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MONTHLY MAGAZINE

JULY 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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Top stories this month

- **Heritage:** Sarnath becomes India's 45th World Heritage Site; Kargil Vijay Diwas at 27.
- **Diplomacy:** PM in Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand; India-UK trade pact in force; Quad in Manila.
- **Polity:** Monsoon Session begins; tougher paper-leak law; no more post-facto green clearances.
- **Economy:** retail inflation crosses 4%; IIP at a 23-month high; Semicon 2.0 approved.
- **Science and security:** Vikram-1, India's first private orbital rocket; Kusha air defence test; El Nino strengthens.

How to read this magazine

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

About this issue

- The July 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 July 2026. By-election results, the end of the Commonwealth Games and the rest of the Monsoon Session came in August; check updates.
- 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

Kargil Vijay Diwas at 27: Remembering Operation Vijay

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Post-independence India; GS3: Security challenges in border areas

Context

26 July 2026 marked the 27th anniversary of victory in the Kargil war of 1999. The month-long run-up included the **Shaurya Vijay Yatra**, a 13-day, 1,900 km motorcycle ride by 28 riders from the National War Memorial, Delhi to the Kargil War Memorial at **Dras**, flagged off by the Defence Minister on 14 July. Soldiers also trekked to Gun Hill (Point 5140) and Tiger Hill.

Date (1999)	Event
May	Intrusion by Pakistani troops and militants detected on heights above the Srinagar-Leh highway
26 May	IAF began Operation Safed Sagar
13 June	Tololing recaptured
4 July	Tiger Hill recaptured
14 July	Operation Vijay declared a success
26 July	All posts cleared; now Kargil Vijay Diwas

Lessons that shaped reforms

- **Kargil Review Committee** (K. Subrahmanyam, 2000) found intelligence and surveillance gaps.
- It led to a Group of Ministers report (2001), the **Defence Intelligence Agency**, the Integrated Defence Staff and, later, the post of Chief of Defence Staff (2020).
- High-altitude warfare showed the value of artillery (Bofors), air power and logistics on difficult terrain.

Did you know?

The war brought 4 Param Vir Chakras, 9 Maha Vir Chakras and 55 Vir Chakras (PIB backgrounder, 24 July 2026).

Prelims Pointers

- Dras, in Ladakh's Kargil district, is among the coldest inhabited places in India.
- The Zoji La pass links Kashmir with Dras and Kargil.
- The Param Vir Chakra is India's highest wartime gallantry award.

02 | HISTORY GS 1

Tilak at 170 and Azad at 120

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Modern Indian history; personalities of the freedom struggle

Context

23 July 2026 was the birth anniversary of both **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** (born 1856) and **Chandra Shekhar Azad** (born 1906), the 170th and 120th respectively (our arithmetic). The Prime Minister and the Home Minister paid tributes.

	Bal Gangadhar Tilak	Chandra Shekhar Azad
Born	23 July 1856, Ratnagiri district (Maharashtra)	23 July 1906, Bhavra (now in Madhya Pradesh)
Strand	Extremist (assertive) nationalism	Revolutionary nationalism
Work	Newspapers *Kesari* (Marathi) and *Mahratta*; Ganesh and Shivaji festivals; Home Rule League (1916)	Kakori action (1925); led the HSRA with Bhagat Singh
Ideas	'Swaraj is my birthright'; *Gita Rahasya*, written in Mandalay jail	Socialist republic; armed struggle
Death	1 August 1920, Bombay	27 February 1931, Alfred Park, Allahabad

Why it matters

- **Mass politics:** Tilak used festivals and the press to reach ordinary people.
- **Unity:** Tilak backed the Lucknow Pact (1916) between the Congress and the Muslim League.
- **Revolutionaries** such as Azad pushed the movement to think about social and economic goals, not only political freedom.

Prelims Pointers

- HSRA: the Hindustan Republican Association became 'Socialist' in 1928 at Ferozeshah Kotla, Delhi.
- Tilak's Home Rule League worked in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Central Provinces and Berar; Annie Besant's in the rest of India.
- Tilak was jailed in Mandalay (Burma) from 1908 to 1914.

03 | HISTORY GS 1

Syama Prasad Mookerjee at 125

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Personalities; post-independence politics; GS2: Federalism and J&K;

Context

6 July 2026 was the 125th birth anniversary of **Syama Prasad Mookerjee** (1901-1953). The West Bengal government announced a year of events with a budget of about Rs 200 crore, including a statue and new school lessons (as reported). The Victoria Memorial also marked the day.

Year	Milestone
1901	Born in Calcutta, son of Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee
1934	Youngest Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, at 33
1947-50	Minister for Industry and Supply in the first Union Cabinet
1950	Resigned over the Nehru-Liaquat Pact on minorities
1951	Founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh
1953	Died in detention in Srinagar (23 June) after entering J&K; without a permit

Legacy and debate

- **Admirers** credit him with India's early industrial policy and with opposing a separate status for J&K ('one nation, one constitution').
- **Critics** point to his part in the Hindu Mahasabha and in coalition politics in Bengal during the war years.
- Article 370 was made inoperative in 2019, which his followers see as fulfilling his demand.

Prelims Pointers

- The Nehru-Liaquat Pact (Delhi Pact) was signed in April 1950.
- Kolkata Port is named after him (since 2020).
- His death anniversary, 23 June, is observed as 'Balidan Diwas' by his followers.

04 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Sarnath Becomes India's 45th World Heritage Site

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian culture; heritage; Buddhism

Context

The **48th session of the World Heritage Committee** in **Busan, South Korea** inscribed the **Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath** (Uttar Pradesh) on **25 July 2026**. India now has **45 World Heritage Sites**: 37 cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed, the sixth-highest in the world.

Key Points

- **Criteria:** (iii) a lasting pilgrimage tradition and (vi) direct link to the Buddha's first sermon.
- **Serial property:** Chaukhandi Stupa, and the remains at Sarnath (Dhamek and Dharmarajika stupas, Mulagandhakuti Vihara, Ashokan pillar).
- On the Tentative List since 1998; dossier filed in January 2025.
- The session inscribed 25 new sites worldwide, taking the list to 1,273 sites in 173 countries.

Why it matters

- Strengthens the **Buddhist circuit** (Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar) for tourism and diplomacy in Asia.
- Requires a management plan and limits on construction in buffer zones.
- The ASI is the nodal agency for India's nominations.

Recent Indian inscriptions	Year
Moidams of the Ahom dynasty (Assam)	2024
Maratha Military Landscapes	2025
Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath	2026

Prelims Pointers

- India ratified the World Heritage Convention (1972) in 1977.
- India hosted the 46th session in New Delhi (2024).
- A country may nominate one site a year.

05 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Rath Yatra, Amarnath Yatra and GI Tags

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian culture; festivals; GI

Context

The **Rath Yatra** of Lord Jagannath was held in **Puri** on **16 July 2026**, with AI-based surveillance and anti-drone systems for crowd safety. The **Amarnath Yatra** began on **3 July** through the Pahalgam and Baltal routes. A July report placed **Uttar Pradesh** first in GI registrations (83), followed by Tamil Nadu (76) and West Bengal (59).

Key Points

- **Rath Yatra:** the three chariots carry Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra about 3 km to the Gundicha temple; the king performs 'Chhera Pahanra' (sweeping the chariots).
- **Amarnath:** a cave shrine at about 3,880 m in the Lidder valley; the yatra was suspended from 19 July because of heavy rain.
- **GI:** West Bengal has the most food GIs (13 of 64), as reported.

Managing mass pilgrimages

- Crowd-flow modelling and real-time monitoring reduce stampede risk.
- Weather warnings and route closures are vital on Himalayan routes.
- Waste and water management protect fragile ecosystems.

Prelims Pointers

- The Jagannath temple was built under the Eastern Ganga king Anantavarman Chodaganga (12th century).
- Puri is one of the four 'dhams' associated with Adi Shankaracharya.
- GI registrations are managed by the Geographical Indications Registry, Chennai.

06 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Spain Win the World Cup; Sinner and Noskova at Wimbledon

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Society; sport

Context

Spain won the **FIFA World Cup 2026**, beating **Argentina 1-0** after extra time in the final on **19 July** at MetLife Stadium (New York New Jersey). Ferran Torres scored. It was Spain's second title (after 2010).

Event	Winner	Note
FIFA World Cup Golden Ball	Rodri (Spain)	Best player
FIFA World Cup Golden Boot	Kylian Mbappe (France)	10 goals
Wimbledon men's singles (12 July)	Jannik Sinner	Beat Alexander Zverev; title defended
Wimbledon women's singles (11 July)	Linda Noskova	Beat Karolina Muchova; first Grand Slam
Tour de France (ended 26 July)	Tadej Pogacar	Remco Evenepoel second
Women's T20 World Cup final (5 July, Lord's)	Australia	Beat England by 7 wickets

India's angle

- Indian officials Vrinda Rathi (umpire) and G.S. Lakshmi (match referee) officiated the women's T20 World Cup final.
- India's men's team toured England for three ODIs and five T20Is in July.

Prelims Pointers

- The 2026 World Cup was the first with 48 teams and 104 matches.
- Wimbledon is the oldest tennis tournament (1877) and is played on grass.
- The Tour de France leader wears the yellow jersey (maillot jaune).

07 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Commonwealth Games, Glasgow: India's First Week

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Society; sport

Context

The **Commonwealth Games 2026** opened in **Glasgow** on **23 July** and run to 2 August. India sent a contingent of 191 (126 athletes); **Mirabai Chanu** was flag-bearer. By 31 July, India's tally was reported at **23 medals: 5 gold, 12 silver and 6 bronze** (sources differ).

Gold medals by 31 July (as reported)

- **Mirabai Chanu:** weightlifting, women's 48 kg.
- **Asmita Dey** (women's 48 kg) and **Harsh Singh** (men's 60 kg): judo.
- **Sharmila Dhankar:** para shot put F57.
- **Dilip Gavit:** para 100 m T47.

- **Javelin:** Neeraj Chopra won silver (85.83 m) and Yashvir Singh bronze, India's first double podium in the event at the Games (reported).
- **Athletics:** silvers for Sarvesh Kushare (high jump), Gulveer Singh (10,000 m) and M. Sreeshankar (long jump); Tejaswin Shankar won decathlon bronze.
- **Smaller Games:** Glasgow ran a reduced programme; several sports in which India wins many medals were left out.

Prelims Pointers

- The first Games were held in Hamilton, Canada, in 1930 as the British Empire Games.
- India hosted the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in 2010.
- Para sports are integrated into the main Commonwealth Games programme.

08 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Monsoon Recovers in July

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian monsoon; GS3: Agriculture and water

Context

After a 40% deficit in June, the monsoon covered the **whole country on 9 July 2026**, a day after the normal date. July rain was close to normal at about **280.6 mm** against a long period average (LPA) of 280.4 mm (as reported by IMD on 31 July). By our arithmetic, June and July together were about 15% below normal. IMD forecast **below-normal rain in August** (under 94% of LPA) and for August-September as a whole.

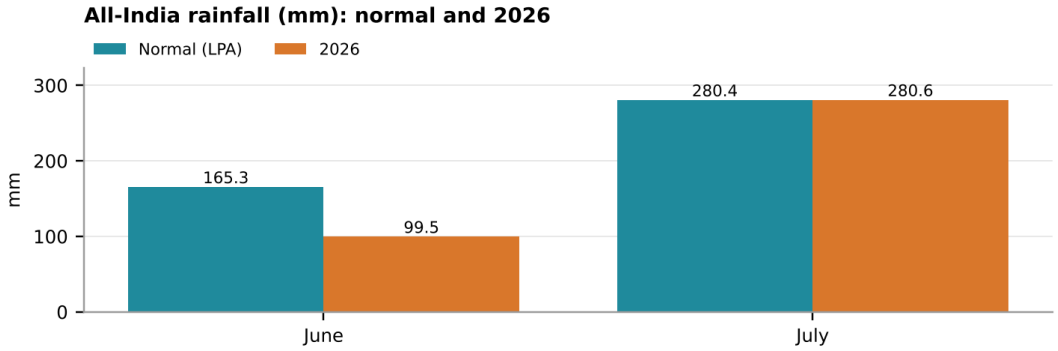


Chart. Of 741 districts, 42% were deficient and 7% largely deficient for June-July. Source: IMD (30 June and 31 July 2026 briefings, as reported).

What drove July

- **Depressions** from the Bay of Bengal (around 5 July and 26 July) crossed the Odisha-West Bengal coast and carried rain inland.
- An **active monsoon trough** south of its normal position brought heavy rain to central India.
- **El Nino** is strengthening, which is why IMD expects a weaker second half.

Why it matters

- Kharif sowing caught up in July but still lagged last year (see agriculture).
- Heavy rain in short spells caused floods and landslides in J&K and the Northeast (see disaster).
- A dry August would hit rain-fed crops at the flowering stage.

Prelims Pointers

- The monsoon trough runs from northwest India to the head of the Bay of Bengal.
- A 'break' in the monsoon occurs when the trough shifts to the Himalayan foothills.
- IMD's LPA for the season (June-September) is 87 cm (1971-2020).

09 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

El Nino Strengthens; Oceans Hit Record Heat

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

Context

NOAA's ENSO update on **9 July 2026** kept an **El Nino Advisory** in force. The weekly Nino 3.4 index was about **+1.2 C**, and NOAA gave an **81% chance of a very strong event** by October-December. Copernicus later reported (August) that **July 2026 tied with July 2024 as the second-warmest July**, with the **highest July sea surface temperature on record** (20.96 C).

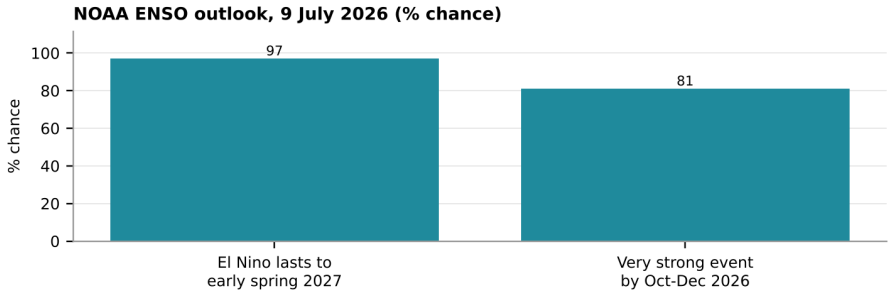


Chart. Source: NOAA Climate Prediction Center ENSO diagnostic discussion, 9 July 2026.

What it means for India

- Strong El Nino years often bring a weak monsoon second half, poor rabi soil moisture and a hot summer next year.
- The **Indian Ocean Dipole** may turn positive from August to November (IRI gave about 68-80% odds), which could partly offset El Nino's effect on rain.
- Warm oceans feed stronger tropical cyclones and marine heatwaves that bleach coral.

Key numbers (Copernicus, July 2026)

- Global surface air temperature 16.90 C: +0.67 C above 1991-2020 and +1.47 C above pre-industrial.
- Western Europe 2.53 C above average; June and July together were its warmest on record.

