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MONTHLY MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 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

Inside This Issue

Tap any subject tile or title to jump straight to it. Use the bookmarks panel of your PDF reader to browse by GS paper, and tick the boxes on the contents pages as you revise.

History
GS 1 | 1 section | p. 5
Vivekananda at Chicago, Bhagat Singh and Vinoba

Art and Culture
GS 1 | 4 sections | p. 5
Hindi Diwas and the Rajbhasha Sammelan

Geography
GS 1 | 5 sections | p. 8
Monsoon 2026 Ends Deficient at 87% of Normal

Indian Society
GS 1 | 2 sections | p. 12
Jobs Data

International Relations
GS 2 | 7 sections | p. 13
BRICS Summit in New Delhi

Polity
GS 2 | 4 sections | p. 17
Election Commissioners' Appointment Law Sent to ...

Governance
GS 2 | 1 section | p. 20
New Rules Against Dark Patterns in E-Commerce

Social Justice
GS 2 | 3 sections | p. 21
Poshan Maah 2026

Economy
GS 3 | 14 sections | p. 23
Inflation

Agriculture
GS 3 | 1 section | p. 30
Kharif Sowing Falls; Rice Area Down

Environment
GS 3 | 5 sections | p. 33
World Ozone Day

Disaster Management
GS 3 | 2 sections | p. 37
Depressions Over Odisha and Floods in North Indi...

Science and Technology
GS 3 | 6 sections | p. 38
GSLV-F17 Launches EOS-05, India's First Geostati...

Internal Security
GS 3 | 4 sections | p. 41
DAC Clears Rs 1.10 Lakh Crore Proposals

Ethics
GS 4 | 2 sections | p. 44
Case Study

Essay
Essay | 1 section | p. 45
Essay Corner

Prelims Notes
Prelims | 10 sections | p. 46
History, Culture and Sport

Revision and Practice
Revision | 4 sections | p. 51
Days and Themes of September 2026

Top stories this month

- **Diplomacy:** 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi; Modi-Xi bilateral talks.
- **Climate:** monsoon ends 'deficient' at 87%; a very strong El Nino looms.
- **Space and tech:** GSLV-F17 launches EOS-05; RAPP-8 loads fuel; SEMICON India.
- **Economy:** CPI 4.82%, WPI 9.92%, IIP 8.0%; forex at a record, then a sharp fall.
- **Polity:** CEC appointment law sent to a Constitution Bench; rules against dark patterns.

How to read this magazine

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

About this issue

- The September 2026 wide-coverage issue: every GS paper, Essay and Prelims, with maps, charts, an ethics case study and practice questions.
- Facts are as reported up to 30 September 2026; October events are left for the next issue.
- Maps are location diagrams (points by latitude and longitude, no boundaries). Use an official Survey of India map for India's boundaries.

Contents

GS PAPER I: HISTORY, CULTURE, GEOGRAPHY, SOCIETY

☐	01	Vivekananda at Chicago, Bhagat Singh and Vinoba History	5
☐	02	Hindi Diwas and the Rajbhasha Sammelan Art and Culture	5
☐	03	National Teachers' Awards and National Film Awards Art and Culture	6
☐	04	Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya: India's First Fortnight Art and Culture	7
☐	05	Chess Olympiad Medals and Global Awards Art and Culture	8
☐	06	Monsoon 2026 Ends Deficient at 87% of Normal Geography	8
☐	07	Northeast Monsoon Outlook and Withdrawal Geography	9
☐	08	El Nino: Over 90% Chance of a Very Strong Event Geography	10
☐	09	Arctic Sea Ice Reaches Its Annual Minimum Geography	11
☐	10	Hurricane Polo Hits Mexico; Atlantic Stays Quiet Geography	11
☐	11	Jobs Data: Unemployment at 5.0% Indian Society	12
☐	12	Gender Equality: 171 Years Away Indian Society	13

GS PAPER II: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, IR

☐	13	BRICS Summit in New Delhi: The New Delhi Declaration International Relations	13
☐	14	Modi and Xi Meet in New Delhi International Relations	14
☐	15	SCO Bishkek Summit: English Becomes an Official Language International Relations	14
☐	16	India and Iran Amid the West Asia War International Relations	15
☐	17	India at UNGA 81: Terrorism, Global South and Reform International Relations	16
☐	18	India-EU FTA Moves Towards Signing International Relations	16
☐	19	Neighbourhood: Ganga Treaty Talks and Pakistan at the UN International Relations	17
☐	20	Election Commissioners' Appointment Law Sent to a Constitution Bench Polity	17
☐	21	Supreme Court in September: Judges, Protests and the Bar Polity	18
☐	22	Eight New High Court Chief Justices; Three Names for the Supreme Court Polity	19
☐	23	Delhi's Voter Roll Deletions and Bypolls Called Polity	20
☐	24	New Rules Against Dark Patterns in E-Commerce Governance	20
☐	25	Poshan Maah 2026: Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari Social Justice	21
☐	26	Ayushman Bharat at Eight Social Justice	22
☐	27	Global Innovation Index and University Rankings Social Justice	22

GS PAPER III: ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT, S&T, SECURITY

☐	28	Inflation: Retail 4.82%, Wholesale 9.92% Economy	23
☐	29	Industry: IIP Grows 8.0%, Core Sector Slows Economy	24
☐	30	GST Collections Near Rs 2 Lakh Crore Economy	25
☐	31	Exports Jump 26% in August; Gold Imports Fall Economy	25
☐	32	Current Account Deficit at 0.5% of GDP Economy	26
☐	33	External Debt Rises to US$778 Billion Economy	27
☐	34	Forex Reserves Peak, Then Fall Sharply Economy	27
☐	35	OECD and ADB Raise India's Growth Forecasts Economy	28
☐	36	SEBI Overhauls Portfolio Management and Opens Commodities to FPIs Economy	29
☐	37	RBI Targets Mule Accounts; States Get Higher Ways and Means Limits Economy	29
☐	38	Kharif Sowing Falls; Rice Area Down Agriculture	30
☐	39	Renewable Capacity Crosses 295 GW Economy	31

☐	40	**Power Demand and Coal Output** Economy	31
☐	41	**Western Dedicated Freight Corridor Completed** Economy	32
☐	42	**Green Energy Corridor Phase III and Draft Petroleum Bill** Economy	33
☐	43	**World Ozone Day: Kigali Amendment at Ten** Environment	33
☐	44	**Swachhata Hi Seva 2026** Environment	34
☐	45	**Project Cheetah: Four Years On** Environment	35
☐	46	**Revised GRAP for Delhi-NCR** Environment	36
☐	47	**Road to COP31 in Antalya** Environment	36
☐	48	**Depressions Over Odisha and Floods in North India** Disaster Management	37
☐	49	**Drought in Maharashtra** Disaster Management	38
☐	50	**GSLV-F17 Launches EOS-05, India's First Geostationary Imaging Satellite** Science and Technology	38
☐	51	**Satellite Internet: Spectrum Pricing Cleared** Science and Technology	39
☐	52	**SEMICON India 2026** Science and Technology	39
☐	53	**RAPP-8 Loads Fuel; Nuclear Power Expands** Science and Technology	40
☐	54	**Starship Reaches Orbit on Its 14th Flight** Science and Technology	40
☐	55	**Lasker Awards and Kerala's Amoebic Infections** Science and Technology	41
☐	56	**DAC Clears Rs 1.10 Lakh Crore Proposals** Internal Security	41
☐	57	**Yudh Abhyas and Nomadic Elephant** Internal Security	42
☐	58	**AFSPA Extended in Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal** Internal Security	43
☐	59	**Navy to Induct 18 Warships in 2026** Internal Security	43

GS PAPER IV: ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND APTITUDE

☐	60	**Case Study: The Hospital That Filled Its Beds** Ethics	44
☐	61	**Ethics in the News: Values Behind September's Headlines** Ethics	45

ESSAY

☐	62	**Essay Corner: Themes from This Month** Essay	45

PRELIMS FOCUS

☐	63	**History, Culture and Sport: Quick Notes** History	46
☐	64	**Geography: Phenomena in the News** Geography	46
☐	65	**Places in the News: September 2026 on the Map** Geography	47
☐	66	**Polity and Governance: Quick Notes** Polity	48
☐	67	**Society and Social Justice: Quick Notes** Indian Society	48
☐	68	**International Relations: Quick Notes** International Relations	49
☐	69	**Economy and Agriculture: Numbers to Remember** Economy	49
☐	70	**Environment: Quick Notes** Environment	50
☐	71	**Science and Technology: Quick Notes** Science and Technology	50
☐	72	**Defence and Security: Quick Notes** Internal Security	51

REVISION

☐	73	**Days and Themes of September 2026** Revision	51
☐	74	**Practice Questions: Prelims and Mains** Revision	52
☐	75	**Official Sources to Bookmark** Revision	56
☐	76	**Sources and Notes** Sources	57

01 | HISTORY GS 1

Vivekananda at Chicago, Bhagat Singh and Vinoba

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Modern Indian history; personalities; social reform

Context

September brings several anniversaries. **11 September** marks Swami Vivekananda's address at the **Parliament of the World's Religions, Chicago (1893)**, 133 years ago, and the birth anniversary of **Vinoba Bhave** (1895). **28 September** is the birth anniversary of **Bhagat Singh** (1907). **15 September** is Engineers' Day, the birth anniversary of **M. Visvesvaraya** (1861).

Person	Key contribution
Swami Vivekananda	Chicago speech on tolerance and universal acceptance; founded the Ramakrishna Mission (1897)
Vinoba Bhave	Bhoodan movement (1951, Pochampally); first individual satyagrahi (1940); Magsaysay award (1958)
Bhagat Singh	HSRA; Central Legislative Assembly bombing (1929); executed 23 March 1931
M. Visvesvaraya	Engineer of the Krishnarajasagara dam; Diwan of Mysore; Bharat Ratna (1955)

Why they matter today

- **Vivekananda:** a confident, inclusive idea of Indian civilisation; National Youth Day (12 January) honours him.
- **Bhagat Singh:** revolutionary thought linked freedom with social and economic justice.
- **Vinoba:** voluntary land gifts showed a non-violent path to land reform, though much donated land was poor or never distributed.

Prelims Pointers

- Bhoodan began at Pochampally (now in Telangana) in April 1951.
- Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt threw bombs in the Central Legislative Assembly against the Public Safety and Trade Disputes Bills.
- Vivekananda's guru was Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

02 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Hindi Diwas and the Rajbhasha Sammelan

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Culture; languages; GS2: Official language provisions

Context

On **Hindi Diwas (14 September 2026)**, the Home Minister opened the **6th Akhil Bharatiya Rajbhasha Sammelan** in **Navi Mumbai**, presented the Rajbhasha Gaurav and Rajbhasha Kirti Awards, and launched the **'Bharati' multilingual translation app** and **'Bhasha Kunj'**, described as India's first data centre dedicated to Indian languages. He compared Indian languages to the petals of a lotus.

Provision	What it says
Article 343	Hindi in Devanagari is the official language of the Union
Article 344	Official Language Commission and committee of Parliament
Article 351	Duty of the Union to promote the spread of Hindi
Official Languages Act, 1963	English continues alongside Hindi for official purposes
Eighth Schedule	22 languages

The debate

- **Supporters** say Hindi as a link language aids national integration.
- **Critics** in non-Hindi states oppose any imposition; the three-language formula remains contested.
- Technology such as AI translation can help all Indian languages grow together.

Prelims Pointers

- The Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi as the official language on 14 September 1949.
- World Hindi Day is on 10 January.
- BHASHINI is the national language translation mission.

03 | ART AND CULTURE **GS 1**

National Teachers' Awards and National Film Awards

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Culture; GS2: Education

Context

On **Teachers' Day (5 September)**, the President gave the **National Teachers' Awards 2026** to **48 school teachers** (26 men, 22 women) from 27 states, 7 UTs and 6 organisations. On **22 September**, she presented the **72nd National Film Awards** at the **Statue of Unity, Ekta Nagar (Gujarat)**, the first ceremony held outside New Delhi (as reported).

National Film Award (for 2024)	Winner
Dadasaheb Phalke Award	Anant Nag, Kannada actor
Best Feature Film	*Article 370*
Best Actor (joint)	Mammootty and Kartik Aaryan
Best Actress	Yami Gautam
Best Director	Rajkumar Periasamy (*Amaran*)
Best Popular Film	*Kalki 2898 AD*

Why it matters

- Teacher awards recognise innovation in classrooms, especially in government schools.
- Holding film awards at tourist sites aims to link cinema with tourism.
- Regional cinema continues to win top honours.

Prelims Pointers

- Teachers' Day marks Dr S. Radhakrishnan's birth anniversary (5 September 1888).
- The Dadasaheb Phalke Award was instituted in 1969; Devika Rani was the first recipient.
- National Film Awards are organised by the I&B Ministry through the National Film Development Corporation.

04 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya: India's First Fortnight

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Society; sport

Context

The **20th Asian Games** opened in **Aichi-Nagoya, Japan** on **19 September 2026** and run to 4 October. By 30 September, India had won about **60 medals (10 gold, 21 silver, 29 bronze)**, as reported.

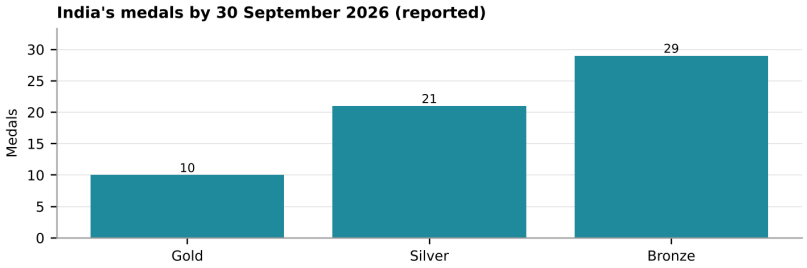


Chart. Source: myKhel tally, 30 September 2026.

Highlights (as reported)

- **Gold:** shooting (10m air pistol mixed team; women's trap), women's cricket, men's and women's kabaddi, women's 4x400m relay, compound archery team events.
- **Firsts in decades:** Sawan Barwal's marathon silver; Seema Kumari's 10,000m bronze; Pooja's high jump bronze.
- **Mirabai Chanu** won weightlifting silver.

Context

- India won a record 107 medals (28 gold) at Hangzhou 2022 (held in 2023).
- The Games end in October, so the final tally belongs to next month's issue.

Prelims Pointers

- The first Asian Games were held in New Delhi in 1951.
- The Olympic Council of Asia governs the Asian Games.
- Japan earlier hosted in Tokyo (1958) and Hiroshima (1994).

05 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Chess Olympiad Medals and Global Awards

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Society; sport; personalities

Context

At the **46th Chess Olympiad** in **Samarkand, Uzbekistan** (final round 27 September), India's men won **silver** on tiebreak and the women won **bronze**, after both teams had won gold in 2024. Uzbekistan won the open section and China the women's. In tennis, **Alexander Zverev** won the US Open (13 September), his first Grand Slam title.

