

UPSC Weekly Current Affairs — Week 30 · 20 Jul – 26 Jul 2026

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Exam digest: the 50 most exam-relevant of 211 notes this period, grouped by GS paper and subject.

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GS1 · History · Society · Geography · 1

History & Culture

Heritage sites, UNESCO & GI tags · Prelims + Mains · 26 Jul

Sarnath Becomes India's 45th UNESCO World Heritage Site

Why in news: Sarnath was officially inscribed as India's 45th UNESCO World Heritage Site during the 48th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea.

Key facts: Sarnath, located in Uttar Pradesh, is the site where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon. It was on the UNESCO tentative list since 1998 and is a key component of the Buddhist Circuit.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Sarnath: Located in Uttar Pradesh, site of Buddha's first sermon.
- **Body:** UNESCO World Heritage Committee: Held its 48th session in Busan, South Korea, in July 2026.
- **Fact:** Sarnath is India's 45th UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Fact:** APAAR ID: Unique identifier for students under the National Education Policy 2020.
- **Place:** Vizhinjam Port: Located in Kerala, notified as a customs port for operations starting August 18, 2026.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of UNESCO World Heritage status in promoting cultural diplomacy and sustainable tourism for Indian heritage sites.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/91556

Polity & Constitution

Parliament & state legislatures · Prelims + Mains · 20 Jul

The Centre will commence the Monsoon Session of Parliament to grant statutory

Why in news: The Centre is convening the Monsoon Session of Parliament in July 2026 to introduce the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, to grant statutory protection to 'Vande Mataram'.

Key facts: The Monsoon Session is scheduled to commence on July 20, 2026. Key legislative items include the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill and the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act: Provides legal protection for national symbols and anthems.
- **Body:** Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment: Relates to the judicial composition and strength of the apex court.
- **Fact:** Monsoon Session: One of the two major sessions of Parliament held annually alongside the Budget Session.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of legislative amendments in protecting national symbols and the role of parliamentary sessions in addressing public grievances.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/87961](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/87961)

Judiciary & landmark judgments · Prelims + Mains · 22 Jul

Supreme Court Slams Routine Bail Challenges, Backs High Courts

Why in news: The Supreme Court reinforced the principle of judicial restraint by ruling that interference with High Court bail orders should be exceptional, specifically during a liquor scam case involving the Enforcement Directorate...

Key facts: On July 22, 2026, a Supreme Court Bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant declined to interfere with a bail order granted to Chaitanya Baghel. The court emphasized that High Courts are the primary arbiters of bail and that Article 136 interventions should be reserved for cases where liberty poses an 'egregious' threat to justice.

Prelims pointers

- **Constitution:** Article 136: Grants the Supreme Court the power to grant Special Leave to Appeal (SLP) against any judgment or order.
- **Body:** Enforcement Directorate (ED): Statutory body established under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).
- **Post:** Chief Justice of India: The highest judicial office in India, presiding over the Supreme Court.

Mains question: Discuss the importance of judicial restraint in the exercise of Special Leave Petitions to balance the fundamental right to personal liberty with the requirements of criminal investigation.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/89620](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/89620)

Parliament & state legislatures · Prelims + Mains · 23 Jul

Supreme Court Rejects Stay on Shiv Sena MP Merger, Upholds Speaker's Decision

Why in news: The Supreme Court refused to stay the Lok Sabha Speaker's decision to recognize the merger of six Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs with the Eknath Shinde-led faction, highlighting the Speaker's authority in parliamentary proceedings.

Key facts: The Lok Sabha Speaker, Om Birla, recognized the merger of six MPs from the Shiv Sena (UBT) into the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena. The Supreme Court declined to grant an interim stay on this decision, upholding the Speaker's jurisdiction over internal party matters and parliamentary representation.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Lok Sabha Speaker: Presides over the Lower House and maintains order and decorum.
- **Fact:** The merger involved 6 MPs from the Shiv Sena (UBT) faction.
- **Body:** QUAD: A strategic security dialogue between India, USA, Japan, and Australia.