Prelims Pointers

- A 'very strong' El Nino has Nino 3.4 at +2.0 C or more.
- The 1997-98 and 2015-16 El Ninos are among the strongest on record.
- A positive IOD means a warmer western Indian Ocean than the eastern part.

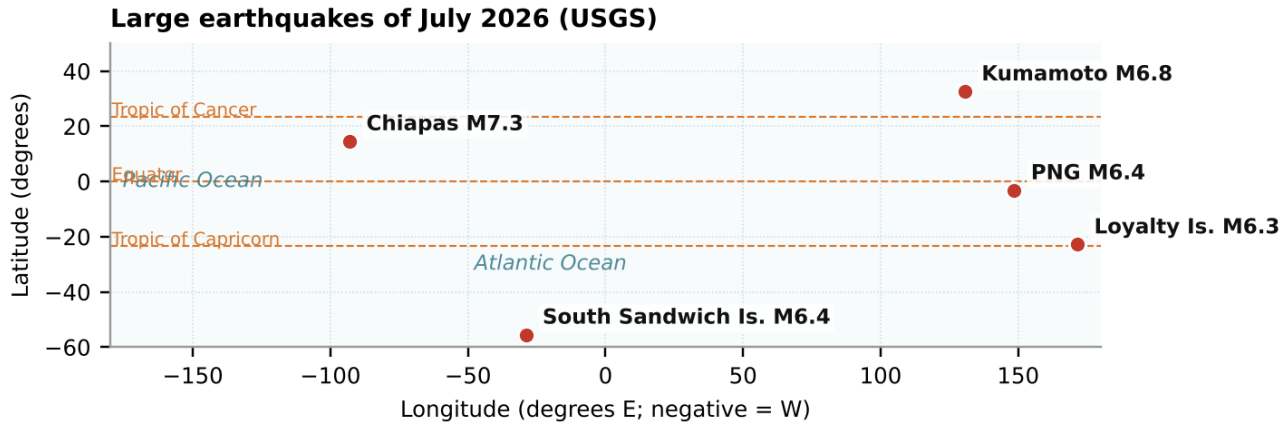
10 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Earthquakes in Mexico and Japan

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

Context

Two large earthquakes struck in July 2026. An **M7.3 quake off Chiapas, Mexico** on **17 July** raised a small tsunami (34 cm at Salina Cruz) and injured at least 18 people. On **28 July**, an **M6.8 quake (USGS; M7.1 by Japan's agency)** hit the **Kumamoto** region of Kyushu, Japan, at a shallow 8 km depth. Media reported 34 deaths by 30 July.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Points from the USGS catalogue.

The science

- **Chiapas:** the Cocos plate sinks under the North American and Caribbean plates along the Middle America Trench.
- **Kumamoto:** a shallow crustal quake on active faults in central Kyushu, in the same zone as the deadly 2016 Kumamoto quakes.
- Shallow quakes cause stronger shaking at the surface than deep ones of the same size.

Prelims Pointers

- Japan uses the 'shindo' intensity scale (0 to 7); magnitude and intensity are different measures.
- A tsunami is triggered mainly by vertical movement of the seafloor.
- India's National Center for Seismology works under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

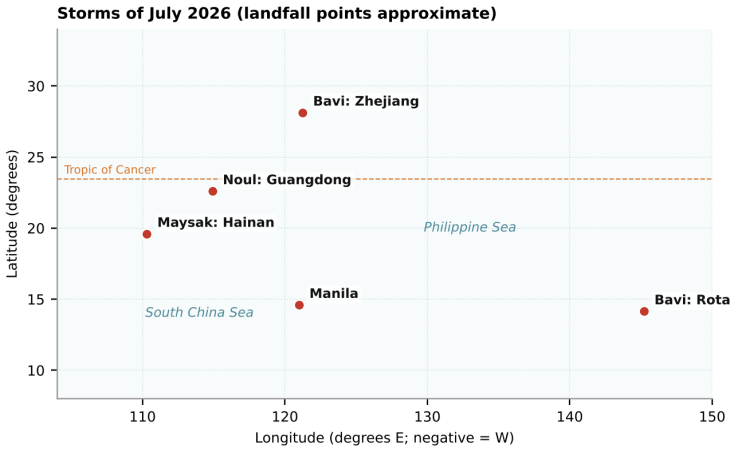
11 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Typhoons Bavi and Noul Hit China

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Tropical cyclones; world geography

Context

The West Pacific was active in July 2026. **Super Typhoon Bavi** struck Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands on 6 July and made landfall near **Yuhuan, Zhejiang** (China) on 11 July; about 1.8 million people were evacuated in Zhejiang (as reported). **Typhoon Noul** made landfall in **Guangdong** on 26 July, called China's strongest typhoon of 2026 so far. In the Atlantic, **Tropical Storm Bertha** came ashore in Louisiana on 22 July.



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

Why typhoons are intensifying

- Record-warm oceans give storms more energy and moisture.
- More storms now intensify rapidly just before landfall, leaving less time to evacuate.
- China's evacuations show how early warning cuts deaths even in very strong storms.

Prelims Pointers

- Tropical cyclones are called typhoons in the northwest Pacific and hurricanes in the Atlantic and northeast Pacific.
- They form over oceans warmer than about 26-27 C and do not form near the Equator (weak Coriolis force).
- Names in the northwest Pacific come from a list shared by 14 countries.

12 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Jobs Data: Urban Unemployment Edges Up

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Society; GS3: Employment

Context

The **PLFS monthly bulletin for June 2026** (released 15 July) put the unemployment rate (age 15+, current weekly status) at **5.5%**, unchanged from May. Urban unemployment rose to **6.6%** and rural fell to 5.0%. The labour force participation rate was 54.4%; for women it was **32.7%**.

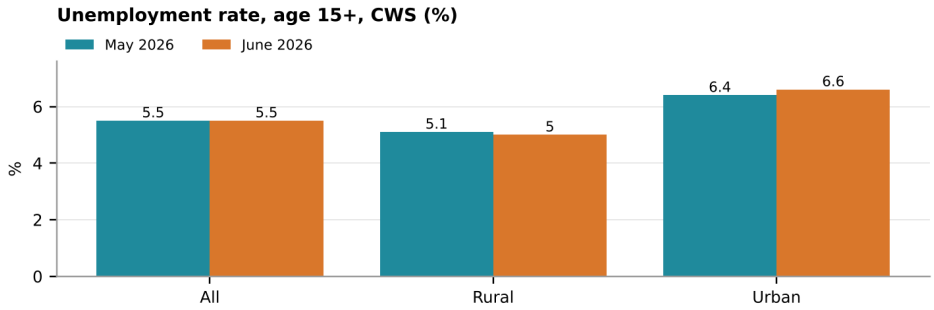


Chart. Source: MoSPI PLFS monthly bulletins (June and July 2026).

Reading the data

- Kharif sowing absorbs rural labour in June and July, lowering rural unemployment.
- Urban jobs are more sensitive to manufacturing and services demand.
- Female participation remains low; care work, safety and lack of nearby jobs are key barriers.

Prelims Pointers

- The monthly PLFS bulletin started in 2025 and covers rural and urban areas.
- Worker population ratio (WPR) is the share of the population that is employed.
- PLFS is conducted by the National Statistics Office (MoSPI).

13 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Progress on the SDGs: Global and Indian Scorecards

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Society; GS2: Development, international institutions

Context

The **UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026**, launched on **7 July** at the High-Level Political Forum in New York, found that only **36% of targets** with data are on track or making moderate progress, 49% are moving too slowly and 15% have reversed. The SDSN's **Sustainable Development Report 2026**, released around the start of July, ranked **India 94th of 167** (score 68.3), its best rank so far (reported).

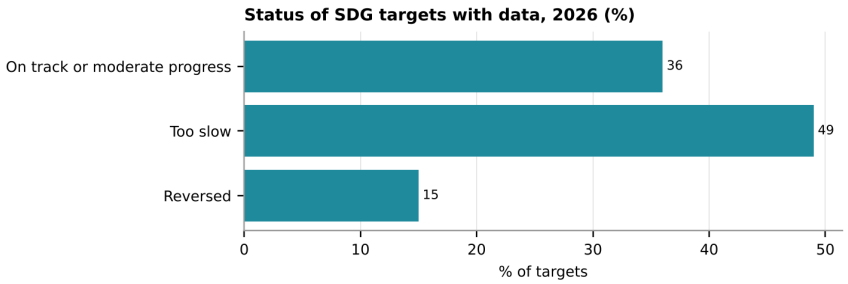


Chart. Source: UN SDG Report 2026 (UN DESA).

India's strengths and gaps (SDR, as reported)

- **Progress:** clean energy (SDG 7) and infrastructure (SDG 9).
- **Gaps:** child wasting and stunting, and declining scores on sustainable consumption (SDG 12) and climate action (SDG 13).
- **Global:** extreme poverty still affects about 1 in 10 people; the yearly SDG financing gap is about US$4 trillion.

Prelims Pointers

- The 17 SDGs (Agenda 2030) were adopted by the UN in September 2015.
- The HLPF meets every July under ECOSOC to review SDG progress.
- NITI Aayog publishes India's own SDG India Index.

14 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

PM in Indonesia: Seven MoUs and Prambanan

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and its extended neighbourhood; Act East Policy

Context

The Prime Minister made a **State Visit to Indonesia from 6 to 8 July 2026** (Jakarta and Yogyakarta), hosted by President **Prabowo Subianto**. It was the first bilateral visit since ties became a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2018. **Seven MoUs** were signed on 7 July, along with agreements on coast guard dialogue, health workers and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Area	Outcome
Technology	Telecom and technology services; outer space
Security	Counter-terrorism; coast guard dialogue
Economy	Minerals and technology for the steel supply chain; medical product regulation
Governance	Technology in elections; official statistics
Culture	ASI to help restore the Prambanan temple compounds (a UNESCO site)

Why Indonesia matters

- **Maritime neighbour:** Indonesia's Sabang port lies close to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, near the Malacca Strait.
- **Largest ASEAN economy** and a G20 member; a partner on the Indo-Pacific.
- **Shared heritage:** Ramayana and Mahabharata traditions in Java and Bali; Prambanan is a 9th-century Hindu temple complex.

Prelims Pointers

- Indonesia joined BRICS as a full member in January 2025.
- The Six Degree Channel separates Great Nicobar from Indonesia's Sumatra.
- Yogyakarta is the cultural heart of Java and near Borobudur.

15 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India-Australia Annual Summit in Melbourne

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Bilateral relations; Indo-Pacific; energy security

Context

The Prime Minister visited **Australia from 8 to 10 July** for the annual summit with PM **Anthony Albanese** in Melbourne on 9 July. The sides announced **18 outcomes** and agreed to speed up talks on a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

Key outcomes

- **Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation** and a Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap.
- **Energy:** a joint statement on energy security and an arrangement under the civil nuclear agreement for long-term uranium supply.
- **Sport:** a Sports Collaboration Roadmap launched at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.
- Trade has grown about 55% since the interim trade agreement (ECTA, 2022), as stated at the CEOs Forum.

Why it matters

- **Critical minerals and uranium:** Australia is a major supplier of lithium, rare earths and uranium.
- **Quad partner:** both share concerns about maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Diaspora:** Indians are among the fastest-growing communities in Australia.

Prelims Pointers

- India and Australia signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement in 2014.
- India-Australia ECTA entered into force on 29 December 2022.
- The ties became a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2020.

16 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

New Zealand: A Strategic Partnership

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Bilateral relations; trade agreements

Context

On **10-11 July 2026**, the Prime Minister made an official visit to **New Zealand** (Auckland), reported as the first by an Indian PM in about four decades. With PM **Christopher Luxon**, ties were raised to a **Strategic Partnership** with a Roadmap to 2030 and a goal of doubling trade to NZ$7 billion by 2030.

Key outcomes (18, including 10 agreements)

- Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement for the armed forces.
- Maritime cooperation arrangement and a new Maritime Security Dialogue.
- New Zealand to lead the maritime security pillar of India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, with a focus on illegal fishing.
- Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism.

The trade deal

- The India-New Zealand FTA was signed on 27 April 2026 and is due to enter into force later in 2026 (reported).
- All Indian exports would enter New Zealand duty-free; India cuts or removes duties on most New Zealand goods, with dairy protected.
- New Zealand committed to investment of US$20 billion over 15 years (reported).

Prelims Pointers

- IPOI (Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative) was launched by India in 2019 at the East Asia Summit.
- IPOI has seven pillars, including maritime security and maritime ecology.
- New Zealand is a member of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance.

17 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India-UK Trade Agreement Comes into Force

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

Context

The **India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)** entered into force on **15 July 2026**. It was signed in July 2025. About **99% of India's tariff lines** get duty-free access to the UK. A Double Contribution Convention, which spares temporary workers from paying social security in both countries, was reported to take effect on the same date.

India gains	UK gains
Duty-free entry for textiles, leather, footwear, gems, marine products	Phased cuts on Scotch whisky, cars (within quotas), medical devices
Easier movement for professionals	Access to Indian government procurement in some sectors
Social security relief for Indian workers posted to the UK	Lower tariffs on aerospace parts and food products

Issues to watch

- **CBAM:** the UK plans its own carbon border tax from 2027, which could hit Indian steel and aluminium.
- **Dairy and sensitive farm goods** are excluded by India.
- Firms must meet rules of origin to claim lower duties.

Prelims Pointers

- India's other recent FTAs: UAE CEPA (2022), Australia ECTA (2022), EFTA TEPA (in force 2025), Oman CEPA (in force 2026).
- A free trade agreement does not need Parliament's approval in India.
- The UK left the EU in 2020 and now negotiates its own trade deals.

18 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India-US Trade Deal Still Pending

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India-US relations; GS3: Trade policy

Context

On **21 July 2026**, the Commerce Ministry told the Lok Sabha that India 'remains engaged' with the US on a trade agreement. The deal announced in February 2026 had still not been signed. Since February, the US has applied a flat **10% tariff** on imports from all countries under Section 122 of its Trade Act, which allows such tariffs for 150 days, a period that ran to about late July (our arithmetic).

Date	Development
2 Feb 2026	Deal announced; joint statement on 7 Feb
7 Feb 2026	US removed the extra 25% tariff linked to Russian oil purchases
20 Feb 2026	US Supreme Court struck down 'reciprocal' tariffs under emergency powers
24 Feb 2026	10% tariff on all countries under Section 122
June-July 2026	Talks continued; deal not signed

Analysis

- **India's aims:** low and stable tariffs on its exports, especially labour-intensive goods.
- **US aims:** market access for farm goods and industrial products, and purchases of energy and defence goods.
- **Uncertainty** over the legal basis of US tariffs complicates long-term commitments.

Prelims Pointers

- The US is India's largest export market for goods.
- Section 122 of the US Trade Act, 1974 deals with balance-of-payments problems.
- India and the US set a goal of US$500 billion in bilateral trade by 2030 ('Mission 500').