Event	Result
Chess Olympiad (open)	Uzbekistan gold, India silver, Germany bronze
Chess Olympiad (women)	China gold, Kazakhstan silver, India bronze
US Open men's singles	Alexander Zverev beat Ben Shelton
Right Livelihood Award (30 Sept)	Timnit Gebru, Jalila Haider, Rural Women's Assembly, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association

Why it matters

- India's depth in chess is now among the world's best, with several young grandmasters.
- Neeraj Chopra missed the Diamond League Final in Brussels due to an ankle injury (reported).
- The Right Livelihood Award, often called the 'Alternative Nobel', honoured work on AI ethics and human rights.

Prelims Pointers

- India hosted the 44th Chess Olympiad at Mamallapuram in 2022.
- FIDE is the international chess federation.
- The Right Livelihood Award was set up in 1980.

06 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Monsoon 2026 Ends Deficient at 87% of Normal

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

Context

IMD's end-of-season summary (30 September 2026) put June-September rainfall at **759.4 mm, 87% of the long period average**. The season is classed as **'deficient'** (13% below normal). September rain was 92% of normal. The monsoon began withdrawing from west Rajasthan on **19 September**, two days after the normal date.

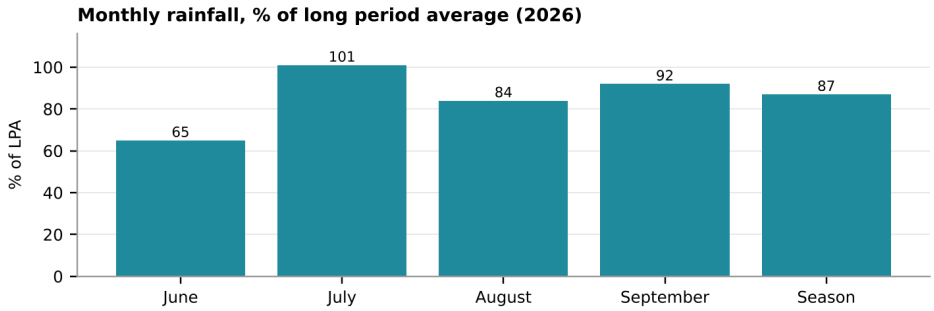


Chart. Source: IMD, Salient Features of SW Monsoon 2026 (30 September).

Region	Season (% of LPA)
Northwest India	94
Central India	97

Region	Season (% of LPA)
South Peninsula	76
East and Northeast India	74

Key features

- Of 36 subdivisions, 18 were normal, 17 deficient and only Odisha in excess.
- Fourteen low-pressure systems formed, more than normal, but most stayed over central and eastern India.
- El Nino strengthened through the season; the IOD stayed neutral.

Prelims Pointers

- The season is 'deficient' if rainfall is below 90% of the LPA.
- The LPA for June-September is 87 cm (1971-2020).
- Withdrawal begins from west Rajasthan; the normal date is 17 September.

07 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Northeast Monsoon Outlook and Withdrawal

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian climate; GS3: Agriculture

Context

IMD said on **30 September 2026** that the **northeast monsoon** (October-December) over the **South Peninsula** is likely to be **normal (88-112% of the long period average)**, but rainfall over most of the country in this period is likely to be below normal. October rain for India as a whole is likely to be below 85% of normal, with above-normal temperatures.

How the northeast monsoon works

- After the southwest monsoon retreats, winds reverse and blow from the northeast over the Bay of Bengal.
- They pick up moisture and bring rain to Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, coastal Andhra Pradesh, south interior Karnataka and Kerala.
- Cyclones and depressions from the Bay of Bengal add much of this rain.

Why it matters this year

- Southern reservoirs are low after a 24% seasonal deficit in the South Peninsula.
- Rabi crops in the south depend on October-December rain.
- A strong El Nino sometimes coincides with a good northeast monsoon over Tamil Nadu, though not always.

Prelims Pointers

- Tamil Nadu gets about half its annual rain from the northeast monsoon.
- October-November is a peak season for Bay of Bengal cyclones.
- Mango showers and Kalbaishakhi are pre-monsoon, not northeast monsoon, phenomena.

08 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

El Nino: Over 90% Chance of a Very Strong Event

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

Context

NOAA's ENSO update of **10 September 2026** kept an **El Nino Advisory**, with a **greater than 90% chance of a very strong event** this winter and a **75% chance of a 'historic' event** (Relative ONI of +2.5 C or more) in October-December. The August Nino 3.4 anomaly was **+1.8 C**; parts of the eastern Pacific were over 3 C above normal. WMO issued its El Nino/La Nina update on 3 September.

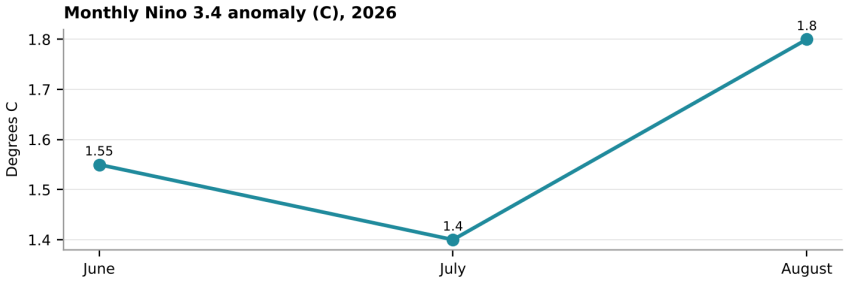


Chart. June and July values come from different sources and methods; read the trend, not exact differences. Source: IRI (June) and NOAA CPC discussions (August and September 2026).

Key term	Meaning
ONI	Oceanic Nino Index: three-month mean Nino 3.4 anomaly
RONI	Relative ONI: Nino 3.4 anomaly minus the tropical-mean anomaly, to remove overall ocean warming
SOI	Southern Oscillation Index: pressure difference between Tahiti and Darwin; negative in El Nino

Possible impacts

- Warm, dry winter in parts of India; weaker western disturbances in some El Nino years.
- Droughts in Indonesia, Australia and southern Africa; floods in Peru and Ecuador.
- 2027 may set a new global temperature record.

Prelims Pointers

- El Nino events peak around December, giving the name 'the Christ Child'.
- The Walker circulation weakens during El Nino.
- WMO is a UN specialised agency based in Geneva.

09 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Arctic Sea Ice Reaches Its Annual Minimum

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Physical geography; GS3: Climate change

Context

NASA reported (23 September) that **Arctic sea ice** reached its annual minimum on **12 September 2026** at about **4.6 million sq km**, tied with 2008, 2010 and 2025 as the **10th-lowest** in the satellite record. Earlier in 2026, the winter maximum had essentially tied the record low.

Why it matters

- **Albedo feedback:** dark open water absorbs more sunlight than white ice, adding to warming.
- **Shipping:** longer ice-free seasons open the Northern Sea Route, with strategic and environmental risks.
- **Weather links:** Arctic warming may affect jet stream patterns in the mid-latitudes.

India in the Arctic

- Research station Himadri at Ny-Alesund, Svalbard (since 2008).
- Observer at the Arctic Council since 2013; Arctic Policy released in 2022.
- Interest in the Northern Sea Route for trade with Russia.

Prelims Pointers

- Arctic sea ice is smallest in September and largest in March.
- Satellite records of sea ice began in 1979.
- Sea ice melting does not raise sea level much; land ice melting does.

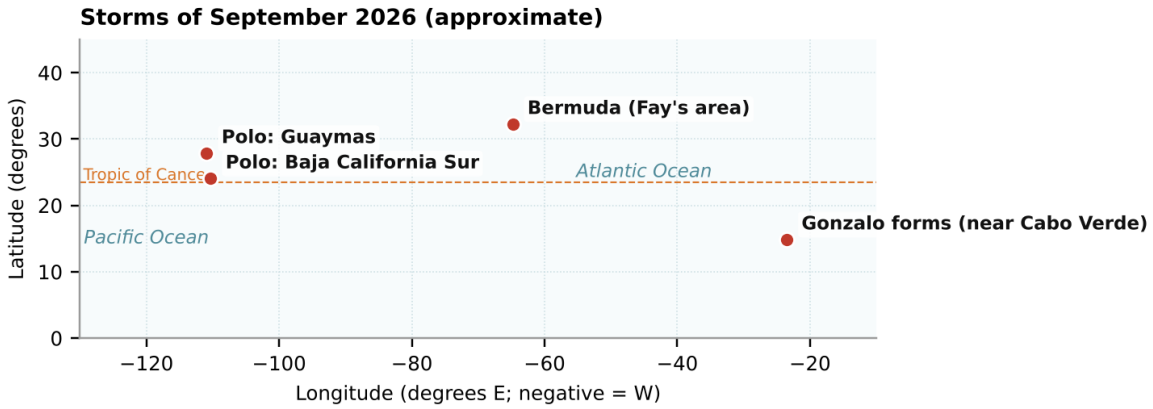
10 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Hurricane Polo Hits Mexico; Atlantic Stays Quiet

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Tropical cyclones; ENSO teleconnections

Context

In the eastern Pacific, **Hurricane Polo** made landfall in **Baja California Sur on 28 September 2026 as a Category 3 storm** and again near **Guaymas, Sonora on 29 September** as a Category 1. In the Atlantic, **Tropical Storm Gonzalo** formed on 24 September, but the basin had **no hurricane by the end of September**, a historic 'hurricane drought' linked to El Nino.



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

Why the contrast

- El Nino warms the eastern Pacific, helping storms there.

- It raises wind shear over the Atlantic, which tears storms apart.
- If no Atlantic hurricane forms, 2026 would be one of very few such seasons on record.

Prelims Pointers

- Baja California is a peninsula between the Pacific and the Gulf of California.
- The Atlantic season peaks around 10 September.
- Category 3 and above are 'major hurricanes' on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

11 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Jobs Data: Unemployment at 5.0%

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

Context

The **PLFS monthly bulletin for August 2026** (released 15 September) put unemployment at **5.0%** (age 15+, current weekly status), down from 5.1% in July. Rural unemployment fell to 4.1%, while urban unemployment rose to 6.8%. Female labour force participation rose to **34.8%**.

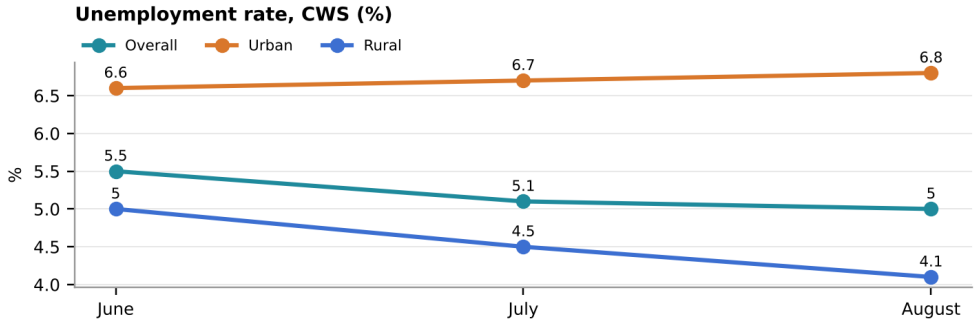


Chart. Source: MoSPI PLFS monthly bulletins (July-September 2026).

Reading the data

- Kharif farm work raises rural employment in July-August.
- Urban unemployment has edged up for three months.
- Female participation keeps rising, mostly in rural areas.

Prelims Pointers

- Worker population ratio rose to 52.8% in August.
- Unemployment rate = unemployed / labour force x 100.
- PLFS is conducted by the National Statistics Office.

12 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Gender Equality: 171 Years Away

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

Context

The UN's **Gender Snapshot 2026** (UN Women and UN DESA, as reported in September) says that **no target under SDG 5** (gender equality) is on track and that full equality is about **171 years** away at the current pace.

Key findings (as reported)

- Women hold about 27.4% of parliamentary seats worldwide and 35.6% of local government seats.
- Women do about 2.5 times as much unpaid care work as men.
- About 1 in 5 girls marries before 18.
- Women are only 22% of AI professionals.

India's picture

- Women's reservation in Parliament and assemblies (one-third) awaits the Census and delimitation.
- Panchayats already have at least one-third (many states 50%) seats for women.
- Female labour force participation is rising but remains low.

Prelims Pointers

- The 106th Amendment (2023) provides for one-third reservation for women in Lok Sabha and state assemblies.
- UN Women was created in 2010.
- SDG 5 targets include ending child marriage and recognising unpaid care work.

13 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

BRICS Summit in New Delhi: The New Delhi Declaration

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Groupings; India's presidency; global governance

Context

India hosted the **18th BRICS Summit** at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on **12-13 September 2026**, the 20th anniversary of the grouping. Leaders adopted the **New Delhi Declaration** by consensus on the first day. Russian President **Vladimir Putin** and Chinese President **Xi Jinping** attended; it was Xi's first visit to India since 2019. China will chair BRICS in 2027.

Key outcomes

- **Terrorism:** condemned the Pahalgam attack of 22 April 2025; zero tolerance and no double standards; action against terror financing and safe havens.
- **West Asia:** deep concern over escalation; call for restraint and uninterrupted trade and energy flows.
- **Reform:** UN Security Council reform with a timeframe; ten proposals on global governance reform to become a roadmap.
- **Trade and payments:** concern over unilateral tariffs; faster cross-border payments in local currencies (reported).
- **India's initiatives:** a BRICS Continuity and Implementation Mechanism through the Troika; a Seafarers Emergency Support Network.

Analysis

- **Win for India:** China signed a text condemning Pahalgam, a sign of a thaw.
- **Limits:** wording on West Asia was a compromise because members such as Iran and the UAE differ.
- **De-dollarisation:** India backs payment links in local currencies but not a common BRICS currency.

Prelims Pointers

- BRIC foreign ministers first met in 2006; the first summit was in 2009.
- India has now chaired BRICS in 2012, 2016, 2021 and 2026.
- The New Development Bank is headquartered in Shanghai.

14 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Modi and Xi Meet in New Delhi

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India-China relations

Context

On the sidelines of the BRICS summit, the Prime Minister and President **Xi Jinping** held a bilateral (earlier: Kazan 2024, Tianjin 2025) on **12 September 2026**. Both expressed commitment to a 'fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable' resolution of the boundary question and discussed India's large trade deficit (as reported).

Date	Step in normalisation
October 2024	Disengagement agreement; Modi-Xi meeting at Kazan
2025	Kailash Mansarovar Yatra resumed; Modi visited Tianjin for SCO
25 August 2026	25th Special Representatives talks in Beijing on delimitation
12 September 2026	Modi-Xi bilateral in New Delhi

Issues

- **Trade:** India's goods trade deficit with China was about US$112 billion in 2025-26 (reported).
- **Border:** troop levels along the LAC remain high; delimitation will take time.
- **Principle:** the PM spoke of 'mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, mutual interest' and said differences should not become disputes.

Prelims Pointers

- Xi's previous visit was the 2019 informal summit at Mamallapuram.
- The Panchsheel principles were agreed by India and China in 1954.
- China is India's largest source of imports.

15 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

SCO Bishkek Summit: English Becomes an Official Language

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

Context

The **26th SCO Summit** in **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan** concluded on **1 September 2026**, the grouping's 25th anniversary. Leaders adopted the **Bishkek Declaration** and a protocol amending the 2002 SCO Charter to make **English an official language**, which India had long sought (reported). The Prime Minister met Presidents **Putin** and **Pezeshkian**.

