC session, Gowalia Tank Maidan (now August Kranti Maidan), Bombay, 8 August 1942
Slogan	Gandhi's 'Do or Die'
Trigger	Failure of the Cripps Mission (March 1942) and the threat of Japanese invasion
Leaders	Top Congress leaders arrested on 9 August; Aruna Asaf Ali hoisted the flag; Usha Mehta ran an underground Congress Radio
Parallel governments	Ballia (UP), Tamluk (Bengal, Jatiya Sarkar), Satara (Maharashtra, Prati Sarkar)

Why it matters

- It was a leaderless mass movement in which students, workers, peasants and women took the lead.
- Britain's harsh response and wartime strain made it clear that colonial rule could not last long after the war.
- **Not everyone joined:** the Muslim League, the Communist Party (backing the war against fascism) and the Hindu Mahasabha stayed away.

Did you know?

Tagore wrote 'Crisis in Civilisation', a sharp critique of colonialism, in April 1941, months before his death.

Prelims Pointers

- 9 August is observed as August Kranti Din.
- Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia led underground activity during the movement.
- The movement is also called the August Kranti.

03 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

National Handloom Day: Weaving a Future

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian art and culture; GS3: Rural livelihoods

Context

The **12th National Handloom Day** on **7 August 2026** had the theme **'Celebrating Weavers, Renewing Traditions, Expanding Horizons'**. The Textiles Ministry launched a 'Handloom Hackathon 2026'. GST on 36 handicraft items was cut from 12% to 5% (PIB backgrounder).

Key numbers

- 35.22 lakh handloom weavers and allied workers (4th Handloom Census, 2019-20); over 72% are women.
- Handloom exports of about Rs 1,331 crore in 2025-26.
- 106 handloom products have GI registration.

Challenges

- Competition from cheap powerloom copies of traditional designs.
- Low and uncertain incomes push young people away from weaving.
- Costly yarn and weak access to credit and markets.

Way forward

- Direct online sales and branding with GI and the Handloom Mark.
- Cluster development, design support and better looms.
- Enforcing the Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985.

Prelims Pointers

- National Handloom Day was first observed in 2015 in Chennai.
- Famous handlooms: Pochampally ikat, Banarasi brocade, Kanjeevaram silk, Muga silk (Assam).
- India Handloom Brand was launched in 2015.

04 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

India Finishes Fourth at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Society; sport

Context

The **Commonwealth Games** in **Glasgow** ended on **2 August 2026**. India won **39 medals: 13 gold, 17 silver and 9 bronze**, and finished **fourth**, behind Australia, England and Canada.

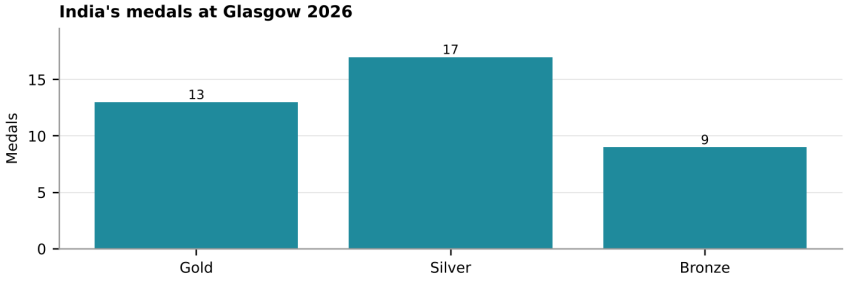


Chart. Source: Final medal table as reported by Drishti and Adda247 (August 2026).

Highlights

- **Boxing:** seven golds, five of them by women (as reported); Lovlina Borgohain won silver.
- **Weightlifting:** Mirabai Chanu won her third straight Commonwealth gold.
- **Judo:** Asmita Dey and Harsh Singh won India's first judo golds at the Games (reported).
- **Athletics:** Neeraj Chopra won javelin silver.

Context

- Glasgow ran a reduced programme of about 10 sports to cut costs; shooting, wrestling, hockey and badminton were left out.
- India's medal count is lower than at Birmingham 2022 (61) because of the smaller programme.

Prelims Pointers

- The Commonwealth Games are held every four years; Glasgow also hosted in 2014.
- India's best Games was Delhi 2010 (101 medals, second place).
- The Commonwealth Games Federation is based in London.

05 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Praggnanandhaa Wins the Grand Chess Tour

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Society; sport

Context

R. Praggnanandhaa became the **first Indian to win the Grand Chess Tour**, beating Fabiano Caruana 15-13 in the finals at Saint Louis (22-27 August 2026) after coming back from 3-9 down. New Delhi hosted the **BWF World Badminton Championships**, which ended on 23 August.

Event	Indian result
Grand Chess Tour Finals, Saint Louis	Praggnanandhaa champion; US$200,000 prize
BWF World Championships, New Delhi	Ayush Shetty beat world No. 1 Shi Yu Qi; Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand reached the quarter-finals
Lausanne Diamond League (21 August)	Neeraj Chopra second with a season-best 88.05 m
Kanizsa Open, Hungary	GM Pranesh M won

Why it matters

- India now has several top-10 chess players, built on early coaching and online play.
- Hosting world events like the BWF Worlds builds sports infrastructure and interest.
- **National Sports Day** (29 August) marks Major Dhyan Chand's birth anniversary.

Prelims Pointers

- India last hosted the BWF World Championships in Hyderabad in 2009.
- The Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna is India's highest sports honour.
- Viswanathan Anand became India's first grandmaster in 1988.

06 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Ramon Magsaysay Award 2026

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Personalities; GS4: Public service values

Context

The **2026 Ramon Magsaysay Awards** were announced on **31 August**. The three winners are from Singapore, Myanmar and Bangladesh; no Indian was among them. The awards will be presented in Manila on 15 November.

Winner	Country	Known for
Tommy Koh	Singapore	Diplomat; presided over the UN conference that adopted UNCLOS (1982)
Bo Kyi	Myanmar	Former political prisoner; co-founded the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners
Runa Khan	Bangladesh	Founder of Friendship, which runs hospital ships and clinics

Indian winners in the past

- Vinoba Bhave (1958), Mother Teresa (1962), Satyajit Ray (1967), Kiran Bedi (1994), Arvind Kejriwal (2006), Ravish Kumar (2019).
- Many awardees work in community service, journalism and governance.

People in the news

- **D.Y. Patil**, former Governor of Bihar and an education entrepreneur, died on 4 August (reported).

Prelims Pointers

- The award was set up in 1957 in memory of Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay.
- It is often called 'Asia's Nobel Prize'.
- Tommy Koh presided over the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea.

07 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Amarnath Yatra Ends with 4.8 Lakh Pilgrims

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Culture; pilgrimages; GS3: Disaster and security management

Context

The 57-day **Amarnath Yatra** ended on **28 August 2026** (Raksha Bandhan) when the Chhari Mubarak, the holy mace, reached the cave shrine. More than **4.8 lakh pilgrims** visited. The yatra had been suspended for about six days in July because of heavy rain.

Key Points

- Routes: Pahalgam (longer, traditional) and Baltal (shorter, steeper).
- Managed by the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board with the J&K administration.
- Heavy security with RFID tracking and drones; no major security incident reported.

Lessons

- Weather-based suspension saved lives in a year of many cloudbursts in J&K.
- Waste, water and crowd control in a fragile high-altitude area.
- Pilgrimages support local ponywallahs, porters and tent owners.

Prelims Pointers

- The cave is at about 3,880 m in the Lidder valley.
- The yatra ends on Shravan Purnima.
- Pahalgam lies on the Lidder river in Anantnag district.

08 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

August Rain Deficit and India's Hottest August

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian monsoon; climate; GS3: Agriculture

Context

India received **213.3 mm** of rain in **August 2026**, **16.3% below** the long period average of 254.9 mm (IMD, 31 August, as reported). It was also the **hottest August since 1901**, with a mean temperature of 28.01 C. By 29 August, season rainfall was about **14% below normal**. IMD expects **September** rain below 91% of normal.

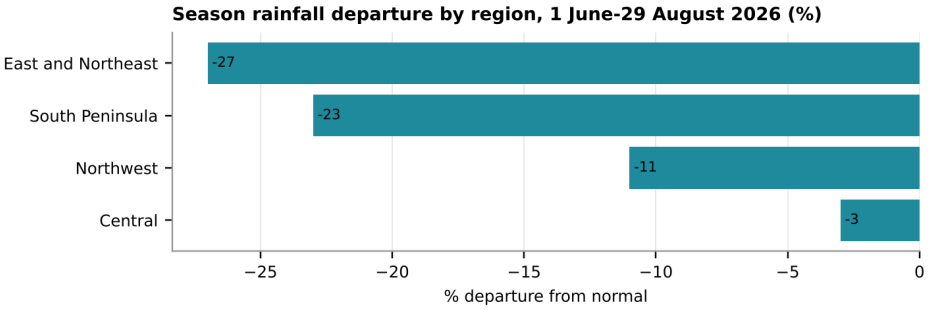


Chart. About 47% of districts had deficient or largely deficient rain. Source: IMD data as reported by Rural Voice (August 2026).

Why August was weak

- **El Nino** strengthened steadily through the month.
- Rain fell mostly over the Indo-Gangetic plains; the south and northeast stayed dry.
- Four low-pressure systems formed, but they did not reach the peninsula.

Impact

- Rice and maize sowing lagged in Karnataka, Telangana and Jharkhand.
- Hot nights raised power demand to a record August peak.
- Reservoirs in the south may run low before the winter.

Prelims Pointers

- Rainfall is 'deficient' when it is below 90% of the LPA for the season.
- IMD's long period average is based on 1971-2020 data.
- The northeast monsoon (October-December) brings most of Tamil Nadu's rain.

09 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

A 'Historic' El Nino Looms

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Climatology; ENSO; GS3: Climate change

Context

NOAA's ENSO update of **13 August 2026** gave a **more than 90% chance of a very strong El Nino** this winter and a **69% chance of a 'historic' event**, stronger than any since 1950. The July Nino 3.4 anomaly was +1.4 C. Copernicus later reported (10 September) that **August 2026 was the warmest August on record**, tied with July 2023 as the hottest month ever.

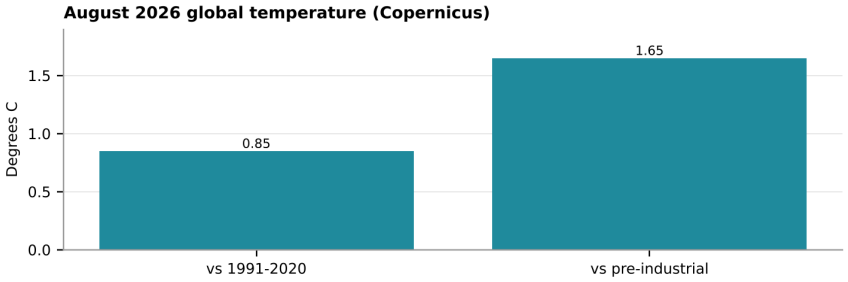


Chart. Sea surface temperature 21.07 C, a record for August. Source: Copernicus C3S bulletin for August 2026 (released 10 September).

Sea ice and the poles

- **Arctic** sea ice in August was 9.2% below the 1991-2020 average.
- **Antarctic** sea ice was 6.5% below average, the fourth-lowest for August; the Indian Ocean sector was the lowest on record.

What a historic El Nino could mean

- Weak northeast monsoon support, drought risk in Australia and southern Africa, floods in Peru and Ecuador.
- 2027 could become the warmest year on record.
- Coral bleaching and fisheries stress across the tropics.

Prelims Pointers

- NOAA now also uses a Relative Oceanic Nino Index (RONI) to classify events.
- El Nino weakens the Walker circulation over the Pacific.
- The 1877-78 El Nino was linked to severe famine in India.

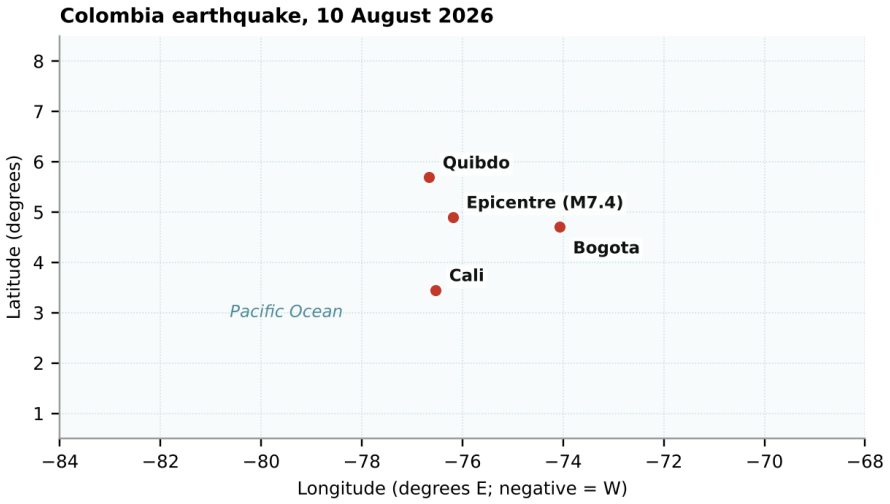
10 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Deadly Earthquake in Colombia

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Earthquakes; plate tectonics; GS3: Disaster management

Context

An **M7.4 earthquake** struck western **Colombia** on **10 August 2026**, centred near San Jose del Palmar in Choco department at a depth of about 107 km. By 13 August, Colombia's disaster agency reported **273 deaths**, over 3,800 injured and 377 missing. Cali, Pereira, Quibdo and Manizales were hit. The International Disasters Charter was activated.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Epicentre from the GeoNet mirror of the USGS solution; city points approximate.

The science

- The **Nazca plate** sinks under the South American plate along the Pacific coast.
- This was an **intermediate-depth** quake inside the sinking slab; such quakes shake wide areas.
- Weak buildings in towns on soft soils caused most deaths.

Prelims Pointers

- Intermediate-depth earthquakes occur at about 70-300 km depth.
- The Andes are a fold mountain range formed by Nazca-South American convergence.
- The International Charter on Space and Major Disasters provides free satellite images; ISRO is a member.