19 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India-EU Trade and Technology Council Meets in Brussels

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and the EU; technology partnerships

Context

The **third meeting of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC)** was held in **Brussels on 15 July 2026**, led on India's side by the External Affairs, Commerce and Electronics ministers. Formal talks on India's association with **Horizon Europe**, the EU's research programme, began in July.

Three working groups

- Strategic technologies, digital governance and digital connectivity.
- Clean and green technologies.
- Trade, investment and resilient value chains.

Why it matters

- The TTC is only the EU's second such council; the first is with the US.
- It complements the India-EU FTA, whose negotiations concluded in January 2026.
- Joint work on semiconductors, AI and 6G supports supply-chain diversification.

Prelims Pointers

- The India-EU TTC was announced in April 2022.
- Horizon Europe (2021-2027) is the world's largest multinational research funding programme.
- India and the EU have been strategic partners since 2004.

20 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Quad and ASEAN Meetings in Manila

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Regional groupings; Indo-Pacific

Context

The **Quad foreign ministers** (India, US, Japan, Australia) met in **Manila on 22 July 2026**, on the margins of ASEAN meetings hosted by the Philippines as ASEAN chair. Their statement backed **ASEAN centrality** and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. The same day, the EAM attended the ASEAN-India Post-Ministerial Conference; 2026 is the **ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation**.

Key Points

- It was the second Quad foreign ministers' meeting of 2026, after New Delhi in May.
- Areas: maritime security, technology, disaster relief and critical minerals.
- The EAM spoke on de-risking and diversifying supply chains with ASEAN.

Analysis

- Linking the Quad with ASEAN eases South-East Asian worries that the Quad is a military bloc.
- Disputes in the South China Sea remain the main regional flashpoint.
- A review of the ASEAN-India goods trade agreement (AITIGA) is a priority for India.

Prelims Pointers

- The Quad was revived in 2017; leaders first met in 2021.
- ASEAN has 11 members after Timor-Leste joined in 2025.
- India's Act East Policy was announced in 2014 (succeeding Look East, 1991).

21 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India Launches Its UNSC Campaign; EAM in the Gulf

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and the UN; diaspora; West Asia

Context

The External Affairs Minister launched India's campaign for a **non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2028-29** at the UN in New York in mid-July (13 or 14 July; sources differ). The campaign vision is called **'SHANTI'**. Earlier, from 5 to 10 July, he toured **Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman**.

Key Points

- India has served eight terms on the Council, most recently in 2021-22.
- It highlighted peacekeeping: about 3 lakh Indians have served in some 50 UN missions.
- India restated support for a two-state solution for Palestine and announced projects for Palestinians.

Why the Gulf tour matters

- The Gulf is home to millions of Indian workers and sends the largest share of remittances.
- Energy security during the West Asia conflict and Hormuz disruptions.
- Oman's CEPA with India came into force on 1 June 2026.

Prelims Pointers

- The UNSC has 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms.
- Non-permanent members are elected by a two-thirds majority of the UN General Assembly.
- India is among the largest troop contributors to UN peacekeeping.

22 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

BRICS Ministers in Nagpur and Chandigarh; SCO in Kyrgyzstan

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Regional and global groupings

Context

India's BRICS chair year continued with the **3rd BRICS Transport Ministers' Meeting** in **Nagpur** (about 11-12 July, reported) and the **16th BRICS Health Ministers' Meeting** in **Chandigarh** (22-24 July). The **SCO Council of Foreign Ministers** met at **Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan** on 23-24 July; India was represented by a Minister of State.

Meeting	Focus
BRICS Transport (Nagpur)	Sustainable aviation fuel, multimodal transport, decarbonisation, AI
BRICS Health (Chandigarh)	Healthy lifestyles, mental wellness, digital health and AI
SCO Foreign Ministers	Preparation for the SCO summit in Bishkek (31 Aug-1 Sept)

India's balancing act

- India's BRICS theme stresses resilience, innovation, cooperation and sustainability.
- At the SCO, India has refused to endorse statements that ignore cross-border terrorism or back the Belt and Road Initiative.
- Both groups include China and Russia, so India uses them for Global South outreach while keeping ties with the West.

Prelims Pointers

- SCO was founded in 2001 in Shanghai; India and Pakistan joined in 2017.
- SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is in Tashkent.
- Cholpon-Ata is on the shore of Lake Issyk-Kul.

23 | POLITY GS 2

Monsoon Session 2026: Bills in Focus

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Parliament; legislation; ordinances

Context

The **Monsoon Session** of Parliament began on **20 July 2026** and is scheduled to end on 13 August, with 19 sittings. In July, Parliament passed a law to toughen penalties for exam paper leaks and a Bill extending the national honour law to the national song, while the Lok Sabha passed changes to birth and death registration.

Bill	Status (July)	Key provisions
Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026	Passed by Parliament (30 July)	See next section
Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026	Passed by Parliament	Extends the 1971 Act to Vande Mataram
Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026	Passed by Lok Sabha (31 July)	Registration delayed over 2 years needs a Judicial Magistrate's order
Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026	Introduced	Replaces the May ordinance; 37 judges plus the CJI
MSME Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026	Introduced in Rajya Sabha	Centre to set MSME limits; CPSEs to pay MSMEs via TReDS

Other developments

- The **JPC on the 130th Constitution Amendment Bill** (removal of ministers held in custody for 30 days on serious charges) deferred adopting its report on 17 July.
- The **JPC on One Nation One Election** held consultations in Lucknow on 11-12 July.
- A draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill would let foreign lawyers practise only in international commercial arbitration (reported).

Prelims Pointers

- The President summons Parliament (Article 85); the gap between sessions cannot exceed six months.
- An ordinance lapses six weeks after Parliament reassembles unless approved.
- A Joint Parliamentary Committee is formed by a motion in one House agreed to by the other.

24 | POLITY GS 2

Tougher Law Against Exam Paper Leaks

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Education; accountability; legislation

Context

After the NEET-UG leak, Parliament passed the **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026** on **30 July**, three days after its introduction. It strengthens the 2024 Act.

Provision	2024 Act	2026 Amendment
Jail term for unfair means	3-5 years	5-10 years
Fine on individuals	Up to Rs 10 lakh	Up to Rs 50 lakh
Fine on service providers	Up to Rs 1 crore	Up to Rs 5 crore
Debarment of service providers	4 years	8 years
Investigation and trial	General courts	Special Task Force; probe in 2 months; fast-track courts, trial in 3 months

Debate

- **Supporters** say harsh penalties and speedy trials will deter organised gangs.
- **Critics** say leaks come from weak systems (printing, transport, vendors) and need process reform, not only punishment; they also objected to the speed of passage.
- The NTA's move to computer-based tests from 2027 is part of the fix.

Prelims Pointers

- The 2024 Act covers exams by UPSC, SSC, RRBs, IBPS, NTA and central ministries.
- Offences under the Act are cognisable and non-bailable.
- Education is in the Concurrent List (moved by the 42nd Amendment, 1976).

25 | POLITY GS 2

Supreme Court in July: Data, Equality and Prisoners

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Fundamental rights; judiciary; statutory bodies

Context

The Supreme Court's July rulings covered student data, gender equality, the powers of statutory commissions and humane treatment of prisoners. It also set aside tribunal orders that relied on **fake, AI-generated precedents**.

Case	Holding
Abhishek Baxi v. Union of India	The APAAR student ID is upheld, but parents must get an opt-out; data use is subject to the DPDP Act, 2023
Sayara Khatoon v. State of Bihar (23 July)	Limiting compassionate appointment to divorced or deserted daughters violates Article 14
Mumbai Port Authority v. NCSC	The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (Art. 338) is advisory and cannot issue binding service orders
NALSA v. Union of India	Centre and States to frame a policy for early release of elderly and terminally ill prisoners
Pooja Ramesh Singh v. J&K Bank	NCLT and NCLAT orders citing non-existent, AI-generated cases set aside

Case	Holding
Pune Bar Association v. Union of India	Certificate requirement for electronic evidence under Section 63(4) of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam upheld

Why it matters

- **Privacy:** consent and opt-out rules for state databases build on the *Puttaswamy* judgment (2017).
- **AI in courts:** judges and lawyers must verify every citation; courts are framing AI-use guidelines.
- **Prisons:** overcrowding and an ageing prison population call for humane release policies.

Prelims Pointers

- APAAR: Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry, the 'One Nation One Student ID'.
- The DPDP Act was passed in 2023; its rules were notified in 2025.
- NCSC became a separate commission by the 89th Amendment (2003).

26 | POLITY GS 2

By-Elections and the Roll Revision

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

Context

By-elections were held on **30 July 2026** for assembly seats including **Bankipur** (Bihar), **Datia** (Madhya Pradesh) and **Manjalpur** (Gujarat). Results, declared on 3 August, gave Bankipur to **Prashant Kishor** of Jan Suraaj. Meanwhile, the **Special Intensive Revision (SIR) Phase III** moved through draft-roll publication in several states.

Seat	Why vacant
Bankipur (Bihar)	Sitting MLA moved to the Rajya Sabha
Datia (MP)	MLA disqualified after conviction with a 3-year sentence (Section 8, RP Act)
Manjalpur (Gujarat)	Death of the MLA

SIR Phase III milestones in July (schedule)

- Draft rolls: Odisha, Mizoram, Sikkim, Manipur (5 July); Uttarakhand (14 July); Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh (21 July); Telangana, Punjab (31 July).
- Deadlines for Andhra Pradesh and Haryana were extended (reported).
- Phase III covers about 36.7 crore electors with about 3.94 lakh booth-level officers.

Prelims Pointers

- A by-election must be held within six months of a vacancy (Section 151A, RP Act), with some exceptions.
- Under Section 8(3), conviction with a sentence of two years or more disqualifies a legislator.
- *Lily Thomas* (2013) ended the three-month protection for sitting legislators.

27 | GOVERNANCE GS 2

NITI Aayog's First Investment Friendliness Index

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Governance; cooperative and competitive federalism

Context

NITI Aayog released its first **Investment Friendliness Index** on **17 July 2026**, ranking 28 states and 8 UTs on **eight pillars**. **Gujarat** topped, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Odisha.

The eight pillars

- Infrastructure; business climate; resources; government policy.
- Regulatory ease; institutional environment; financial health; environmental resilience.
- States are grouped as top performers, frontrunners, emerging performers and aspiring.

Why it matters

- **Competitive federalism:** rankings push states to improve land, power, approvals and governance.
- **Investment** after the semiconductor and electronics schemes depends on state-level delivery.
- **Critics** say indices can reward already-developed states and miss local constraints.

Prelims Pointers

- Other NITI indices: SDG India Index, Export Preparedness Index, Fiscal Health Index, Innovation Index.
- The DPIIT runs the Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) rankings.
- NITI Aayog replaced the Planning Commission in 2015.

28 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

NEET Re-Test Results and Exam Reform

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Education; transparency

Context

Results of the **NEET-UG 2026 re-test** (held 21 June) were declared on **16 July**. About **11.21 lakh candidates qualified**; two students shared the top rank with 715 of 720 marks. Women made up more than 58% of those who qualified. On 28 July, the Supreme Court found a prima facie case for an independent probe into violence during NEET protests.

Issues

- Students lost weeks of preparation and faced added cost and stress.
- Counselling and college admissions were delayed.
- Trust in national exams needs secure technology and accountable agencies.

Reform steps

- Tougher penalties under the amended Public Examinations Act (July 2026).
- Computer-based testing from 2027.
- Independent oversight of the National Testing Agency.

Prelims Pointers

- NEET-UG is conducted by the NTA for MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and nursing courses.
- The National Medical Commission (2020) replaced the Medical Council of India.
- Seat counselling for all-India quota seats is run by the Medical Counselling Committee.

29 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Fewer Zero-Dose Children in India

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Health; children

Context

WHO and UNICEF's annual immunisation estimates (WUENIC), released in July 2026, showed India's **zero-dose children** (those who missed even the first DTP dose) fell to **6.79 lakh in 2025** from 9.09 lakh in 2024. India is out of the top ten countries for children unvaccinated against measles for the first time since 2001. Globally, 13.5 million children were zero-dose.

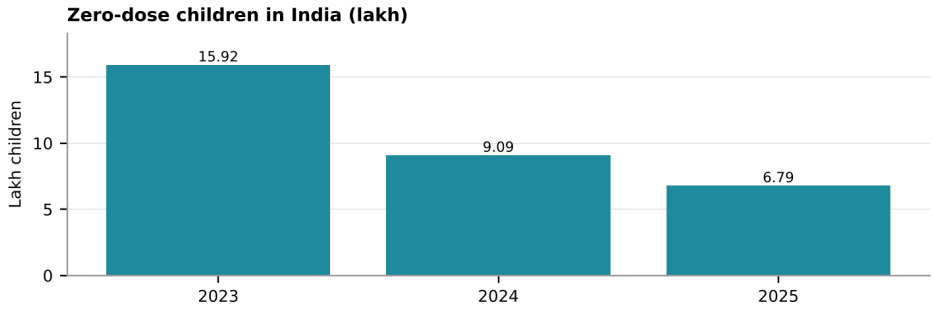


Chart. Source: WHO/UNICEF WUENIC estimates (July 2026), as reported by UNICEF India.

What worked

- **Mission Indradhanush** drives to reach missed children.
- **U-WIN**, the digital vaccine registry, tracks each child.
- ASHA and ANM workers reach remote and urban-poor areas.

Prelims Pointers

- The Universal Immunisation Programme began in 1985.
- DTP protects against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough).
- Mission Indradhanush was launched in December 2014.

30 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Hunger and HIV: Two Global Reports

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Health; nutrition; international institutions

Context

The FAO-led **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2026** report estimated that about **645 million people** were undernourished in 2025, down from 2022 but higher than in 2015 (as reported). UNAIDS released its report **'United to End AIDS'** on **27 July** at the AIDS 2026 conference in Rio de Janeiro: 41 million people live with HIV, and international HIV funding fell 18% in 2025.

India's picture

- India's share of undernourished people has fallen, but estimates differ across reports; check the FAO tables.
- NFHS-6 (2023-24) put child stunting at 29.3%, down from 35.5% in NFHS-5 (as reported).
- A healthy diet remains out of reach for many households as food prices rise.

HIV: India's response

- National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), now in Phase V (2021-26).
- HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017 bans discrimination.
- Goal: end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 (SDG 3.3).

Prelims Pointers

- SOFI is published jointly by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO.
- Prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) measures people whose calorie intake is below need.
- UNAIDS's 95-95-95 targets: diagnosis, treatment and viral suppression.

31 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Gig Workers and Social Security

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Vulnerable sections; GS3: Labour

Context

Under the **Code on Social Security** (in force since November 2025), platform companies had to register their workers on the **e-Shram** portal by 21 June 2026. By July, about **10.8 lakh platform workers** were reported to be registered, a small share of the projected gig workforce. Fifteen aggregators, including major food-delivery and ride-hailing firms, had onboarded.