Outcomes (as reported)

- Bishkek Declaration backing a 'just multipolar world order'.
- A universal centre for countering security threats; anti-drug programmes to 2030.
- Statements on energy cooperation; memoranda on climate, media and AI.
- India will host the first SCO Civilisation Dialogue Forum.

India's message

- Three pillars: **security, connectivity and opportunity**.
- 'Conflicts cannot be resolved on the battlefield'; dismantle terror networks with no double standards.
- Connectivity must respect sovereignty, an implicit objection to the CPEC.

Prelims Pointers

- Until now, Russian and Chinese were the SCO's official languages.
- The SCO Charter was signed in St Petersburg in 2002.
- Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek lies in the Chuy valley near the Tien Shan.

16 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India and Iran Amid the West Asia War

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and West Asia; energy security; diaspora

Context

The Prime Minister met Iran's President **Masoud Pezeshkian** at Bishkek on **1 September 2026**, their first meeting since the West Asia war began. Iran asked India to use its 'extensive contacts' to help de-escalation and to ease the impact of sanctions (Iranian readout). Shipping through Hormuz, the **Chabahar** port and energy were discussed.

India's interests

- **Energy and shipping:** Hormuz carries a large share of India's oil and gas; Indian seafarers have been killed in attacks, the EAM told the UN.
- **Chabahar:** India's gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia; India signed a 10-year operating deal in 2024.
- **Balance:** India has strong ties with Israel, the Gulf states and the US as well as Iran.

India's stated approach

- Dialogue and diplomacy; 'end of war', not endless war.
- Freedom of navigation and safety of seafarers.
- Humanitarian help and evacuation of citizens when needed.

Prelims Pointers

- Chabahar is on the Gulf of Oman in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province.
- The INSTC links Mumbai to Russia via Iran.
- India joined the Group of Friends on Safety and Security of Shipping and Seafarers at the UN.

17 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India at UNGA 81: Terrorism, Global South and Reform

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and the UN; multilateralism

Context

External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** delivered India's statement at the **81st UN General Assembly** on **26 September 2026**. Earlier, **Quad sherpas** met in New Delhi on 3 September.

Key messages

- Right to defend against cross-border terrorism; Pakistan called a 'serial practitioner of terrorism'.
- 'Endless war must give way to an end to war' in Ukraine and West Asia; support for a two-state solution.
- The Global South's '4F crisis': food, fuel, fertiliser and finance.
- India as 'first responder': 600 development projects in 78 countries.
- Concern over the 'weaponisation of everything': finance, technology, supply chains.
- Every nation's right to shape its own AI ecosystem; UNSC reform.

Why it matters

- India's UNSC campaign for 2028-29 builds on these Global South themes.
- Pakistan raised the Indus Waters Treaty; India defended its position (reported).
- The speech closed with Gandhi: 'There is no way to peace; peace is the way.'

Prelims Pointers

- The UNGA's annual high-level debate opens in the third week of September.
- Each UN member has one vote in the General Assembly.
- The G4 (India, Brazil, Germany, Japan) seek permanent UNSC seats.

18 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India-EU FTA Moves Towards Signing

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

Context

On **11 September 2026**, the **European Commission** formally asked the EU Council to authorise signing and concluding the **India-EU Free Trade Agreement**. The European Parliament must then give consent. Germany said on 27 September that it expected signing by the end of 2026. India-US talks continued; Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal began a US visit on 29 September, including a G20 trade ministers' meeting (reported).

Key figures (EU side)

- Tariffs removed or cut on about 96% of EU goods exports to India.
- About EUR 4 billion a year in duties saved for EU firms.
- Bilateral trade in goods and services above EUR 180 billion.

Next steps

- Council decision, then signature, then European Parliament consent.
- India does not need parliamentary ratification for trade agreements.
- Separate agreements on investment protection and geographical indications are still under negotiation.

Prelims Pointers

- Trade policy is an exclusive EU competence, negotiated by the Commission.
- The EU is a customs union of 27 members.
- India and the EU set up a Trade and Technology Council in 2022.

19 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Neighbourhood: Ganga Treaty Talks and Pakistan at the UN

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and its neighbours

Context

Talks on renewing the **Ganga Water Treaty** (expiring in December 2026) were reported to have begun in early September, with Bihar and West Bengal seeking to be consulted. At the UN, India and Pakistan traded charges over terrorism and the **Indus Waters Treaty**, which India placed in abeyance after the Pahalgam attack in 2025.

Treaty	Signed	Status
Indus Waters Treaty (with Pakistan)	1960, World Bank-brokered	Held in abeyance by India since April 2025
Ganga Water Treaty (with Bangladesh)	1996, 30 years	Expires December 2026; renewal talks
Mahakali Treaty (with Nepal)	1996	Pancheshwar project pending

Issues

- Climate change and upstream use reduce lean-season flows.
- States such as Bihar and West Bengal want a say in water deals that affect them.
- Water is increasingly a strategic tool in regional relations.

Prelims Pointers

- Under the IWT, India controls the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) and Pakistan the western (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab).
- The Permanent Indus Commission meets under the IWT.
- Farakka barrage is in Murshidabad district, West Bengal.

20 | POLITY GS 2

Election Commissioners' Appointment Law Sent to a Constitution Bench

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Constitutional bodies; Election Commission; separation of powers

Context

On **23 September 2026**, a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court referred challenges to the **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023** to a **Constitution Bench** (case: *Jaya Thakur v. Union of India*; reported). Petitioners say the selection committee lets the executive dominate.

	Anoop Baranwal (2023)	2023 Act
Committee	PM, Leader of Opposition, CJI	PM, Leader of Opposition, a Union Minister nominated by the PM
Status	Interim, until Parliament made a law	Law in force; under challenge

Arguments

- **Petitioners:** free and fair elections are part of the basic structure; an executive majority on the panel threatens independence.
- **Government:** Article 324(2) leaves appointments to a law made by Parliament; the Court's model was explicitly temporary.
- The two judges differed on whether a substantial question of law arose, but agreed to refer it.

Prelims Pointers

- Article 145(3): cases involving substantial questions of constitutional interpretation need at least five judges.
- Article 324(5): the CEC can be removed only like a Supreme Court judge.
- The Election Commission became a multi-member body in 1989 (and permanently from 1993).

21 | POLITY GS 2

Supreme Court in September: Judges, Protests and the Bar

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Judiciary; fundamental rights

Context

The Supreme Court issued several significant orders in September 2026 (SC Observer monthly review).

Date	Order
1 September	Seven states told to raise the retirement age of district judges from 60 to 62
1 September	Article 142 used to quash FIRs against NEET protesters at Jantar Mantar (except those with serious criminal records)
2 September	Long-serving Bar Council of India chairman to continue only as pro tem; Bar Council elections to be expedited
17 September	Directions for special courts and displaced persons in Manipur
22 September	Seven-judge bench heard a 27-year-old reference on Orissa's additional sales tax; judgment reserved

Why it matters

- **Judicial vacancies:** a higher retirement age helps lower courts keep experienced judges.
- **Protest rights:** the Court balanced the right to assemble with law and order.
- **Bar autonomy:** regular elections are basic to self-regulating professions.

Prelims Pointers

- Article 142 lets the Supreme Court pass any order needed for 'complete justice'.
- District judges are appointed by the Governor in consultation with the High Court (Article 233).
- The Bar Council of India is set up under the Advocates Act, 1961.

22 | POLITY GS 2

Eight New High Court Chief Justices; Three Names for the Supreme Court

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Judiciary; appointments

Context

On **5 September 2026**, the Centre notified **eight High Court Chief Justices**. On **28 September**, the Supreme Court collegium recommended three Chief Justices for elevation to the Supreme Court: **Sunita Agarwal** (Gujarat), **Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya** (Delhi) and **Aparesh Kumar Singh** (Telangana), towards the new posts created when strength was raised to 38.

Chief Justice	High Court
V. Kameswar Rao	Patna
Ravindra V. Ghuge	Calcutta
Mahesh Chandra Tripathi	Bombay
Ashwani Kumar Mishra	Punjab and Haryana
Krushna Ram Mohapatra	Chhattisgarh
Alpesh Y. Kogje	Madhya Pradesh
Sanjay Kumar Agrawal	Rajasthan
Pushpendra Singh Bhati	J&K and Ladakh

Issues

- The government notified these within about a month of the recommendations, faster than in past disputes.
- Justice Sunita Agarwal would add to the small number of women judges in the Supreme Court.
- Debate continues over the transparency of the collegium system.

Prelims Pointers

- Supreme Court judges are appointed under Article 124(2).
- The Memorandum of Procedure guides collegium appointments.
- The NJAC Act was struck down in 2015 (Fourth Judges case).

23 | POLITY GS 2

Delhi's Voter Roll Deletions and Bypolls Called

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Elections; Election Commission

Context

Delhi's **SIR draft roll** (31 August) dropped about **47.7 lakh of 1.45 crore** names, nearly one in three, mostly as shifted or absent. The Supreme Court agreed on 17 September to hear a challenge. On **8 September**, the Election Commission announced **by-elections** for one Lok Sabha and five assembly seats, with polling on 6 October.

Reason for deletion (Delhi draft)	Names (approx.)
Shifted or absent	43.32 lakh
Dead	2.82 lakh
Enrolled in more than one place	1.41 lakh

Two views

- **Election Commission:** clean rolls are essential; claims and objections allow correction (until 30 September in Delhi).
- **Critics:** migrants and renters in cities are likely to be wrongly removed; notices were mechanical.
- Bypoll seats include Nagaon (Assam Lok Sabha), Nandigram and Rejinagar (West Bengal), Thattanchavady (Puducherry), and Madurantakam and Dharapuram (Tamil Nadu).

Prelims Pointers

- Form 6 is for inclusion, Form 7 for objection or deletion, Form 8 for corrections.
- Section 22 of the RP Act, 1950 allows correction of entries.
- By-elections are usually held within six months of a vacancy (Section 151A, RP Act, 1951).

24 | GOVERNANCE GS 2

New Rules Against Dark Patterns in E-Commerce

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Consumer protection; governance; GS3: Digital economy

Context

The **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) (Amendment) Rules, 2026** were notified on **9 September** and take effect on 1 January 2027 (PRS). They ban **manipulation of search results**, require **sponsored listings to be labelled**, require discounts to show the earlier price, and make platforms follow the 2023 guidelines on **dark patterns** with yearly self-audits.

Key term	Meaning
Dark patterns	Deceptive design that tricks users, such as false urgency, hidden charges or forced sign-ups
Drip pricing	Revealing extra charges only at the final payment step
Basket sneaking	Adding items or services to a cart without clear consent

Other governance notifications in September

- **DILRMP 3.0** (9 September): Rs 566 crore for 2026-31 to digitise land records, with 14-digit land parcel IDs and online revenue courts.
- **EPFO wage ceiling** raised from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 a month (17 September).
- **Payment charges** (14 September): no fee on RuPay debit or UPI up to Rs 2,000; 0.4% merchant fee on larger UPI merchant payments from 15 October (PRS).

Prelims Pointers

- The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) was set up under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- The CCPA issued guidelines on 13 dark patterns in 2023.
- ULPIN (Bhu-Aadhaar) gives each land parcel a unique 14-digit ID.

25 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Poshan Maah 2026: Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Nutrition; women and children; schemes

Context

The **9th Rashtriya Poshan Maah** (nutrition month) was launched in **Varanasi on 9 September 2026** with the theme **'Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari'**, asking communities to take ownership of Anganwadi centres. It also marked **10 years of PMMVY**, the maternity benefit scheme.

Key numbers (31 July 2026)

- About 13.99 lakh Anganwadi centres and 13.30 lakh Anganwadi workers.
- 8.94 crore beneficiaries, including over 7.2 crore children aged 6 months to 6 years.
- The 2025 Poshan Maah logged 14.33 crore activities.

Focus areas

- Dietary diversity and protein, using local foods and millets.
- Fresh hot cooked meals under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme.
- Early childhood care and education at Anganwadis.
- Community monitoring through Anganwadi Management Committees.

Prelims Pointers

- POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched in 2018 at Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan.
- Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 merged nutrition schemes in 2021.
- PMMVY gives Rs 5,000 for the first child (and Rs 6,000 for a second girl child under PMMVY 2.0).

26 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Ayushman Bharat at Eight

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Health; schemes

Context

Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY completed eight years on **23 September 2026**. As of 21 September, **48.51 crore Ayushman cards** had been made and **13.25 crore hospital admissions** worth **Rs 2.03 lakh crore** authorised (as reported). About 1.36 crore Ayushman Vay Vandana cards cover people aged 70 and above.

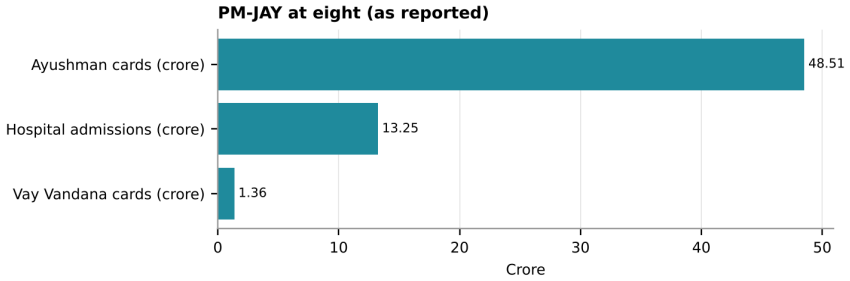


Chart. Source: Digital Health News and Organiser, citing NHA (24-25 September 2026).

Achievements and gaps

- Out-of-pocket health spending fell from 62.6% (2014-15) to 43.4% (2022-23) of total health spending.
- **Gaps:** outpatient care is not covered; private hospitals in poorer states are few.
- **Fraud:** inflated or fake claims need AI-based detection and audits.

Prelims Pointers

- PM-JAY gives cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year.
- It is run by the National Health Authority.
- Funding is shared 60:40 by the Centre and states (90:10 for northeastern and Himalayan states).

27 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Global Innovation Index and University Rankings

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Education; GS3: Science and innovation

Context

WIPO released the **Global Innovation Index 2026** on **29 September**. India was reported at **38th of 139** economies, first among lower-middle-income economies. The **NEET-PG 2026** result was declared on 24 September (2.66 lakh candidates). **International Literacy Day** (8 September) had the theme 'Literacy for People, Planet and Prosperity'.

Indicator (GII 2026, reported)	India
Overall rank	38 of 139
Innovation inputs	49th
Innovation outputs	25th
ICT services exports	1st in the world

Reading the rankings

- India does better on outputs than inputs, meaning it gets good results from limited R&D spending.
- R&D spending is still below 1% of GDP.
- The THE World University Rankings 2027 placed IISc as India's top institution (reported, around 254th).

Prelims Pointers

- The GII is published by WIPO (Geneva).
- The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) was set up by a 2023 Act.
- International Literacy Day is observed on 8 September (UNESCO).