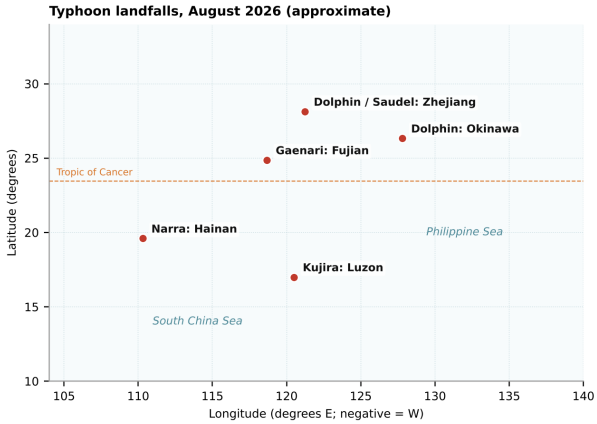
11 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Typhoons Lash East Asia

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Tropical cyclones; world geography

Context

The West Pacific stayed very active in August 2026 (as reported). **Super Typhoon Dolphin** hit Okinawa on 7 August and Zhejiang, China on 9 August. **Kujira** (local name 'Luis') crossed northern Luzon, killing at least 13 in the Philippines. **Saudel** struck Zhejiang on 28 August, and **Narra** hit Hainan and Guangdong on 25 August.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Points are approximate.

Why it matters

- Record ocean heat fuels stronger, wetter storms.
- Repeated strikes on Zhejiang test China's evacuation systems.
- Disruption to ports affects global supply chains, including India's trade with East Asia.

Prelims Pointers

- Typhoons generally move west and northwest, then recurve northeast.
- PAGASA gives local names to storms entering the Philippine area.
- Okinawa lies in Japan's Ryukyu Islands.

12 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

The Atlantic's Missing Hurricanes

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Tropical cyclones; ENSO teleconnections

Context

No Atlantic hurricane formed in August 2026. In an average season the first hurricane forms around 11 August. By late September the basin still had none, putting 2026 on course to be one of very few seasons on record without a hurricane (as reported). The eastern Pacific, by contrast, was very active.

Why

- **El Nino** raises upper-level westerly winds over the Atlantic, creating **vertical wind shear** that tears storms apart.
- Sinking air and dry, dusty air from the Sahara also suppress storms.
- Warm Pacific waters favour eastern Pacific hurricanes in El Nino years.

Key term	Meaning
Wind shear	Change in wind speed or direction with height; strong shear prevents a storm's structure from forming
Teleconnection	A climate link between distant regions, such as El Nino affecting Atlantic storms
Saharan Air Layer	Hot, dry, dusty air blown from Africa over the Atlantic

Prelims Pointers

- The Atlantic hurricane season runs from 1 June to 30 November.
- La Nina years usually bring more Atlantic hurricanes.
- Hurricanes are rated on the Saffir-Simpson scale (Categories 1-5).

13 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Jobs Data: Unemployment Falls to 5.1%

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Society, women; GS3: Employment

Context

The **PLFS monthly bulletin for July 2026** (released 17 August) put the unemployment rate at **5.1%**, down from 5.5% in June. Rural unemployment fell to 4.5% while urban rose to 6.7%. The female labour force participation rate rose to **34.4%**. The quarterly bulletin for April-June (released 10 August) showed urban unemployment at 6.7%.

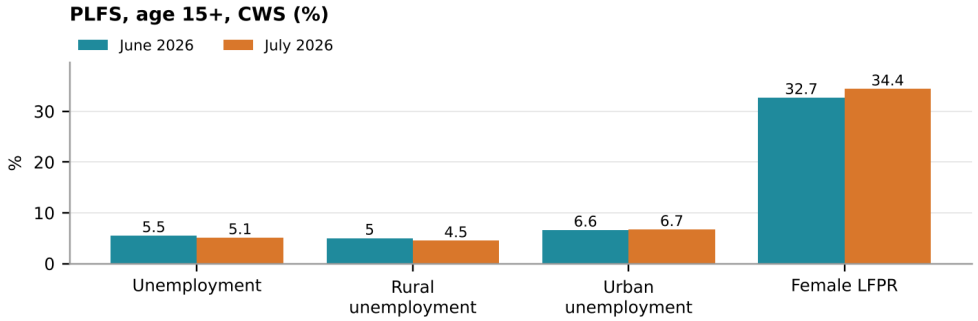


Chart. Source: MoSPI PLFS monthly bulletins (July and August 2026).

Reading the data

- Kharif sowing raised rural work, especially for women (rural female LFPR 38.8%).
- Urban female participation is much lower at 25.3%.
- Seasonal changes mean monthly figures should be read with caution.

Prelims Pointers
- LFPR = share of population working or seeking work.
- The quarterly PLFS bulletin covers both rural and urban areas since 2025.
- The July 2026 sample covered about 3.7 lakh persons.

14 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Valuing Care Work: NITI Report and e-Shram at Five

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Women; society; GS2: Vulnerable sections

Context

On **6 August 2026**, NITI Aayog released **'Reimagining Care: Strategies for Empowering Caregivers in Viksit Bharat@2047'** (reported). It calls for a **National Policy on Caregiving** and a National Caregiver Council. Separately, the **e-Shram** portal for unorganised workers completed five years with **31.89 crore registrations**, 54.28% of them women (PIB, 25 August).

Why care matters

- Women do most unpaid care work in India, which limits their paid work.
- India's elderly population is growing fast and needs trained caregivers.
- A care economy can create jobs and let more women join the workforce.

e-Shram at five

- Launched in August 2021 as a national database of unorganised workers.
- About 11.5 lakh gig and platform workers registered.
- Linked to insurance (PMSBY, PMJJBY) and pension (PM-SYM, Rs 3,000 a month after 60).

Prelims Pointers
- The Time Use Survey is conducted by MoSPI (2019 and 2024).
- PM-SYM is a voluntary, contributory pension scheme for unorganised workers.
- ILO Convention 189 deals with domestic workers.

15 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India and Uzbekistan: A Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and Central Asia; connectivity; energy

Context

The Prime Minister paid a **State Visit to Uzbekistan on 29-30 August 2026**. With President **Shavkat Mirziyoyev**, ties were raised to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, and **11 agreements** were signed. The two sides set a bilateral trade target of **US$5 billion**. The Prime Minister received Uzbekistan's highest state honour, the **Order of 'Oliy Darajali Do'stlik'**.

Areas of agreements

- Critical minerals and uranium supply.
- Trade, digital payments and defence cooperation.
- Education, Hindi and Sanskrit studies, sport and heritage conservation.
- More links between Indian states and Uzbek regions (reported); 30-day visa-free entry for Indians was also reported.

Why Central Asia matters

- **Energy and minerals:** Uzbekistan has uranium, gold and other critical minerals.

- **Connectivity:** Chabahar port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) can link India to the region despite the land block through Pakistan.
- **Security:** stability in Afghanistan affects both countries.
- **Competition:** China and Russia have deep influence in Central Asia.

Prelims Pointers
- The Tashkent Declaration (January 1966) ended the 1965 India-Pakistan war; Lal Bahadur Shastri died in Tashkent.
- Uzbekistan is double-landlocked: it and all its neighbours are landlocked.
- The India-Central Asia Summit was first held virtually in January 2022.

16 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

PM in Bishkek for the SCO Summit

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Regional groupings; India and Central Asia

Context

The Prime Minister reached **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on 31 August 2026** for the **26th SCO Summit**, themed '25 Years of the SCO: Together Towards Sustainable Peace, Development and Prosperity'. On arrival he met the Indian community, paid tribute at the Gandhi statue in Bishkek and attended the opening of the **6th World Nomad Games**. The main summit session and the Bishkek Declaration were on 1 September (next month's issue).

India's approach to the SCO

- India frames its regional policy as 'security, connectivity and opportunity'.
- It presses for action against cross-border terrorism and does not endorse China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- The summit offers meetings with leaders of Russia, Iran, China and Central Asian states.

Key Points
- SCO members (10): China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.
- Kyrgyzstan held the SCO chair in 2025-26.
- The SCO marked 25 years since its founding in Shanghai (2001).

Prelims Pointers
- The SCO Secretariat is in Beijing; RATS is in Tashkent.
- Belarus became the 10th member in 2024.
- India hosted the SCO summit virtually in 2023.

17 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India-China Special Representatives Meet in Beijing

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and its neighbours; border management

Context

The **25th round of the Special Representatives (SR) talks** on the India-China boundary question was held in **Beijing on 25 August 2026** between NSA **Ajit Doval** and **Wang Yi**. Both sides agreed to move forward on **delimitation** talks and to seek a 'fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable package solution' based on the 2005 Political Parameters agreement. The 26th round will be held in India in 2027.

Key outcomes (Chinese readout)

- Maintain peace and tranquillity in border areas and improve border-management mechanisms.
- Implement understandings from the leaders' meetings at Kazan (2024) and Tianjin (2025).
- Discuss cross-border cooperation, including rivers and trade (details not given).

Analysis

- **Delimitation** (drawing the boundary on maps) is a step beyond disengagement and de-escalation.
- **Caution:** differences remain over Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin; troop numbers near the LAC remain high.
- Normalisation includes the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, direct flights and visas.

Prelims Pointers

- The SR mechanism was set up in 2003.
- The 2005 agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles is the basis for a boundary settlement.
- The LAC is about 3,488 km long by India's reckoning.

18 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

EAM in Moscow: The Intergovernmental Commission

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India-Russia relations

Context

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited **Moscow on 23-24 August 2026** and co-chaired the **27th session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC)**. He held talks with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov; a meeting with President Putin was also reported.

Key issues

- **Trade imbalance:** India's oil imports have pushed trade up, but Indian exports to Russia remain small.
- **Payments** in national currencies and the impact of Western sanctions.
- **Connectivity:** INSTC and the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime corridor.
- **Defence:** spares and delayed deliveries, including S-400 units.

Prelims Pointers

- India and Russia signed a 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' (2010).
- The annual India-Russia summit is a key mechanism (since 2000).
- IRIGC-TEC is co-chaired by India's EAM and a Russian Deputy Prime Minister.

19 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

US Tariffs Shift; Trade Deals Advance

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Bilateral agreements; GS3: External trade

Context

The temporary US tariff of 10% under **Section 122** expired on **24 July 2026**. It was replaced by tariffs under **Section 301**, with no automatic end date. In the gem and jewellery sector, India faces **10%**, lower than the 12.5% on several competitors, after it banned imports made with forced labour (reported). The India-US trade deal was **still not signed** by the end of August. On the **India-EU FTA**, legal scrubbing was reported complete, with signing expected by December 2026.

Agreement	Status (August 2026)
India-US trade deal	Talks continuing; not signed
India-EU FTA	Legal scrubbing complete; signing expected December 2026; in force early 2027 (reported)
India-UK CETA	In force since 15 July 2026
India-New Zealand FTA	Signed April 2026; due in force 20 October 2026 (reported)
India-Oman CEPA	In force since 1 June 2026

Analysis

- Section 301 targets 'unfair' trade practices and can be used country by country.
- Exporters face uncertainty as US tariff tools keep changing.
- Diversifying export markets through FTAs reduces dependence on any one market.

Prelims Pointers

- Section 301 of the US Trade Act, 1974 is administered by the US Trade Representative (USTR).
- Gems and jewellery are among India's top exports to the US.
- The EU, taken as a bloc, and the US are India's two largest trading partners in goods.

20 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India-EU FTA: Legal Scrubbing Complete

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and the EU; trade agreements

Context

The **India-EU Free Trade Agreement**, whose negotiations concluded in January 2026, completed **legal scrubbing** (reported). Signing is expected by **December 2026** and entry into force in early 2027, after approval by the European Parliament and the Council. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal visited Brussels in early August (reported).

What the deal offers (as reported)

- Duty-free access in the EU for about 93% of India's exports by value.
- Phased cuts on EU cars, wines and spirits; protection for India's dairy and some farm goods.
- Separate tracks on investment protection and geographical indications.

Concerns

- **CBAM:** the EU's carbon border charges began in 2026 and can offset tariff gains for steel and aluminium.
- **Standards:** EU rules on deforestation, sustainability and data may act as non-tariff barriers.
- **Ratification:** European Parliament approval can be slow.

Prelims Pointers

- India-EU FTA talks began in 2007, stalled in 2013 and resumed in 2022.
- Legal scrubbing is the line-by-line legal review of an agreed text.
- The India-EU Trade and Technology Council met for the third time in July 2026.

21 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

The Ganga Water Treaty Nears Expiry

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and its neighbourhood; water sharing

Context

The **Ganga Water Treaty** of 1996 expires in **December 2026**. Bangladesh asked for renewal talks in June and set up an expert committee. Around 6 August, India's MEA said any discussion would take place 'through bilateral mechanisms' such as the Joint Rivers Commission (reported). Bangladesh's PM **Tarique Rahman**, in office since the February 2026 election, was invited to the BRICS summit in September as BIMSTEC chair (reported).

Issues in renewal

- Dry-season flows at Farakka have fallen with upstream use and climate change.
- Bangladesh wants a guaranteed minimum and longer-term certainty.
- West Bengal's needs for the Hooghly and Kolkata port must be balanced.
- Other irritants: illegal migration, border killings and the Teesta.

Prelims Pointers

- The treaty was signed on 12 December 1996 by H.D. Deve Gowda and Sheikh Hasina.
- Farakka barrage diverts water into the Bhagirathi-Hooghly through a feeder canal.
- BIMSTEC has seven members around the Bay of Bengal; its secretariat is in Dhaka.

22 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

BRICS Chair: Environment Ministers and the Summit Countdown

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Groupings; India's presidency

Context

India hosted the **12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting** in New Delhi on **18 August 2026**, chaired by Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav. On 27 August, India confirmed that the **18th BRICS Summit** would be held in New Delhi on 12-13 September.

Four compendiums released

- Sustainable lifestyles, featuring Mission LiFE.
- Integrated wildfire management.
- Landscape-based greening against land degradation and biodiversity loss.
- Extended producer responsibility (EPR) and the circular economy.

India's priorities

- Climate finance and technology for developing countries.
- Opposition to unilateral trade measures such as carbon border taxes.
- Practical cooperation that suits a larger, more diverse BRICS.

Prelims Pointers

- Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) was launched in 2022.
- BRICS now includes Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE and Indonesia.
- India's BRICS 2026 theme centres on resilience, innovation, cooperation and sustainability.