Issues

- **Classification:** gig workers are neither employees nor fully independent.
- **Funding:** aggregators may contribute 1-2% of turnover (capped at 5% of payouts) to a welfare fund.
- **Algorithmic control:** ratings and deactivation affect income without clear appeal.

Prelims Pointers

- The four labour codes cover wages, industrial relations, social security and occupational safety.
- e-Shram is a national database of unorganised workers (launched 2021).
- Rajasthan passed India's first state law on platform workers in 2023.

32 | ECONOMY GS 3

Inflation: Retail Crosses the 4% Target

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Inflation; monetary policy

Context

Retail (CPI) inflation for **June 2026**, released on 13 July on the new **2024 base**, rose to **4.38%** from 3.93% in May. It was the first reading at or above the RBI's 4% target since the base change. Wholesale (WPI) inflation, on the **2022-23 base**, rose to **9.87%**, though fuel and power inflation eased slightly.

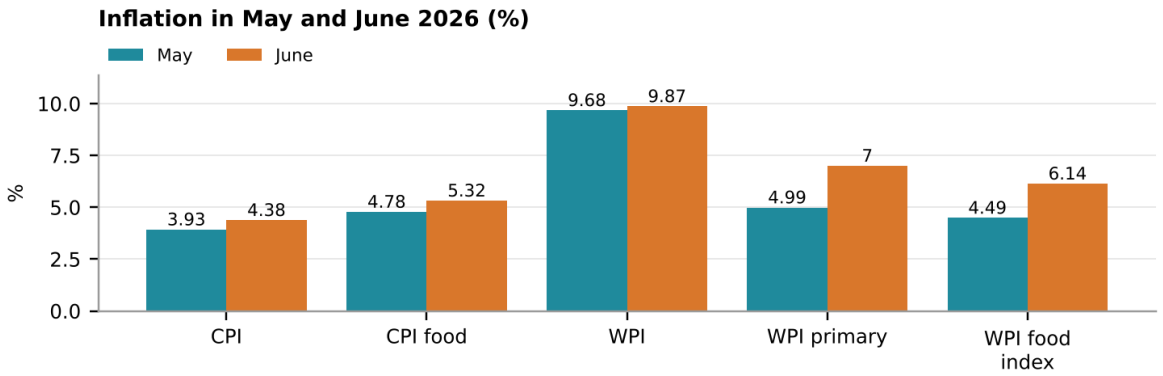


Chart. WPI fuel and power eased from 30.33% to 27.41%; manufactured products stayed at 7.48%. Source: MoSPI CPI release (13 July 2026); DPIIT WPI release (14 July 2026).

Inside the numbers

- **Precious metals:** silver and gold jewellery prices rose sharply (silver jewellery up more than 130%).
- **Vegetables:** ginger and tomato surged while potato and peas fell.
- **Rural inflation** (4.74%) was higher than urban (3.92%).

Policy view

- Wholesale costs are passing slowly to consumers; a weak monsoon and El Nino could add food pressure.
- The RBI held the repo rate at 5.25% in June; its next review is in August.

Prelims Pointers

- CPI base years: 2012 (old series) and 2024 (new series from 2026).
- WPI is compiled by the Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT.
- The RBI's inflation target is 4% with a band of 2-6%.

33 | ECONOMY GS 3

Industry: IIP at a 23-Month High; a New Core Index

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Industrial growth; data

Context

The **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** grew **7.3% in June 2026** (released 28 July), a 23-month high, led by manufacturing (7.8%) and electricity (10.6%). On 20 July, the government released the first **Index of Core Industries on a new base (2022-23)**. It now covers **nine industries** with the addition of **iron ore**. Core output grew 5.0% in June.

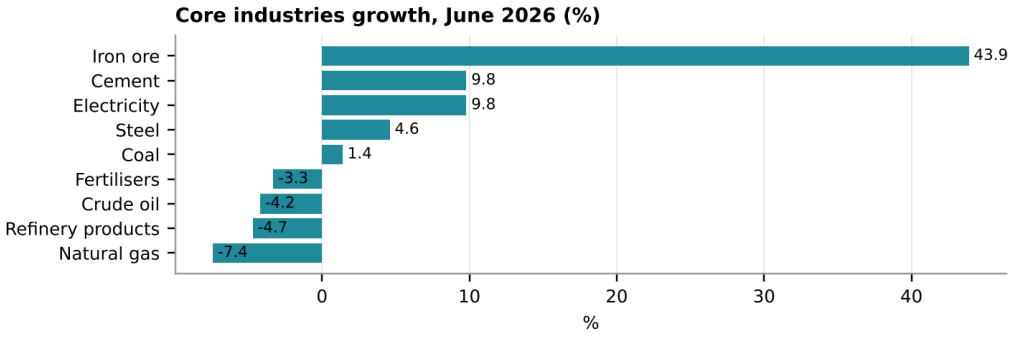


Chart. Source: Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT, 20 July 2026.

Reading the data

- **Infrastructure demand** is lifting steel, cement and iron ore.
- **Oil and gas** output keeps falling, raising import dependence.

- The new base gives electricity the biggest weight (about 31%), followed by refinery products (about 23%).

Prelims Pointers

- Core industries form about two-fifths of the IIP's weight.
- The eight old core industries were coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement, electricity.
- Both IIP and the core index now use 2022-23 as base year.

34 | ECONOMY GS 3

Trade Deficit Widens as Imports Jump

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External trade; balance of payments

Context

In **June 2026**, merchandise exports rose to **US$40.41 billion** (up about 15.5%), but imports jumped to **US$70.84 billion** (up about 31%), leaving a **goods deficit of about US$30.4 billion**, a five-month high. Services exports were estimated at US$33.03 billion.

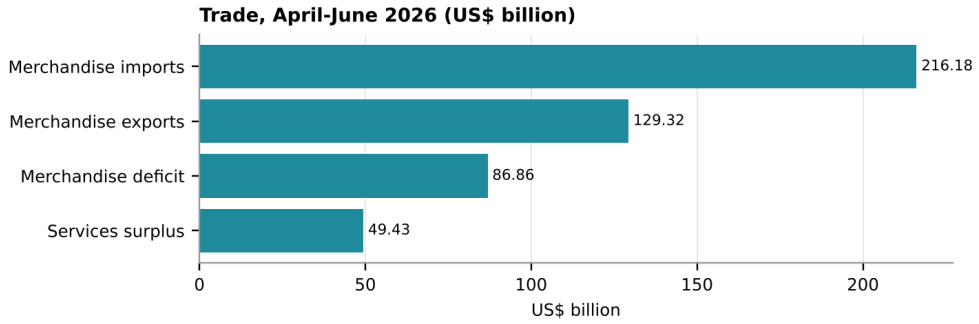


Chart. The goods deficit was US$68.75 billion in April-June 2025. Source: Ministry of Commerce, 13 July 2026.

Drivers

- Costly crude and gas raised the import bill.
- Exports of engineering goods (+21%), electronics (+19%) and gems and jewellery (+35%) grew strongly.
- ICRA expects the current account deficit to widen to about 1.5% of GDP in April-June (reported).

Prelims Pointers

- Electronics, led by smartphones, is now among India's top export items.
- Services exports include IT, business services and travel.
- A trade deficit is covered by the services surplus, remittances and capital inflows.

35 | ECONOMY GS 3

Forex Reserves Recover in July

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External sector; RBI

Context

India's foreign exchange reserves rose through July 2026, from **US$666.93 billion** on 26 June to **US$682.35 billion** on 24 July (released 31 July), the highest in nearly two months. They remain below the record US$728.49 billion of 27 February, before the West Asia conflict led to heavy RBI dollar sales.

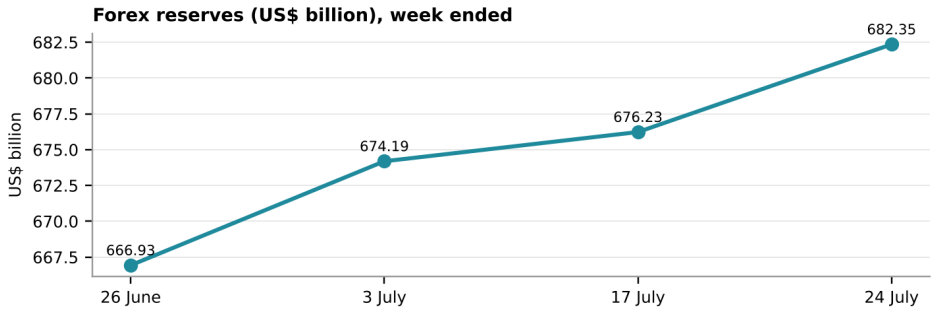


Chart. Source: RBI weekly statistical supplement, as reported by PTI.

Components (week ended 24 July)

- Foreign currency assets: US$555.92 billion.
- Gold: US$103.05 billion.
- SDRs: US$18.61 billion; reserve position in the IMF: US$4.75 billion.

Prelims Pointers

- The RBI manages reserves under the RBI Act, 1934.
- Changes in reserves reflect both RBI market operations and valuation changes.
- SDR (Special Drawing Right) is an IMF reserve asset based on a basket of five currencies.

36 | ECONOMY GS 3

GST and the First-Quarter Fiscal Deficit

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Fiscal policy; taxation

Context

Gross **GST collections for June 2026** (announced 1 July) were **Rs 1.95 lakh crore**, up 13.9%, helped by a 34.6% rise in GST on imports. The Controller General of Accounts reported (31 July) that the **fiscal deficit for April-June** was **Rs 3.08 lakh crore, 18.2% of the full-year target** (Rs 16.96 lakh crore, or 4.3% of GDP).

Key numbers

- Net GST in June: Rs 1.62 lakh crore (up 11.2%); refunds up 29.1%.
- April-June gross GST: Rs 6.32 lakh crore (up 8.4%).
- Net tax revenue in April-June: 22.2% of the Budget Estimate; total spending 25.4%.

Why it matters

- Higher import GST reflects costly imports, not only stronger demand.
- Fuel tax cuts or subsidies to cushion oil prices could strain the deficit target.
- The Centre aims to cut its debt-to-GDP ratio to about 50% (plus or minus 1) by 2030-31.

Prelims Pointers

- GST came into force on 1 July 2017 (101st Amendment); 1 July is GST Day.
- The FRBM Act was passed in 2003.
- Fiscal deficit = total expenditure minus total receipts other than borrowings.

37 | ECONOMY GS 3

IMF Trims India's Growth Forecast

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Growth; global economy

Context

The IMF's **World Economic Outlook Update** (reported on 8 July 2026) cut India's growth forecast for **2026-27 to 6.4%** (from 6.5%) and raised it for 2027-28 to 6.7%, citing higher energy prices. World growth was kept at **3.0% for 2026**.

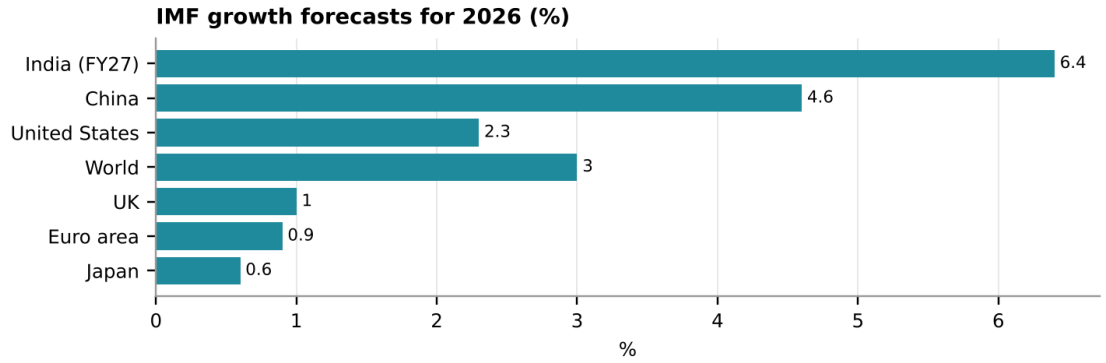


Chart. Source: IMF WEO Update, July 2026, as reported by Outlook Business and Business Today.

Risks

- The West Asia conflict and oil prices weigh on growth and inflation.
- An AI-led investment boom supports some advanced economies.
- Trade policy uncertainty, especially US tariffs, remains high.

Prelims Pointers

- The WEO is published in April and October, with updates in January and July.
- The IMF reports India's growth on a fiscal-year (April-March) basis.
- The IMF and World Bank were created at Bretton Woods in 1944.

38 | ECONOMY GS 3

Cabinet's Big Bets: Semicon 2.0 and Mobile Manufacturing

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Industrial policy; PLI; government schemes

Context

On **15 July 2026**, the Union Cabinet approved seven decisions worth about **Rs 2.19 lakh crore**, led by **Semicon 2.0** (Rs 1.275 lakh crore) and a new **Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme** (Rs 62,500 crore, 2026-27 to 2030-31). On 31 July, it approved the **Samudra Manthan** offshore exploration scheme (Rs 84,084 crore) and a revamped **Khelo India** scheme (Rs 36,441 crore).

Decision	Outlay	Aim
Semicon 2.0	Rs 1,27,500 crore	Fabs, design, equipment, materials, R&D and talent (reported details)
Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme	Rs 62,500 crore	Sales-linked incentives with a bonus for local components (reported)
Samudra Manthan	Rs 84,084 crore	Offshore seismic surveys and deepwater drilling
Khelo India and sports federations	Rs 36,441 crore	Grassroots sport and athlete support, 2026-31

Analysis

- **Supporters:** deepening value chains will cut imports and create jobs.
- **Critics:** large subsidies need clear outcomes; past PLI schemes show uneven results across sectors.
- Success depends on power, water, skilled workers and stable policy.

Prelims Pointers

- The India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) was set up in 2021 under MeitY.
- PLI schemes were launched in 2020, starting with mobile phones.
- India is the world's second-largest mobile phone maker.

39 | AGRICULTURE GS 3

Kharif Sowing Catches Up but Still Lags

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Cropping patterns; monsoon and agriculture

Context

With good July rain, kharif sowing reached **787.37 lakh hectares by 24 July 2026**, against 826.19 lakh hectares a year earlier, a gap of 38.82 lakh hectares. The gap had been over 20% in early July. Reservoir storage in 166 major reservoirs was **34.46% of capacity on 16 July**, close to normal but well below last year (as reported from the CWC bulletin).