28 | ECONOMY GS 3

Inflation: Retail 4.82%, Wholesale 9.92%

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Inflation; price stability

Context

Retail inflation for **August 2026** rose to **4.82%** (released 14 September), up from 4.45% in July. Food inflation jumped to **5.95%**. Wholesale inflation edged up to **9.92%** from 9.78%, with fuel and power still the main driver.

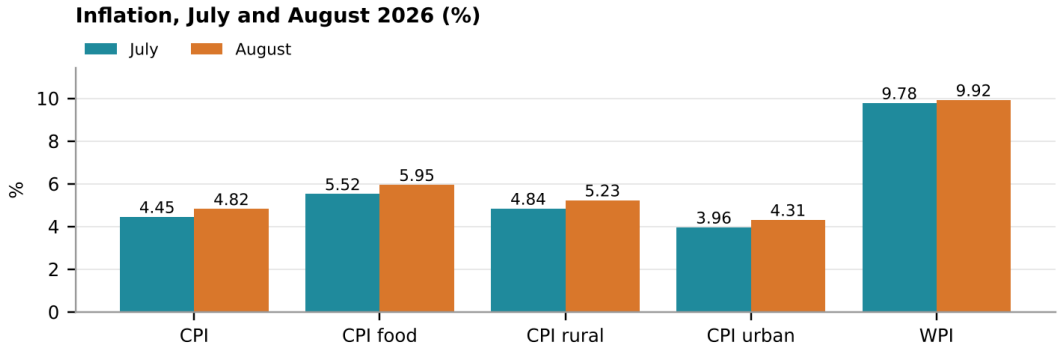


Chart. Source: MoSPI CPI and DPIIT/Office of the Economic Adviser WPI releases, 14 September 2026.

Key Points

- **WPI groups (August):** primary articles 7.76%, fuel and power 22.93%, manufactured products 8.37%; WPI Food Index 7.05%.
- Rural inflation (5.23%) stays above urban (4.31%).
- The gap between WPI and CPI is wide because WPI has more weight on fuel and industrial inputs.

Why it matters

- **Oil shock pass-through.** High crude prices (Indian basket about US$110 a barrel in September, reported) feed into WPI first and CPI later.
- **Weak monsoon.** A deficient monsoon and lower rice sowing raise the risk of food prices rising further.
- **Policy room.** CPI is still within the 2-6% tolerance band, but the RBI expects it to rise in the second half of the year.

Prelims Pointers

- The inflation target is 4% CPI with a band of 2-6%, set under the RBI Act, 1934 (Section 45ZA).
- MoSPI's National Statistics Office releases CPI; the Office of the Economic Adviser (DPIIT) releases WPI.
- WPI has no services component; CPI does.

29 | ECONOMY GS 3

Industry: IIP Grows 8.0%, Core Sector Slows

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Industrial growth; infrastructure

Context

The **Index of Industrial Production** grew **8.0% in August 2026** (released 28 September), and July's figure was revised to 7.4%. Growth for April-August was 6.7%. In contrast, the **core sector** index grew only **4.8%** (released 22 September), a four-month low.

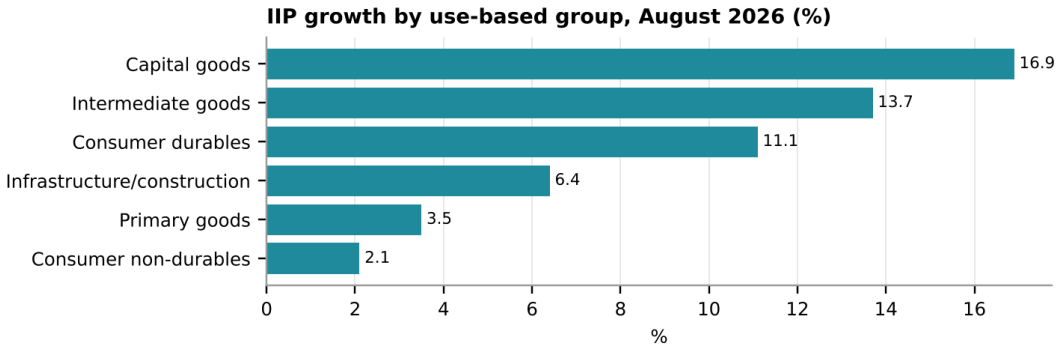


Chart. Source: MoSPI IIP press release, 28 September 2026.

Sector	Growth, August 2026
Mining	-5.6%
Manufacturing	9.0%
Electricity	12.3%

Reading the data

- **Investment demand is strong:** capital goods grew fastest, in line with high public and private capex.
- **Mass consumption is weak:** non-durables (food, toiletries) grew only 2.1%.
- **Mining fell** partly because heavy rain disrupted coal and mineral output.

Prelims Pointers

- IIP is released by the NSO, MoSPI, about six weeks after the month ends.
- Core industries make up about 40% of the IIP by weight.
- Manufacturing has the largest weight in the IIP (over three-quarters).

30 | ECONOMY GS 3

GST Collections Near Rs 2 Lakh Crore

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Mobilisation of resources; fiscal policy

Context

Gross GST collections for **August 2026** (released 1 September) were about **Rs 1.998 lakh crore**, up **14.8%** from a year earlier. GST on imports rose about 29%. Net collections after refunds were about Rs 1.68 lakh crore.

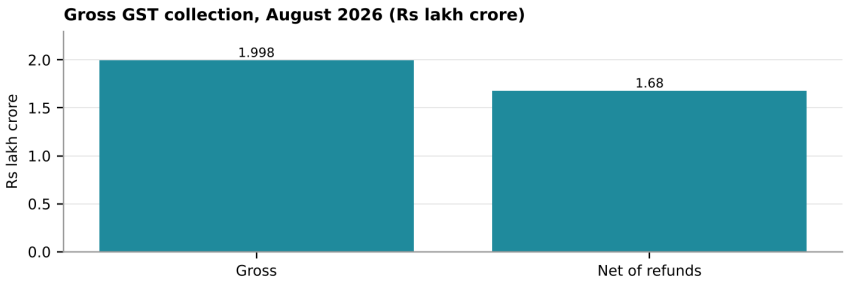


Chart. Source: Government GST data, 1 September 2026, as reported.

Why it matters

- Import GST rose fastest, partly because higher oil and input prices raise the taxable value.
- Strong collections help absorb the cost of excise relief and fertiliser subsidies in an oil shock.
- Domestic GST growth is a rough guide to consumption and compliance.

Did you know?

The GST Council is a constitutional body under **Article 279A**, added by the 101st Amendment Act, 2016.

Prelims Pointers

- IGST is levied on inter-state supplies and imports.
- The GST Appellate Tribunal hears appeals against orders of the appellate authorities.
- GST replaced 17 central and state taxes from 1 July 2017.

31 | ECONOMY GS 3

Exports Jump 26% in August; Gold Imports Fall

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External sector; trade

Context

India's **merchandise exports** rose **26.1%** to **US$43.81 billion** in August 2026. Imports were US$70.67 billion, leaving a trade deficit of US$26.86 billion. Gold imports fell about 58% to around US$2.3 billion.

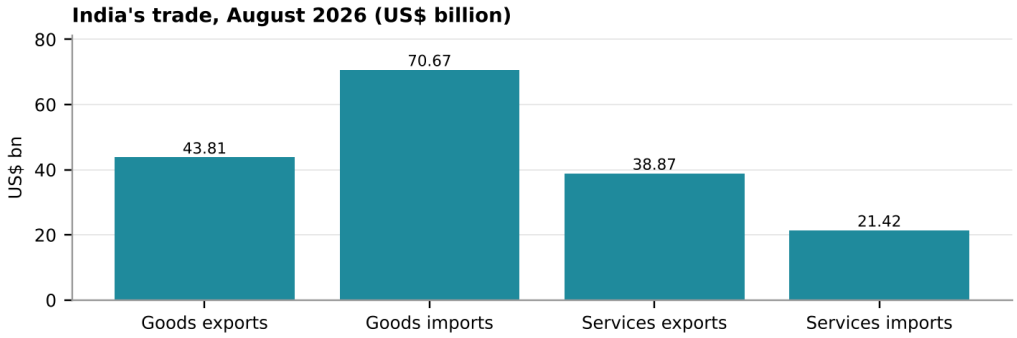


Chart. Source: Ministry of Commerce quick estimates, September 2026.

Analysis

- **Services surplus** of about US$17.5 billion offsets much of the goods deficit.
- **Lower gold imports** follow very high prices and help the current account.
- **Risks:** high oil prices raise the import bill; US tariffs and the EU's carbon border tax affect some exports.

Prelims Pointers

- Services trade data are first estimated by the RBI and revised later.
- The Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S) compiles merchandise trade data.
- Gold and petroleum are among India's largest import items.

32 | ECONOMY **GS 3**

Current Account Deficit at 0.5% of GDP

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Balance of payments

Context

The RBI's balance of payments data for **April-June 2026** (released 1 September) showed a **current account deficit of US$4.2 billion** (0.5% of GDP). A large goods deficit was mostly offset by services and remittances, but capital outflows meant **reserves fell by US$8.1 billion**.

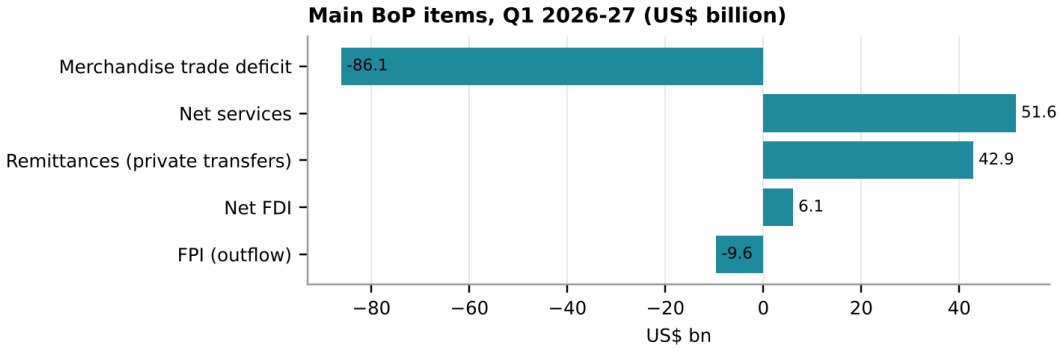


Chart. Source: RBI, Developments in India's BoP, 1 September 2026.

Reading the numbers

- Remittances are now almost half the size of the goods deficit; India is the largest recipient in the world.
- Net FDI is modest because of repatriation by foreign firms and Indian investment abroad.
- Portfolio outflows reflect global risk aversion during the West Asia war.

Prelims Pointers

- The current account covers goods, services, primary income and secondary income (transfers).
- A fall in reserves is shown in BoP data as a 'drawdown'.
- FDI is a non-debt-creating capital flow.

33 | ECONOMY GS 3

External Debt Rises to US$778 Billion

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External debt; macroeconomic stability

Context

India's **external debt** stood at **US$778.2 billion at end-June 2026** (released 30 September), equal to **20.8% of GDP**. Short-term debt was 19.7% of the total, and forex reserves covered 85.9% of the debt.

Indicator (end-June 2026)	Value
Total external debt	US$778.2 billion
Debt to GDP	20.8%
Short-term debt share	19.7%
Reserves to total debt	85.9%

Why it matters

- A debt ratio near 20% of GDP is low by emerging-market standards.
- Reserve cover has fallen as reserves were used to steady the rupee.
- Most debt is in US dollars, so a weaker rupee raises the repayment burden in rupee terms.

Prelims Pointers

- The RBI and the Ministry of Finance publish external debt data quarterly.
- Short-term debt has an original maturity of up to one year.
- Commercial borrowings and NRI deposits are large components of India's debt.

34 | ECONOMY GS 3

Forex Reserves Peak, Then Fall Sharply

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External sector; exchange rate

Context

India's foreign exchange reserves reached a reported **record of about US$785.7 billion** in the week ended 5 September. They then fell to about US$765.9 billion by 18 September, a weekly drop of about US$14.9 billion, reported as the steepest since November 2024.

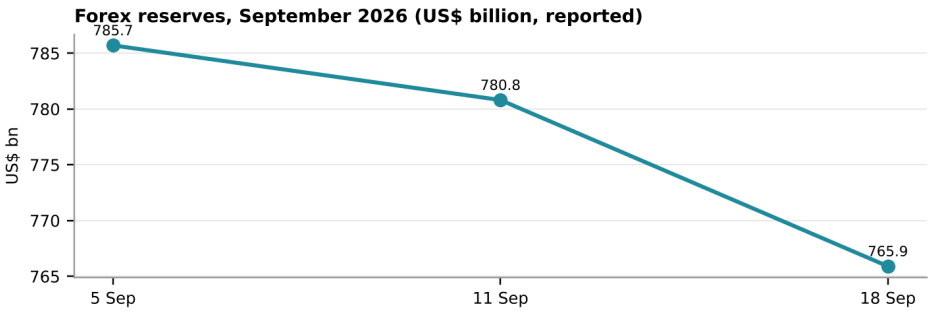


Chart. Source: RBI Weekly Statistical Supplement, as reported.

Why reserves move

- **RBI sales of dollars** to calm the rupee during oil-driven outflows.
- **Valuation changes:** moves in gold prices and in the euro or yen change the dollar value of reserves.
- **Inflows** such as the earlier FCNR(B) swap window add to reserves.

Prelims Pointers

- Reserves include foreign currency assets, gold, Special Drawing Rights and the reserve position in the IMF.
- Foreign currency assets are the largest component.
- The RBI manages reserves under the RBI Act, 1934.

35 | ECONOMY GS 3

OECD and ADB Raise India's Growth Forecasts

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Growth; global economy

Context

After India's strong April-June GDP data, international agencies raised their forecasts. The **Asian Development Bank** (Asian Development Outlook, 23 September) now expects **7.0%** growth in 2026-27. The **OECD** (Interim Economic Outlook, reported) raised its forecast to **7.1%**.

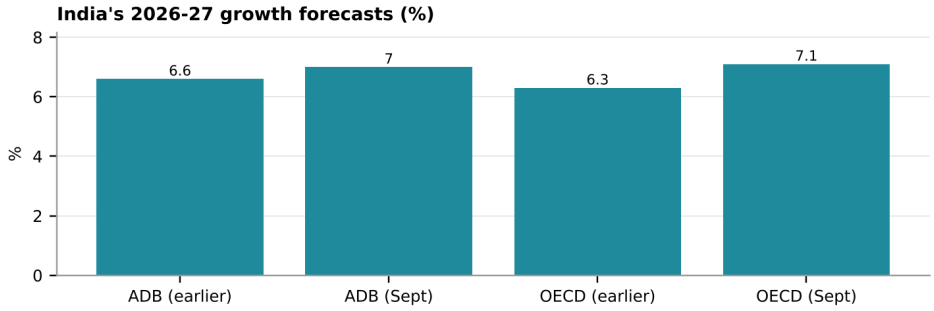


Chart. Source: ADB ADO September 2026; OECD Interim Outlook (reported).

Key Points

- ADB: 2027-28 growth 7.1%; inflation about 5.0% in 2026-27.
- OECD (reported): world growth about 2.9% in 2026; India 6.5% in 2027-28.
- Both cite oil prices and the West Asia war as the main risks.