- **Intl. org:** ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations, emphasized as central to Indo-Pacific stability.

Mains question: *Examine the extent of the Speaker's powers in resolving intra-party disputes and their implications for the principle of representative democracy in India.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90099

Judiciary & landmark judgments · Prelims + Mains · 25 Jul

Raveena Baneta writes UPSC Key for July 24 in Indian Express

Why in news: Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the creation of fast-track courts and a new law to penalize those responsible for examination paper leaks.

Key facts: The government plans to introduce a new law to punish exam fraud, with the Cabinet scheduled to discuss the draft. Fast-track courts (FTCs) are specialized judicial bodies designed to expedite the trial of specific categories of cases, such as those involving examination leaks.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Fast Track Courts (FTCs) are specialized courts established to speed up the disposal of specific types of cases.
- **Fact:** The government is proposing a new law specifically targeting examination leaks and frauds.
- **Post:** The Union Education Minister is currently facing calls for resignation due to the examination leak situation.

Mains question: *Critically examine the efficacy of Fast Track Courts in reducing judicial pendency and balancing the need for speedy justice with the right to a fair trial.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90824

Governance

Role of civil services · Prelims + Mains · 23 Jul

Gujarat Leads as Top Investment Hub, Scores 56.6 in NITI Aayog Index

Why in news: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet appointed Anurag Jain as CEO of NITI Aayog and Ashok Kumar Lahiri as Vice Chairperson while Gujarat emerged as the top-performing state in the Investment Friendliness Index.

Key facts: NITI Aayog's Investment Friendliness Index evaluates states across eight pillars to enhance investment ecosystems. Gujarat secured the top rank with a score of 56.6, followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

Prelims pointers

- **Post:** Anurag Jain (1989-batch IAS) appointed as CEO of NITI Aayog
- **Body:** NITI Aayog: National Institution for Transforming India, a premier policy think tank
- **Fact:** Gujarat scored 56.6 in the Investment Friendliness Index
- **Body:** Appointments Committee of the Cabinet: Body responsible for appointing high-level officials

Mains question: *Analyze the role of NITI Aayog in fostering a competitive federal investment ecosystem and the significance of state-level investment indices in achieving national economic goals.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/89653

Bills, Acts & ordinances · Prelims + Mains · 23 Jul

FCRA Bill faces opposition, Amit Shah assures Christian NGOs it's not targeted

Why in news: The Press Information Bureau clarified the scope of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, to address concerns regarding the seizure of religious assets by the state.

Key facts: The FCRA Bill, 2026, aims to rectify administrative lapses in the management of foreign funds by NGOs. The government clarified that the designated authority can only manage assets from foreign funds post-deregistration and cannot seize places of worship.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** FCRA Bill, 2026: Proposed legislation to regulate foreign funding for non-governmental organizations in India.
- **Body:** Press Information Bureau (PIB): The nodal agency of the Government of India to disseminate information to the media.

- **Fact:** The bill was listed for passage during the Monsoon Session of the Parliament in 2026.

Mains question: Critically examine the balance between the state's power to regulate foreign funding for NGOs and the protection of religious freedom and institutional autonomy.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/89698

Bills, Acts & ordinances · Prelims + Mains · 24 Jul

Delhi High Court forms fast-track court for exam leak cases after Modi's promise

Why in news: The Delhi High Court established a fast-track court to expedite trials of exam paper leak cases following the enactment of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.

Key facts: The court appointed judicial officer Anu Grover Baliga as a special CBI judge at the Rouse Avenue Courts Complex. The new judicial framework addresses systemic irregularities in public examinations, providing for severe criminal penalties.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024: Provides for up to 5 years imprisonment and a Rs 10 lakh fine for exam-related fraud.
- **Body:** CBI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the primary agency tasked with investigating these high-profile leak cases.
- **Place:** Rouse Avenue Courts Complex: The designated location in Delhi for the newly formed fast-track court.