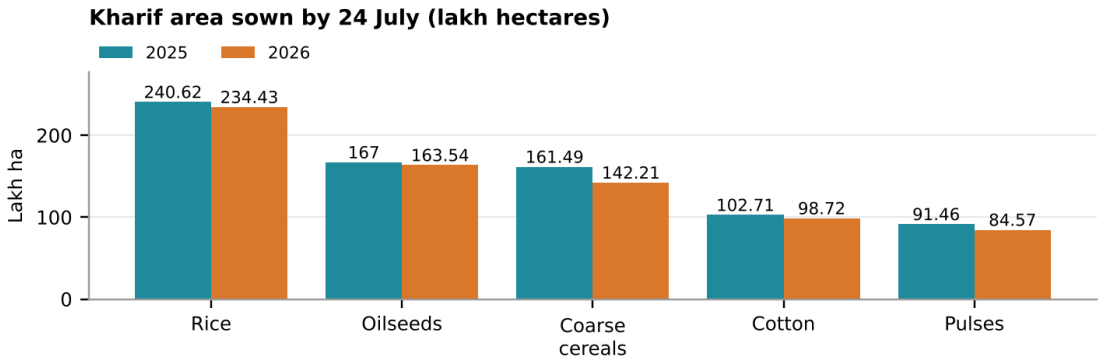


Chart. Urad was the only major pulse ahead of last year. Source: Agriculture Ministry data as reported by DD India (27 July 2026).

Concerns

- **Pulses and coarse cereals** lag most, which may push up prices and imports.
- A dry August (IMD forecast) could hurt late-sown crops.
- Rain-fed regions have fewer options than irrigated areas.

Way forward

- Contingency crop plans with short-duration seeds.
- Price support and procurement for pulses and oilseeds.
- Micro-irrigation and water budgeting at village level.

Prelims Pointers

- Major kharif crops: rice, maize, jowar, bajra, tur, moong, urad, soybean, groundnut, cotton.
- The Central Water Commission (CWC) publishes a weekly reservoir bulletin.
- PM-KISAN pays Rs 6,000 a year in three instalments.

40 | ECONOMY GS 3

Coal Output Rises; Power Demand Near 271 GW

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Energy; infrastructure

Context

India produced **69.75 million tonnes of coal in July 2026**, up 7.51%; Coal India's share was 50.35 MT. On 9 July, the Power Minister said peak demand had reached about **271 GW** and could touch **300 GW next year**. Installed generation capacity is about 543 GW.

Why it matters

- Coal still meets most of India's power needs, especially at night.
- **Storage:** the Central Electricity Authority targets about 160 GW of storage by 2035 to manage solar's evening drop.
- Hot, humid nights and air-conditioning drive new peaks.

Key numbers

- April-July coal output: 302.24 MT; dispatch up 5.87%.
- All-time peak demand: 270.82 GW on 21 May 2026.
- Renewable capacity: 288.59 GW at end-June; solar about 162 GW.

Prelims Pointers

- Coal India Ltd, a Maharatna, produces most of India's coal.
- Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh hold the largest coal reserves.
- Pumped storage hydro uses surplus power to pump water uphill for later use.

41 | ECONOMY GS 3

Infrastructure Approvals: A Tunnel Road and a New Corridor

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Infrastructure; roads

Context

The Cabinet approved two highway projects (reported as 1 July 2026): a six-lane, **8.1 km Dwarka tunnel road in Delhi** (Rs 6,970 crore), with 3.1 km under the Southern Ridge forest, and a four-lane, **242 km Kanpur-Kabrai highway** in Uttar Pradesh (Rs 7,145 crore), part of the Bhopal-Kanpur economic corridor.

Project	Model	Benefit
Dwarka tunnel road	Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM)	Links Dwarka Expressway with Vasant Kunj; saves forest land
Kanpur-Kabrai highway	BOT (Toll)	Cuts travel time from 3.5 to 1.5 hours; serves Bundelkhand

Issues

- Tunnels under green areas protect forests but cost more and need strict safety systems.
- Private investment in highways depends on fair risk sharing.
- Land acquisition and forest clearances remain the main sources of delay.

Prelims Pointers

- Under HAM, the government pays 40% during construction and the rest as annuities.
- Under BOT (Toll), the private developer recovers costs from tolls.
- The Delhi Ridge is the northern end of the Aravalli range.

42 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Global Tiger Day: India Holds 70% of Wild Tigers

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Conservation; wildlife

Context

On **Global Tiger Day (29 July 2026)**, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) released a security audit of 24 tiger reserves, an eco-tourism webpage and a habitat study for sloth bears (reported). India has **3,682 tigers** (2022 estimate) in **58 tiger reserves**, about 70% of the world's wild tigers.

Key Points

- Global wild tigers are estimated at about 5,700, up from about 3,200 in 2010.
- The 58th tiger reserve, Madhav (Madhya Pradesh), was notified in 2025.
- The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), led by India, co-published a report on tigers of the world.

Challenges

- **Conflict:** tigers outside reserves increasingly clash with people and livestock.
- **Corridors** are broken by roads, railways and mines.
- **Poaching** for the illegal wildlife trade continues.

Prelims Pointers

- Project Tiger began in 1973; the NTCA is a statutory body under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Tiger: IUCN Endangered; Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act.
- Global Tiger Day dates from the St Petersburg Tiger Summit (2010).

43 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

483 New Animal Species in a Year

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Biodiversity

Context

On the **Zoological Survey of India's 111th Foundation Day** (1 July 2026), the Environment Minister released **Animal Discoveries 2025**. It records **483 species new to science** and 226 new records for India. India's known fauna now stands at **1,05,953 species**.

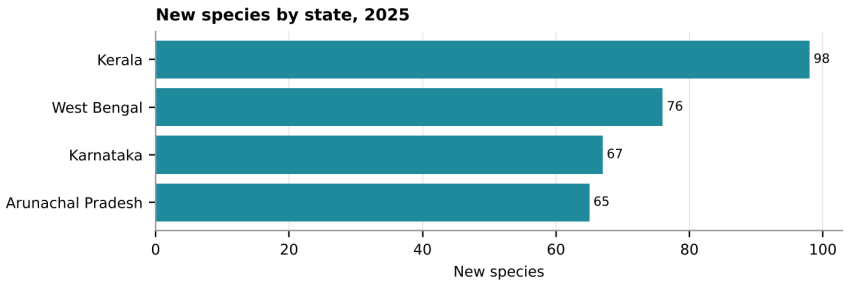


Chart. Source: ZSI Animal Discoveries 2025, as reported.

Why it matters

- Biodiversity hotspots (Western Ghats, Himalaya, Northeast) still hold many undescribed species.
- Taxonomy is the base for conservation, but trained taxonomists are few.
- New portals such as PaleoIndia make data public.

Prelims Pointers

- ZSI was founded in 1916 and is headquartered in Kolkata.
- The Botanical Survey of India (1890) does the same for plants.
- India has four of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots.

44 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Western Ghats: A Seventh Draft Notification

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Environmental governance; biodiversity

Context

Around **27 July 2026**, the Environment Ministry issued a **seventh draft notification** of the Western Ghats Ecologically Sensitive Area: **56,825.7 sq km** in 1,463 villages across six states, with 60 days for comments. Correction: our June issue said a final notification was imminent (reported); the Ministry instead re-issued a draft.

State	Area (sq km)
Karnataka	20,668
Maharashtra	17,340
Goa	1,461
Others	Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat

Proposed rules

- Ban on mining, quarrying and sand mining; existing mines to close within five years or at lease end.
- No new thermal power plants; limits on large buildings (above 20,000 sq m).
- States seek smaller areas to protect settlements and farming.

Prelims Pointers

- Earlier drafts: 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2022 and 2024.
- ESAs are notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- The Kasturirangan panel (2013) proposed about 37% of the Ghats as ESA.

45 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Supreme Court Ends Post-Facto Green Clearances

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Environmental impact assessment; GS2: Judiciary

Context

On **29 July 2026**, a Supreme Court bench led by the Chief Justice ruled in *Vanashakti v. Union of India* that **prior environmental clearance** under the EIA Notification, 2006 is mandatory. It struck down, with prospective effect, a 2021 office memorandum that allowed projects to get clearance after starting work.

Key Points

- Clearances already granted under the 2017 window and the 2021 memorandum remain valid unless challenged on merits.
- No fresh post-facto applications will be accepted.
- The Centre may still frame amnesty schemes by proper rules under the Environment (Protection) Act.

Two views

- **Environmental groups:** post-facto approval rewards violators and makes EIA meaningless.
- **Industry:** rigid rules can strand investments; regularisation with penalties is pragmatic.
- The Court earlier recalled its May 2025 ruling on review (November 2025) before this final decision.

Prelims Pointers

- EIA became mandatory in 1994; the current notification dates from 2006.
- Projects are in Category A (central clearance) or B (state authority).
- Public consultation is a stage of the EIA process.

46 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Deep-Sea Mining Talks Stall at Kingston

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Ocean resources; international environment

Context

The **International Seabed Authority (ISA)** held Part II of its 31st session in **Kingston, Jamaica (13-31 July 2026)**. The Assembly could not agree to seek an advisory opinion from the Law of the Sea tribunal on mining outside ISA rules, and the **mining code** for commercial extraction was again not adopted.

Key Points

- India's Mayank Joshi was elected President of the ISA Council in March 2026.
- Deep-sea mining targets polymetallic nodules rich in nickel, cobalt, copper and manganese.
- Concern over unilateral mining plans outside the ISA framework.

India's stake

- India holds ISA exploration contracts in the Central Indian Ocean Basin and for sulphides on the Indian Ocean ridge.
- The **Deep Ocean Mission** (2021) includes the crewed submersible Matsya 6000 (Samudrayaan).
- Scientists warn that mining could destroy little-known deep-sea ecosystems.

Prelims Pointers

- The ISA was set up under UNCLOS (1982) and is based in Kingston.
- The seabed beyond national jurisdiction is the 'common heritage of mankind'.
- ITLOS, the Law of the Sea tribunal, sits in Hamburg.

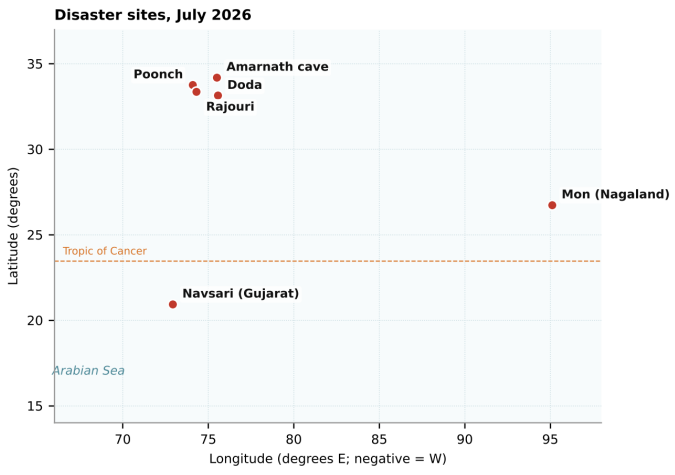
47 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT GS 3

Floods and Landslides in J&K; and the Northeast

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Disaster management; landslides

Context

Heavy rain on **18-20 July 2026** killed at least **27 people in Jammu and Kashmir**, most in **Poonch**, where a landslide at Loran killed seven members of one family. Landslides killed **nine in Nagaland**, mostly in Mon district. The **Amarnath and Vaishno Devi yatras** were suspended from 19 July. Maharashtra reported 62 monsoon deaths from 1 June to 8 July (reported).



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

Why the hills are vulnerable

- Steep, young Himalayan slopes and loose debris fail under intense rain.
- Road cutting and construction without slope protection increase risk.
- Short, very heavy bursts of rain are becoming more common.

Way forward

- Landslide early-warning systems with rain thresholds.
- Risk zoning and building rules for hill towns.
- Weather-linked regulation of pilgrim flows.

Prelims Pointers

- The GSI is the nodal agency for landslide studies in India.
- NDMA released national landslide risk management guidelines in 2009.
- Poonch and Rajouri lie in the Pir Panjal range south of the Kashmir valley.

48 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT GS 3

Heat and Wildfires in Europe and Canada

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Disaster management; climate extremes

Context

Western Europe had a record-warm June and July. By the end of July, wildfires had burnt close to **half a million hectares** across the EU, led by Spain, France and Italy, and over 3 lakh people were evacuated in France and Spain (reported). In **Canada**, about **3 million hectares** had burnt in 3,915 fires by 21 July, the third-highest for that date.

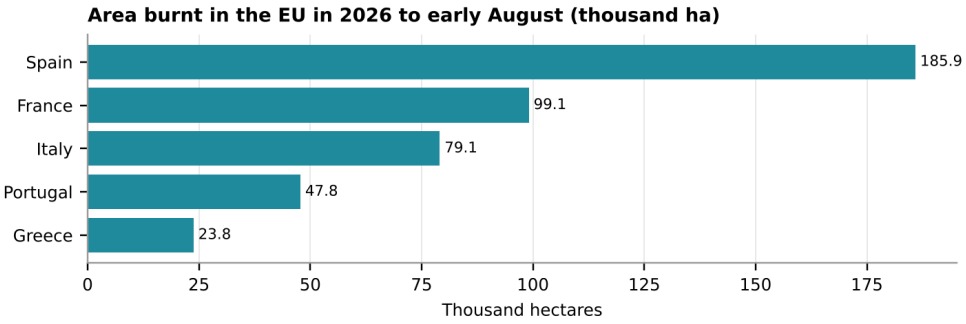


Chart. Figures run to week 31, slightly past July. Source: EU Global Wildfire Information System data reported by Euronews (13 August 2026).

Lessons for India

- **Heat action plans** must cover night temperatures and outdoor workers.
- **Forest fires** in India peak in March-May; fire-line clearing and community watch help.
- Satellite fire alerts (Forest Survey of India) speed up response.

Prelims Pointers

- Heatwaves are not a notified disaster under the national list for SDRF funding, though states may use part of the fund.
- Ahmedabad launched India's first heat action plan in 2013.
- EFFIS is the European Forest Fire Information System under Copernicus.

49 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Vikram-1: India's First Private Orbital Rocket

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology; private sector in space

Context

On **18 July 2026**, **Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1** lifted off from Sriharikota and placed two satellites in low Earth orbit. It was the **first orbital launch by a private Indian company**, and it succeeded on the first attempt. ISRO and IN-SPACe provided facilities and clearances.

Key Points

- Four stages: three solid and a liquid upper stage (Raman engine).
- Skyroot flew the sub-orbital Vikram-S in November 2022.
- IN-SPACe reportedly approved a large low-Earth-orbit constellation for Reliance Jio and issued norms for controlled re-entry of space objects in July.

Why it matters

- Small, quick launches for the growing small-satellite market.
- Frees ISRO to focus on deep space, human spaceflight and heavy launches.
- Private investment in Indian space crossed US$600 million (government figure, reported).

ISRO's own year

- ISRO had no successful launch in the first half of 2026; PSLV-C62 failed in January.
- Gaganyaan's first uncrewed flight (G1) is now targeted for late 2026.

Prelims Pointers

- Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC-SHAR), Sriharikota, is in Andhra Pradesh.
- IN-SPACe (2020) authorises and supervises private space activity.
- Agnikul launched a sub-orbital rocket from its private launchpad in 2024.

50 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Gaganyaan Tests and the Space Station Plan

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology; human spaceflight

Context

ISRO carried out several tests in July 2026 for **Gaganyaan**, India's human spaceflight programme (reported): a fifth integrated main-parachute airdrop test at Sheopur (Madhya Pradesh) on 7 July, a hot test of the CE20 cryogenic engine on 6 July, and tests of crew-module systems on 12 July. The uncrewed **G1** mission, carrying the robot **Vyommitra**, is targeted for late 2026.