23 | POLITY GS 2

Monsoon Session Ends: 11 Bills, Little Debate

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Parliament; legislative process

Context

The **Monsoon Session** of Parliament ended on **13 August 2026** after 19 sittings. PRS reported that the **Lok Sabha worked only 15%** and the **Rajya Sabha 33%** of scheduled time, amid protests over the NEET leak and other issues. **Eleven bills were passed**; none was sent to a standing committee, and seven took five minutes or less in the Lok Sabha (as reported).

Bill passed	Key provision
Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment	Strength raised to 38 including the CJI (Rajya Sabha passed it on 5 August)
Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment)	Registration over 2 years late needs a Judicial Magistrate's order
Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026	National Tribunals Commission for selection and oversight; appointments within 3 months
Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill	State renamed 'Keralam' in the First Schedule
Bankers' Books Evidence Bill, 2026	Replaces the 1891 Act; digital bank records admissible
MSME Development (Amendment)	Centre to notify MSME thresholds; TReDS and mediation provisions
Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment)	Tax exemptions for some foreign investors in government securities

Concerns

- Low scrutiny: committee review improves laws, but its use has fallen sharply.
- Disruptions cost question hour and debate time.
- The FCRA (Amendment) Bill was sent to a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

Prelims Pointers

- Renaming a state needs a law under Article 3; it is not a constitutional amendment (Article 4).
- Department-related standing committees were set up in 1993.
- Adjournment sine die ends a sitting without fixing a date to reassemble.

24 | POLITY GS 2

A National Tribunals Commission

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Quasi-judicial bodies; separation of powers

Context

The **Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026**, introduced on 10 August and passed in the session, repeals the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 and creates a **National Tribunals Commission** to run selections and inquiries into tribunal members. The government must act on recommendations **within three months** (PRS).

Background

- The Supreme Court has repeatedly struck down rules that gave the executive too much control over tribunals (*Madras Bar Association* cases).
- It has long suggested an independent National Tribunals Commission.
- A parliamentary committee report (7 August) asked for filling vacancies at the ITAT and NGT.

Analysis

- **Supporters:** a single body brings uniform, timely appointments.
- **Critics:** independence depends on who sits on the commission and on tenure and pay rules.
- Tribunals were meant to reduce court burdens; long vacancies defeat that purpose.

Prelims Pointers

- Articles 323A and 323B (42nd Amendment, 1976) provide for tribunals.
- *L. Chandra Kumar* (1997) held that tribunal decisions are subject to High Court review.
- The NGT was set up under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.

25 | POLITY GS 2

New High Court Chief Justices and a Ladakh Bench

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Judiciary; appointments; Union Territories

Context

On **6 August 2026**, the Supreme Court collegium recommended four judges as **High Court Chief Justices**. On **27 August**, a Presidential regulation under **Article 240** allowed the High Court of J&K and Ladakh to **sit in Ladakh**. With the Act raising the Supreme Court's strength to 38, four new judges can be appointed.

Judge	Recommended as Chief Justice of
V. Kameswar Rao	Patna High Court
Ravindra V. Ghuge	Calcutta High Court
Mahesh Chandra Tripathi	Bombay High Court
Ashwani Kumar Mishra	Punjab and Haryana High Court

Issues

- Delays in notifying collegium recommendations remain a friction point.
- Benches closer to people improve access to justice, especially in remote Ladakh.
- High Courts carry large vacancies and pendency.

Prelims Pointers

- High Court Chief Justices are generally appointed from outside the state (the 'outside CJ' policy).
- Article 217 covers the appointment of High Court judges.
- Article 240 lets the President make regulations for certain Union Territories, including Ladakh.

26 | POLITY GS 2

By-Election Results and the Roll Revision

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Elections; Representation of the People Act

Context

Results of the 30 July by-elections were declared on **3 August 2026**. **Prashant Kishor** of Jan Suraaj won **Bankipur** (Bihar) by 19,324 votes. Congress won **Datia** (MP) and the BJP kept **Manjalpur** (Gujarat) with a smaller margin. Under **SIR Phase III**, about **1.59 crore names** (11.51%) were deleted from draft rolls in 12 States and UTs by 11 August (as reported).

Seat	Winner	Margin
Bankipur (Bihar)	Prashant Kishor (Jan Suraaj)	19,324
Datia (MP)	Ghanshyam Singh (Congress)	6,016
Manjalpur (Gujarat)	Satish Patel (BJP)	30,630

SIR: the debate

- Large deletions in Andhra Pradesh (44.89 lakh) and Haryana (33.83 lakh) were reported.
- **The Election Commission** says deletions are of dead, shifted, absent or duplicate entries.
- **Critics** fear genuine voters, especially migrants, may be removed; claims and objections are the safeguard.

Prelims Pointers

- Datia fell vacant after the MLA's conviction under Section 8(3) of the RP Act.
- Draft rolls are followed by a period for claims (Form 6) and objections (Form 7).
- Article 326 provides for elections on the basis of adult suffrage.

27 | POLITY GS 2

Supreme Court Moves Against 'Digital Arrest' Scams

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Judiciary; GS3: Cyber security

Context

In early August 2026, the Supreme Court issued directions to curb **'digital arrest' scams**, in which fraudsters pose as police or officials on video calls and extort money (reported). The RBI must issue procedures within four weeks for **temporary debit holds** on mule accounts, and states must roll out **e-Zero FIR** and cyber crime coordination centres.

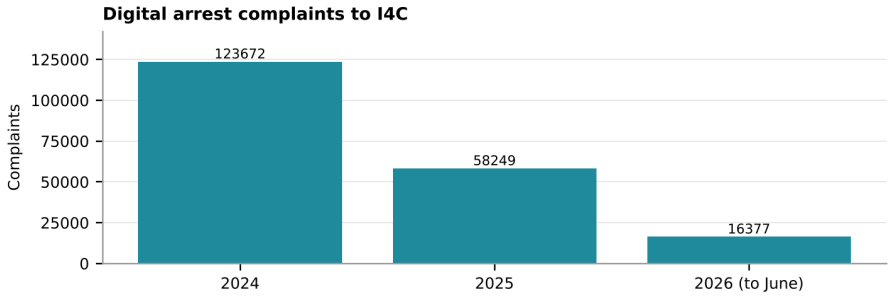


Chart. Source: I4C data cited in coverage of the Supreme Court's directions (August 2026).

Why it matters

- Elderly and less tech-savvy people are the main victims.
- **Mule accounts**, opened in others' names, move stolen money quickly.

- Only a small share of lost money is recovered; Rs 18.05 crore was restored in 36,290 cases under the new mechanism.

Prelims Pointers

- There is no legal concept of 'digital arrest' in Indian law.
- I4C (Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre) works under the Home Ministry.
- The cyber crime helpline number is 1930.

28 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Record Organ Transplants and New Guidelines

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Health; GS4: Ethics of donation

Context

On the 16th **Indian Organ Donation Day** (3 August 2026), the Health Ministry said India performed a record **20,138 organ transplants in 2025**, up from 4,990 in 2013, ranking third in the world. New initiatives included the 'Jug Jug Jiyo Abhiyaan', the e-Pratyaropan platform, and national guidelines on brain stem death certification and swap transplants.

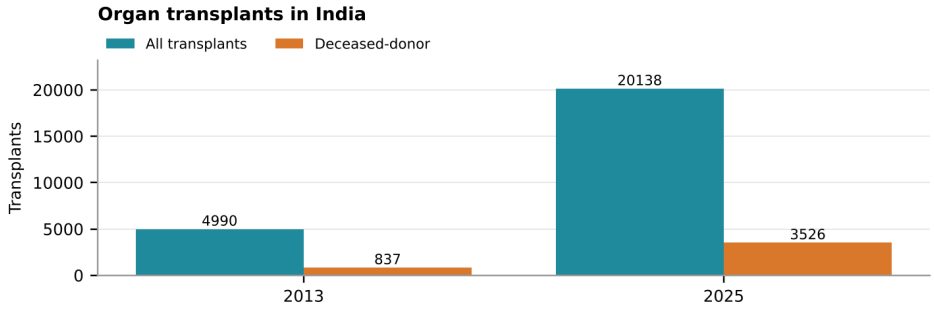


Chart. Source: NOTTO/Health Ministry figures reported by DD India (3 August 2026).

Challenges

- Most transplants still use living donors; deceased donation is low.
- Families often do not consent; awareness of brain stem death is limited.
- Facilities are concentrated in a few states such as Tamil Nadu.

Prelims Pointers

- The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994 governs donation in India.
- NOTTO (National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation) is in New Delhi.
- Swap transplants let two incompatible donor-recipient pairs exchange donors.

29 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

NEET-PG and the Higher Education Regulator Bill

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Education; regulation

Context

NEET-PG 2026 was held on **30 August** in one shift for about 2.66 lakh candidates at 1,111 centres. For the first time, the exam body will publish candidates' recorded responses with the provisional answer key, following a Supreme Court order (reported). A power failure at two Jaipur centres forced a re-test for about 2,445 candidates. Meanwhile, the **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill**, which would replace the UGC, AICTE and NCTE with a single regulator, stayed with a parliamentary committee, which had flagged concerns about autonomy (reported).

Issues

- **Transparency** in answer keys builds trust after the NEET-UG leak.
- A single regulator could cut overlap, but critics fear central control over universities.
- Graded penalties and time-bound appointments were suggested by the committee.

Prelims Pointers

- NEET-PG is conducted by the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS).
- The UGC was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1956.
- NEP 2020 proposed a single overarching higher education regulator.

30 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Transgender Identity Cards to Stay Valid

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Vulnerable sections; fundamental rights

Context

The Supreme Court is hearing challenges to the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026**. On **17 August**, the Solicitor General told the Court that **identity cards already issued** under the 2019 Act would remain valid; the Court recorded this, subject to the outcome of the case.

Issue	2019 Act	2026 Amendment (as challenged)
Gender identity	Right to self-perceived identity (Section 4(2))	Self-perception clause deleted
Certification	District Magistrate on application	Medical authority headed by a CMO or Deputy CMO
Definition	Broad	Narrowed, petitioners say

Arguments

- **Petitioners** say the changes violate the *NALSA* judgment (2014), privacy and dignity under Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21.
- **The government** says verification prevents misuse of benefits.
- The National Portal for Transgender Persons had stopped working, petitioners told the Court.

Prelims Pointers

- *NALSA v. Union of India* (2014) recognised transgender persons as the 'third gender'.
- The Transgender Persons Act was passed in 2019.
- The SMILE scheme supports transgender persons and those engaged in begging.

31 | ECONOMY GS 3

RBI Holds Rates, Raises Growth Forecast

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Monetary policy; inflation; growth

Context

On **5 August 2026**, the Monetary Policy Committee kept the **repo rate at 5.25%** with a **neutral** stance (reported as unanimous). It raised its 2026-27 GDP growth forecast to **6.7%** and cut its CPI inflation forecast to **5.0%**.

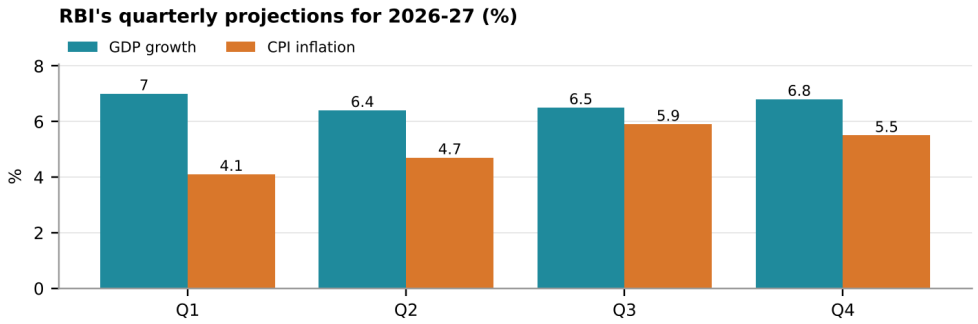


Chart. Source: RBI Monetary Policy Statement, 5 August 2026, as reported.

Policy corridor

- Standing Deposit Facility (floor): 5.00%.
- Marginal Standing Facility and Bank Rate: 5.50%.
- A special dollar swap window (from 8 June) brought in US$72.85 billion by 21 August, mostly via FCNR(B) deposits.

Reading the decision

- Strong growth gives room to wait; inflation is expected to rise later in the year (Q3 5.9%).
- El Nino and a weak monsoon could push food prices up.
- A stronger rupee and record reserves reduce external pressure.

Prelims Pointers

- The repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends to banks against government securities.
- FCNR(B) deposits are foreign currency deposits held by non-residents in Indian banks.
- The MPC meets at least four times a year (in practice six).

32 | ECONOMY GS 3

GDP Grows 7.8% in April-June

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Growth; national income

Context

The National Statistics Office reported on **31 August 2026** that real GDP grew **7.8%** in April-June 2026 (Q1 of 2026-27), up from 6.9% a year earlier and above the RBI's 7.0% projection. Nominal GDP grew **10.3%**.

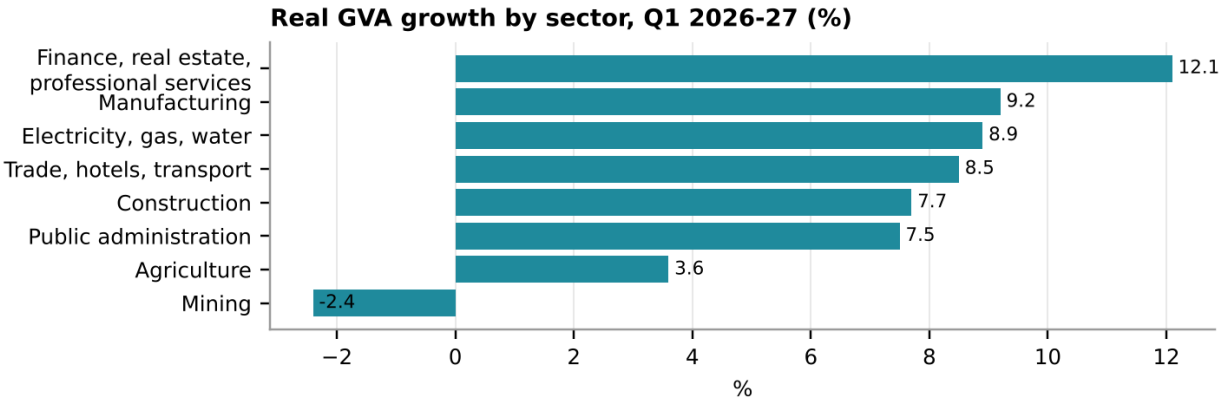


Chart. Source: MoSPI press note, 31 August 2026.