Analysis

Upgrades reflect strong investment and services, but the agencies also warn that high oil prices and a weak monsoon could raise inflation and squeeze household spending.

Prelims Pointers

- The ADB is headquartered in Manila; Japan and the US are its largest shareholders.
- The OECD (Paris) has 38 members; India is not a member but a key partner.
- The IMF's World Economic Outlook comes out in April and October.

36 | ECONOMY GS 3

SEBI Overhauls Portfolio Management and Opens Commodities to FPIs

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Capital markets; regulation

Context

At its board meeting on **24 September 2026**, SEBI approved a set of changes (as reported). These include new **Portfolio Managers Regulations**, new settlement rules, a common advertising code and permission for **foreign portfolio investors (FPIs)** to trade in non-agricultural commodity derivatives.

Key decisions (reported)

- **Portfolio managers:** a fresh set of regulations replacing the older framework.
- **Settlement Regulations, 2026:** a consolidated framework for settling enforcement cases.
- **Common advertising code** for regulated entities.
- **FPIs** may trade non-agricultural commodity derivatives.
- **Vault managers** (for electronic gold receipts) need a net worth of Rs 75 crore.
- Changes for alternative investment funds and accredited investors.

Why it matters

- Wider FPI participation can deepen commodity markets and improve price discovery.
- Critics worry that more foreign money can add to volatility in thin contracts.
- Clearer settlement rules can reduce long litigation.

Prelims Pointers

- SEBI was given statutory status by the SEBI Act, 1992.
- Commodity derivatives came under SEBI after the Forward Markets Commission merged with it in 2015.
- Appeals against SEBI orders go to the Securities Appellate Tribunal.

37 | ECONOMY GS 3

RBI Targets Mule Accounts; States Get Higher Ways and Means Limits

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Banking; cyber fraud; fiscal federalism

Context

On **11 September 2026**, the RBI issued **draft KYC directions** that would let banks place debit holds on suspected **mule accounts** (accounts used to move fraud money). On **29 September**, it raised the total **Ways and Means Advances (WMA)** limit for states to **Rs 67,839 crore**.

Key term	Meaning
Mule account	A bank account opened or rented out to receive and pass on money from fraud.
Ways and Means Advances	Short-term loans from the RBI to governments to cover temporary gaps between receipts and spending.
Debit hold	A block on withdrawals while a suspicious credit is checked.

Analysis

- **Cyber fraud:** mule accounts are the key link in digital arrest and investment scams.
- **Balance needed:** wrongful holds can hurt genuine customers, so the draft needs clear review timelines.

- **States' finances:** higher WMA limits help states manage cash flow without costly market borrowing.

Prelims Pointers

- The RBI is banker to the Centre under the RBI Act and to states by agreement (Section 21A).
- Overdraft is allowed when a state exceeds its WMA limit, for a limited number of days.
- The RBI's MuleHunter.AI tool helps banks detect mule accounts.

38 | AGRICULTURE GS 3

Kharif Sowing Falls; Rice Area Down

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Cropping patterns; food security

Context

With a deficient monsoon, **kharif sowing** stood at about **1,086 lakh hectares** on 4 September 2026, about 17.7 lakh hectares less than a year earlier. Rice was the main shortfall; pulses were slightly higher.

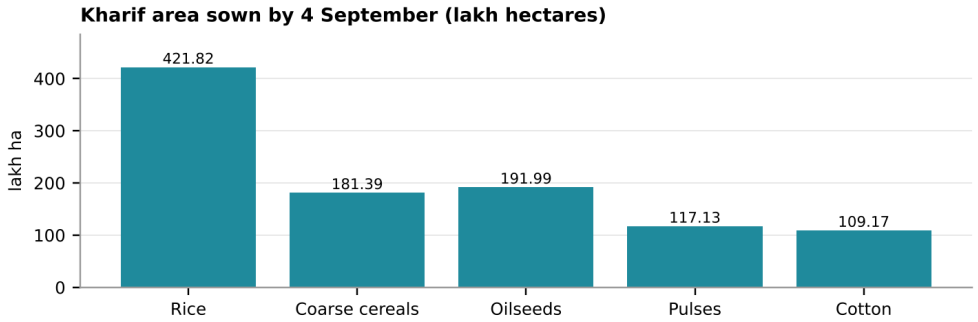


Chart. Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, 4 September 2026.

Key Points

- Rice area was 421.82 lakh ha against 438.19 lakh ha a year earlier.
- By mid-September, rice was about 3.8% lower; urad area was about 12% higher (reported).
- The ban on sugar exports was in force until 30 September 2026.
- **Maharashtra** declared 265 of 358 talukas drought-hit (26 September).

Implications

- Lower rice output could tighten stocks, though central stocks are large.
- Higher pulses area helps the pulses self-reliance mission.
- Farm incomes in rain-fed areas may need relief through crop insurance and MGNREGA.

Prelims Pointers

- Kharif crops are sown with the monsoon (June-July) and harvested in September-October.
- Urad (black gram) is a kharif pulse.
- Crop insurance under PMFBY: farmer premium 2% for kharif crops.

39 | ECONOMY GS 3

Renewable Capacity Crosses 295 GW

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Energy; infrastructure

Context

India added **3.83 GW** of renewable capacity in August 2026, mostly solar (3,445 MW). Total renewable capacity reached **295.55 GW** on 31 August; solar alone was about 168 GW. Additions in 2026-27 so far were about 20 GW.

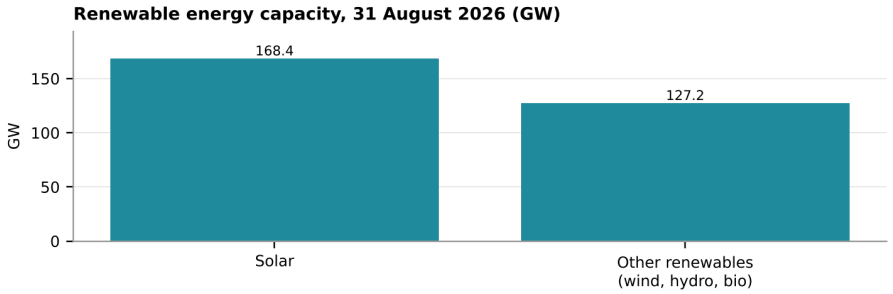


Chart. Source: MNRE data as reported; other renewables derived from the total.

Why it matters

- India's target is 500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030.
- Transmission and storage, not panels, are now the main limits.
- The **Kadana floating solar plant** (110 MW, Gujarat), dedicated on 8 September, uses reservoir surface and cuts evaporation.

Prelims Pointers

- Rajasthan and Gujarat lead in installed solar capacity.
- Floating solar plants are placed on reservoirs and lakes.
- PM Surya Ghar gives subsidies for rooftop solar for homes.

40 | ECONOMY GS 3

Power Demand and Coal Output

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Energy security

Context

Electricity use in September 2026 was reported at about **162 billion units**, up about 11% from a year earlier, with peak demand near **269 GW**. Coal India produced 47.5 million tonnes in August (down 5.7%) and about 53.5 MT in September (up about 9%, reported).

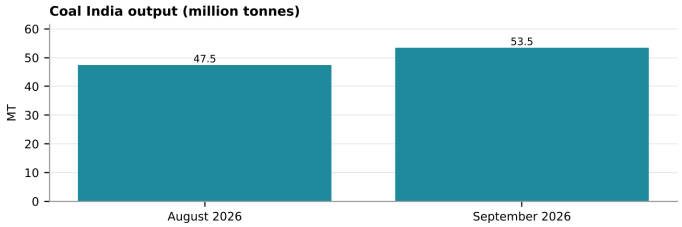


Chart. Source: Coal India data, as reported.

Analysis

- A weak monsoon raises demand for irrigation pumps and cooling.
- Heavy rain in coal belts cut August output; stocks at plants need watching before winter.

- Captive and commercial mines produced about 69 MT up to 10 September (reported).

Prelims Pointers

- Coal India is a Maharatna public sector enterprise under the Ministry of Coal.
- Commercial coal mining was opened to private firms in 2020.
- Thermal power still supplies roughly 70% of India's electricity.

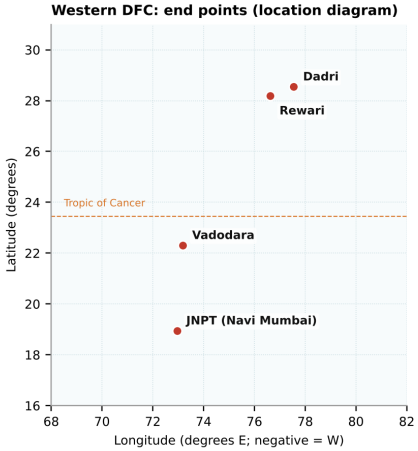
41 | ECONOMY GS 3

Western Dedicated Freight Corridor Completed

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Infrastructure; logistics

Context

On **8 September 2026** in Vadodara, the Prime Minister dedicated the last three sections of the **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC)**, completing it, along with projects worth over Rs 35,000 crore. On 9-10 September, the Cabinet approved **eight rail projects** worth about **Rs 20,804 crore**, covering about 1,196 km.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Approximate points; corridor alignment not drawn.

Why it matters

- Freight trains move on separate tracks, freeing passenger lines and cutting transit time.
- Lower logistics costs help exports from ports on the western coast.
- The Eastern DFC (Ludhiana to Sonnagar) was completed earlier.

Prelims Pointers

- The WDFC runs about 1,500 km from Dadri (UP) to JNPT (Maharashtra).
- DFCs are built by the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd (DFCCIL).
- Part of the WDFC was funded by Japan (JICA).

42 | ECONOMY GS 3

Green Energy Corridor Phase III and Draft Petroleum Bill

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Energy infrastructure; regulation

Context

On **30 September 2026**, the Cabinet approved **Green Energy Corridor Phase III** with an outlay of about **Rs 1,86,405 crore** (as listed by PRS) and the minimum support prices for rabi crops for 2027-28. The same day, the Petroleum Ministry released a **draft Petroleum (Amendment) Bill** for comment.

Key Points

- Green Energy Corridors build transmission lines to carry renewable power from resource-rich states to demand centres.
- Phase I focused on eight renewable-rich states; Phase II on intra-state lines in seven states.
- Full details of Phase III and the rabi MSPs were awaited at the time of writing.

Why it matters

- Without lines, solar and wind plants face curtailment (forced output cuts).
- Storage and grid stability are needed as renewables grow.
- The Petroleum Act, 1934 governs import, storage and transport of petroleum; the amendment aims to update it.

Prelims Pointers

- Inter-state transmission is planned by the Central Electricity Authority.
- The Green Energy Corridor scheme is run by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- MSP is announced by the Centre on the recommendation of the CACP.

43 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

World Ozone Day: Kigali Amendment at Ten

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Environment; international agreements

Context

World Ozone Day was marked on **16 September 2026** with the theme **"Global Action for a Cooler Planet"**. India's 32nd national event was held in Mumbai. The day also marked ten years of the **Kigali Amendment** (2016) to the Montreal Protocol.

Year	Milestone
1985	Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer
1987	Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer
2016	Kigali Amendment to phase down HFCs
2026	Ten years of the Kigali Amendment

Key Points

- India launched a Net Zero portal and a dashboard for the National Action Plan on Climate Change at the event (reported).
- HFCs do not harm the ozone layer but are powerful greenhouse gases.
- India's HFC phase-down starts with a freeze in 2028.

Why it matters

- The Montreal Protocol is the only UN treaty ratified by every country.

- Cooling demand in India is rising fast; the India Cooling Action Plan (2019) seeks efficient, low-impact cooling.

Prelims Pointers
- 16 September marks the signing of the Montreal Protocol in 1987.
- The ozone layer lies mainly in the stratosphere.
- The WMO's Ozone Bulletin was released on 16 September.

44 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Swachhata Hi Seva 2026

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Waste management; GS2: Government schemes

Context

The **Swachhata Hi Seva** campaign began on **17 September 2026** with the theme **"Swachhata Mein Sahbhag, Swachh Bharat, Viksit Bharat"**. It is run under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban and Grameen) and leads up to Swachh Bharat Diwas on 2 October.

Key Points
- Focus on cleaning neglected spots, safai mitra welfare camps and community participation.
- Sources differ on the end date (2 October or 17 October).
- Swachh Bharat Mission began on 2 October 2014.

Challenges

- Legacy waste dumps and poor source segregation.
- Safety of sanitation workers, especially in sewer cleaning.
- Sustaining behaviour change after campaigns end.

Did you know?
Manual scavenging is banned under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.

Prelims Pointers
- SBM-Urban 2.0 aims at garbage-free cities.
- Swachh Survekshan ranks cities on cleanliness.
- ODF Plus covers solid and liquid waste management in villages.

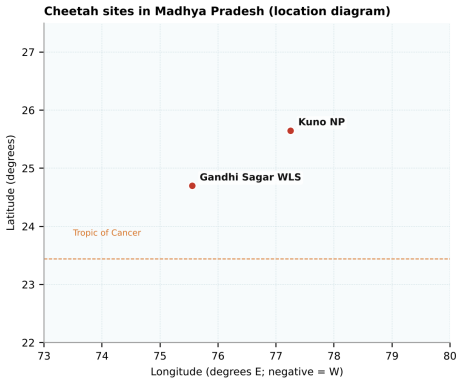
45 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Project Cheetah: Four Years On

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Conservation; biodiversity

Context

Project Cheetah marked four years on **17 September 2026**. Four cubs were reported born at **Kuno National Park** (Madhya Pradesh) on 18 September, taking India's cheetah count to about **56** (reported). A female from Botswana was released at **Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary** on 20 September (reported).



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Approximate points.

Issues

- **Survival:** adult deaths from infections, fights and heat stress in early years.
- **Space:** cheetahs need large ranges; corridors with Rajasthan are being considered.
- **Critics** argue that funds should go to grassland and native species; supporters say cheetahs restore grassland ecosystems.

Prelims Pointers

- The cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952.
- African cheetah: IUCN Vulnerable; Asiatic cheetah (Iran): Critically Endangered.
- The first cheetahs came from Namibia in September 2022.

46 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Revised GRAP for Delhi-NCR

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Air pollution

Context

Ahead of winter, the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** revised the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** on 28 September 2026 (reported). Some curbs, such as on diesel generator sets and older BS-IV buses, were moved to Stage I, and Sonipat was brought fully into the plan.

GRAP stage	Air quality (AQI)	Actions (reported count)
Stage I	Poor (201-300)	25
Stage II	Very poor (301-400)	8
Stage III	Severe (401-450)	10
Stage IV	Severe+ (above 450)	5

Analysis

- Earlier action can prevent pollution from building up, but adds costs for small businesses.
- Stubble burning, vehicles, dust and industry all contribute; GRAP is a short-term tool.
- The WMO Air Quality and Climate Bulletin was released on 7 September.

Prelims Pointers

- CAQM was set up under the CAQM Act, 2021.
- GRAP was first notified in 2017 following a Supreme Court order.
- AQI is calculated from eight pollutants, including PM2.5 and PM10.