Mains question: Examine the institutional and legislative measures required to ensure the integrity of public examinations in India and prevent the commercialization of examination fraud.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90176

Role of civil services · Prelims + Mains · 24 Jul

NTA overhauled after exam leaks: 47 staffers removed, bill seeks 10-year jail terms

Why in news: The government is overhauling the National Testing Agency (NTA) and introducing a draft bill to penalize exam paper leaks with up to 10 years of imprisonment.

Key facts: The National Testing Agency (NTA) is undergoing a structural overhaul following mass protests over paper leaks. The government approved a draft bill proposing jail terms of up to 10 years and fines up to Rs 10 crore for leak-related offenses.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NTA: National Testing Agency is an autonomous body responsible for conducting major entrance exams like NEET and JEE.
- **Fact:** The proposed draft bill seeks to impose fines of up to Rs 10 crore for exam paper leaks.
- **Fact:** The draft bill proposes a maximum imprisonment term of 10 years for those involved in paper leaks.

Mains question: Critically examine the systemic vulnerabilities in the conduct of national-level entrance examinations and suggest measures to ensure the integrity of the examination process.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90595

Government policies & schemes · Prelims + Mains · 26 Jul

Modi forms task force led by Nandan Nilekani to review India's exam systems

Why in news: PM Modi announced a task force led by Nandan Nilekani to overhaul India's examination systems to ensure reliability and transparency following high-profile paper leaks.

Key facts: The task force includes Nandan Nilekani (former UIDAI chairman), S Somanath (former ISRO chairman), and V Kamakoti (IIT Chennai director). It is tasked with reviewing examination systems to address systemic vulnerabilities and integrate technological solutions.

Prelims pointers

- **Post:** Nandan Nilekani: Former chairman of UIDAI and architect of Aadhaar
- **Body:** ISRO: Space research agency under the Department of Space
- **Fact:** Task force objective: Enhancing examination reliability and transparency through technology

Mains question: Critically analyze the systemic vulnerabilities in India's competitive examination framework and suggest measures to ensure integrity through technological intervention.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/91605

Social Justice

Education policy · Prelims + Mains · 24 Jul

Amid NEET paper leak protests in India, Vineet Joshi was replaced

Why in news: The Centre replaced Vineet Joshi as Secretary of the Department of Higher Education with Naresh Pal Gangwar following massive protests over NEET paper leaks.

Key facts: Vineet Joshi, a 1992-batch officer, served as the first Director-General of the National Testing Agency (NTA) and Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC). The Delhi High Court established a fast-track court to adjudicate exam paper leak cases under new anti-cheating laws.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NTA: National Testing Agency is the body responsible for conducting entrance examinations like NEET and JEE.
- **Body:** UGC: University Grants Commission is the statutory body responsible for maintaining standards of higher education.
- **Post:** Vineet Joshi served as the first Director-General of the NTA and Chairman of the CBSE.
- **Fact:** Vineet Joshi was appointed Secretary of the Department of Higher Education in January 2025.

Mains question: Critically analyze the systemic vulnerabilities in the conduct of national-level entrance examinations and suggest measures to ensure the integrity of the examination process.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90226

International Relations

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains · 21 Jul

US Central Command Destroys Surveillance Tower at Chabahar Port in Iran

Why in news: US Central Command destroyed a surveillance tower at Iran's Chabahar Port, raising concerns over the security of India's investment in the Shahid Beheshti terminal.

Key facts: India invested USD 500 million in the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar Port. The port's operations have been managed by India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) since 2018. The US Central Command confirmed the destruction of the tower on July 16, 2024.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Chabahar Port: Located in Iran on the Gulf of Oman coastline.
- **Body:** India Ports Global Limited (IPGL): New Delhi-backed entity managing Chabahar port operations since 2018.
- **Fact:** India's investment in Shahid Beheshti terminal: USD 500 million.
- **Intl. org:** JCPOA: Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a nuclear deal involving Iran and the P5+1 nations.
- **Fact:** India signed a 10-year contract with Iran for Chabahar port operations in 2024.