Demand side

- **Investment** (gross fixed capital formation) grew 11.9%; its share of GDP rose to 34.3%.
- **Private consumption** grew 7.1%, but its share slipped slightly.
- Higher nominal growth helps tax revenue and debt ratios.

Prelims Pointers

- GDP now uses 2022-23 as the base year.
- GVA at basic prices + net product taxes = GDP.
- Quarterly GDP estimates are released about two months after the quarter ends.

33 | ECONOMY GS 3

Inflation: Retail 4.45%, Wholesale 9.78%

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Inflation

Context

Retail inflation for **July 2026** rose slightly to **4.45%** (released 12 August), with food inflation at 5.52%. Wholesale inflation eased a little to **9.78%** (released 14 August) as fuel and power inflation fell from 27.41% to 20.05%, but food and manufactured goods rose.

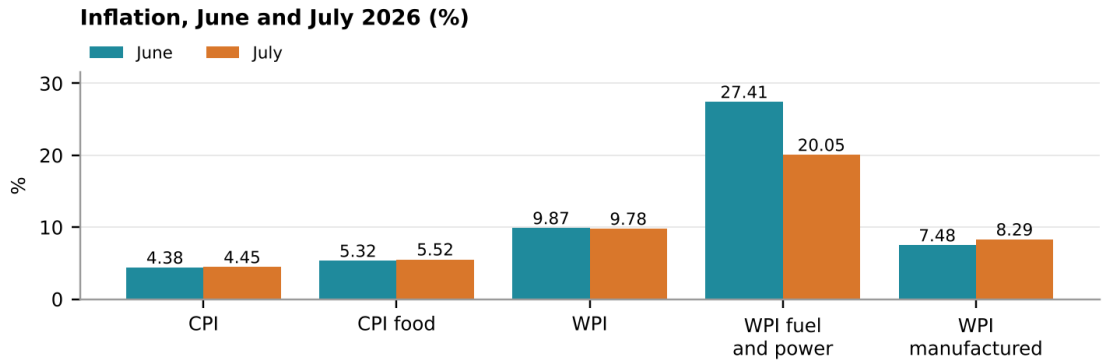


Chart. Source: MoSPI CPI release (12 August 2026); WPI as reported by Tribune and ICRA (14 August 2026).

Inside the numbers

- Silver and gold jewellery, ginger, garlic and onion saw the highest price rises.
- Potato and tomato prices fell.
- Rural inflation (4.84%) stayed above urban (3.96%).

Prelims Pointers

- The WPI Food Index combines food articles and manufactured food products.
- Core inflation excludes food and fuel.
- Headline CPI uses 2024 as the base year.

34 | ECONOMY GS 3

Industry: IIP 6.7%, Core Sector 5.4%

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Industrial growth

Context

The **Index of Industrial Production** grew **6.7% in July 2026** (released 28 August); June was revised up to 8.8%. The **eight (now nine) core industries** grew 5.4% in July (released 20 August).

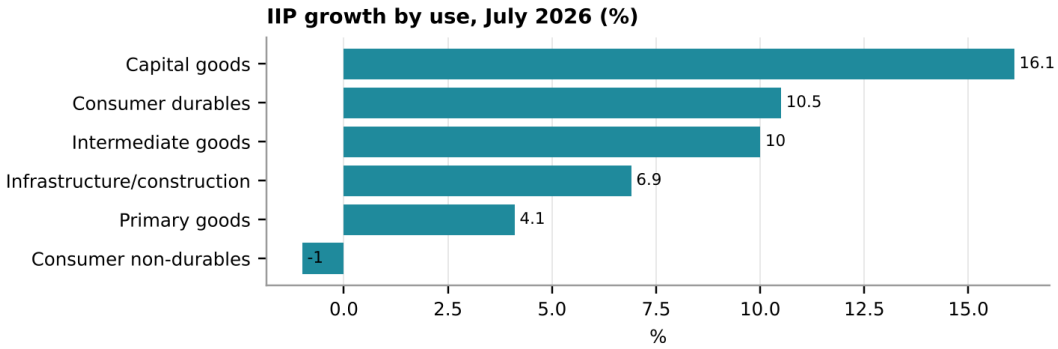


Chart. Source: MoSPI IIP data as reported by PTI and ICRA (28 August 2026).

Reading the data

- **Capital goods** growth points to strong investment, matching the GDP data.
- **Consumer non-durables** contracted, a sign of weak mass consumption.
- Core sector: iron ore (29.5%) and cement (13.1%) led; crude oil, gas and fertilisers fell.

Prelims Pointers

- Core industries carry about 40% of the IIP's weight.
- Both IIP and the core index use 2022-23 as the base year.
- IIP is released by the NSO about four weeks after the month (new schedule).

35 | ECONOMY GS 3

Record Exports, Wider Trade Deficit

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External trade

Context

Merchandise exports reached **US$44.24 billion in July 2026** (up 19.6%), reported as a record. Imports rose to US$76.22 billion, widening the **trade deficit to US$31.98 billion**, a six-month high. Crude imports were US$18.31 billion.

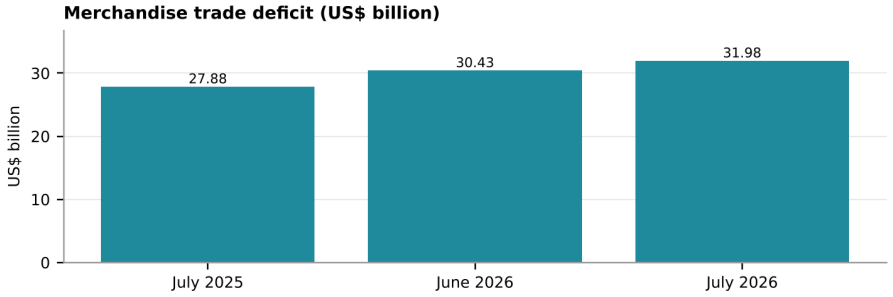


Chart. April-July exports were US$173.78 billion (up 17%). Source: Commerce Ministry data as reported (13 August 2026).

Why it matters

- Export growth shows Indian goods are competing despite US tariff changes.
- Costly oil keeps the import bill high.
- Services exports (about US$35.9 billion in July) help offset the goods deficit.

Prelims Pointers

- Merchandise trade data are released by the Commerce Ministry around the 15th of each month.
- Services trade figures are estimates, later revised by the RBI.
- Engineering goods are India's largest merchandise export group.

36 | ECONOMY GS 3

Forex Reserves Hit a Record US$729 Billion

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External sector; RBI

Context

India's foreign exchange reserves reached a **record US$729.33 billion** in the week ended **21 August 2026**, above the earlier high of US$728.49 billion (27 February). The rise came from strong inflows, including a special RBI swap window that drew US$72.85 billion, and higher gold prices.

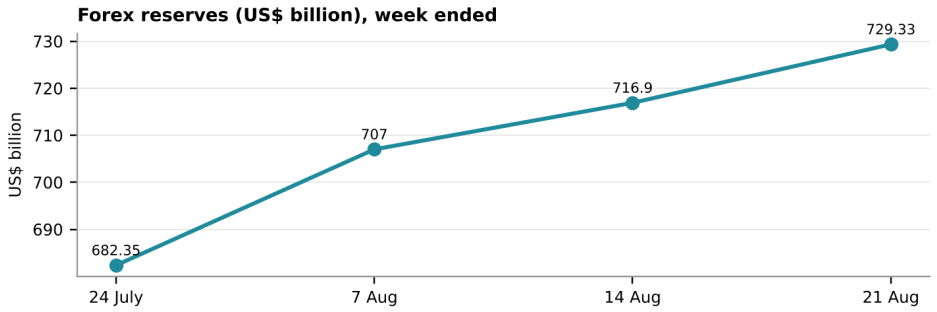


Chart. Source: RBI weekly data as reported (July-August 2026).

Components (21 August)

- Foreign currency assets: US$591.33 billion.
- Gold: US$114.22 billion.
- SDRs US$18.85 billion; IMF reserve position US$4.93 billion.

Why it matters

- Large reserves protect against sudden outflows and oil shocks.
- The RBI has resumed buying dollars after selling heavily during the West Asia crisis.
- Swap-based inflows will have to be repaid when the swaps mature.

Prelims Pointers

- Reserves are managed by the RBI under the RBI Act, 1934.
- Import cover = reserves divided by monthly import bill.
- India holds the fourth-largest reserves in the world (approximately).

37 | ECONOMY GS 3

RBI's Dollar Swap Window Draws US$73 Billion

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External sector; monetary management

Context

A special **USD-INR swap facility**, opened by the RBI on **8 June 2026** when the rupee was under pressure, brought in **US$72.85 billion by 21 August**: US$65.4 billion through **FCNR(B) deposits**, US$4.86 billion through banks' overseas borrowings and US$2.59 billion through ECBs. Because of the strong response, the FCNR(B) window was closed early on 31 August; the other windows stay open until 31 December (AIR).

How it works

- Banks raise dollars from non-resident Indians or abroad and swap them with the RBI for rupees.
- The RBI gets dollars now and agrees to return them at a fixed rate later, reducing banks' currency risk.
- The inflows lift reserves and steady the rupee.

A precedent

- In 2013, during the 'taper tantrum', a similar FCNR(B) swap window raised about US$34 billion.
- **Risk:** the money must be repaid when swaps mature, which can create future outflows.

Prelims Pointers

- FCNR(B): Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) deposits, held in foreign currency.
- ECB: External Commercial Borrowing by Indian firms from abroad.
- A currency swap is an agreement to exchange currencies now and reverse later at a set rate.

38 | ECONOMY GS 3

UPI Crosses 24.5 Billion Transactions a Month

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Digital economy; payments

Context

UPI handled a record **24.51 billion transactions in August 2026** worth **Rs 29.82 lakh crore**, according to NPCI data released on 1 September. Value was up about 20% from a year earlier (as reported).

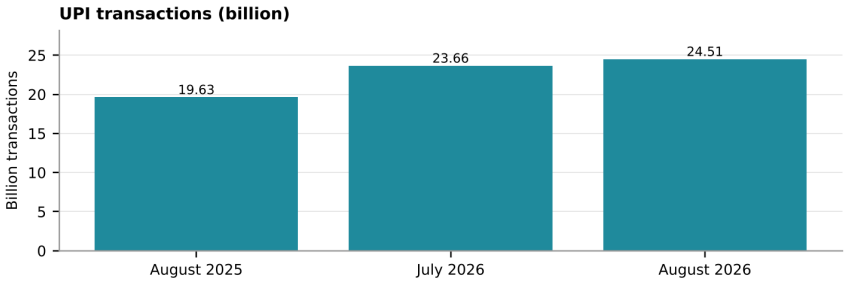


Chart. Source: NPCI data as reported by PTI/DT Next (1 September 2026).

Issues

- **Zero MDR:** no merchant fee on UPI makes the system hard to fund; banks and apps seek a fee for large merchants.
- **Concentration:** two apps handle most transactions; NPCI has a market-share cap plan.
- **Fraud:** mule accounts and scams ride on instant payments.
- **Global reach:** UPI links with several countries for remittances and tourists.

Prelims Pointers
- UPI was launched by NPCI in 2016.
- NPCI is a not-for-profit company promoted by the RBI and the Indian Banks' Association.
- UPI Lite allows small payments without a PIN.

39 | ECONOMY GS 3

GST Collections Jump 15%

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Taxation; fiscal policy

Context

Gross GST collections for **July 2026** (announced 1 August) were **Rs 2.11 lakh crore**, up 15.4%. GST on imports rose 28.8%. Net collections after refunds were Rs 1.81 lakh crore. UPI handled a record **24.51 billion transactions in August** worth Rs 29.82 lakh crore (NPCI data, released 1 September).

 # Key numbers
- Domestic GST: Rs 1.45 lakh crore (up 10.1%).
- Import GST: Rs 66,511 crore.
- Refunds: Rs 29,968 crore (up 13.1%).

What drives the numbers

- Higher import values (oil, gold, electronics) lift IGST on imports.
- Rate cuts after GST reforms in 2025 lowered prices but widened the base.
- Digital payments improve tax compliance by leaving a record.

Prelims Pointers
- IGST is levied on inter-state supplies and imports.
- The GST Council is set up under Article 279A.
- NPCI runs UPI, RuPay and FASTag.

40 | ECONOMY GS 3

NITI Aayog on Professional Services

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Services sector; regulation

Context

On **10 August 2026**, NITI Aayog released **'India's Services Sector: Insights on Regulatory Regime in Professional Services'**, the third report in its services series (reported). Professional services make up about a quarter of India's services exports.

Four-pronged strategy
- Harness emerging trends such as AI and global capability centres.
- Move up the value chain in legal, accounting and consulting services.
- Adopt global best practices in regulation.
- Promote continuous professional development.

Issues

- Self-regulating bodies (such as bar and chartered accountant councils) can restrict competition.
- Foreign firms and lawyers face entry limits; a draft Advocates Bill proposes a narrow opening.
- Mutual recognition of qualifications is key in trade deals with the UK and EU.

Prelims Pointers

- Services contribute over half of India's GVA.
- Global capability centres (GCCs) are offshore units of multinational firms.
- Mode 4 under GATS covers the movement of natural persons (professionals).

41 | AGRICULTURE GS 3

Kharif Sowing Near Last Year's Level

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Cropping patterns; monsoon and agriculture

Context

By **28 August 2026**, kharif crops covered about **1,071 lakh hectares**, about 1.8% below last year. **Rice** lagged by about 14 lakh hectares, mainly in Karnataka, Telangana and Jharkhand, where rain was deficient. **Pulses** were ahead, led by Uttar Pradesh (as reported).