Step	Status
Test Vehicle TV-D1 (crew escape)	Done, October 2023
Integrated air-drop test	Done, 2025-26
G1 uncrewed orbital flight	Targeted late 2026
Crewed flight (H1)	After uncrewed flights
Bharatiya Antariksh Station module (BAS-01)	Target 2028

Why it matters

- India would be the fourth country to send humans to orbit on its own rocket.

- Builds life-support, re-entry and recovery skills needed for a space station by 2035.
- Spin-offs in materials, medicine and safety systems.

Prelims Pointers
- LVM3, the human-rated launcher, uses the CE20 cryogenic upper stage.
- Shubhanshu Shukla became the first Indian on the ISS (Axiom-4, 2025).
- Rakesh Sharma flew to space on a Soviet mission in 1984.

51 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY — GS 3

Starship Flight 13 and the Global Space Race

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology; awareness

Context

SpaceX's Starship flew its 13th test on **24 July 2026**, the second flight of the larger V3 version. It deployed 20 advanced Starlink satellites and splashed down in the Indian Ocean after what SpaceX called its best re-entry yet; the booster failed to relight enough engines and fell into the Gulf of Mexico. Japan's **H3** rocket launched a cargo mission to the ISS on 26 July (reported).

Why it matters

- **Reusability** could cut launch costs sharply.
- Starship is the planned lunar lander for NASA's Artemis landings; Artemis III is now a low-Earth-orbit test in 2027.
- China's Chang'e-7 mission to the lunar south pole was set for August 2026.

Starlink in India
- Starlink has a DoT licence and IN-SPACe authorisation, but services had not started by July 2026.
- Final security clearances were reported to be on hold in June.

Prelims Pointers
- Low Earth orbit is roughly 160-2,000 km above Earth.
- Artemis II flew astronauts around the Moon in 2026.
- Chandrayaan-3 landed near the lunar south pole in August 2023.

52 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY — GS 3

Small Modular Reactors by 2033

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Nuclear energy; energy security

Context

The government told Parliament in late July 2026 that at least **five indigenous small modular reactors (SMRs)** should be operational by **2033**. BARC is developing a **220 MW Bharat Small Modular Reactor** and a 55 MW design. Nuclear capacity is 8.78 GW and is set to reach about 22 GW by 2031-32, on the way to **100 GW by 2047**.

Key Points
- The SHANTI Act, 2025 opened nuclear power to private participation; its rules were pending (reported).
- The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam reached first criticality in April 2026.
- Pre-project work is approved for two 500 MW fast breeder reactors at Kalpakkam (reported).

Why SMRs

- Factory-built modules cut construction time and cost.
- Can replace old coal plants on existing sites and power industry.

- **Issues:** safety regulation, fuel supply, waste and public acceptance.

Prelims Pointers

- SMRs are generally reactors of up to 300 MW per unit.
- The Nuclear Energy Mission was announced in the 2025-26 Budget with Rs 20,000 crore for SMRs.
- A fast breeder reactor produces more fissile fuel than it consumes.

53 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Chip Packaging Plant Opens at Sanand

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Semiconductors; electronics manufacturing

Context

On **4 July 2026**, the Prime Minister opened commercial production at **CG Semi's chip assembly and testing (OSAT) plant in Sanand, Gujarat**, a joint venture of CG Power with Renesas (Japan) and Stars Microelectronics (Thailand), with investment of about Rs 7,500 crore. Eleven days later, the Cabinet approved **Semicon 2.0**.

Plant	Type	Status
Micron, Sanand	Assembly and test (ATMP)	Operational, early 2026
Kaynes Semicon, Sanand	OSAT	Operational, 2026
CG Semi, Sanand	OSAT	Commercial production from 4 July 2026
Tata-PSMC, Dholera	Fabrication (fab)	Under construction

Challenges

- Fabs need huge, steady supplies of ultra-pure water and power.
- India has design talent but few manufacturing engineers.
- Global competition and subsidies from the US, EU, Japan and China.

Prelims Pointers

- OSAT: outsourced semiconductor assembly and test.
- The India Semiconductor Mission (2021) offered 50% fiscal support for fabs.
- Silicon wafers are processed in fabs; OSAT units package and test chips.

54 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

AI in July: New Models and a Delayed EU Rulebook

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Artificial intelligence; regulation

Context

OpenAI released **GPT-5.6** on **9 July 2026** with three tiers and a work agent, rolling it out in stages at the US government's request (Axios). Several other labs released new models during the month (reported). In Europe, lawmakers moved to **delay key high-risk obligations of the EU AI Act** to December 2027 and August 2028; final Council approval was pending.

Governance questions

- **Safety testing:** governments increasingly ask for checks before frontier models are released.
- **Courts:** the Supreme Court set aside tribunal orders that relied on AI-invented case law (see polity).
- **Labelling:** India amended the IT Rules earlier in 2026 to require labels on AI-generated content.

India's approach

- IndiaAI Mission (2024, Rs 10,372 crore) for compute, data and models.
- Light-touch, sector-specific rules rather than a single AI law.
- AI Safety Institute under IndiaAI.

Prelims Pointers

- The EU AI Act was adopted in 2024 and classifies AI by risk.
- General-purpose AI obligations under the Act apply from 2 August 2025.
- India hosted the AI Impact Summit in February 2026.

55 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Chandipura Virus Returns to Gujarat

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

Context

By **20-21 July 2026**, Gujarat had reported **63 suspected Chandipura virus cases**, of which 12 were confirmed, and 8 deaths, mostly young children; some cases came from Rajasthan. Separately, ICMR licensed three indigenous biomedical technologies for cancer and infectious diseases to Indian firms (21 July).

Key term	Meaning
Chandipura virus	A vesiculovirus (rhabdovirus family) causing fever and acute encephalitis, mainly in children under 15
Vector	Sandflies; also mosquitoes and ticks
First found	Chandipur village, Maharashtra (1965)

Response

- Vector control: spraying in houses and cattle sheds, filling cracks in mud walls.
- Early referral of children with fever and fits; there is no specific antiviral or vaccine.
- Testing at NIV Pune and state labs.

Prelims Pointers

- Gujarat's 2024 outbreak was among the largest in two decades.
- Nipah, another zoonotic virus, was found again in Kerala in June 2026.
- The One Health approach links human, animal and environmental health.

56 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Kusha: First Test of India's Long-Range Air Defence

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence technology; indigenisation

Context

DRDO carried out the **maiden flight test of the Kusha long-range surface-to-air missile** from Kalam Island, Odisha, on **23 July 2026**. It hit an electronic target simulating a fast, high-altitude threat. The Defence Minister said only a few countries have this capability.

Key Points

- Designed to counter fighters, cruise missiles, drones and large aircraft.
- Missiles, radars and command centre developed by DRDO with Indian industry.
- Planned in tiers with ranges reported at about 150-350 km.

Why it matters

- A home-grown alternative to imported systems such as the S-400.
- Part of a layered shield with Akash, MRSAM and ballistic missile defence.
- Lessons from Operation Sindoor showed the value of strong air defence.

Prelims Pointers

- Kalam Island was formerly Wheeler Island.
- S-400 'Triumf' is a Russian air defence system bought by India in 2018.
- MRSAM was developed jointly with Israel.

57 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Pinaka Guided Rocket and Other DRDO Milestones

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence technology; aero-engines

Context

DRDO tested the **Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket** from an in-service launcher at Chandipur on **8 July 2026**, hitting a target at the minimum range of 60 km (the maximum, 120 km, was tested earlier). Other July milestones included a new engine test cell at **GTRE** (16 July) and contracts to convert six A321 aircraft for **AEW&C Mk II** (22 July).

Date	Milestone
8 July	Pinaka LRGR test, Chandipur
16 July	Test Cell-6 at GTRE Bengaluru; Kaveri engine test run
21 July	DMRL steel technology for warships transferred to SAIL
22 July	Contracts for six AEW&C Mk II aircraft
23 July	Kusha maiden test

Why it matters

- Long-range precision rockets are cheaper than missiles for deep strikes.
- A home-grown fighter engine is the biggest gap in India's aerospace industry.
- Rare-earth-light magnets reduce dependence on Chinese supplies.

Prelims Pointers
- Pinaka is a multi-barrel rocket launcher named after Lord Shiva's bow.
- Pinaka has been exported to Armenia.
- GTRE (Bengaluru) leads the Kaveri engine programme.

58 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

DAC Clears Rs 52,000 Crore for Drones and Air Defence

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence procurement

Context

The **Defence Acquisition Council**, chaired by the Defence Minister, granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) on **3 July 2026** for proposals worth about **Rs 52,000 crore**, focused on counter-drone, anti-tank and air defence systems.

Service	Items
Army	AKASH TARANG anti-drone electronic warfare; man-portable anti-tank missiles; MRSAM; very-short-range air defence; tank protection systems; jet-powered loitering drones
Navy	Multi-influence ground mines; shipborne drones; test facility for electric propulsion

Why it matters

- Drone and counter-drone warfare has become central since recent conflicts.
- Most items are to be bought from Indian sources.
- Defence production reached Rs 1.78 lakh crore and exports Rs 38,424 crore in 2025-26 (PIB).

Prelims Pointers
- AoN is the first step in the capital procurement process.
- The Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 governs capital purchases.
- The 2026-27 defence budget is Rs 7.85 lakh crore.

59 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

INS Malvan and India's Role at RIMPAC

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

Context

INS Malvan, the second **Mahe-class anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft**, was commissioned at **Karwar** on **22 July 2026**. Built by Cochin Shipyard, it has over 80% local content. At **RIMPAC 2026** near Hawaii, India sent INS Shivalik and a P-8I aircraft and, for the first time, served as deputy commander of the anti-submarine warfare task force.

Key Points
- Shallow water craft hunt submarines in coastal waters and lay mines.
- RIMPAC is the world's largest maritime exercise, hosted by the US Navy every two years.
- The 2026 edition had about 30 nations and 30,000 personnel (reported).

Why it matters

- Coastal anti-submarine defence protects ports and trade routes.
- Leadership roles in RIMPAC show trust among partner navies.

- Building ships in India supports jobs and self-reliance.

Prelims Pointers
- Karwar (Karnataka) hosts INS Kadamba, the base being developed under Project Seabird.
- The P-8I is a long-range maritime patrol aircraft.
- India first took part in RIMPAC in 2014 with a ship.

60 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Securing the Amarnath Yatra

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Internal security; border areas

Context

The **Amarnath Yatra** began on 3 July 2026 under heavy security and crossed **4.14 lakh pilgrims** by about 27 July (reported). It was suspended from 19 July after heavy rain and later resumed. No security incident was reported in July.

Security layers
- Central armed police forces, the Army and J&K Police along both routes.
- RFID cards to track pilgrims and vehicles.
- Drones, CCTV and convoy movement with road opening parties.

Challenges

- Threat of terror attacks on pilgrims and convoys.
- Weather and landslides on high-altitude routes.
- Coordinating many agencies over a 57-day yatra.

Prelims Pointers
- The Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (2000) manages the yatra.
- Routes: Pahalgam (Anantnag) and Baltal (Ganderbal).
- The yatra ends on Raksha Bandhan (Shravan Purnima).

61 | ETHICS GS 4

Case Study: The Quarry on the Slope

Syllabus Mapping: GS4: Ethics in public administration; environmental ethics; integrity under pressure

The case

You are the newly posted District Collector of a hill district in the Western Ghats. Heavy July rain has caused small landslides near a stone quarry above a village of 300 families. The quarry has been running for six years and employs 150 local workers. Its lease is valid, but you find that it started work before getting environmental clearance and was later regularised under an office memorandum that the Supreme Court has just struck down for the future. A draft notification would bring the area into an eco-sensitive zone. The quarry owner, a major donor to local causes, asks you to 'let things be' until the lease ends in three years. Villagers are divided: some fear for their homes, others for their jobs.

Stakeholders

- Villagers living below the quarry, especially the poorest households near the slope.
- Quarry workers and their families.
- The lease holder and the construction industry that buys the stone.
- The forest, water sources and future generations.

Ethical issues

- **Right to life and safety** versus the right to livelihood.

- **Rule of law:** a legally regularised clearance that rests on a now-discredited process.
- **Precautionary principle** when the risk is likely but not certain.
- **Undue influence** of a powerful local donor.

Option	Merits	Demerits
Allow work to continue until the lease ends	No job loss; lease respected	Risk to lives during monsoons; ignores warning signs
Order immediate permanent closure	Removes risk at once	May exceed powers; jobs lost; likely legal challenge
Suspend blasting and work during the monsoon under disaster law; commission a geological safety study; relocate the most exposed families temporarily; offer alternative work to quarry workers; act on the study's findings and report the facts to the State	Protects life now; lawful and proportionate; evidence-based	Short-term loss of income; pressure from the owner

A reasoned course of action

Choose the third option. The Disaster Management Act, 2005 lets the district authority take preventive measures when there is a threat to life. Ask the Geological Survey of India or the state agency for an urgent slope study and make its findings public. Arrange temporary shelter for families on the slope and link quarry workers to MGNREGA and skill schemes. Politely decline the owner's request and record it. If the study confirms danger, recommend that the lease be cancelled and the site restored; if not, allow work under strict conditions such as no blasting in the rains.

Ethics vocabulary to use

- **Precautionary principle:** lack of full certainty is no excuse to delay action against serious harm (*Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum*, 1996).
- **Intergenerational equity:** today's choices must not rob future generations.
- **Impartiality and courage of conviction** in the face of influence.

62 | ETHICS GS 4

Ethics in the News: Values Behind July's Headlines

Syllabus Mapping: GS4: Ethics in governance, technology, sport and international relations

Why read the news for ethics

These links between July'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
Exam paper-leak law	Is harsher punishment the best deterrent?	Justice; proportionality; systemic reform
AI-invented case law in tribunals	Who is responsible for an AI's mistake?	Accountability; diligence; honesty
APAAR student ID ruling	Can welfare justify data collection without choice?	Consent; privacy; autonomy
Post-facto green clearances struck down	Should violators be regularised?	Rule of law; precaution
Early release of elderly prisoners	What does punishment owe to human dignity?	Compassion; dignity; reform
Kargil Vijay Diwas	What do citizens owe soldiers and their families?	Duty; sacrifice; gratitude
Typhoon evacuations	How far can a state restrict movement to save lives?	Paternalism; duty of care
Sport at the CWG	Winning versus fair play	Integrity; sportsmanship

Thinkers to quote

- **Bal Gangadhar Tilak:** the duty of selfless action from his *Gita Rahasya*. Use it for public service.
- **Immanuel Kant:** treat people as ends, never merely as means. Use it for data and consent.
- **Aldo Leopold:** the land ethic. Use it for the Western Ghats and quarrying.
- **Amartya Sen:** development as freedom. Use it for jobs, health and education data.