Mains question: Examine the geostrategic significance of the Chabahar Port for India's connectivity to Central Asia and the challenges posed by Western sanctions.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/88762

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains · 21 Jul

India Pushes Hydropower, Aims to Renegotiate Indus Waters Treaty Amid Terrorism Concerns

Why in news: India is seeking to renegotiate the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) and accelerate hydropower projects on the Chenab River due to persistent cross-border terrorism from Pakistan.

Key facts: The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) governs the sharing of three perennial rivers: the Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum. India is currently pushing for hydropower development on the Chenab River while seeking a formal review of the treaty's framework.

Prelims pointers

- **Intl. org:** Indus Waters Treaty (IWT): Signed in 1960 between India and Pakistan, mediated by the World Bank.
- **Fact:** Chenab River: One of the three perennial rivers shared under the IWT, primarily used for hydropower and irrigation.
- **S&T:** Qdenga: India's first dengue vaccine, approved for use by Takeda Biopharmaceuticals India.

- **Post:** President Droupadi Murmu: Visited Moldova in 2026 to discuss UNSC reforms and counter-terrorism.
- Mains question:** *Examine the challenges India faces in renegotiating the Indus Waters Treaty while balancing regional water security and counter-terrorism objectives.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/88905

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains · 21 Jul

Iran attacked a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, forcing its crew

Why in news: Iran and the United States are engaged in escalating military conflict and maritime attacks in the Strait of Hormuz, leading to the collapse of an interim peace deal.

Key facts: The Strait of Hormuz is a critical maritime chokepoint through which approximately 20% of global crude oil and natural gas trade passes. The conflict has resulted in the abandonment of tankers and the targeting of civilian infrastructure, with the US conducting airstrikes for ten consecutive nights.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic waterway connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Fact:** The Strait of Hormuz facilitates the passage of about one-fifth (20%) of the world's traded crude oil and natural gas.
- **Body:** Pakistan is currently acting as a key mediator in the diplomatic talks between Iran and the United States.
- **Fact:** The US military reported a death toll of 17 American service members since early July in the ongoing conflict.

Mains question: *Analyze the geopolitical and economic implications of maritime insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz on global energy security and international trade routes.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/88979

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains · 22 Jul

Iran Hides Thousands of Nuclear Centrifuges 300 Feet Underground, Angers US

Why in news: Iran moved thousands of nuclear centrifuges to a fortified underground site called Pickaxe Mountain near Natanz, sparking US warnings of potential strikes.

Key facts: The Pickaxe Mountain complex is buried over 300 feet beneath solid granite to protect it from aerial bombardment. Satellite imagery confirmed construction activity starting in February 2024, with the IAEA currently lacking access to the site.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency, the global watchdog for nuclear non-proliferation.
- **Place:** Natanz: A major site for Iran's uranium enrichment activities.
- **Fact:** The Pickaxe Mountain facility is buried over 300 feet underground.
- **S&T:** Nuclear centrifuges: Machines used to enrich uranium by spinning it at high speeds.

Mains question: *Discuss the implications of clandestine underground nuclear facilities on the efficacy of international non-proliferation regimes and global security architecture.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/89014

Regional & global groupings (QUAD, BRICS, SCO, G20...) · Prelims · 22 Jul

India's Jaishankar urges ASEAN for deeper cooperation at Manila Quad meeting

Why in news: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar urged deeper India-ASEAN cooperation during the Quad meeting and ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Manila to navigate global turbulence.

Key facts: The meeting took place on July 22, 2026, in Manila. The discussions centered on the theme 'Navigating Our Future Together,' focusing on maritime law, trade, technology, and sustainability.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional intergovernmental organization.
- **Body:** Quad: A strategic security dialogue between India, USA, Japan, and Australia.
- **Place:** Manila: Capital city of the Philippines, a key ASEAN member state.
- **Fact:** The meeting occurred on July 22, 2026.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of India's deepening engagement with ASEAN in the context of maintaining a rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific region.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/89257

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains · 23 Jul

On Wednesday, Marco Rubio, US Secretary of State, met with S Jaishankar

Why in news: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in Manila to discuss interim trade deals, defense agreements, and global conflicts.