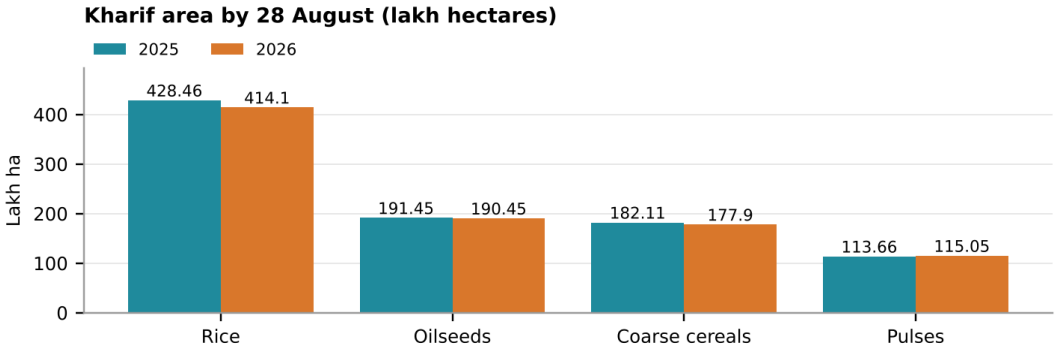


Chart. Source: Agriculture Ministry data as reported by Deccan Herald (31 August 2026).

Inputs

- The government said there was no shortage of urea or DAP (Lok Sabha, 7 August).
- Farm-gate prices: urea Rs 242 per 45-kg bag; DAP Rs 1,350 per 50-kg bag.
- A special support of Rs 3,500 per tonne for DAP and imported TSP in kharif 2026.

Risks

- A dry September and a strong El Nino could cut yields.
- Lower rice output may tighten stocks for exports and welfare schemes.

Prelims Pointers

- TSP is triple superphosphate, a phosphatic fertiliser.
- The integrated Fertiliser Management System (iFMS) tracks supply.
- PM-KISAN was extended to 2030-31 by the Cabinet on 31 July 2026.

42 | ECONOMY GS 3

Power: 300 GW Non-Fossil Capacity and a Record August Peak

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Energy; infrastructure

Context

India's installed power capacity reached **552 GW** by 31 July 2026, with **non-fossil sources crossing 300 GW** (about 54%). Solar reached 164.59 GW and wind 58.14 GW. Peak demand in August hit **258.27 GW**, the highest ever for August, as the month was the hottest on record. Coal India's August output fell 5.7% while its supplies rose 5.5%.

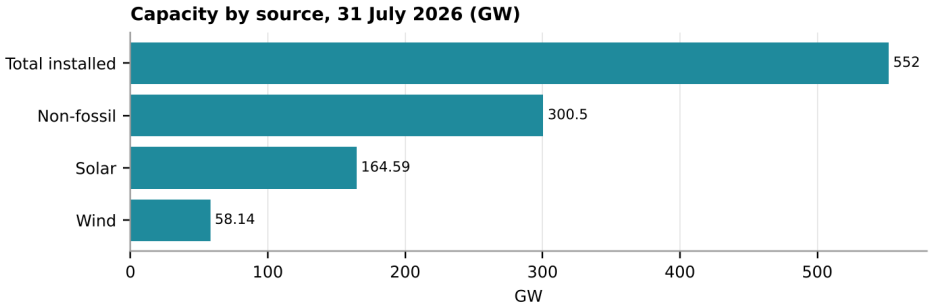


Chart. Source: Power Ministry factsheet reported by IANS and Mercom (13 August 2026).

Why it matters

- India has crossed 60% of its 500 GW non-fossil target for 2030.
- Evening peaks still rely on coal; storage and grid upgrades are needed.
- PM Surya Ghar rooftop solar reached about 14.8 GW of capacity (reported).

Prelims Pointers

- The all-time peak demand remains 270.82 GW (May 2026).
- India met its NDC goal of 50% non-fossil capacity ahead of 2030.
- Coal India is a Maharatna public sector company.

43 | ECONOMY GS 3

Cabinet Clears Rs 13,041 Crore for Rail and Road

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Infrastructure; transport

Context

On **19 August 2026**, the Union Cabinet approved **four railway multitracking projects** worth **Rs 9,450 crore** (about 410 km of new track by 2030-31) and the four-laning of the **Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi-Sonbarsa section of NH-22** in Bihar (82.57 km, about Rs 3,590 crore, Hybrid Annuity Mode).

Rail project	States
Kharagpur-Bhadrak 4th line	West Bengal, Odisha
Bhadrak-Haridaspur 4th line	Odisha
Gummidipundi-Gudur 3rd and 4th lines	Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh
Cuttack-Paradeep 3rd and 4th lines	Odisha

Why it matters

- The east coast corridor carries coal, iron ore and port traffic; extra lines ease congestion.

- Paradeep is a major port for coal and fertiliser.
- Sonbarsa is on the India-Nepal border, so the highway aids cross-border trade.

Prelims Pointers
- PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (2021) guides multimodal infrastructure.
- Paradeep port is in Odisha's Jagatsinghpur district.
- Multitracking means adding third and fourth lines to busy routes.

44 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

UNCCD COP17: A Framework on Drought

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Land degradation; international conventions

Context

The **17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP17)** was held in **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 17 to 28 August 2026** with the theme **'Restoring Land, Restoring Hope'**. It adopted a **policy framework on drought** and the report on a future strategy beyond 2030 (as reported).

Key Points
- 2026 is the UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, a proposal led by Mongolia.
- Drought is the costliest slow-onset disaster; El Nino years raise the risk.
- The COP stressed pastoralism, land tenure and early warning.

India's stake

- About a third of India's land is degraded or undergoing desertification (ISRO atlas).
- Target: restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.
- India hosted COP14 in 2019 and launched a Centre of Excellence on land management.

Prelims Pointers
- UNCCD was adopted in 1994 in Paris; its secretariat is in Bonn.
- It is one of the three Rio Conventions with the UNFCCC and the CBD.
- Desertification and Drought Day is 17 June.

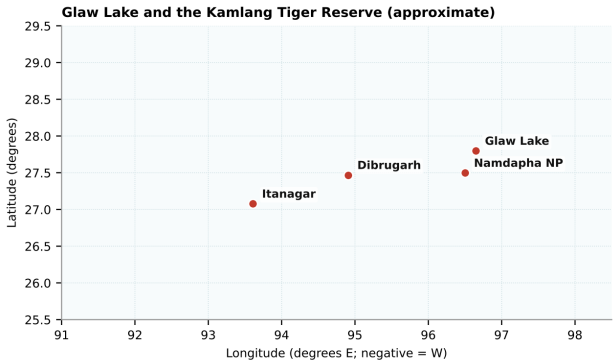
45 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Glaw Lake Becomes India's 101st Ramsar Site

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Wetlands; conservation

Context

Glaw Lake in Arunachal Pradesh, inside the **Kamlang Tiger Reserve**, was designated **India's 101st Ramsar site** (announced 4 August 2026). The site and its catchment have more than 150 tree species and 49 orchid species. India had 26 Ramsar sites in 2014.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Points are approximate.

Why it matters

- It is a high-altitude wetland in the Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot.
- Wetlands in hills store water and regulate stream flows downstream.
- Ramsar status brings international attention but no extra legal protection by itself.

Prelims Pointers

- Kamlang Tiger Reserve lies in Lohit district, Arunachal Pradesh.
- Arunachal's other tiger reserves include Namdapha and Pakke.
- Wetlands in India are regulated under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.

46 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

World Elephant Day: 22,446 Wild Elephants

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Conservation; human-wildlife conflict

Context

On **World Elephant Day (12 August 2026)**, the government highlighted the first **DNA-based Synchronous All India Elephant Estimation** (2021-25), which counted **22,446 wild elephants**. India has **33 Elephant Reserves** covering 80,777 sq km in 14 states and **150 elephant corridors**.

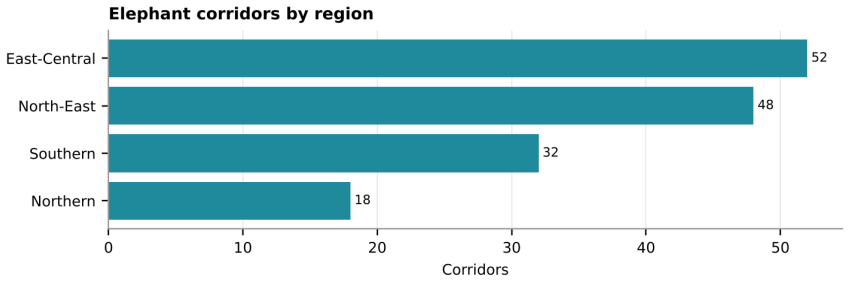


Chart. West Bengal has the most corridors (26); 6 cross into Nepal. Source: PIB backgrounder, 12 August 2026.

Reading the number

- The 2017 count (29,964) used a different method, so the two are not directly comparable.
- DNA from dung gives a more accurate estimate of individual animals.
- Elephant deaths from trains, electrocution and conflict remain high.

Prelims Pointers

- Project Elephant began in 1992.
- The Asian elephant is Endangered (IUCN) and in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act.
- The elephant was declared India's national heritage animal in 2010.

47 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Record-Warm Oceans and Shrinking Sea Ice

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Climate change; GS1: Oceanography

Context

The Copernicus Climate Change Service (bulletin released 10 September) found that **August 2026** had a record average sea surface temperature of **21.07 C** (60S-60N). **Antarctic sea ice** was 6.5% below average, the fourth-lowest for August, and the Indian Ocean sector was the lowest on record. **Arctic sea ice** was 9.2% below average.

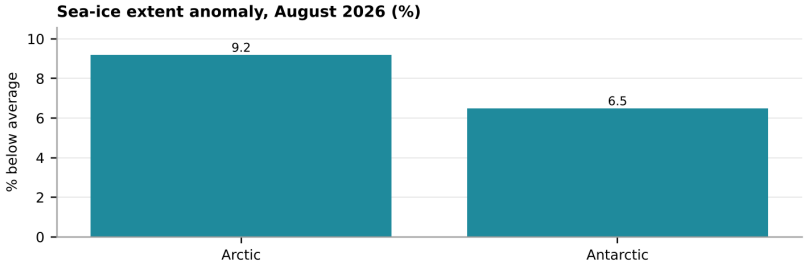


Chart. Source: Copernicus C3S sea-ice bulletin for August 2026.

Why it matters

- Less sea ice means darker water absorbs more heat (ice-albedo feedback).
- Warm oceans fuel stronger cyclones and marine heatwaves that bleach coral.
- Antarctic changes affect Southern Ocean currents and, over time, sea level.

India's polar research

- Stations: Maitri and Bharati in Antarctica; Himadri in Svalbard (Arctic).
- The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research is in Goa.
- India's Arctic Policy was released in 2022.

Prelims Pointers

- Arctic sea ice reaches its minimum in September; Antarctic in February.
- India is an observer in the Arctic Council (since 2013).
- The Indian Antarctic Act was passed in 2022.

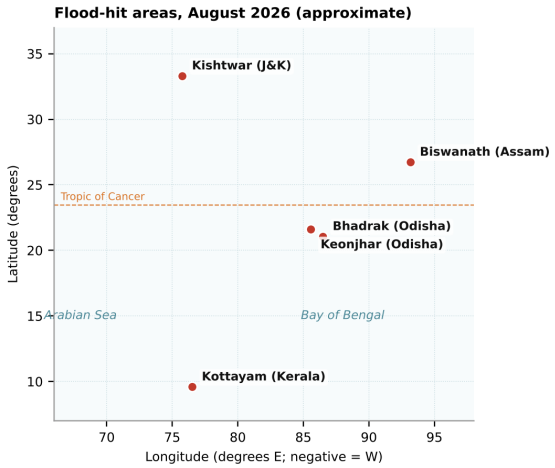
48 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT GS 3

Floods in Kerala, Assam and Odisha

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Disaster management; floods

Context

Early August 2026 brought floods to several states (Sphere India situation reports). **Kerala** recorded 26 deaths and over 27,000 people in relief camps (1-7 August). In **Odisha**, 8.64 lakh people were affected in 22 districts and 6 died. In **Assam**, about 1.56 lakh people were affected in 13 districts. **J&K** recorded at least 35 cloudbursts this year.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Points are approximate.

Lessons

- Embankment breaches in Odisha and Assam show the need for better maintenance.
- Early warning systems in Kishtwar helped avoid deaths during a cloudburst on 1 August (reported).
- Urban drainage and river-front encroachments worsen floods in Kerala.

Prelims Pointers

- The Disaster Management Act, 2005 was amended in 2025.
- SDRF funds are shared 75:25 by the Centre and states (90:10 for Himalayan and northeastern states).
- Sphere India is a national coalition of humanitarian agencies.

49 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT GS 3

Wildfires Scorch Spain and Canada

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Disaster management; climate extremes

Context

Spain recorded about **264,656 hectares** burnt in 44 large fires by 31 August 2026; the **Avila fire** (about 50,000 ha) was the largest in its modern history. **Canada** had about **4.1 million hectares** burnt in 4,793 fires by 18 August, with over 10,000 people evacuated in southern British Columbia. Western Europe had its warmest summer on record.

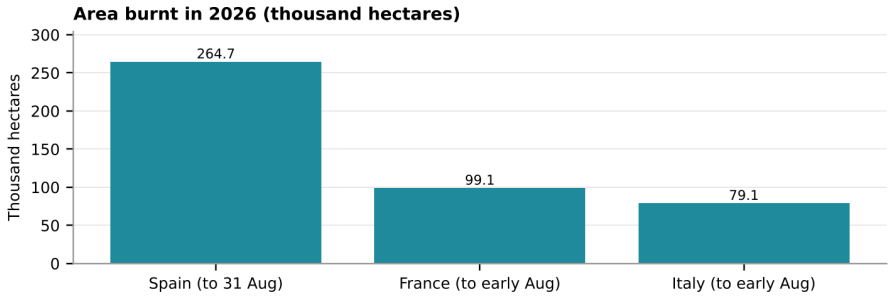


Chart. Source: Spain's environment ministry via The Local; EU GWIS via Euronews (August 2026).

Why fires are worsening

- Heat and drought dry out vegetation; abandoned farmland adds fuel.
- Longer fire seasons stretch firefighting resources.
- Smoke harms health far from the fires.

Prelims Pointers

- Forest fires in India peak in March-May; Uttarakhand and the Northeast are prone.
- The Forest Survey of India sends satellite fire alerts.
- Canada's boreal forests are among the world's largest carbon stores.

50 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

National Space Day 2026 and ISRO's Pause

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology

Context

India celebrated its third **National Space Day** on **23 August 2026**, with the main event in Ahmedabad. The theme was **'Towards Viksit Bharat: Innovating, Collaborating and Aspiring to Global Space Leadership'**. Skyroot Aerospace was honoured for Vikram-1's successful orbital launch in July. ISRO said India now has over **440 space start-ups**. There was **no ISRO launch in August**; launches were reported likely to resume by October after the PSLV failures.