63 | ESSAY ESSAY

Essay Corner: Themes from This Month

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

Themes to practise

- **Heritage is a conversation between the past and the future.** Sarnath and living traditions.
- **The machine may err, but the responsibility is human.** AI in courts and governance.
- **A mountain does not negotiate.** Development and ecology in fragile landscapes.

Sample outline: 'The machine may err, but the responsibility is human'

- **Opening:** a tribunal order resting on court cases that never existed, written with an AI tool.
- **Meaning:** tools amplify human choices; accountability cannot be outsourced.
- **Governance:** AI in welfare targeting, policing and tax; the need for human review and appeal.
- **Economy:** productivity gains and job shifts; responsibility of firms that deploy AI.
- **Society:** deepfakes, bias and labelling rules; digital literacy.
- **Counter-view:** humans also err; well-tested AI can be more consistent and fair than tired officials.
- **Way forward:** transparency, audits, liability rules, and training for users.
- **Conclusion:** the measure of technology is the wisdom of those who use it.

Did you know?

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

64 | HISTORY PRELIMS

History, Culture and Sport: Quick Notes

Anniversaries, heritage, people and sport from July 2026.

Anniversaries

- **Syama Prasad Mookerjee (born 6 July 1901):** 125th birth anniversary.
- **Tilak (born 23 July 1856) and Chandra Shekhar Azad (born 23 July 1906):** 170th and 120th.
- **Kargil Vijay Diwas (26 July):** 27th anniversary; Shaurya Vijay Yatra to Dras.

Heritage and culture

- **Sarnath:** inscribed 25 July; India's 45th World Heritage Site.
- **WHC48, Busan:** 25 new sites; list now 1,273.
- **Rath Yatra:** Puri, 16 July. **Amarnath Yatra:** from 3 July.
- **Indonesia:** ASI to help restore Prambanan temple compounds.

Sport

- **FIFA World Cup:** Spain beat Argentina 1-0 (19 July).
- **Wimbledon:** Jannik Sinner and Linda Noskova.
- **Tour de France:** Tadej Pogacar.
- **CWG Glasgow:** Mirabai Chanu gold (48 kg); first Indian judo golds (reported).

65 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Geography: Phenomena in the News

Concepts behind July's geography stories.

Monsoon and climate

- **Monsoon covered India:** 9 July (normal 8 July).
- **Depressions:** low-pressure systems with winds of 31-49 km/h; two crossed the Odisha-Bengal coast in July.
- **Nino 3.4:** +1.2 C weekly (NOAA, 9 July); a very strong El Nino is likely.
- **Positive IOD:** likely from August (IRI), which can help Indian rainfall.

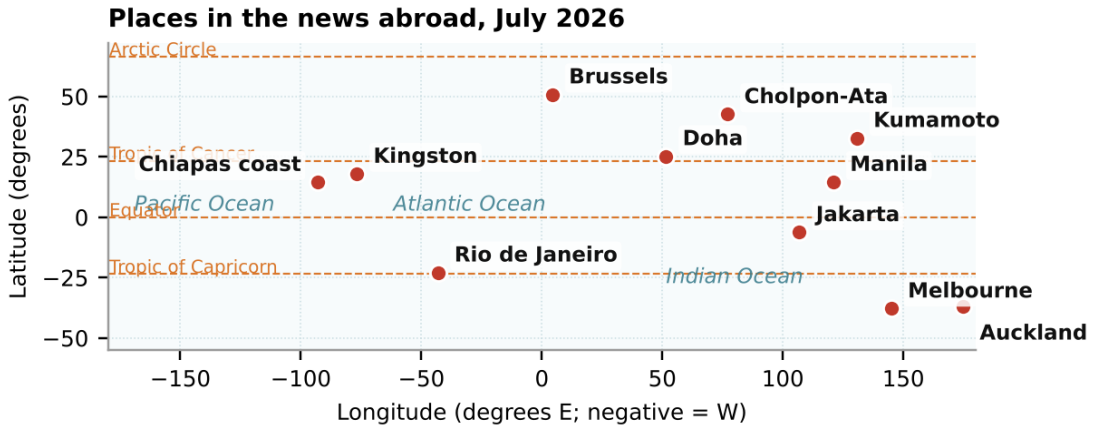
Hazards

- **Chiapas M7.3 (17 July):** subduction of the Cocos plate; small tsunami.
- **Kumamoto M6.8 (28 July):** shallow crustal quake in Kyushu.
- **Typhoon Bavi:** Category 5 strength; landfall in Zhejiang.
- **Typhoon Noul:** landfall in Guangdong (26 July).
- **Canada:** about 3 million ha burnt by 21 July.

66 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Places in the News: July 2026 on the Map

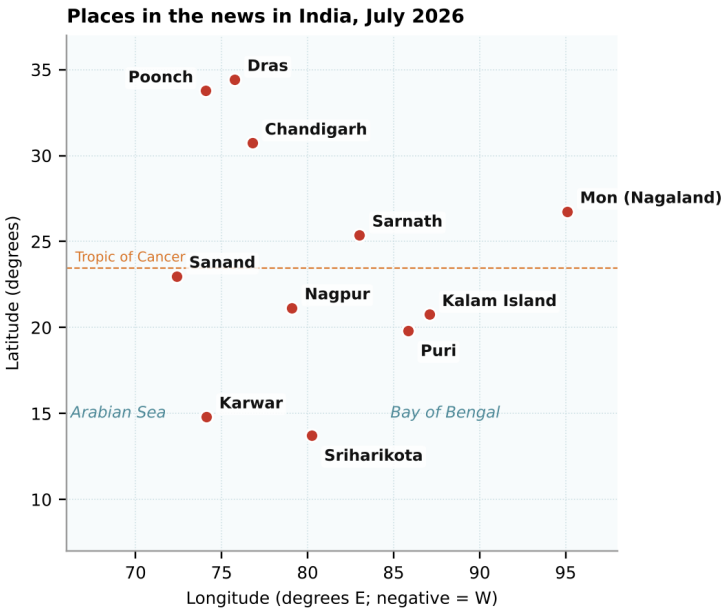
Locate each place and learn one fact about it.



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

- **Jakarta and Yogyakarta:** PM's State Visit (6-8 July).
- **Melbourne:** India-Australia annual summit (9 July).
- **Auckland:** India-New Zealand Strategic Partnership.
- **Brussels:** 3rd India-EU TTC (15 July).
- **Manila:** Quad and ASEAN meetings (22 July).
- **Cholpon-Ata (Kyrgyzstan):** SCO foreign ministers.
- **Kingston (Jamaica):** International Seabed Authority.
- **Glasgow (Scotland):** Commonwealth Games. **Rio de Janeiro:** AIDS 2026 conference.



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

India

- **Sarnath (UP):** World Heritage Site. **Puri (Odisha):** Rath Yatra.
- **Nagpur:** BRICS transport ministers. **Chandigarh:** BRICS health ministers.
- **Sanand (Gujarat):** chip packaging plant.
- **Sriharikota (AP):** Vikram-1 launch.
- **Karwar (Karnataka):** INS Malvan commissioned. **Kalam Island (Odisha):** Kusha test.
- **Poonch (J&K):** landslides. **Dras (Ladakh):** Kargil War Memorial.

67 | POLITY — PRELIMS

Polity and Governance: Quick Notes

Parliament, courts and institutions in July 2026.

Parliament

- **Monsoon Session:** from 20 July (to 13 August, scheduled).
- **Public Examinations Amendment:** passed 30 July; jail of 5-10 years.
- **National Honour Amendment:** covers Vande Mataram.
- **Births and Deaths Amendment:** passed by Lok Sabha, 31 July.
- **130th Amendment JPC:** report deferred (17 July).

Courts and institutions

- **APAAR ID:** upheld with an opt-out for parents.
- **NCSC:** advisory, not adjudicatory (Article 338).
- **Vanashakti (29 July):** no post-facto environmental clearance.
- **NITI Investment Friendliness Index:** Gujarat first (17 July).
- **By-elections:** polling 30 July; results 3 August.

68 | SOCIAL JUSTICE PRELIMS

Society, Health and Welfare: Quick Notes

Reports, results and data in July 2026.

Reports and data

- **UN SDG Report 2026:** launched 7 July; 36% of targets on track or moderate.
- **SDR 2026 (SDSN):** India 94th of 167 (reported).
- **WUENIC:** India's zero-dose children 6.79 lakh (2025).
- **UNAIDS:** 41 million living with HIV; funding down 18%.
- **PLFS (June):** unemployment 5.5%; urban 6.6%; female LFPR 32.7%.

Education and welfare

- **Re-NEET result:** 16 July; 11.21 lakh qualified.
- **Gig workers:** about 10.8 lakh on e-Shram (reported).
- **World Population Day theme:** realising the hopes and aspirations of young people.
- **Chandipura virus:** 8 deaths in Gujarat and Rajasthan by 21 July.

69 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRELIMS

International Relations: Quick Notes

Visits, groupings and agreements in July 2026.

Visits

- **Indonesia (6-8 July):** 7 MoUs; Prambanan restoration.
- **Australia (8-10 July):** 18 outcomes; uranium supply arrangement.
- **New Zealand (10-11 July):** Strategic Partnership; logistics support pact.
- **EAM:** Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman (5-10 July); UNSC campaign in New York; Brussels; Manila.

Agreements and groupings

- **India-UK CETA:** in force 15 July.
- **India-EU TTC:** third meeting, Brussels, 15 July.
- **Quad foreign ministers:** Manila, 22 July.
- **SCO foreign ministers:** Cholpon-Ata, 23-24 July.
- **BRICS:** transport (Nagpur) and health (Chandigarh) ministers.
- **UNSC campaign:** for 2028-29; vision 'SHANTI'.

70 | ECONOMY PRELIMS

Economy: Quick Notes

Numbers to remember from July 2026.

Prices and output

- **CPI (June):** 4.38% (base 2024). **WPI (June):** 9.87% (base 2022-23).
- **IIP (June):** 7.3%, a 23-month high.
- **Core index:** new base 2022-23; nine industries with iron ore.
- **IMF:** India 6.4% for 2026-27; world 3.0%.

Fiscal and external

- **GST (June):** Rs 1.95 lakh crore, up 13.9%.
- **Fiscal deficit (April-June):** 18.2% of the year's target.
- **Trade (June):** goods deficit about US$30.4 billion.
- **Forex:** US$682.35 billion (24 July).
- **Cabinet:** Semicon 2.0 (Rs 1.275 lakh crore); Samudra Manthan (Rs 84,084 crore).
- **Coal (July):** 69.75 MT, up 7.51%.

71 | ENVIRONMENT PRELIMS

Environment and Ecology: Quick Notes

Sites, species, rulings and talks in July 2026.

India

- **Tigers:** 3,682 (2022); 58 reserves; about 70% of wild tigers.
- **ZSI:** 483 new species in 2025; Kerala leads.
- **Western Ghats ESA:** 7th draft; 56,825.7 sq km; 1,463 villages.
- **Vanashakti ruling:** prior environmental clearance mandatory.

World

- **Copernicus:** July 2026 joint second-warmest July; record July sea surface temperature.
- **ISA (Kingston):** no mining code; no advisory request to ITLOS.
- **EU wildfires:** close to half a million hectares burnt by early August.
- **Mangrove Day:** 26 July. **Global Tiger Day:** 29 July.

72 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRELIMS

Science and Technology: Quick Notes

Facts from July's science stories.

India

- **Vikram-1 (18 July):** first private Indian orbital launch (Skyroot).
- **Gaganyaan:** parachute and engine tests; G1 targeted late 2026.
- **SMRs:** five by 2033; Bharat SMR of 220 MW.
- **CG Semi OSAT, Sanand:** production from 4 July.
- **ICMR:** licensed three indigenous technologies (21 July).

World

- **Starship Flight 13:** 24 July; 20 Starlink satellites deployed.
- **GPT-5.6:** released 9 July.
- **EU AI Act:** high-risk deadlines proposed for delay to 2027-28.
- **H3 (Japan):** ISS cargo launch, 26 July (reported).

73 | INTERNAL SECURITY PRELIMS

Defence and Security: Quick Notes

Tests, ships, approvals and exercises in July 2026.

Tests and approvals

- **Kusha LR-SAM:** maiden test, 23 July, Kalam Island.
- **Pinaka LRGR:** 8 July, Chandipur; 60 km minimum range.
- **DAC (3 July):** about Rs 52,000 crore AoN.
- **AEW&C Mk II:** six A321 conversions contracted (22 July).

Navy and events

- **INS Malvan:** Mahe-class ASW shallow water craft; Karwar, 22 July.
- **RIMPAC 2026:** INS Shivalik and a P-8I; India deputy commander of ASW task force.
- **Kargil Vijay Diwas:** 26 July.
- **Amarnath Yatra:** 3 July start; suspended from 19 July due to rain.

74 | REVISION REVISION

Days and Themes of July 2026

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

Days

- **National Doctors' Day, CA Day and GST Day (1 July).**
- **Van Mahotsav (first week of July).**
- **World Population Day (11 July):** 'Realising the hopes and aspirations of young people - today and for the future'.
- **World Youth Skills Day (15 July):** 'Skills for a Shared Future' (reported).
- **International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem (26 July).**
- **World Hepatitis Day (28 July):** 'Hepatitis: Let's break it down' (reported).
- **Global Tiger Day (29 July).**
- **World Day against Trafficking in Persons (30 July):** 'Trapped Behind the Scam'.

Anniversaries

- **6 July:** Syama Prasad Mookerjee, 125 years.
- **23 July:** Tilak and Chandra Shekhar Azad.
- **26 July:** Kargil Vijay Diwas.

75 | REVISION REVISION

Practice Questions: Prelims and Mains

1. Consider: 1. Operation Safed Sagar was the IAF's part in the Kargil war. 2. Tiger Hill was recaptured on 4 July 1999. Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither

Answer: (c). Kargil Vijay Diwas is 26 July.

2. The Kargil Review Committee was headed by:

(a) N.N. Vohra (b) K. Subrahmanyam (c) Naresh Chandra (d) Arun Singh

Answer: (b). It reported in 2000.

3. 'Gita Rahasya' was written by Tilak while in prison at:

(a) Andaman (b) Yerwada (c) Mandalay (d) Rangoon

Answer: (c). He was jailed in Mandalay from 1908 to 1914.

4. Chandra Shekhar Azad was associated with:

(a) Ghadar Party (b) Anushilan Samiti (c) Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (d) Abhinav Bharat

Answer: (c). HSRA was renamed in 1928 at Delhi.

5. Syama Prasad Mookerjee resigned from the Union Cabinet in 1950 over:

(a) the Hindu Code Bill (b) the Nehru-Liaquat Pact (c) Article 370 (d) the States Reorganisation Commission

Answer: (b). He founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951.

6. Sarnath was inscribed on the World Heritage List under which criteria?

(a) (i) and (ii) (b) (iii) and (vi) (c) (vii) and (x) (d) (iv) only

Answer: (b). Lasting pilgrimage tradition and association with the first sermon.