47 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Road to COP31 in Antalya

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Climate change; international negotiations

Context

Turkiye will host **COP31** in **Antalya** in November 2026, with Australia leading the negotiations. In September, the hosts set out ten priority themes and confirmed the leaders' segment for 11-12 November (reported). A pre-COP meeting is planned in Fiji.

Key Points

- Countries were due to submit updated climate plans (NDCs) for 2035.
- Finance under the New Collective Quantified Goal (US$300 billion a year by 2035) remains a key issue.
- Adaptation indicators and the Loss and Damage Fund are also on the agenda.

India's position

- Stresses common but differentiated responsibilities and equity.
- Seeks finance and technology transfer for adaptation.
- Opposes unilateral trade measures such as the EU's carbon border tax.

Prelims Pointers

- COP is the supreme body of the UNFCCC (1992).
- COP30 was held in Belem, Brazil, in 2025.
- India's target: net zero by 2070.

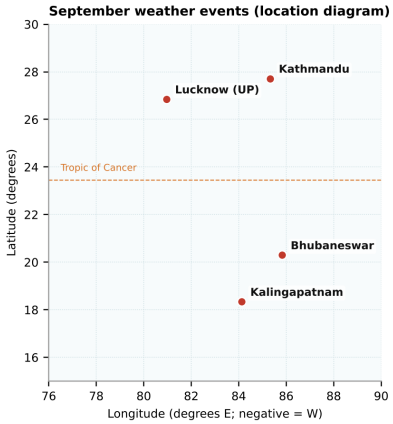
48 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT GS 3

Depressions Over Odisha and Floods in North India

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Disaster management

Context

A **deep depression** crossed the coast near **Kalingapatnam** (Andhra Pradesh) on the night of 23-24 September, bringing red alerts to south Odisha. A second deep depression formed on 28-30 September. Late-season rain also caused **floods in north India** on 25-27 September, killing about 56 people, mostly in Uttar Pradesh; 14 died in Nepal.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Approximate points.

Lessons

- The Central Water Commission reported severe flood situations at about 30 stations.
- Odisha's early evacuation model has cut cyclone deaths sharply.
- Shared rivers with Nepal need real-time data sharing.

Prelims Pointers

- A depression has winds of 31-49 km/h; a deep depression 50-61 km/h.
- Storms are named only when they become cyclonic storms (62 km/h or more).
- The Central Water Commission issues flood forecasts.

49 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT GS 3

Drought in Maharashtra

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Drought management; agriculture

Context

On **26 September 2026**, Maharashtra declared **265 of its 358 talukas** drought-hit after a weak monsoon. Relief includes land revenue waivers, deferred loan recovery and fee waivers for students (typical measures under the drought manual).

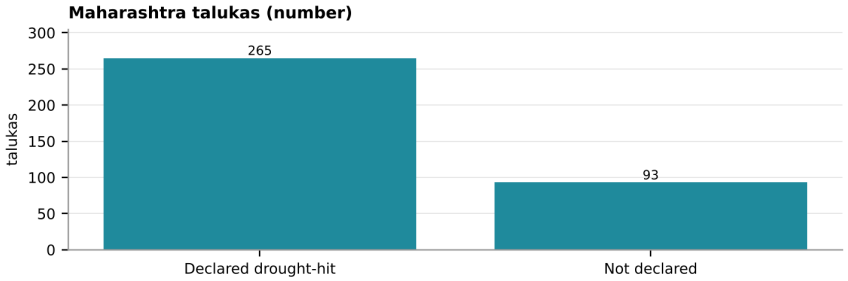


Chart. Source: Government of Maharashtra decision, 26 September 2026, as reported.

Way forward

- Use the Manual for Drought Management (2016, updated 2020) indicators: rainfall, vegetation, soil moisture.
- Water budgeting and drip irrigation in Marathwada and Vidarbha.
- Crop insurance claims need quick settlement.

Prelims Pointers

- Drought is one of the notified disasters eligible for SDRF and NDRF assistance.
- States declare drought; the Centre gives help from the NDRF for severe cases.
- Marathwada lies in the rain shadow of the Western Ghats.

50 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

GSLV-F17 Launches EOS-05, India's First Geostationary Imaging Satellite

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology

Context

On **4 September 2026**, **GSLV-F17** launched **EOS-05** from Sriharikota. The 2,367 kg satellite is India's first **geosynchronous Earth-imaging satellite**, with a planned life of about nine years. It was ISRO's first success after the PSLV failures.

Key Points

- From geosynchronous orbit (about 36,000 km), a satellite can watch the same area all the time.
- Uses: near real-time monitoring of floods, cyclones, fires and crops.
- ISRO plans the first uncrewed Gaganyaan flight (G1) for December and six more launches this year.
- The new Kulasekarapattinam launch pad (Tamil Nadu) is expected by about March 2027.

Orbit	Height	Typical use
Low Earth orbit	up to 2,000 km	High-resolution imaging
Sun-synchronous	about 500-800 km	Repeat imaging at the same local time
Geosynchronous	about 35,786 km	Weather and continuous watch

Prelims Pointers
- GSLV uses an indigenous cryogenic upper stage.
- Sriharikota (Satish Dhawan Space Centre) is in Andhra Pradesh.
- Kulasekarapattinam will mainly launch the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle.

51 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY — GS 3

Satellite Internet: Spectrum Pricing Cleared

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Communications; space economy

Context

The **Digital Communications Commission** was reported (8-9 September) to have cleared most of TRAI's recommendations on **satellite communications spectrum**. Spectrum will be given by administrative allocation for five years, with a charge of 4% of adjusted gross revenue and Rs 500 per urban subscriber a year. Commercial satellite broadband launches were still awaited.

The debate

- **Supporters** say administrative allocation suits shared satellite spectrum and helps reach remote areas.
- **Telecom operators** argued for auctions to ensure a level playing field with mobile networks.
- Security conditions include local data storage and lawful interception.

Key term	Meaning
LEO constellation	Hundreds of small satellites in low Earth orbit giving low-delay internet.
AGR	Adjusted gross revenue: the revenue on which licence and spectrum fees are charged.

Prelims Pointers
- The Telecommunications Act, 2023 allows administrative allocation of satellite spectrum.
- IN-SPACe authorises private space activities.
- TRAI was set up under the TRAI Act, 1997.

52 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY — GS 3

SEMICON India 2026

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Electronics; industrial policy

Context

The Prime Minister opened **SEMICON India 2026** at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, on **17 September**. Discussion focused on the **India Semiconductor Mission 2.0** (reported outlay about US$13.5 billion). Assembly and test units at Mohali and Surat were reported to be in production.

Key Points
- About 70,000 students have been trained under chip-design programmes (reported).
- ISM 1.0 approved fabs and assembly units in Gujarat, Assam and other states.
- Focus areas: design, packaging, display fabs and compound semiconductors.

Challenges

- Fabs need large, steady supplies of water and power.
- Skilled engineers and equipment makers are scarce.
- Global competition: the US, Japan and the EU also offer large subsidies.

Prelims Pointers
- ISM runs under the Ministry of Electronics and IT.
- OSAT means outsourced semiconductor assembly and test.
- The Design Linked Incentive scheme supports chip design start-ups.

53 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

RAPP-8 Loads Fuel; Nuclear Power Expands

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Nuclear energy

Context

Initial fuel loading began at **Rajasthan Atomic Power Project Unit 8 (RAPP-8)** at Rawatbhata on **19 September 2026**. It is the fourth indigenous **700 MWe pressurised heavy water reactor** to reach this stage.

Key term	Meaning
PHWR	A reactor using natural uranium as fuel and heavy water as moderator and coolant.
Criticality	The point at which a reactor sustains a chain reaction.
Fleet mode	Building many reactors of the same design to cut cost and time.

Why it matters

- India targets 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047.
- The SHANTI Act, 2025 opened parts of the sector to private participation.
- Nuclear gives steady, low-carbon power to balance solar and wind.

Prelims Pointers
- Rawatbhata is in Chittorgarh district, Rajasthan, on the Chambal.
- NPCIL builds and runs most of India's reactors.
- India follows a three-stage nuclear programme ending with thorium.

54 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Starship Reaches Orbit on Its 14th Flight

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology; global developments

Context

SpaceX's **Starship Flight 14** on **28 September 2026** was reported as the first Starship flight to reach orbit, deploying 26 Starlink satellites. The flight ended earlier than planned (reported).

Key Points
- Starship is a fully reusable two-stage rocket (Super Heavy booster plus Starship).
- NASA plans to use a version for crewed Moon landings under Artemis.
- Reusability can sharply cut launch costs.

Relevance for India

- ISRO is developing the reusable Next Generation Launch Vehicle (Soorya).
- Lower global launch prices raise competition for Indian launch firms.

Prelims Pointers

- Low Earth orbit is up to about 2,000 km.
- Methane-oxygen engines (like Raptor) are easier to reuse than kerosene ones.
- ISRO's RLV-TD tests reusable spaceplane technology.

55 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Lasker Awards and Kerala's Amoebic Infections

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Biotechnology; public health

Context

The **2026 Lasker Awards** were announced in September. In Kerala, cases of **primary amoebic meningoencephalitis** continued, with about 18-19 deaths reported this year.

Lasker category	Winners (2026)
Basic medical research	Mignot and Yanagisawa
Clinical medical research	Hattori, Igawa and Kitazawa
Public service	Michael J. Fox

Amoebic meningoencephalitis

- Caused by free-living amoebae such as *Naegleria fowleri* found in warm fresh water.
- Infection happens when contaminated water enters the nose; it does not spread person to person.
- Kerala has set up testing and treatment protocols and advises against bathing in stagnant water.

Prelims Pointers

- Lasker Awards are given by the Lasker Foundation (US).
- Naegleria fowleri is called the 'brain-eating amoeba'.
- Miltefosine is one drug used in treatment.

56 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

DAC Clears Rs 1.10 Lakh Crore Proposals

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence procurement

Context

On **7 September 2026**, the **Defence Acquisition Council** chaired by the Defence Minister gave Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for proposals worth about **Rs 1.10 lakh crore**.

Main items

- **Army:** CBRN reconnaissance vehicles, high-mobility vehicles, mine layers, trawl tanks, Sarvatra bridges.
- **Army and IAF:** Advanced Light Helicopters.
- **Navy:** Arudhra radars and marine gas turbines.
- **Others:** a ground-based jammer and the DEFSAC communication system (as reported).

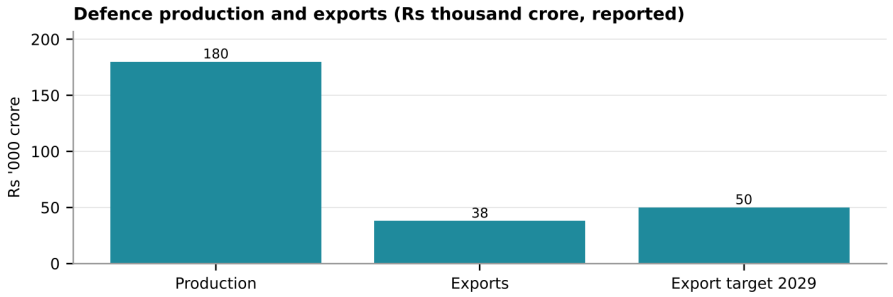


Chart. Source: Defence Minister's statements, as reported.

Prelims Pointers

- AoN is the first step in the capital procurement process under DAP 2020.
- The DAC is chaired by the Defence Minister.
- Buy (Indian-IDDM) is the highest-priority category.

57 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Yudh Abhyas and Nomadic Elephant

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence cooperation

Context

The 22nd **Yudh Abhyas** with the US Army began on 15 September 2026 at Auli and Mahajan, with about 600 troops from each side. The 18th **Nomadic Elephant** with Mongolia ran from 21 September to 3 October at Pithoragarh, with 45 personnel each.

Exercise	Partner	Edition and place
Yudh Abhyas	United States	22nd; Auli (Uttarakhand) and Mahajan (Rajasthan)
Nomadic Elephant	Mongolia	18th; Pithoragarh (Uttarakhand)

Why it matters

- High-altitude and desert training improves joint operations under UN mandates.
- Ties with Mongolia support India's 'third neighbour' outreach in Central Asia.

Prelims Pointers

- Auli is in Chamoli district, Uttarakhand.
- Mahajan Field Firing Range is in Bikaner district, Rajasthan.
- Exercise Khaan Quest is a multinational exercise hosted by Mongolia.

58 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

AFSPA Extended in Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Internal security; northeast

Context

On **25 September 2026**, the Home Ministry extended the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act** for six months from 1 October in parts of Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

State	Areas (as reported)
Manipur	Whole state except 13 police station areas
Nagaland	Several districts and police station areas (lists differ by source)
Arunachal Pradesh	Tirap, Changlang, Longding and three police stations in Namsai

The debate

- **Government:** needed to support forces against insurgents and armed groups.
- **Critics:** immunity from prosecution without sanction can shield abuses; the Jeevan Reddy Committee (2005) recommended repeal.
- The area under AFSPA in the northeast has been reduced since 2022.

Prelims Pointers

- AFSPA was enacted in 1958.
- Section 3 lets the Centre or the Governor declare an area 'disturbed'.
- The Supreme Court upheld AFSPA in Naga People's Movement of Human Rights (1997) with safeguards.

59 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Navy to Induct 18 Warships in 2026

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Maritime security; indigenisation

Context

The Navy plans to induct a record **18 warships** in 2026 (All India Radio, 30 September), most of them built in Indian yards. (Our August issue reported 19.)

Key Points

- Ships include destroyers, frigates, anti-submarine shallow-water craft and survey vessels.
- Most are built by Mazagon Dock, GRSE, Cochin Shipyard and others.
- Indigenous content is rising with local steel, sensors and weapons.

Why it matters

- A larger fleet supports India's role as a security provider in the Indian Ocean.
- Shipbuilding creates jobs and supports MSMEs.
- Submarine numbers remain a concern.

Prelims Pointers

- Project 17A frigates are of the Nilgiri class.
- Information Fusion Centre-IOR is in Gurugram.
- SAGAR became MAHASAGAR in 2025.

60 | ETHICS GS 4

Case Study: The Hospital That Filled Its Beds

Syllabus Mapping: GS4: Probity; accountability; conflict of interest; public health ethics

The case

You are the officer in charge of the district unit that runs a government health insurance scheme for poor families. Data analysis shows that one private hospital, the only empanelled specialist hospital within 80 km, files three times as many claims for certain surgeries as similar hospitals, with many patients admitted for the minimum stay and discharged on the same weekday. A few beneficiaries tell you they were admitted for 'check-ups' and do not know what was billed. The hospital owner is a respected doctor who runs free camps and is close to a local legislator. A senior colleague advises you to 'go slow', because de-empanelling the hospital would leave thousands of patients without care nearby, and the district's scheme indicators would fall.

Stakeholders

- Poor patients who rely on the hospital, and those who may have been harmed by needless procedures.
- Taxpayers and the scheme, whose funds may be misused.
- Honest doctors and hospitals who lose trust when fraud goes unchecked.
- The hospital owner, the legislator and your own office.