Mission	Status
PSLV	Failed in May 2025 (C61) and January 2026 (C62); return to flight pending
Gaganyaan G1 (uncrewed)	Targeted by end-2026
NVS-03, EOS-05	Reported ready to launch
Bharatiya Antariksh Station	First module targeted 2028

Issues

- Two PSLV failures need a thorough failure analysis before return to flight.

- Private launchers can fill gaps but need steady demand.
- Launch delays affect navigation (NavIC) and Earth observation plans.

Prelims Pointers

- National Space Day marks Chandrayaan-3's landing on 23 August 2023 at Shiv Shakti point.
- The Space Applications Centre (SAC) is in Ahmedabad.
- NVS satellites are for the NavIC navigation system.

China Postpones Chang'e-7

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology; awareness

Context

China's **Chang'e-7** lunar south pole mission, rolled out at Wenchang on 19 August and due to launch on 24 August, was **postponed on 23 August 2026**. The agency said the mission 'does not meet the launch conditions' and would miss this year's window. NASA held a briefing on 3 August for the SpaceX Crew-13 mission, due in September.

About Chang'e-7

- Orbiter, lander, rover and a small 'hopper' to explore shadowed craters.
- Goal: search for water ice near the lunar south pole (Shackleton crater area, reported).
- Carries payloads from several countries.

Why the south pole

- Water ice could supply drinking water, oxygen and rocket fuel for future bases.
- China and the US plan crewed landings there; India's Chandrayaan-3 landed nearby in 2023.
- Permanently shadowed craters are among the coldest places in the solar system.

Prelims Pointers

- Chang'e-6 returned the first samples from the Moon's far side in 2024.
- Wenchang launch site is on Hainan Island.
- The International Lunar Research Station is a China-Russia-led project.

52 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

EU AI Act: Transparency Rules Take Effect

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Artificial intelligence; regulation

Context

From **2 August 2026**, the **transparency obligations (Article 50)** of the EU AI Act apply. Users must be told when they are talking to an AI system, synthetic audio, images, video and text must be machine-readably marked, and deepfakes must be disclosed. A simplification law ('AI Omnibus', in force 27 July) delayed high-risk rules to December 2027 and August 2028.

Obligation	Applies from
Bans on unacceptable-risk AI	February 2025
General-purpose AI model duties	2 August 2025
Transparency (chatbots, deepfakes, marking)	2 August 2026 (grace to 2 December 2026 for existing generative systems)
Stand-alone high-risk systems	2 December 2027
High-risk AI in regulated products	2 August 2028

Lessons for India

- India amended the IT Rules in 2026 to require labelling of AI-generated content.
- A risk-based approach balances innovation with safety.
- Global firms may apply EU standards worldwide (the 'Brussels effect').

Prelims Pointers

- The EU AI Act classifies AI by risk: unacceptable, high, limited and minimal.
- The EU's GDPR (2018) is a model for data protection laws.
- India's DPDP Act was passed in 2023.

53 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Semiconductors: Three Plants Producing, More by Year-End

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Electronics; industrial policy

Context

On **18 August 2026**, the MeitY Secretary said **three India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) projects** are in commercial production and five or six may be by the end of 2026 (reported). The Cabinet has approved **ISM 2.0**, which adds support for design, advanced packaging, equipment, materials, R&D and talent. The Prime Minister's Independence Day speech spoke of seven to eight plants starting within one to two years.

Why it matters

- India's chip demand is expected to double from about US$100 billion.
- Packaging and testing plants are the first step; fabs are harder.
- Supply-chain security after pandemic-era shortages and US-China tensions.

Challenges

- Fabs need huge capital, ultra-pure water and stable power.
- Skilled workforce gaps in process engineering.
- Global competition for investment.

Prelims Pointers

- SEMICON India 2026 is scheduled for September in New Delhi.
- OSAT plants assemble, package and test chips.
- Silicon photonics uses light to carry data on chips.

54 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Chandipura Virus Toll Rises in Gujarat

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Health technology; GS2: Public health

Context

Gujarat reported **42 Chandipura virus cases and 28 deaths** since 30 June 2026, mostly children, by 28 August (IANS, as reported). The source of the outbreak remained unclear. The figures differ from the 'suspected' and 'confirmed' counts reported in July because of differences in case definitions.

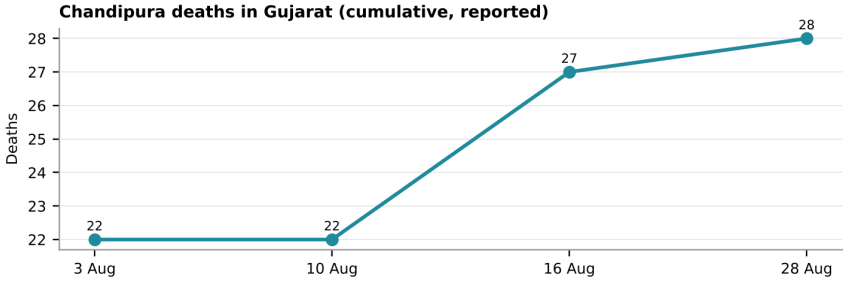


Chart. Source: IANS reports (August 2026).

Response

- Sandfly control in houses and animal sheds; filling cracks in mud walls.
- Fast referral of children with fever and fits to hospitals.
- Research on vaccines and antivirals is at an early stage.

Prelims Pointers

- Chandipura virus is a vesiculovirus spread by sandflies.
- It causes acute encephalitis syndrome (AES), mainly in children under 15.
- NIV Pune is the national reference laboratory for such viruses.

55 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Agni-4 Test and India's Nuclear Deterrent

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence technology; strategic forces

Context

India test-fired the **Agni-4** ballistic missile off the Odisha coast on **6 August 2026** under the Strategic Forces Command; officials said it validated all operational and technical parameters (reported).

Missile	Type	Range (approx.)
Prithvi-II	Short-range ballistic	350 km
Agni-1	Short-range ballistic	700-900 km
Agni-4	Intermediate-range ballistic, two-stage solid fuel	about 4,000 km
Agni-5	Intercontinental-class, canisterised; MIRV-capable	over 5,000 km

Why user trials matter

- Regular tests by the Strategic Forces Command confirm the missiles are ready for use.
- They support India's doctrine of credible minimum deterrence and no first use.
- Land-based missiles form one leg of the nuclear triad with aircraft and submarines (INS Arighaat, Arihant).

Prelims Pointers

- The Strategic Forces Command was set up in 2003.
- India's Nuclear Command Authority has a Political Council chaired by the Prime Minister.
- Agni missiles were developed under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (1983).

56 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

78 Gallantry Awards on Independence Day

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Security forces; GS4: Courage and duty

Context

On **14 August 2026**, the President approved **78 gallantry awards** (13 posthumous) for the armed forces and central and state forces, including **9 Kirti Chakras** (7 posthumous) and **19 Shaurya Chakras**, plus 89 Mentions-in-Despatches. Police, fire and other services received **1,057 medals**, including 301 for gallantry, 197 of them for service in LWE-affected areas.

Award	Number	Posthumous
Kirti Chakra	9	7
Shaurya Chakra	19 (+1 Bar)	1
Sena Medal (Gallantry)	36 (+5 Bars)	5
Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry)	3	-
Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry)	5	-

Who was honoured

- J&K Police personnel killed in a Kathua encounter received the Kirti Chakra posthumously (reported).
- Army officers and soldiers decorated for counter-terror operations in J&K and the Northeast.
- Police gallantry medals reflect the heavy burden in Left Wing Extremism areas.

Prelims Pointers

- Peacetime gallantry awards in order: Ashoka Chakra, Kirti Chakra, Shaurya Chakra.
- Wartime awards in order: Param Vir Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra, Vir Chakra.
- A 'Bar' is given when a person wins the same award again.

57 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

INS Nipun and Exercises Abroad

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Maritime security; GS2: Defence diplomacy

Context

INS Nipun, the second **Nistar-class diving support vessel** built by Hindustan Shipyard, was commissioned in Mumbai on **31 August 2026** (reported). It supports deep-sea diving and **submarine rescue**. Abroad, the IAF held **Udara Shakti** with Malaysia (10-14 August) and the Army held **Maitree-XV** with Thailand (18-31 August).

Exercise	Partner	Venue	Focus
Udara Shakti	Malaysia (air force)	Subang Air Base	Air combat; Rafale and C-17 took part
Maitree-XV	Thailand (army)	Surat Thani	Counter-terrorism
Pitch Black (from July)	Australia-led, multinational	Darwin	Large air exercise

Why it matters

- Submarine rescue ships are vital as the submarine fleet grows.
- Exercises with South-East Asian partners support Act East and Indo-Pacific goals.
- The Navy aims to commission about 19 warships in 2026 (reported).

Prelims Pointers

- INS Nistar, the first of the class, was commissioned in 2025.
- Hindustan Shipyard Ltd is in Visakhapatnam.
- Maitree began in 2006 as an India-Thailand army exercise.

58 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Internal Security: Manipur, LWE and NIA

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Internal security; insurgency

Context

Security forces in **Manipur** arrested 13 militants and recovered a large arms cache (about 14 August, reported). Six Maoists were reported killed near the Chhattisgarh-Andhra Pradesh border around 21 August. The **NIA** made arrests in a Bihar arms case and the Nalagarh (Himachal Pradesh) IED blast case.

Issues

- **LWE:** the government set a March 2026 target to end Naxalism; remaining groups operate in border pockets.
- **Manipur:** recovery of looted arms is key to restoring peace.
- **Cyber-enabled crime** is now a major share of internal security work (see 'digital arrest').

Way forward

- Development and roads in former LWE areas to prevent a revival.
- Rehabilitation of surrendered cadres.
- Coordination between state police and central forces.

Prelims Pointers

- The NIA was set up under the NIA Act, 2008 after the Mumbai attacks.
- The SAMADHAN doctrine guides anti-LWE strategy.
- AFSPA areas in the Northeast are reviewed every six months.

59 | ETHICS GS 4

Case Study: The Accounts That Should Not Exist

Syllabus Mapping: GS4: Integrity; whistle-blowing; organisational ethics; public trust

The case

You have just taken charge as manager of a busy public sector bank branch in a small town. While reviewing records, you notice that about 60 savings accounts were opened last quarter by one officer, each with very small deposits, and that several received large transfers from distant cities and were emptied within hours. Police alerts suggest these may be 'mule accounts' used in digital arrest scams. The officer, a well-liked colleague, admits he opened them in bulk to meet account-opening targets set by the regional office, using documents supplied by a local agent; he says he did not know about any fraud. Your regional manager hints that reporting this will hurt the branch's ratings and everyone's promotions.

Stakeholders

- Fraud victims, many of them elderly, who lost savings.
- People whose identities may have been misused to open accounts.
- The officer, the branch staff and the bank's reputation.
- Police, the RBI and the public, whose trust in banking is at stake.

Ethical issues

- **Integrity versus loyalty** to a colleague and to the branch.
- **Target culture:** pressure that pushes staff to cut corners.
- **Duty of care** to victims and to the public.
- **Accountability** of supervisors who set unrealistic targets.

Option	Merits	Demerits
Quietly close the accounts and say nothing	Avoids embarrassment	Victims denied justice; evidence lost; complicity
Report only the officer	Quick	Ignores the systemic cause; scapegoating
Freeze the suspicious accounts, report them to the police and the cyber portal, file the required suspicious transaction reports, inform the regional office in writing about both the misconduct and the target pressure, and cooperate with victims' recovery	Lawful, protects victims, fixes the system	Short-term damage to ratings; strained relations

A reasoned course of action

Choose the third option. Freeze the accounts at once and report them through the bank's fraud-monitoring channel, the cyber crime portal (1930) and to the Financial Intelligence Unit through the bank's procedure. Ensure the officer gets a fair inquiry, considering his intent and the pressure he faced. Write to senior management recommending that account-opening targets be paired with quality checks and video KYC. Help victims claim restitution. Refuse the hint to suppress the matter and record it.

Ethics vocabulary to use

- **Systemic accountability:** fixing the structures that encourage wrongdoing, not only punishing individuals.
- **Moral courage:** doing the right thing despite career costs.
- **Fiduciary duty:** banks hold public money in trust.

60 | ETHICS GS 4

Ethics in the News: Values Behind August's Headlines

Syllabus Mapping: GS4: Ethics in governance, society and international relations

Why read the news for ethics

These links between August's stories and ethical ideas give ready examples for GS Paper IV. For each, practise a paragraph naming the value, giving the example and balancing it against a competing value.

Story	Ethical question	Concepts to use
Bills passed with little debate	Does speed justify less scrutiny?	Deliberative democracy; accountability
Gallantry awards	What makes courage a public virtue?	Courage; duty; sacrifice
Organ donation record	How should scarce organs be allocated?	Distributive justice; altruism; consent
Transgender identity cards	Who decides a person's identity?	Autonomy; dignity; privacy
Digital arrest scams	Who is responsible when systems enable fraud?	Duty of care; institutional ethics
Partition remembrance	How should a nation remember painful history?	Truth; reconciliation; empathy
Ganga water treaty	What do upstream states owe downstream neighbours?	Equity; good neighbourliness
Care economy	Should unpaid care be valued by the state?	Gender justice; care ethics

Thinkers to quote

- **Mahatma Gandhi:** 'Do or Die' as total commitment to a cause. Use it for public service with conviction.
- **Rabindranath Tagore:** the universal humanism of 'where the world has not been broken up into fragments'. Use it for Partition remembrance.
- **Carol Gilligan:** the ethics of care. Use it for the care economy and organ donation.
- **Max Weber:** the ethic of responsibility. Use it for bankers, regulators and legislators.

61 | ESSAY ESSAY

Essay Corner: Themes from This Month

Three essay themes from August's news, with a sample outline. Write one practice essay (1,000-1,200 words) this week.

Themes to practise

- **Freedom is a daily practice, not an anniversary.** Eighty years of independence.
- **A law is only as good as the debate that made it.** Parliament and deliberation.
- **Care is the invisible economy.** Women, ageing and unpaid work.