7. India's World Heritage Sites after July 2026 number:

(a) 43 (b) 44 (c) 45 (d) 46

Answer: (c). 37 cultural, 7 natural, 1 mixed.

8. The Chhera Pahanra ritual is associated with:
(a) Hornbill festival (b) Puri Rath Yatra (c) Onam (d) Kumbh Mela
Answer: (b). The Gajapati king sweeps the chariots.

9. Which country won the 2026 FIFA World Cup?
(a) Argentina (b) France (c) Spain (d) Brazil
Answer: (c). Beat Argentina 1-0 after extra time.

10. In July 2026 the monsoon covered the whole of India on:
(a) 30 June (b) 8 July (c) 9 July (d) 15 July
Answer: (c). The normal date is 8 July.

11. A 'very strong' El Nino is when the Nino 3.4 anomaly is at least:
(a) +0.5 C (b) +1.0 C (c) +1.5 C (d) +2.0 C
Answer: (d). NOAA gave 81% odds for late 2026.

12. The Chiapas earthquake of July 2026 is linked to subduction of the:
(a) Nazca plate (b) Cocos plate (c) Juan de Fuca plate (d) Philippine Sea plate
Answer: (b). Along the Middle America Trench.

13. Which statement about tropical cyclones is NOT correct?
(a) They need warm sea surface (b) They are called typhoons in the northwest Pacific (c) They form most easily on the Equator (d) They weaken over land
Answer: (c). The Coriolis force is too weak at the Equator.

14. The monthly PLFS bulletin measures unemployment using:
(a) usual status only (b) current weekly status (c) current daily status only (d) census definitions
Answer: (b). CWS: activity in the past seven days.

15. The High-Level Political Forum that reviews SDGs works under:
(a) UNGA First Committee (b) ECOSOC (c) UNEP (d) UNDP Executive Board
Answer: (b). It meets every July.

16. Indonesia's Prambanan temple compound is primarily:
(a) Buddhist (b) Hindu (c) Jain (d) Islamic
Answer: (b). A 9th-century Hindu temple complex; ASI to help restore it.

17. The Six Degree Channel separates:
(a) Andaman from Myanmar (b) Great Nicobar from Sumatra (c) Lakshadweep from Maldives (d) Sri Lanka from India
Answer: (b). Near the Malacca Strait approaches.

18. India-Australia ECTA entered into force in:
(a) 2020 (b) 2021 (c) 2022 (d) 2024
Answer: (c). 29 December 2022.

19. The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) was launched by India at:
(a) the Shangri-La Dialogue 2018 (b) the East Asia Summit 2019 (c) the Quad Summit 2021 (d) G20 2023
Answer: (b). New Zealand will lead its maritime security pillar.

20. The India-UK CETA came into force on:
(a) 24 July 2025 (b) 1 January 2026 (c) 15 July 2026 (d) 1 October 2026
Answer: (c). Signed in July 2025.

21. Section 122 of the US Trade Act, 1974 allows temporary tariffs for:
(a) 90 days (b) 150 days (c) 180 days (d) one year
Answer: (b). Used for balance-of-payments problems.

22. Which grouping has a Trade and Technology Council with India?
(a) ASEAN (b) European Union (c) GCC (d) African Union
Answer: (b). Third meeting in Brussels, July 2026.

23. SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure is located in:
(a) Beijing (b) Moscow (c) Tashkent (d) Bishkek
Answer: (c). SCO was founded in 2001.

24. Consider: 1. The Public Examinations Act was passed in 2024. 2. The 2026 amendment raised jail terms to 5-10 years. Which is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither
Answer: (c). Passed by Parliament on 30 July 2026.

25. The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act was amended in 2026 to cover:
(a) the national flower (b) the national song (c) the national emblem (d) the national calendar
Answer: (b). The Act dates from 1971.

26. The National Commission for Scheduled Castes was made a separate body by the:
(a) 65th Amendment (b) 73rd Amendment (c) 89th Amendment (d) 102nd Amendment
Answer: (c). In 2003; Article 338.

27. Disqualification on conviction with two years' sentence is provided by:
(a) Article 102 directly (b) Section 8(3) of the RP Act, 1951 (c) Tenth Schedule (d) Article 191(2)
Answer: (b). Applied in the Datia vacancy.

28. APAAR is related to:
(a) agricultural insurance (b) a student academic ID (c) pension accounts (d) property records
Answer: (b). Upheld with an opt-out for parents.

29. Which state topped NITI Aayog's first Investment Friendliness Index?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Gujarat (d) Karnataka
Answer: (c). Released 17 July 2026.

30. Mission Indradhanush aims at:
(a) solar energy (b) full immunisation (c) skill training (d) water supply
Answer: (b). Launched in December 2014.

31. The base year of the new CPI series released from 2026 is:
(a) 2012 (b) 2020 (c) 2022-23 (d) 2024
Answer: (d). June 2026 CPI was 4.38%.

32. Which industry was added to the Index of Core Industries in July 2026?
(a) Aluminium (b) Iron ore (c) Copper (d) Textiles
Answer: (b). Now nine industries, base 2022-23.

33. India's forex reserves include: 1. Gold 2. SDRs 3. Reserve position in the IMF. Select:
(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: (d). Plus foreign currency assets.

34. Under the Hybrid Annuity Model for highways, the government pays during construction about:
(a) 20% (b) 40% (c) 60% (d) 100%
Answer: (b). The rest is paid as annuities.

35. The National Tiger Conservation Authority is a:
(a) society (b) statutory body under the Wildlife (Protection) Act (c) constitutional body (d) company
Answer: (b). Set up by the 2006 amendment.

36. The Zoological Survey of India is headquartered in:
(a) Dehradun (b) Kolkata (c) Chennai (d) Pune
Answer: (b). Founded in 1916.

37. The International Seabed Authority is located in:
(a) Hamburg (b) Kingston (c) Geneva (d) Nairobi
Answer: (b). ITLOS is in Hamburg.

38. Vikram-1, launched in July 2026, was built by:
(a) Agnikul Cosmos (b) Skyroot Aerospace (c) Pixxel (d) Dhruva Space
Answer: (b). First private orbital launch from India.

39. Small modular reactors are generally of capacity up to:
(a) 30 MW (b) 300 MW (c) 700 MW (d) 1,000 MW
Answer: (b). India plans five by 2033.

40. Chandipura virus is transmitted mainly by:

(a) Aedes mosquitoes (b) sandflies (c) rodents (d) contaminated water

Answer: (b). It causes encephalitis in children.

41. Kusha, tested in July 2026, is a:

(a) hypersonic glide vehicle (b) long-range surface-to-air missile (c) anti-ship missile (d) ballistic missile

Answer: (b). Maiden test from Kalam Island.

42. RIMPAC is hosted by:

(a) Australia (b) Japan (c) the US Navy (d) India

Answer: (c). Held near Hawaii every two years.

Mains Practice

- **Q1.** The Kargil war exposed gaps in intelligence and jointness. Examine the reforms that followed and what remains to be done. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q2.** Compare the methods of the assertive nationalists and the revolutionaries in India's freedom struggle with reference to Tilak and Chandra Shekhar Azad. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q3.** World Heritage status brings both opportunities and obligations. Discuss with reference to Sarnath. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q4.** Large religious gatherings in India need scientific crowd and disaster management. Suggest measures. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q5.** Explain how El Nino and the Indian Ocean Dipole together shape the Indian monsoon. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q6.** Why are tropical cyclones becoming more intense? Discuss the implications for coastal India. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q7.** Low female labour force participation persists despite rising education. Analyse. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q8.** Assess India's progress on the SDGs. Which goals need the most attention? (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q9.** Indonesia is central to India's Act East Policy and maritime strategy. Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q10.** India-Australia relations have moved from trade to strategic convergence. Examine. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q11.** What are the gains and risks for India from the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement? (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q12.** Discuss the significance of the Quad's engagement with ASEAN. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q13.** India's bid for a UNSC seat reflects its aspirations for global leadership. Critically examine. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q14.** Harsher penalties alone cannot stop exam paper leaks. Critically evaluate the 2026 amendment to the Public Examinations Act. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q15.** The use of AI in judicial and quasi-judicial work raises questions of accountability. Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q16.** Are statutory commissions such as the NCSC effective without binding powers? Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q17.** How can state-level indices strengthen competitive federalism? Discuss with reference to NITI Aayog's Investment Friendliness Index. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q18.** India has reduced zero-dose children sharply. What explains this success and what gaps remain? (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q19.** Social security for gig workers is a test of India's labour codes. Comment. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q20.** A widening gap between wholesale and retail inflation has implications for monetary policy. Explain. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q21.** Rebasing economic indices is essential for good policy. Discuss with reference to the new CPI and core industries series. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q22.** Large production-linked incentives for semiconductors and electronics must be matched by ecosystem reforms. Discuss. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q23.** Discuss the measures needed to protect kharif output when monsoon rainfall is uneven. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q24.** Should post-facto environmental clearances ever be permitted? Discuss in light of the Supreme Court's ruling. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q25.** Balancing conservation and livelihoods remains the core challenge in the Western Ghats. Examine. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q26.** Deep-sea mining could secure critical minerals but at an ecological cost. Discuss India's position. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q27.** Landslides in the Himalaya are as much man-made as natural. Comment with suggestions. (15 marks, 250 words)

- **Q28.** The entry of private launch companies marks a new phase in India's space sector. Discuss its significance and challenges. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q29.** Small modular reactors can help India meet its 2047 nuclear target. Examine the opportunities and concerns. (15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q30.** Indigenous long-range air defence is critical for India's security. Discuss with reference to recent developments. (10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q31.** A collector must choose between livelihoods and safety in a landslide-prone quarry area. What ethical principles should guide the decision? (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.

India Meteorological Department
https://mausam.imd.gov.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.

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Sources and Notes

- **History and culture:** PIB backgrounder on Kargil Vijay Diwas (24 July); AIR and IANS (Tilak and Azad tributes); The Statesman and Victoria Memorial (Mookerjee); PIB document and Drishti (Sarnath); QNA/The Peninsula (WHC48 outcomes); ETV Bharat and FPJ (Rath Yatra, Amarnath); Drishti (GI counts); theScore and AllAfrica (World Cup); results pages (Wimbledon, Tour de France, cricket); Outlook, Esquire and The Bridge (CWG).
- **Geography and disasters:** IMD press releases (5, 9 and 26 July) and briefing of 31 July (Business Standard); NOAA CPC ENSO discussion (9 July); IRI ENSO quick look (20 July); Copernicus C3S July bulletin; USGS catalogue; NOAA tsunami.gov; Watchers (Kumamoto); The World and Malay Mail (typhoons); Down To Earth, AIR and Al Jazeera (floods); Euronews (Europe fires); UNU-INWEH (Canada).
- **Society:** MoSPI PLFS bulletin (15 July); UN DESA SDG Report 2026; Drishti (SDR 2026); UNICEF India and FPJ (WUENIC); RuralVoice, StudyIQ and Drishti (SOFI 2026); UNAIDS; Careers360 and WION (NEET results); SCC Online and Anantam (gig workers); AIR (World Population Day); UNRIC (trafficking day).
- **International relations:** MEA announcements via AIR; Government of Indonesia (Setkab); AIR and Asianet (Australia); NZIIA and The Week (New Zealand); Tribune and HLC (India-UK CETA); ETV Bharat/PTI (US trade); MEA India-EU brief and European Commission joint statement (TTC); Australian Foreign Minister's release and Republic (Quad); Tribune (UNSC campaign, SCO); Embassy of India, Oman (EAM tour); Drishti, UNI and PIB summary (BRICS meetings).
- **Polity and governance:** PRS Monthly Policy Review, July 2026; SCC Online July roundup; Down To Earth court digest; Business Today and FPJ (session); News Arena and NewKerala (JPCs); ECI SIR schedule via Morung Express; Newsgram/IANS (by-election results); AIR and ThePrint (NITI index).
- **Economy and agriculture:** MoSPI CPI release (13 July); DPIIT WPI release (14 July) and core index (20 July); AIR (IIP, 28 July); Commerce Ministry trade release (13 July) and ICRA; PTI-based reports (forex, GST, CGA fiscal data); Outlook Business and Business Today (IMF); Free Press Journal and AIR (Cabinet decisions); DD India, AgroSpectrum and Global Agriculture (kharif); Down To Earth (CWC storage); AIR, Swarajya and Sahi (coal); pv magazine (power); PIB Cabinet document (highways).
- **Environment:** AIR and Indian Masterminds (Global Tiger Day); Drishti (ZSI Animal Discoveries); Swarajya and Sanskriti IAS (Western Ghats draft); Down To Earth (Vanashakti ruling, NGT); IISD ENB and Ocean Mining Intel (ISA).
- **Science and security:** ISRO (Vikram-1); ISpA July newsletter (Gaganyaan tests, IN-SPACe items); AP (Starship); MediaNama (Starlink); AIR and SuperKalam (nuclear replies); AIR and WebIndia (CG Semi); Axios (GPT-5.6); Sidley (EU AI Act); DeshGujarat and ThePrint (Chandipura); AIR (ICMR); AIR, IANS and DRDO Newsletter (Kusha, DRDO milestones); Telangana Today and ETV Bharat (Pinaka); GKToday and Cavalier (DAC); Raksha Anirveda and Naval News (INS Malvan); Marine Insight (RIMPAC); Open (Amarnath).

Please verify before use

- **Facts are as reported up to 31 July 2026.** By-election results (3 August), the Copernicus July bulletin (August), the end of the Commonwealth Games (2 August) and the rest of the Monsoon Session fall after the month; we flag them where used.
- **Corrections to our June issue:** the Western Ghats ESA was re-issued as a seventh draft (about 27 July), not finally notified; the WPI now uses base 2022-23 (our June verify note mentioned 2011-12).
- **Reported, not confirmed from primary documents:** CWG medal tally and the 'first judo golds' claim; Mookerjee celebration budget; GI rankings; Maharashtra and Gujarat flood tolls; Kumamoto death toll; typhoon evacuation numbers; SDR 2026 rank and release date; SOFI 2026 India figures; e-Shram gig worker count; NZ FTA in-force date and investment pledge; BRICS transport meeting dates; Semicon 2.0 and mobile scheme details; Gaganyaan July tests; IN-SPACe Jio and re-entry items; SHANTI rules; Kusha range; RIMPAC participation numbers; H3 launch; Amarnath pilgrim count; theme of World Youth Skills Day and World Hepatitis Day.
- **Figures or dates that differ between sources:** UNSC campaign launch (13 or 14 July); WUENIC release (15 or 21 July); Kumamoto magnitude (USGS 6.8, JMA 7.1); July rainfall described as 'normal' or '1% above'; date of the highway approvals (1 or 19 July).
- **Derived by us:** anniversary numbers; June-July rainfall departure (about -15%); the end date of the US Section 122 tariff period.
- **Approximate map points:** typhoon landfalls, disaster sites and some event venues 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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