Ethical issues

- **Probity and stewardship** of public money versus **access to care**.
- **Patient autonomy and informed consent**: were patients told what was done to them?
- **Political pressure** and conflict of interest.
- **Fairness of process:** suspicion from data is not yet proof.

Option	Merits	Demerits
Ignore the pattern as advised	Keeps services running; avoids conflict	Possible harm to patients; misuse of funds; complicity
De-empanel the hospital at once	Strong signal against fraud	Patients lose nearby care; process may be unfair
Order a confidential medical audit and patient verification, suspend payment only on suspect claims, report to the state anti-fraud unit, make alternative referral arrangements, and give the hospital a fair hearing	Protects patients and funds; due process; continuity of care	Takes time; may face pressure and criticism

A reasoned course of action

Choose the third option. Verify a sample of claims through patient interviews and medical records, keeping the audit confidential. Hold payment on suspect claims, not all claims, so genuine patients are not hurt. Report the findings in writing to the state anti-fraud unit and record the advice to go slow. Arrange referrals to the nearest government or empanelled hospitals in case services are disrupted. If fraud is proved, act under the scheme's rules and the law, recover money and inform affected patients. Suggest routine data-based audits for all hospitals so that action is seen as systemic, not personal.

Ethics vocabulary to use

- **Stewardship:** public funds are held in trust for citizens.
- **Proportionality:** the response should match the evidence and harm.
- **Due process:** the accused must be heard before final action.

61 | ETHICS GS 4

Ethics in the News: Values Behind September's Headlines

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

Why read the news for ethics

These links between September'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
Teachers' Day awards	What makes a teacher a role model?	Commitment; empathy; integrity
Dark patterns rules	Is nudging customers manipulation?	Autonomy; honesty; consumer dignity
Voter roll deletions	How to balance clean rolls and the right to vote?	Fairness; due process; inclusion
AFSPA extension	Security versus civil liberties	Rule of law; accountability; human rights
Swachhata Hi Seva	Is cleanliness a civic duty?	Civic virtue; dignity of labour
Mule accounts	Who bears the cost of fraud?	Duty of care; institutional ethics
Bhagat Singh anniversary	When is sacrifice a public virtue?	Courage; idealism; reason
Gender Snapshot	Why is equality so slow?	Justice; equity; care ethics

Thinkers to quote

- **Swami Vivekananda:** service to humanity as service to God. Use it for public service values.
- **Vinoba Bhave:** voluntary giving (Bhoodan) as moral persuasion. Use it for trusteeship.
- **Immanuel Kant:** treat people as ends, not merely as means. Use it for dark patterns and health fraud.
- **Amartya Sen:** development as freedom. Use it for health insurance and literacy.

62 | ESSAY ESSAY

Essay Corner: Themes from This Month

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

Themes to practise

- **A teacher shapes a nation one child at a time.** Teachers' Day and literacy.
- **The rain that did not come.** Monsoon, El Nino and India's resilience.
- **Many voices, one table.** BRICS, SCO and a multipolar world.

Sample outline: 'The rain that did not come'

- **Opening:** a farmer in Marathwada watching a dry sky in August.
- **Meaning:** the monsoon as India's real finance minister: farms, water, power, prices.
- **Science:** El Nino, warming oceans and more erratic rain.
- **Impact:** lower rice sowing, drought talukas, food inflation, rural demand.
- **Resilience so far:** large food stocks, irrigation, crop insurance, forecasts.
- **Counter-view:** the economy depends less on farming than before; strong growth continued.
- **Way forward:** water budgeting, drought-tolerant seeds, micro-irrigation, climate-smart insurance.
- **Conclusion:** adapting to uncertainty is the new normal.

63 | HISTORY PRELIMS

History, Culture and Sport: Quick Notes

Anniversaries, culture, awards and sport from September 2026.

Anniversaries

- **Vivekananda's Chicago address:** 11 September 1893.
- **Vinoba Bhave:** born 11 September 1895; started Bhoodan at Pochampalli (1951).
- **M. Visvesvaraya:** born 15 September 1861; Engineers' Day.
- **Bhagat Singh:** born 28 September 1907.
- **Teachers' Day (5 September):** birth anniversary of S. Radhakrishnan.

Culture, awards and sport

- **72nd National Film Awards:** 22 September, Ekta Nagar (Gujarat).
- **Rajbhasha Sammelan:** 6th edition, Navi Mumbai; 'Bharati' app and 'Bhasha Kunj'.
- **Asian Games:** 20th, Aichi-Nagoya, 19 September-4 October.
- **Chess Olympiad:** 46th, Samarkand; India men silver, women bronze.
- **Lasker Awards:** public service award to Michael J. Fox.

64 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Geography: Phenomena in the News

Concepts behind September's geography stories.

Monsoon and climate

- **Monsoon 2026:** 87% of LPA; 'deficient'. September 92%.
- **Withdrawal:** began 19 September from west Rajasthan.
- **Northeast monsoon:** normal over the South Peninsula (88-112% of LPA).
- **El Nino:** over 90% chance of a very strong event (NOAA, 10 September).
- **Arctic sea ice minimum:** 12 September; about 4.6 million sq km.

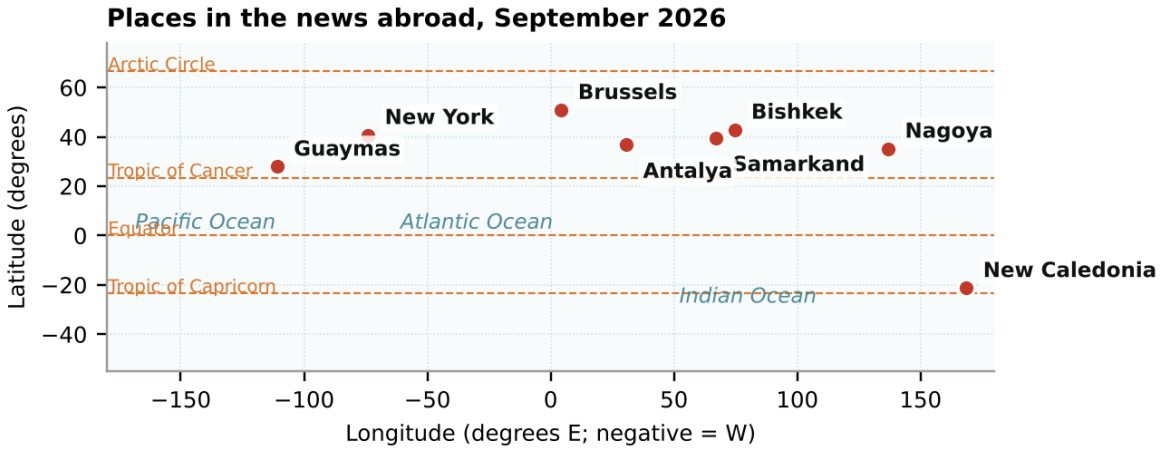
Hazards

- **Hurricane Polo:** Category 3 landfall in Baja California Sur (28 September).
- **Atlantic:** no hurricane till end-September.
- **Deep depression:** crossed near Kalingapatnam (23-24 September).
- **New Caledonia:** M6.6 earthquake, 25 September (reported).
- **Maharashtra:** 265 talukas declared drought-hit.

65 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Places in the News: September 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

- **Bishkek:** SCO summit; English made an official language.
- **Samarkand:** 46th Chess Olympiad. **Nagoya (Aichi):** 20th Asian Games.
- **Brussels:** EU moves to sign the India-EU FTA.
- **Guaymas (Mexico):** Hurricane Polo's second landfall.
- **New Caledonia:** M6.6 earthquake (reported).
- **Antalya (Turkiye):** COP31 host. **New York:** UNGA 81.



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

India

- **Sriharikota:** GSLV-F17/EOS-05. **Rawatbhata:** RAPP-8 fuel loading.
- **Varanasi:** Poshan Maah launch. **Navi Mumbai:** Rajbhasha Sammelan.
- **Ekta Nagar:** National Film Awards. **New Delhi:** BRICS summit; SEMICON India.
- **Kalingapatnam:** deep depression landfall.
- **Auli and Pithoragarh:** Yudh Abhyas and Nomadic Elephant.
- **Kuno NP:** cheetah cubs; Vadodara: WDFC completed.

66 | POLITY — PRELIMS

Polity and Governance: Quick Notes

Courts, elections and rules in September 2026.

Courts and institutions

- **CEC Act, 2023:** challenge referred to a Constitution Bench (23 September).
- **High Courts:** eight new Chief Justices notified (5 September).
- **Collegium:** three Chief Justices recommended for the Supreme Court (28 September).
- **Article 124:** Supreme Court judges are appointed by the President.
- **Article 145(3):** a Constitution Bench has at least five judges.

Elections and rules

- **Delhi SIR draft roll:** about 47.7 lakh names dropped.
- **Bypolls:** one Lok Sabha and five assembly seats; polling 6 October.
- **E-commerce rules:** dark patterns curbed from 1 January 2027.
- **DILRMP:** land records digitisation scheme of the Department of Land Resources.
- **AFSPA:** extended for six months in parts of three northeastern states.

67 | INDIAN SOCIETY — PRELIMS

Society and Social Justice: Quick Notes

Schemes, data and reports on people and welfare.

Schemes and campaigns

- **Poshan Maah:** 9th edition; 'Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari'.
- **PMMVY:** 10 years; Rs 5,000 for the first child.
- **PM-JAY:** 8 years; Rs 5 lakh cover per family a year.
- **Ayushman Vay Vandana:** cover for all aged 70 and above.
- **Swachhata Hi Seva:** from 17 September.

Data and reports

- **PLFS (August):** unemployment 5.0%; female LFPR 34.8%.
- **Gender Snapshot 2026:** equality about 171 years away.
- **Global Innovation Index:** India 38th (reported).
- **Literacy Day theme:** 'Literacy for People, Planet and Prosperity'.
- **NEET-PG 2026:** result on 24 September.

68 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRELIMS

International Relations: Quick Notes

Groupings, summits and agreements in September 2026.

Groupings

- **BRICS:** 18th summit, New Delhi; 20th anniversary; China chairs in 2027.
- **SCO:** 26th summit, Bishkek; 25th anniversary; English as an official language.
- **UNGA 81:** India's statement on 26 September.
- **Quad sherpas:** met in New Delhi, 3 September.

Bilateral

- **China:** Modi-Xi meeting, 12 September.
- **Iran:** Modi-Pezeshkian meeting at Bishkek; Chabahar.
- **EU:** Commission proposes signing the FTA (11 September).
- **Bangladesh:** Ganga Water Treaty expires December 2026.
- **Mongolia and US:** army exercises in Uttarakhand.

69 | ECONOMY PRELIMS

Economy and Agriculture: Numbers to Remember

Key economic figures released in September 2026.

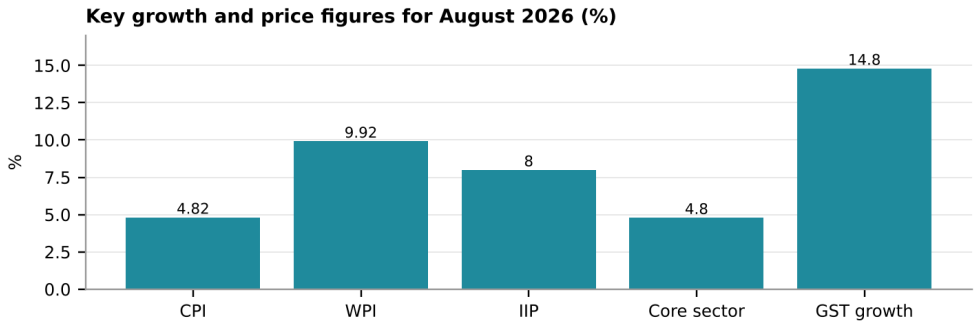


Chart. Source: MoSPI, DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and GST data, September 2026.

Prices and output

- **CPI:** 4.82%; food 5.95%. **WPI:** 9.92%.
- **IIP:** 8.0%; capital goods 16.9%. **Core:** 4.8%.
- **GST:** about Rs 2 lakh crore gross.

External sector

- **CAD (Q1):** US$4.2 billion, 0.5% of GDP.
- **External debt:** US$778.2 billion, 20.8% of GDP.
- **Forex:** record about US$785.7 billion (5 September, reported).
- **Exports (August):** US$43.81 billion, +26.1%.
- **Growth forecasts:** ADB 7.0%; OECD 7.1% (reported).

70 | ENVIRONMENT PRELIMS

Environment: Quick Notes

Treaties, species and pollution rules in the news.

Treaties and days

- **Montreal Protocol:** 16 September 1987; World Ozone Day.
- **Kigali Amendment:** 2016; HFC phase-down; India's freeze 2028.
- **COP31:** Antalya, Turkiye, November 2026.
- **World Rhino Day:** 22 September; one-horned rhino is IUCN Vulnerable.

Species and pollution

- **Cheetah:** Kuno NP and Gandhi Sagar WLS (Madhya Pradesh).
- **GRAP:** four stages; revised by CAQM (reported, 28 September).
- **CAQM:** statutory body under the CAQM Act, 2021.
- **WMO bulletins:** air quality (7 September), ozone (16 September).

71 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRELIMS

Science and Technology: Quick Notes

Launches, reactors and technology policy in September 2026.

Item	Key fact
EOS-05	First geosynchronous Earth-imaging satellite; GSLV-F17; 4 September
RAPP-8	700 MWe PHWR; fuel loading 19 September; Rawatbhata
Satcom spectrum	Administrative allocation; 4% AGR; 5 years
SEMICON India	17 September; Yashobhoomi, New Delhi
Starship Flight 14	First to reach orbit (reported), 28 September
PAM	Naegleria fowleri; enters through the nose

Concepts

- **Geosynchronous orbit:** about 35,786 km; period equal to one sidereal day.
- **PHWR:** natural uranium; heavy water moderator.
- **OSAT:** chip assembly, testing and packaging.

72 | INTERNAL SECURITY PRELIMS

Defence and Security: Quick Notes

Procurement, exercises and laws in September 2026.

Defence

- **DAC (7 September):** AoN worth about Rs 1.10 lakh crore.
- **Arudhra:** medium-range surveillance radar for the Navy.
- **Navy:** 18 warships to be inducted in 2026.
- **Defence exports:** over Rs 38,000 crore (reported).

Exercises and laws

- **Yudh Abhyas:** India-US, 22nd edition.
- **Nomadic Elephant:** India-Mongolia, 18th edition.
- **AFSPA, 1958:** 'disturbed area' declared under Section 3.
- **Mule accounts:** RBI draft KYC directions (11 September).

73 | REVISION REVISION

Days and Themes of September 2026

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

Days

- **Rashtriya Poshan Maah:** the whole of September.
- **Teachers' Day (5 September).**
- **International Literacy Day (8 September):** 'Literacy for People, Planet and Prosperity'.
- **World Suicide Prevention Day (10 September):** 'Changing the Narrative on Suicide'.
- **Hindi Diwas (14 September).**
- **Engineers' Day and International Day of Democracy (15 September).**
- **World Ozone Day (16 September):** 'Global Action for a Cooler Planet'.
- **World Rhino Day (22 September).**
- **Ayushman Bharat Diwas (23 September):** PM-JAY at eight.