Sample outline: 'A law is only as good as the debate that made it'

- **Opening:** a bill passed in under five minutes, affecting millions.
- **Meaning:** deliberation tests ideas, exposes flaws and builds consent.
- **History:** the Constituent Assembly's three years of debate; committees introduced in 1993.
- **Present:** falling sittings, disruptions and fewer bills sent to committees.
- **Consequences:** poorly drafted laws, more court challenges, lower trust.
- **Counter-view:** urgent reforms cannot wait; endless debate can block change; ordinances exist for emergencies.
- **Way forward:** mandatory committee scrutiny for major bills, a fixed calendar, opposition days, pre-legislative consultation.
- **Conclusion:** in a democracy, the process is part of the product.

Did you know?

Use examples from different fields and regions. Keep a notebook of examples from each month's magazine, grouped by theme.

62 | HISTORY PRELIMS

History, Culture and Sport: Quick Notes

Anniversaries, heritage, people and sport from August 2026.

Anniversaries

- **Independence Day:** 80th, 15 August.
- **Partition Horrors Remembrance Day:** 14 August (since 2021).
- **Quit India:** 8-9 August 1942, Gowalia Tank, Bombay; 84th anniversary.
- **Tagore:** died 7 August 1941 (85th death anniversary).
- **National Handloom Day (7 August):** recalls the Swadeshi Movement of 1905.
- **National Sports Day (29 August):** Dhyan Chand's birth anniversary.

Sport and awards

- **CWG Glasgow:** India 4th with 39 medals (13 gold).
- **Grand Chess Tour:** R. Praggnanandhaa, first Indian winner.
- **BWF World Championships:** held in New Delhi, ended 23 August.
- **Magsaysay 2026:** Tommy Koh, Bo Kyi, Runa Khan.
- **Amarnath Yatra:** ended 28 August; 4.8 lakh+ pilgrims.

63 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Geography: Phenomena in the News

Concepts behind August's geography stories.

Monsoon and climate

- **August rain:** 16.3% below normal; hottest August since 1901.
- **Season to 29 August:** about 14% deficit; East and Northeast -27%.
- **September outlook:** below 91% of LPA.
- **NOAA (13 August):** 69% chance of a 'historic' El Nino.

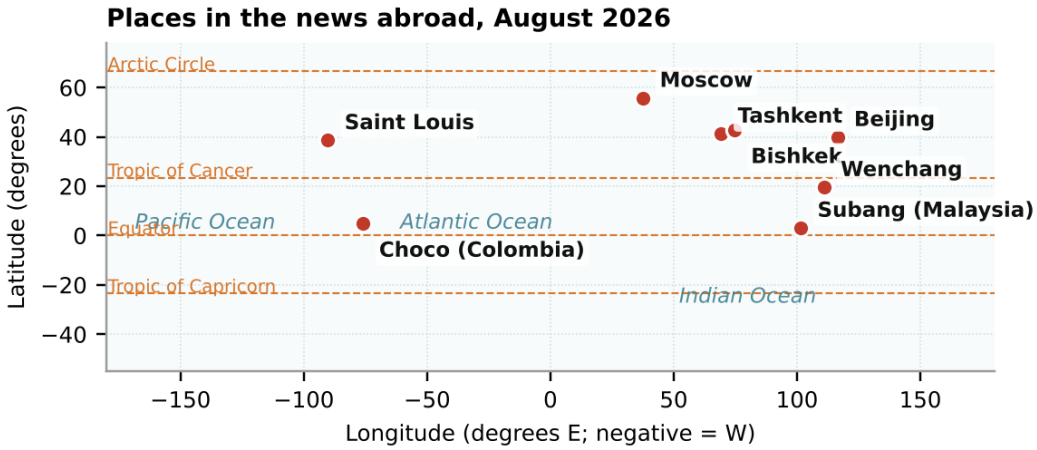
Hazards

- **Colombia M7.4 (10 August):** intermediate-depth, Nazca slab; 273 deaths.
- **Atlantic:** no hurricane in August, linked to El Nino wind shear.
- **Typhoons:** Dolphin (Okinawa, Zhejiang), Kujira (Luzon), Saudel, Narra.
- **Sea ice:** Antarctic 4th-lowest for August.

64 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Places in the News: August 2026 on the Map

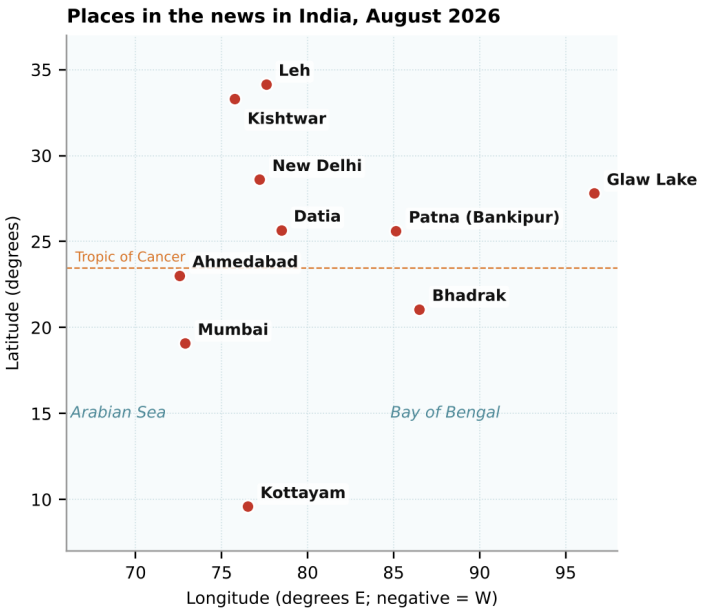
Locate each place and learn one fact about it.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Red dots mark the places; dashed lines mark the Tropics, the Equator and the Arctic Circle.

Abroad

- **Tashkent:** PM's State Visit; Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- **Bishkek:** SCO summit; World Nomad Games.
- **Beijing:** 25th Special Representatives talks.
- **Moscow:** 27th IRIGC-TEC.
- **Ulaanbaatar:** UNCCD COP17.
- **Saint Louis (USA):** Grand Chess Tour finals.
- **Subang (Malaysia):** Exercise Udara Shakti. **Wenchang (China):** Chang'e-7 postponed.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Points are approximate.

India

- **Ahmedabad:** National Space Day event. **New Delhi:** BRICS environment ministers; BWF Worlds.
- **Kottayam (Kerala):** floods. **Bhadrak (Odisha):** floods; rail line approved.
- **Glaw Lake (Arunachal):** 101st Ramsar site.
- **Kishtwar (J&K):** cloudburst. **Leh:** High Court to sit in Ladakh.
- **Mumbai:** INS Nipun commissioned.
- **Patna (Bankipur) and Datia:** by-election results.

65 | POLITY — PRELIMS

Polity and Governance: Quick Notes

Parliament, courts and institutions in August 2026.

Parliament

- **Monsoon Session:** ended 13 August; 11 bills passed (PRS).
- **Supreme Court strength:** 38 including the CJI.
- **Keralam:** state renamed by law under Article 3.
- **Tribunals Reforms Bill:** National Tribunals Commission.
- **FCRA Amendment:** sent to a JPC.

Courts and elections

- **Collegium (6 August):** four High Court Chief Justices recommended.
- **Ladakh:** High Court sittings allowed (Article 240 regulation, 27 August).
- **Digital arrest:** Supreme Court directions on mule accounts and e-Zero FIR.
- **Transgender ID cards:** stay valid (17 August).
- **By-elections (3 August):** Prashant Kishor wins Bankipur.
- **SIR Phase III:** 11.51% names deleted in 12 States/UTs (reported).

66 | SOCIAL JUSTICE PRELIMS

Society, Health and Welfare: Quick Notes

Reports, results and data in August 2026.

Data and reports

- **PLFS (July):** unemployment 5.1%; female LFPR 34.4%.
- **e-Shram:** 31.89 crore registrations in five years; 54.28% women.
- **NITI care report (6 August):** National Policy on Caregiving proposed.
- **Organ transplants:** 20,138 in 2025 (record).

Education and days

- **NEET-PG (30 August):** 2.66 lakh candidates; recorded responses to be shared.
- **VBSA Bill:** single higher education regulator, with a committee.
- **International Youth Day (12 August):** 'Different Contexts, Common Aspirations'.
- **World Humanitarian Day (19 August):** #NotATarget campaign.

67 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRELIMS

International Relations: Quick Notes

Visits, groupings and agreements in August 2026.

Visits and talks

- **Uzbekistan (29-30 August):** 11 agreements; Order of Oliy Darajali Do'stlik to the PM.
- **Bishkek (31 August):** PM arrives for 26th SCO summit.
- **Beijing (25 August):** 25th SR talks; next round in India in 2027.
- **Moscow (23-24 August):** 27th IRIGC-TEC.

Trade and groupings

- **US:** Section 122 tariff expired; Section 301 tariffs applied.
- **India-EU FTA:** legal scrubbing done; signing expected December.
- **BRICS:** environment ministers in Delhi (18 August); summit set for 12-13 September.
- **Ganga Water Treaty:** expires December 2026.

68 | ECONOMY PRELIMS

Economy: Quick Notes

Numbers to remember from August 2026.

Growth and prices

- **Repo rate:** 5.25% (5 August); FY27 GDP forecast 6.7%, CPI 5.0%.
- **GDP Q1 2026-27:** 7.8%; nominal 10.3%.
- **CPI (July):** 4.45%. **WPI (July):** 9.78%.
- **IIP (July):** 6.7%. **Core (July):** 5.4%.

External and fiscal

- **Forex:** record US$729.33 billion (21 August).
- **Exports (July):** record US$44.24 billion; deficit US$31.98 billion.
- **GST (July):** Rs 2.11 lakh crore, up 15.4%.
- **UPI (August):** 24.51 billion transactions.
- **Power:** 552 GW installed; 300.5 GW non-fossil.

69 | ENVIRONMENT PRELIMS

Environment and Ecology: Quick Notes

Sites, species and conventions in August 2026.

India

- **Glaw Lake:** 101st Ramsar site, Kamlang Tiger Reserve, Arunachal.
- **Elephants:** 22,446 (DNA-based estimate); 33 reserves; 150 corridors.
- **World Lion Day (10 August):** Asiatic lions in Gujarat's Gir landscape.
- **BRICS environment ministers:** four compendiums including EPR and wildfire management.

World

- **UNCCD COP17:** Ulaanbaatar, 17-28 August; drought policy framework.
- **Copernicus:** August 2026 warmest August; record sea surface temperature.
- **Spain:** Avila fire largest in modern history.
- **Canada:** about 4.1 million ha burnt by 18 August.

70 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRELIMS

Science and Technology: Quick Notes

Facts from August's science stories.

India

- **National Space Day (23 August):** third edition; main event in Ahmedabad.
- **Space start-ups:** over 440.
- **ISRO:** no launch in August; PSLV return to flight pending.
- **ISM:** three chip projects in production.
- **Chandipura:** 42 cases, 28 deaths in Gujarat (reported).

World

- **Chang'e-7:** postponed on 23 August.
- **EU AI Act:** Article 50 transparency duties from 2 August.
- **Crew-13:** NASA briefing on 3 August; launch in September.

71 | INTERNAL SECURITY PRELIMS

Defence and Security: Quick Notes

Tests, ships, awards and exercises in August 2026.

Tests and awards

- **Agni-4:** test off Odisha, 6 August (reported).
- **Gallantry awards:** 78 (13 posthumous); 9 Kirti Chakras.
- **Police medals:** 1,057, including 301 for gallantry.

Navy, exercises and security

- **INS Nipun:** Nistar-class diving support vessel, 31 August (reported).
- **Udara Shakti:** India-Malaysia air exercise, 10-14 August.
- **Maitree-XV:** India-Thailand army exercise, 18-31 August.
- **Digital arrest:** 1,23,672 complaints in 2024 (I4C).

72 | REVISION REVISION

Days and Themes of August 2026

Important days observed in August, with their 2026 themes where confirmed.

Days

- **World Breastfeeding Week (1-7 August):** 'Breastfeeding for a Sustainable Start in Life' (reported).
- **Indian Organ Donation Day (3 August).**
- **National Handloom Day (7 August):** 'Celebrating Weavers, Renewing Traditions, Expanding Horizons'.
- **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 August):** 'Honouring Indigenous Midwives' (reported).
- **World Lion Day (10 August) and World Elephant Day (12 August).**
- **International Youth Day (12 August):** 'Different Contexts, Common Aspirations'.
- **World Humanitarian Day (19 August).**
- **National Space Day (23 August):** 'Towards Viksit Bharat: Innovating, Collaborating and Aspiring to Global Space Leadership'.
- **National Sports Day (29 August).**

Anniversaries

- **7 August:** Tagore's death anniversary; Swadeshi Movement (1905).
- **8-9 August:** Quit India.
- **14-15 August:** Partition Horrors Remembrance Day; Independence Day.

73 | REVISION REVISION

Practice Questions: Prelims and Mains

1. The Quit India resolution was passed at:

(a) Wardha (b) Gowalia Tank, Bombay (c) Lahore (d) Haripura

Answer: (b). On 8 August 1942; now August Kranti Maidan.

2. Which parallel government was set up during the Quit India Movement in Bengal?

(a) Prati Sarkar (b) Jatiya Sarkar (c) Azad Hind (d) Swaraj Sabha

Answer: (b). In Tamluk, Midnapore.

3. Who ran an underground Congress Radio in 1942?

(a) Aruna Asaf Ali (b) Usha Mehta (c) Sucheta Kripalani (d) Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

Answer: (b). Aruna Asaf Ali hoisted the flag at Gowalia Tank.

4. The Radcliffe boundary award was made public on:

(a) 3 June 1947 (b) 15 August 1947 (c) 17 August 1947 (d) 26 January 1950

Answer: (c). Two days after independence.

5. National Handloom Day commemorates the launch of:

(a) Non-Cooperation Movement (b) Swadeshi Movement (c) Khadi Movement (d) Champaran Satyagraha

Answer: (b). On 7 August 1905.

6. India's position at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games was:

(a) 2nd (b) 3rd (c) 4th (d) 5th

Answer: (c). 39 medals, 13 gold.

7. Tommy Koh, a 2026 Magsaysay awardee, is known for presiding over the conference that adopted:

(a) the Paris Agreement (b) UNCLOS (c) the CBD (d) the NPT

Answer: (b). The Law of the Sea Convention, 1982.