Key facts: The meeting in Manila focused on finalizing an interim trade deal and key defense agreements between India and the US. It also addressed regional conflicts in West Asia and Ukraine, with a potential visit by Rubio to India before the end of 2024.

Prelims pointers

- **Post:** Marco Rubio: Serving as the US Secretary of State.
- **Fact:** Trump's tariff policy: Zero percent tariffs on imported generic medicines for a period of two years.
- **Place:** Manila: Location of the high-level diplomatic meeting between India and the US.

Mains question: Analyze the significance of India-US defense and trade cooperation in the context of shifting global dynamics in West Asia and Eastern Europe.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/89807

Policies of other countries affecting India · Prelims + Mains · 23 Jul

Houthi Attacks in Red Sea Threaten Global Trade, Spark Wider Conflict Fears

Why in news: Houthi rebels' attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Bab El Mandeb Strait have disrupted global maritime trade routes, sparking fears of a wider Middle East conflict.

Key facts: Houthi fighters in Yemen are targeting vessels passing through the Bab El Mandeb Strait. These attacks have persisted since 2023, leading to increased shipping costs and military interventions by the US and UK to secure maritime commerce.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Bab El Mandeb Strait: A strategic maritime choke point connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.
- **Fact:** Houthi attacks have been actively disrupting maritime trade routes since 2023.
- **Body:** US and UK: Primary military actors currently intervening to protect commercial shipping in the Red Sea.

Mains question: Analyze the impact of maritime insecurity in the Red Sea on global supply chains and India's energy security. Suggest measures to ensure maritime safety in international waters.

Source: BBC · satyadheesh.in/news/90120

India's bilateral relations · Prelims · 24 Jul

US strikes and Iran drone attacks escalate tensions, raise oil price concerns

Why in news: Escalating military strikes between the US and Iran have triggered concerns over regional stability and global oil price volatility.

Key facts: The US conducted retaliatory strikes on Iranian military targets following attacks on US ships. Iran responded with drone strikes on US bases in the Middle East, resulting in four fatalities and five injuries in the south-west region.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Iran's drone strikes targeted US bases across the Middle East.
- **Fact:** The US plans to utilize frozen Iranian assets to offset damages from the strikes.
- **Place:** The conflict is centered in the Middle East, a critical region for global oil production.

Mains question: Analyze how the escalation of the Iran-US conflict impacts global energy security and the geopolitical stability of the Middle East.

Source: BBC · satyadheesh.in/news/90477

Saudi Arabia signed a nuclear deal with the Donald Trump administration

Why in news: Saudi Arabia signed a nuclear deal with the Donald Trump administration on July 24, 2026, signaling a shift in regional security dynamics and strategic hedging against Iran.

Key facts: The deal was signed on July 24, 2026, between Saudi Arabia and the US administration. It occurs amidst ongoing US-Israel conflict with Iran and concerns regarding the Arab Gulf region.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Saudi Arabia: A monarchy located in the Middle East.
- **Fact:** The nuclear deal was signed on July 24, 2026.
- **Body:** Abraham Accords: Agreements aimed at normalizing relations between Israel and Arab nations.

Mains question: *Analyze how the Saudi-US nuclear deal reshapes the geopolitical architecture of the Middle East and the balance of power between the Saudi monarchy and the Iranian Islamic Republic.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90511

Trump Imposes Tariffs on 80 Countries Over Forced Labor Claims

Why in news: The Trump administration imposed tariffs on over 80 countries under Section 301 of the Trade Act due to forced labor allegations, sparking global trade friction.

Key facts: Tariffs range from 10% to 12.5% on products from over 80 countries. The action is taken under Section 301 of the Trade Act, which allows the US to investigate and respond to unfair trade practices.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Section 301 of the Trade Act: Provides the US Trade Representative (USTR) authority to investigate and penalize unfair trade practices.
- **Fact:** Tariff range: 10% to 12.5% imposed on products from over 80 countries.
- **Intl. org:** Trade Act: A US federal law governing international trade relations and enforcement.