Anniversaries

- **11 September:** Vivekananda's Chicago address; Vinoba Bhave's birth.
- **17 September:** Project Cheetah (2022); Swachhata Hi Seva begins.
- **28 September:** Bhagat Singh's birth anniversary.

Practice Questions: Prelims and Mains

1. Swami Vivekananda addressed the Parliament of the World's Religions at Chicago in:
(a) 1886 (b) 1893 (c) 1897 (d) 1902
Answer: (b). On 11 September 1893.

2. Consider the following about Vinoba Bhave: 1. He started the Bhoodan movement. 2. He was the first individual satyagrahi in 1940. 3. He received the Bharat Ratna. Which are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: (d). Bhoodan 1951; first individual satyagrahi 1940; Bharat Ratna 1983 (posthumous).

3. Engineers' Day in India marks the birth anniversary of:
(a) Homi Bhabha (b) M. Visvesvaraya (c) Satish Dhawan (d) C.V. Raman
Answer: (b). Born 15 September 1861.

4. The 72nd National Film Awards ceremony in September 2026 was held at:
(a) New Delhi (b) Mumbai (c) Ekta Nagar (d) Hyderabad
Answer: (c). First ceremony held outside New Delhi (reported).

5. The 20th Asian Games (2026) are hosted by:
(a) China (b) South Korea (c) Japan (d) Qatar
Answer: (c). Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.

6. The 46th Chess Olympiad was held in:
(a) Budapest (b) Chennai (c) Samarkand (d) Baku
Answer: (c). Uzbekistan hosted it in 2026.

7. India's 2026 southwest monsoon rainfall was about what share of the long period average?
(a) 87% (b) 94% (c) 104% (d) 108%
Answer: (a). IMD summary, 30 September; 'deficient'.

8. A 'deficient' monsoon season under IMD's classification means rainfall:
(a) below 90% of LPA (b) 90-95% (c) 96-104% (d) above 110%
Answer: (a). Deficient is below 90% of LPA.

9. Consider: 1. El Nino is linked to warmer sea surface in the central and eastern Pacific. 2. El Nino usually strengthens the Indian monsoon. Which is correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither
Answer: (a). El Nino usually weakens the Indian monsoon.

10. The northeast monsoon brings most of its rain to:
(a) Punjab (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Assam (d) Gujarat
Answer: (b). October-December rains over coastal Tamil Nadu and nearby areas.

11. Hurricane Polo in September 2026 made landfall in:
(a) Florida (b) Baja California Sur (c) Cuba (d) Hawaii
Answer: (b). Then near Guaymas, Sonora.

12. The 18th BRICS Summit (2026) was held in:
(a) Kazan (b) Rio de Janeiro (c) New Delhi (d) Johannesburg
Answer: (c). 12-13 September, Bharat Mandapam.

13. Which country will chair BRICS in 2027?
(a) Brazil (b) China (c) Russia (d) South Africa
Answer: (b). Announced at the New Delhi summit.

14. The 26th SCO Summit adopted a protocol to make which language an official SCO language?
(a) Hindi (b) English (c) Arabic (d) Turkish
Answer: (b). Earlier official languages: Russian and Chinese.

15. The Ganga Water Treaty with Bangladesh was signed in:
(a) 1972 (b) 1977 (c) 1996 (d) 2011
Answer: (c). Signed December 1996 for 30 years.

16. The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act was enacted in:
(a) 2019 (b) 2021 (c) 2023 (d) 2025
Answer: (c). Challenge referred to a Constitution Bench in September 2026.

17. Under Article 145(3), a Constitution Bench must have at least:
(a) 3 judges (b) 5 judges (c) 7 judges (d) 9 judges
Answer: (b). For substantial questions of constitutional interpretation.

18. Which body notified the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) (Amendment) Rules, 2026?
(a) MeitY (b) Department of Consumer Affairs (c) CCI (d) RBI
Answer: (b). Rules under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

19. The theme of Poshan Maah 2026 was:
(a) Suposhit Bharat (b) Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari (c) Mission Indradhanush (d) Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi
Answer: (b). Launched in Varanasi on 9 September.

20. PM-JAY provides health cover per family per year of up to:
(a) Rs 1 lakh (b) Rs 2 lakh (c) Rs 5 lakh (d) Rs 10 lakh
Answer: (c). For secondary and tertiary hospital care.

21. The Global Innovation Index is published by:
(a) WEF (b) WIPO (c) UNDP (d) OECD
Answer: (b). With partners; 2026 edition released 29 September.

22. Retail inflation for August 2026 was about:
(a) 3.6% (b) 4.8% (c) 5.9% (d) 9.9%
Answer: (b). 4.82%, released 14 September.

23. Which of the following is NOT part of India's inflation targeting framework?
(a) 4% CPI target (b) 2-6% band (c) WPI target of 3% (d) Monetary Policy Committee
Answer: (c). The target is defined on CPI, not WPI.

24. In the IIP for August 2026, the fastest growing use-based group was:
(a) Primary goods (b) Capital goods (c) Consumer non-durables (d) Infrastructure goods
Answer: (b). 16.9%.

25. The GST Council was created under:
(a) Article 246A (b) Article 269A (c) Article 279A (d) Article 280
Answer: (c). Added by the 101st Amendment, 2016.

26. India's current account deficit in April-June 2026 was about:
(a) 0.5% of GDP (b) 1.5% (c) 2.5% (d) 3.5%
Answer: (a). US$4.2 billion (RBI, 1 September).

27. Which of the following is a non-debt-creating capital flow?
(a) External commercial borrowing (b) NRI deposits (c) Foreign direct investment (d) Short-term trade credit
Answer: (c). FDI does not create a repayment obligation.

28. Ways and Means Advances from the RBI are meant to:
(a) Fund long-term projects (b) Cover temporary mismatches in government cash flows (c) Recapitalise banks (d) Buy gold
Answer: (b). Short-term liquidity for governments.

29. Commodity derivatives regulation passed to SEBI after it merged with:
(a) IRDAI (b) PFRDA (c) Forward Markets Commission (d) NABARD
Answer: (c). Merged in 2015.

30. World Ozone Day marks the anniversary of:
(a) Vienna Convention (b) Montreal Protocol (c) Kigali Amendment (d) Paris Agreement
Answer: (b). Signed 16 September 1987.

31. Consider: 1. HFCs deplete the ozone layer. 2. HFCs are powerful greenhouse gases. Which is correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither
Answer: (b). HFCs replaced ozone-depleting gases but warm the climate.

32. Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, a second home for cheetahs, is in:
(a) Rajasthan (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Gujarat (d) Chhattisgarh
Answer: (b). Mandsaur and Neemuch districts.

33. The Commission for Air Quality Management was set up under a law of:
(a) 2017 (b) 2019 (c) 2021 (d) 2023
Answer: (c). CAQM Act, 2021.

34. COP31 in 2026 is being hosted by:
(a) Australia (b) Turkiye (c) Brazil (d) Azerbaijan
Answer: (b). In Antalya; Australia leads negotiations.

35. EOS-05, launched in September 2026, is notable because it:
(a) is India's first lunar orbiter (b) images Earth from geosynchronous orbit (c) is a navigation satellite (d) is a reusable spaceplane
Answer: (b). Launched by GSLV-F17.

36. Which statement about PHWRs is correct?
(a) They use enriched uranium and light water (b) They use natural uranium and heavy water (c) They use thorium only (d) They need no moderator
Answer: (b). India's 700 MWe fleet uses PHWRs.

37. Rawatbhata nuclear plant lies on the banks of the:
(a) Mahi (b) Chambal (c) Banas (d) Luni
Answer: (b). Chittorgarh district, Rajasthan.

38. Primary amoebic meningoencephalitis is caused by:
(a) Plasmodium vivax (b) Naegleria fowleri (c) Entamoeba histolytica (d) Giardia
Answer: (b). A free-living amoeba in warm fresh water.

39. Acceptance of Necessity in defence procurement is given by:
(a) Cabinet Committee on Security (b) Defence Acquisition Council (c) DRDO (d) Chief of Defence Staff
Answer: (b). First step under DAP 2020.

40. Exercise Nomadic Elephant is held between India and:
(a) Mongolia (b) Kazakhstan (c) Nepal (d) Thailand
Answer: (a). 18th edition at Pithoragarh.

41. Under AFSPA, an area is declared 'disturbed' under:
(a) Section 2 (b) Section 3 (c) Section 4 (d) Section 6
Answer: (b). By the Centre or the Governor.

42. The Western Dedicated Freight Corridor connects:
(a) Ludhiana and Sonnagar (b) Dadri and JNPT (c) Kolkata and Chennai (d) Delhi and Guwahati
Answer: (b). Completed in September 2026.

Mains Practice

- **Q1.** Explain the relevance of Swami Vivekananda's ideas of universalism and service for contemporary India. (GS1, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q2.** Assess the contribution of Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement to land reform in India. (GS1, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q3.** Discuss how El Nino affects the Indian monsoon. How can India reduce the impact of deficient monsoons on agriculture? (GS1, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q4.** Why is the northeast monsoon critical for Tamil Nadu? Examine its variability. (GS1, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q5.** Arctic sea ice decline has global consequences. Discuss with reference to India. (GS1, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q6.** Female labour force participation has risen in recent years. Examine the reasons and remaining barriers. (GS1, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q7.** Evaluate the significance of the 18th BRICS Summit for India's role in a multipolar world. (GS2, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q8.** India-China relations show signs of thaw but deep differences remain. Discuss. (GS2, 15 marks, 250 words)

- **Q9.** Assess India's interests in the SCO in the light of its 2026 Bishkek summit. (GS2, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q10.** How should India balance its ties with Iran and the West during the West Asia conflict? (GS2, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q11.** Discuss the issues to be addressed in renewing the Ganga Water Treaty with Bangladesh. (GS2, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q12.** The independence of the Election Commission depends on how its members are appointed. Critically examine. (GS2, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q13.** Examine the challenges in revising electoral rolls while protecting the right to vote. (GS2, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q14.** What are dark patterns? Evaluate the new e-commerce rules to curb them. (GS2, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q15.** Assess the performance of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY after eight years. (GS2, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q16.** Anganwadis are the backbone of child nutrition in India. Discuss the challenges they face. (GS2, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q17.** Explain why wholesale and retail inflation have diverged in 2026. What are the implications for monetary policy? (GS3, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q18.** Remittances and services exports have kept India's current account deficit low. Discuss. (GS3, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q19.** Is India's external debt sustainable? Examine with reference to recent data. (GS3, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q20.** Discuss the role of SEBI's 2026 reforms in deepening India's capital and commodity markets. (GS3, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q21.** Mule accounts are the backbone of cyber fraud. Suggest measures to tackle them. (GS3, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q22.** Transmission, not generation, is now the bottleneck for renewable energy in India. Discuss. (GS3, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q23.** Evaluate the economic significance of dedicated freight corridors. (GS3, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q24.** Assess the success of Project Cheetah after four years. (GS3, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q25.** The Kigali Amendment links ozone protection and climate action. Explain. (GS3, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q26.** Examine the need for a drought-resilient agriculture strategy, with reference to Maharashtra. (GS3, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q27.** What is the significance of geosynchronous Earth observation for disaster management? (GS3, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q28.** Discuss the arguments for and against administrative allocation of satellite spectrum. (GS3, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q29.** India's semiconductor ambitions face structural challenges. Discuss. (GS3, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q30.** AFSPA balances security needs and civil liberties uneasily. Critically examine. (GS3, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q31.** Probity in the use of public health funds is as important as access to care. Discuss with examples. (GS4, 10 marks, 150 words)

Official Sources to Bookmark

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

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

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

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

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

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

76 | SOURCES REVISION

Sources and Notes

- **History and culture:** PIB (Teachers' Awards, Hindi Diwas, Film Awards); AIR and FPJ (Rajbhasha Sammelan); Olympic Council of Asia and news reports (Asian Games); FIDE (Chess Olympiad); Right Livelihood Foundation; Lasker Foundation.
- **Geography and disasters:** IMD end-of-season and long-range forecast releases (30 September); NOAA CPC ENSO discussion (10 September); NASA sea-ice release (23 September); NHC advisories (Polo); USGS (New Caledonia); IMD bulletins and AIR (depressions); CWC and news reports (north India floods); Maharashtra government (drought).
- **Society and social justice:** MoSPI PLFS bulletin (15 September); UN Women Gender Snapshot; PIB (Poshan Maah, PM-JAY); WIPO GII 2026; NBEMS (NEET-PG); UNESCO (Literacy Day).
- **International relations:** MEA (BRICS, SCO, UNGA, Quad); Iranian presidency readout; European Commission (FTA, 11 September); news reports (Ganga treaty).
- **Polity and governance:** PRS Monthly Policy Review, September 2026; SC Observer monthly review; LiveLaw and Bar and Bench (CEC Act, collegium); Election Commission press notes (bypolls); Department of Consumer Affairs (e-commerce rules).
- **Economy and agriculture:** MoSPI (CPI, IIP); Office of the Economic Adviser (WPI, core sector); GST data; Ministry of Commerce (trade); RBI (BoP, external debt, KYC draft, WMA); RBI WSS via FPJ (forex); ADB ADO and OECD Interim Outlook; SEBI board press release as reported; Ministry of Agriculture (kharif); MNRE, Coal India and news reports (power and coal); PIB (Cabinet, Vadodara).
- **Environment:** MoEFCC (Ozone Day); SBM (Swachhata Hi Seva); news reports (Project Cheetah); CAQM as reported (GRAP); COP31 presidency; WMO.
- **Science and security:** ISRO (GSLV-F17/EOS-05); DoT and news reports (satcom); MeitY and SEMI (SEMICON India); NPCIL (RAPP-8); SpaceX as reported; Kerala Health Department as reported; PIB Defence (DAC, exercises); MHA notifications (AFSPA); AIR (Navy).

Please verify before use

- **Facts are as reported up to 30 September 2026.** The Asian Games end on 4 October and the bypoll results come on 9 October; the three new Supreme Court judges were sworn in on 6 October. Final figures are for our October issue.
- **Updates to earlier issues:** IMD's final June rain was 106.8 mm (65% of LPA; our June issue used 99.5 mm and -40%); final July rain was 283.3 mm (101%; we used 280.6 mm). One report dates the August Cabinet rail package to 22 August (we said 19 August). The Navy plans 18 warships in 2026, not 19. The Keralam renaming was notified on 26 August.
- **Reported, not confirmed from primary documents:** forex weekly figures; crude basket price; OECD forecasts; SEBI board decisions; core sector components; cheetah births and count; GRAP action counts; satcom decisions; SEMICON details; Starship flight result; Kerala amoeba deaths; defence production and export figures; Asian Games medal count; GII rank; Film Awards venue 'first' claim; New Caledonia quake.
- **Figures that differ between sources:** Swachhata Hi Seva end date (2 or 17 October); AFSPA areas in Nagaland; mid-September kharif totals.
- **Approximate map points:** all maps are location diagrams without boundaries; points are approximate.
- The ethics case study and essay themes are original practice material, not reports of real events.

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