8. In August 2026, India's all-India rainfall was about:

(a) 16% above normal (b) normal (c) 16% below normal (d) 40% below normal

Answer: (c). 213.3 mm against 254.9 mm.

9. El Nino tends to suppress Atlantic hurricanes mainly by:

(a) cooling the Atlantic (b) increasing vertical wind shear (c) reducing humidity over Africa (d) shifting the ITCZ south

Answer: (b). Shear disrupts storm structure.

10. The Colombia earthquake of August 2026 was an intermediate-depth event linked to the:

(a) Cocos plate (b) Caribbean plate (c) Nazca plate (d) Scotia plate

Answer: (c). Depth about 107 km.

11. Which of the following is NOT an SCO member?

(a) Belarus (b) Iran (c) Turkmenistan (d) Uzbekistan

Answer: (c). Turkmenistan follows neutrality.

12. The Tashkent Declaration ended the:

(a) 1962 war (b) 1965 India-Pakistan war (c) 1971 war (d) Kargil conflict

Answer: (b). Signed January 1966.

13. The India-China Special Representatives mechanism was set up in:

(a) 1993 (b) 1996 (c) 2003 (d) 2013

Answer: (c). Its 25th round was in August 2026.

14. IRIGC-TEC is a mechanism between India and:

(a) Japan (b) Russia (c) France (d) Iran

Answer: (b). Its 27th session was in Moscow.

15. Section 301 of the US Trade Act deals with:

(a) balance-of-payments problems (b) unfair foreign trade practices (c) national security (d) anti-dumping

Answer: (b). It replaced Section 122 tariffs in July 2026.

16. The Ganga Water Treaty between India and Bangladesh was signed in:

(a) 1972 (b) 1977 (c) 1996 (d) 2011

Answer: (c). For 30 years; expires December 2026.

17. Renaming a state requires:

(a) a constitutional amendment under Article 368 (b) a law under Article 3 (c) a Presidential order only (d) the state legislature's law only

Answer: (b). Article 4 says it is not a 368 amendment.

18. Articles 323A and 323B were added by the:

(a) 24th Amendment (b) 42nd Amendment (c) 44th Amendment (d) 73rd Amendment

Answer: (b). They deal with tribunals.

19. High Court decisions on tribunal orders: which case held tribunals subject to High Court review?

(a) Kesavananda Bharati (b) L. Chandra Kumar (c) Minerva Mills (d) Indra Sawhney

Answer: (b). Decided in 1997.

20. Article 240 empowers the President to:

(a) appoint Governors (b) make regulations for certain UTs (c) declare emergency (d) grant pardons

Answer: (b). Used for Ladakh's High Court sittings.

21. The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) works under:

(a) MeitY (b) Ministry of Home Affairs (c) RBI (d) CERT-In

Answer: (b). Helpline 1930.

22. The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act was enacted in:

(a) 1985 (b) 1994 (c) 2002 (d) 2011

Answer: (b). NOTTO coordinates nationally.

23. NALSA v. Union of India (2014) is associated with:

(a) right to privacy (b) recognition of transgender persons (c) reservation in promotions (d) right to food

Answer: (b). Third gender recognition.

24. e-Shram portal is a database of:
(a) MSMEs (b) unorganised workers (c) migrant students (d) taxpayers
Answer: (b). Launched 2021; 31.89 crore registrations.

25. The repo rate after the August 2026 MPC meeting was:
(a) 5.00% (b) 5.25% (c) 5.50% (d) 6.00%
Answer: (b). Stance neutral.

26. Real GDP growth in April-June 2026 was:
(a) 6.4% (b) 6.9% (c) 7.8% (d) 8.2%
Answer: (c). Real GVA grew 8.2%.

27. India's forex reserves reached a record in the week ended 21 August 2026 of about:
(a) US$682 billion (b) US$707 billion (c) US$729 billion (d) US$750 billion
Answer: (c). Previous record US$728.49 billion.

28. FCNR(B) deposits are:
(a) rupee deposits of residents (b) foreign currency deposits of non-residents (c) bonds of foreign banks (d) RBI swaps
Answer: (b). Drove the 2026 swap-window inflows.

29. The GST Council is constituted under:
(a) Article 246A (b) Article 269A (c) Article 279A (d) Article 280
Answer: (c). Added by the 101st Amendment.

30. Under Mode 4 of GATS, services are supplied through:
(a) cross-border trade (b) consumption abroad (c) commercial presence (d) movement of natural persons
Answer: (d). Relevant to professional services.

31. TSP, mentioned in fertiliser support, stands for:
(a) Total Soluble Phosphate (b) Triple Superphosphate (c) Trace Sulphur Potash (d) Treated Seed Powder
Answer: (b). A phosphatic fertiliser.

32. India's 101st Ramsar site, Glaw Lake, lies in:
(a) Sikkim (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Meghalaya (d) Uttarakhand
Answer: (b). Inside Kamlang Tiger Reserve.

33. Project Elephant was launched in:
(a) 1973 (b) 1992 (c) 2002 (d) 2010
Answer: (b). DNA-based estimate: 22,446.

34. UNCCD COP17 was held in:
(a) Riyadh (b) Ulaanbaatar (c) Bonn (d) Nairobi
Answer: (b). 17-28 August 2026.

35. SDRF funding for Himalayan and northeastern states is shared between the Centre and states in the ratio:
(a) 75:25 (b) 50:50 (c) 90:10 (d) 60:40
Answer: (c). Other states 75:25.

36. National Space Day marks:
(a) Aryabhata's launch (b) Chandrayaan-3's landing (c) Mangalyaan's orbit entry (d) ISRO's founding
Answer: (b). 23 August 2023.

37. Chang'e-7 is a mission to the:
(a) Martian north pole (b) lunar south pole (c) asteroid Bennu (d) Venus
Answer: (b). Postponed on 23 August 2026.

38. Under the EU AI Act, Article 50 deals with:
(a) prohibited AI (b) transparency obligations (c) general-purpose AI fines (d) conformity assessment
Answer: (b). Applies from 2 August 2026.

39. Chandipura virus is spread mainly by:
(a) mosquitoes (b) sandflies (c) ticks (d) bats
Answer: (b). Causes acute encephalitis.

40. Kirti Chakra is:

(a) the highest wartime gallantry award (b) the second-highest peacetime gallantry award (c) a distinguished service medal (d) a police medal

Answer: (b). After the Ashoka Chakra.

41. Exercise Maitree is held between India and:

(a) Myanmar (b) Malaysia (c) Thailand (d) Mongolia

Answer: (c). 15th edition in Surat Thani.

42. INS Nipun is a:

(a) stealth frigate (b) diving support vessel (c) nuclear submarine (d) survey vessel

Answer: (b). Second of the Nistar class.

Mains Practice

- **Q1.** The Quit India Movement was the most spontaneous phase of the national movement. Discuss. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q2.** How should a nation remember the trauma of Partition? Discuss the role of public memory in nation-building. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q3.** The handloom sector combines heritage and livelihoods. What policy measures can make it viable? (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q4.** Why did India's monsoon perform poorly in August 2026 even after a good July? Discuss the role of ENSO. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q5.** Explain the teleconnection between El Nino and Atlantic hurricane activity. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q6.** Intermediate-depth earthquakes can be as destructive as shallow ones. Explain with reference to the Colombia earthquake. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q7.** Unpaid care work is the invisible pillar of the economy. Discuss the need for a national care policy in India. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q8.** Central Asia is vital for India's energy security and connectivity. Examine with reference to India-Uzbekistan ties. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q9.** Assess the significance of the SCO for India amid differences with China and Pakistan. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q10.** Boundary delimitation is the next test of India-China normalisation. Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q11.** How do shifting US tariff tools affect India's export strategy? Suggest a response. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q12.** Renewal of the Ganga Water Treaty requires balancing national and regional interests. Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q13.** Declining parliamentary scrutiny of bills weakens legislative quality. Critically examine. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q14.** Will a National Tribunals Commission secure the independence of tribunals? Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q15.** Large-scale deletions in electoral roll revisions raise concerns about inclusion. Suggest safeguards. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q16.** Digital arrest scams reveal gaps in cyber security and banking. Discuss the measures needed. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q17.** What explains India's rise in organ transplants, and what barriers remain to deceased donation? (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q18.** A single higher education regulator could improve coordination but risk centralisation. Discuss. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q19.** Examine the constitutional issues raised by the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q20.** Strong GDP growth with high wholesale inflation poses a dilemma for monetary policy. Explain. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q21.** Record forex reserves offer both a buffer and a cost. Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q22.** What does the growth of capital goods and investment in 2026 indicate about India's growth cycle? (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q23.** Regulatory reform of professional services can boost India's services exports. Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q24.** Discuss the impact of a deficient monsoon on kharif output and food security. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q25.** India has crossed 300 GW of non-fossil capacity. What challenges remain in the energy transition? (15 marks, 250 words)

- **Q26.** Drought is a slow-onset disaster requiring a different approach. Discuss in light of UNCCD COP17. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q27.** DNA-based wildlife estimation is a step forward for conservation. Discuss with reference to elephants. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q28.** Recurrent launch failures call for institutional reflection in India's space programme. Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q29.** What lessons can India draw from the EU AI Act's transparency obligations? (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q30.** Outbreaks of zoonotic viruses such as Chandipura need a One Health approach. Explain. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q31.** A bank manager discovers mule accounts opened to meet targets. What ethical issues arise and how should they be handled? (10 marks, 150 words)

Official Sources to Bookmark

Scan or click to open the official sites used most for monthly current affairs.

Press Information Bureau
https://pib.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

Ministry of External Affairs
https://www.mea.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

PRS Monthly Policy Review
https://prsindia.org/policy/monthly-policy-review
Scan or click to open the official source.

Reserve Bank of India
https://www.rbi.org.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

Ministry of Statistics (MoSPI)
https://www.mospi.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

75 | SOURCES REVISION

Sources and Notes

- **History and culture:** Sunday Guardian, Outlook and ETV Bharat (Independence Day); AIR (Partition Horrors Day; D.Y. Patil); PIB backgrounder (Handloom Day); Drishti, Adda247 and IANS (CWG); FIDE (Grand Chess Tour); Arunachal Times, FPJ and The Bridge (BWF Worlds); AIR (Neeraj Chopra); AP and Manila Bulletin (Magsaysay); FPJ and National Herald (Amarnath).
- **Geography and disasters:** IMD briefing (31 August) via ETV Bharat and Rural Voice; IMD press release (17 August); NOAA CPC ENSO discussion (13 August); Copernicus August bulletin and sea-ice page (10 September); GeoNet, PAHO and AP (Colombia); Wikipedia and Chronicle.lu (typhoons); WGCU (Atlantic); Sphere India situation reports and AIR (floods); The Local and Euronews (Europe fires); Government of Canada update (Canada fires).
- **Society and social justice:** MoSPI PLFS press notes (10 and 17 August); PIB backgrounder (e-Shram, 25 August); SuperKalam/PIB (NITI care and services reports); DD India (organ donation); Careers360 and Business Today (NEET-PG); Telangana Today and ThePrint (VBSA Bill); SC Observer, LiveLaw and Verdictum (transgender case); UN pages (days).
- **International relations:** AIR and Dunyo (Uzbekistan; Bishkek arrival); Chinese MFA readout and AIR (SR talks); AIR (Moscow; BRICS summit date); ETV Bharat and AIR (BRICS environment); GJEPC (US tariffs); Times of Oman and SteelOrbis (EU FTA); ThePrint and FPJ (Ganga treaty).
- **Polity:** PRS Monthly Policy Review, August 2026; AIR and Business Standard (session); UNI and Daily Excelsior (SC judges); SCC Online and Verdictum (collegium); Onmanorama and Republic (by-elections); Sabrang India (SIR); Drishti and Civilsdaily (digital arrest directions).
- **Economy and agriculture:** RBI policy (NSE copy) and IIFL; MoSPI GDP press note (31 August); MoSPI CPI release (12 August); Tribune and ICRA (WPI, IIP); Business Today (core sector, GST); ETV Bharat and Outlook Business (trade); FPJ, Asianet and Basis Point (forex); AIR (swap facility); DT Next (UPI); Deccan Herald, DD India and IANS (kharif, fertiliser); IANS, Mercom, Outlook Business and Devdiscourse (power and coal); AIR and The News Mill (Cabinet, 19 August).
- **Environment:** AIR and UNI (Glaw Lake); PIB backgrounder (elephants); The Star and UNRIC (UNCCD COP17).
- **Science and security:** ISRO (National Space Day); Kerala Kaumudi (ISRO launch pause); AP via AJC (Chang'e-7); Goodwin and Sidley (EU AI Act); Republic/ANI (semiconductors); IANS via Telangana Today and NewKerala (Chandipura); Telangana Today (Agni-4); Deccan Chronicle, ThePrint and Adda247 (gallantry awards); SSBCrack and DD India (INS Nipun, exercises); IANS and Patrika (Manipur, LWE); The News Mill and Organiser (NIA).

Please verify before use

- **Facts are as reported up to 31 August 2026.** The SCO summit declaration and Modi-Xi meeting (1 September), the BRICS summit (12-13 September), NEET-PG re-test (5 September) and the Copernicus bulletin (released 10 September) fall after the month; we flag them where used.
- **Updates to our July issue:** the EU AI Act delay law ('AI Omnibus') entered into force on 27 July; Chandipura figures now use different case counts (42 cases, 28 deaths by 28 August); IMD's later briefing put June's deficit at about 35% (we used 40% from IMD's 30 June figure).
- **Reported, not confirmed from primary documents:** Independence Day announcements; CWG boxing and judo details; Agni-4 test site; INS Nipun date; the 'historic' El Nino wording; Uzbekistan visa-free entry; US Section 301 rates; EU FTA timeline; SIR deletion figures; Tribunal and other bill details beyond PRS; NITI care and services reports; Bankipur and SIR figures from secondary outlets; typhoon details (Wikipedia-based); kharif figures for 28 August; digital arrest order date; Manipur and LWE incidents.
- **Figures that differ between sources:** Rajya Sabha productivity (33% PRS vs 39% Chair); bills passed (11 vs 12); WPI release date and base; Chandipura counts.
- **Approximate map points:** typhoon landfalls, flood sites and Glaw Lake are approximate; all maps are location diagrams without boundaries.
- The ethics case study and essay themes are original practice material, not reports of real events.

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