Mains question: *Examine how the use of trade sanctions and tariffs as tools for human rights enforcement impacts the stability of the global multilateral trading system.*

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/90638

CETA takes effect, cuts 99% Indian export tariffs but skips investment sections

Why in news: The India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) came into force on July 15, 2026, significantly reducing export tariffs while excluding investment-specific clauses.

Key facts: The CETA reduces tariffs on 99% of Indian exports to the U.K. and eases mobility rules for professionals. Unlike India's deals with EFTA and New Zealand, this agreement lacks a dedicated section on investments.

Prelims pointers

- **Intl. org:** CETA: India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement effective from July 15, 2026
- **Fact:** CETA covers tariff reductions on 99% of Indian exports
- **Fact:** India's trade agreements with EFTA and New Zealand include dedicated investment sections

Mains question: *Analyze the trade-offs between securing immediate tariff concessions and the long-term implications of excluding investment protections in bilateral trade agreements like CETA.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/90743

India clarifies sovereignty stance to China, refutes claims on Taiwan, Tibet

Why in news: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) clarified India's stance on sovereignty after China misrepresented External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's remarks regarding Taiwan and Tibet during a meeting in Manila.

Key facts: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on July 22, 2024, in Manila during the ASEAN and East Asia foreign ministers meeting. India refuted China's claim that it 'respects' Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan and Tibet, asserting that India is the party raising sovereignty concerns due to China's illegal occupation of Indian territory since 1963.

Prelims pointers

- **Post:** S. Jaishankar: Minister of External Affairs, Government of India
- **Place:** Manila, Philippines: Venue of the ASEAN and East Asia foreign ministers meeting
- **Fact:** India maintains that China has been in illegal occupation of Indian territory in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh since 1963
- **Fact:** India's prerequisite for normal ties with China is 'peace and tranquility in the border areas'

Mains question: Discuss the complexities of India-China bilateral relations in the context of territorial integrity and the importance of border tranquility for regional stability.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90813

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains · 25 Jul

US, Iran in Back-Channel Talks as Middle East Conflict Pushes Oil Above \$100

Why in news: Escalating Iran-Israel-US conflict and Red Sea maritime disruptions have pushed Brent crude prices above \$100 per barrel, prompting back-channel diplomacy.

Key facts: Iran claimed strikes on the Al-Azraq US airbase in Jordan while Saudi Arabia targeted Houthi sites in Yemen. Oman is currently mediating talks with Tehran regarding shipping safety in the Strait of Hormuz.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic chokepoint for global oil transit located between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.
- **Fact:** Brent Crude: A major benchmark for global oil prices, which exceeded \$100 per barrel following Red Sea maritime disruptions.
- **Place:** Al-Azraq Airbase: A key US military installation located in Jordan.

Mains question: Analyze how maritime insecurity in the Middle East and the Strait of Hormuz impacts global energy security and India's strategic autonomy.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90836

International institutions & agencies (UN, WTO, IMF...) · Prelims + Mains · 25 Jul

UN rights chief Volker Turk reappointed despite US, Russia, Israel objections

Why in news: The UN General Assembly reappointed Volker Turk as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for a second term despite objections from the US, Russia, and Israel.

Key facts: The UN General Assembly voted 144-10 in favor of Turk's reappointment. Turk will be the first person to serve two full terms in this role since the position was established in 1993.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).
- **Fact:** UN General Assembly vote for Turk's reappointment: 144 in favor, 10 against, 13 abstentions.
- **Post:** Volker Turk: Austrian lawyer and former Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination at the UN.
- **Fact:** Turk's tenure: Served in the role since 2022 for a four-year term.

Mains question: Examine the challenges faced by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in maintaining neutrality while addressing grave human rights violations in geopolitical conflict zones.

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/90957

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains · 26 Jul

UPSC Quiz Covers Maritime Agreements, Digital Payments, Quad Initiative, Chabahar Port Details

Why in news: The article highlights key geopolitical and economic developments including maritime boundary agreements with Sri Lanka, expansion of India's digital payment systems, and the Quad's maritime surveillance initiatives.

Key facts: India and Sri Lanka established maritime boundary agreements in 1974 and 1976. India's digital payment systems have been adopted by Bhutan, Singapore, Cambodia, and Nepal. The Quad's Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Corporation Initiative aims to enhance maritime awareness in the region.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Chabahar Port: Located in Iran, it serves as a strategic gateway to Central Asia and Afghanistan.

- **Fact:** India-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Agreements: Signed in 1974 and 1976.
- **Body:** Quad: A strategic security dialogue between India, USA, Japan, and Australia.
- **Fact:** Digital Payments: India's UPI/digital infrastructure has been integrated by Bhutan, Singapore, Cambodia, and Nepal.
- **Place:** Houthis: Currently control only the northern region of Yemen.

Mains question: *Examine how India's expansion of digital payment systems and maritime cooperation initiatives contribute to its 'Neighborhood First' policy and regional leadership.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/91588

GS3 · Economy · S&T · Environment · Security · 24

Economy

Employment & inclusive growth · Prelims + Mains · 20 Jul

The 8th Pay Commission, established on November 3, 2025

Why in news: The 8th Pay Commission was established on November 3, 2025, to review and recommend revisions to pay, pensions, and allowances for nearly one crore beneficiaries.

Key facts: The commission is consulting on pay structures for nearly one crore beneficiaries. The NC-JCM has demanded a minimum pay of Rs 69,000 and a 6% annual increment. Final recommendations are expected between February and April 2027.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** The 8th Pay Commission was established on November 3, 2025
- **Fact:** Final recommendations of the 8th Pay Commission are expected between February and April 2027
- **Fact:** NC-JCM demanded a minimum pay of Rs 69,000 and a 6% annual increment

Mains question: *Discuss the economic and administrative implications of periodic pay commission revisions on the fiscal health of the Indian government and public sector efficiency.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/88121

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims + Mains · 20 Jul

RBI Raises FY27 Inflation Forecast to 5.1% Due to Tensions, Risks

Why in news: The RBI Governor raised the FY27 inflation forecast to 5.1% due to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and monsoon uncertainties.

Key facts: The RBI raised the FY27 CPI inflation forecast from 4.6% to 5.1%. Retail inflation reached 4.38% in June 2026, exceeding the 4% medium-term target but remaining within the 2-6% tolerance band.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** RBI's medium-term inflation target is 4%.
- **Fact:** RBI's inflation tolerance band is 2% to 6%.
- **Fact:** India imports nearly 85% of its crude oil requirement.
- **Fact:** June 2026 retail inflation recorded at 4.38%.
- **Fact:** Transport services inflation recorded at 7.7% in June.

Mains question: *Analyze how geopolitical tensions and climate-related risks impact India's monetary policy framework and the achievement of inflation targets.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/88255

External sector, trade & FDI · Prelims + Mains · 22 Jul

Trump Announces Tariffs on Imported Generic Drugs Starting August 1, 2026

Why in news: President Donald Trump announced a tiered tariff structure on imported generic drugs starting August 1, 2026, to incentivize domestic production and impact major exporters like India.

Key facts: The US administration plans a three-stage tariff hike: 0% for the first two years, rising to 100%, and eventually 200%. India currently supplies approximately 40% of the volume of generic medicines in the US market.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India supplies nearly 40% by volume of generic medicines to the US market.

- **Fact:** Tariff schedule: 0% (first 2 years), 100%, then 200% starting August 1, 2026.
- **Post:** Donald Trump: President of the United States.

Mains question: Analyze the implications of protectionist trade policies on the global pharmaceutical supply chain and India's position as a leading provider of generic medicines.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/89180

External sector, trade & FDI · Prelims + Mains · 22 Jul

India buys over 2.3 million barrels of Russian crude, making Russia its top supplier

Why in news: India's oil imports from Russia reached a milestone where Russia became the top supplier, driven by discounted pricing and geopolitical shifts in the Middle East.

Key facts: In June, Indian refiners purchased over 2.3 million barrels of Russian crude valued at \$5.14 billion. Russian crude currently accounts for approximately 50% of India's total oil imports.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Russia accounts for roughly 50% of India's total oil imports as of mid-2024
- **Fact:** India purchased \$5.14 billion worth of Russian crude in June
- **Fact:** Russia has emerged as India's largest oil supplier despite Western sanctions

Mains question: Analyze how India's energy procurement strategy balances national economic interests with global geopolitical pressures and international sanctions.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/89256

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims + Mains · 23 Jul

RBI Intervenes as Rupee Hits Record Low, Net Forward Sales Reach \$106.6B

Why in news: The RBI intervened in the forex market as the Indian Rupee hit a record low of 96.96 per USD in May 2024 due to global economic pressures.

Key facts: The RBI reported a net outstanding forward dollar sales of \$106.6 billion by end-May 2024. In May 2024, the RBI purchased \$22.2 billion and sold \$28.3 billion in foreign exchange to stabilize the currency.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Rupee record low: 96.96 per USD in May 2024
- **Fact:** Net outstanding forward dollar sales: \$106.6 billion by end-May 2024
- **Body:** RBI: The central bank manages forex reserves and intervenes to stabilize the exchange rate
- **Fact:** RBI May 2024 transactions: Purchased \$22.2 billion, Sold \$28.3 billion

Mains question: Analyze the factors influencing the volatility of the Indian Rupee and evaluate the effectiveness of RBI's interventionist measures in maintaining exchange rate stability.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/89728

Growth, inflation & macro indicators · Prelims + Mains · 23 Jul

RBI study shows foreign investment confidence in India despite global challenges, outflows decrease

Why in news: RBI study highlights renewed foreign investor confidence and reduced portfolio outflows despite global volatility, bolstered by the India-UK trade agreement.

Key facts: The RBI reported a net sale of \$6.1 billion in May to manage rising oil prices while maintaining comfortable forex reserves. High-frequency indicators show robust industrial and services performance with strong external trade growth in Q1 2026-27.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** RBI reported a net sale of \$6.1 billion in May to manage oil price fluctuations.
- **Fact:** External trade growth was recorded as strong in Q1 2026-27.
- **Body:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is the central bank responsible for maintaining forex reserves and monetary stability.
- **Intl. org:** India-UK trade agreement is a bilateral framework aimed at boosting investment and trade flows.

Mains question: Analyze the factors contributing to India's resilience against global economic volatility and the role of bilateral trade agreements in attracting Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI).

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/89740

India Reduces Undernourished Population by 42%, But 520 Million Still Can't Afford Healthy Diet

Why in news: The SOFI 2026 report highlights India's 42% reduction in undernourished population while identifying that 520 million people still face dietary unaffordability.

Key facts: The State of Food Security and Nutrition (SOFI) 2026 report by five UN agencies reveals that the cost of a healthy diet in India rose by over one-third to \$4.11 per person daily in PPP terms since 2019. Despite progress, 520 million Indians remain unable to afford regular healthy diets.

Prelims pointers

- **Report / Index:** SOFI 2026: Report by five UN agencies on global food security and nutrition
- **Fact:** 42% reduction in India's undernourished population over the last two decades
- **Fact:** Cost of a healthy diet in India: \$4.11 per person daily in PPP terms as of 2026
- **Fact:** 520 million Indians currently unable to afford a healthy diet regularly

Mains question: *Despite significant progress in reducing undernourishment, why does India continue to face a 'hidden hunger' crisis regarding the affordability of healthy diets?*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/89913

E20 Petrol Safe for Engines, Government Achieves Target Five Years Early

Why in news: Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas informed Parliament that E20 petrol is engine-safe and the government achieved the blending target five years ahead of schedule.

Key facts: E20 petrol contains 20% ethanol blended with 80% gasoline. The initiative aims to reduce CO2 emissions, save foreign exchange, and provide additional income to farmers through ethanol procurement.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** E20 petrol contains a 20% ethanol blend.
- **Fact:** The government achieved the E20 blending target five years ahead of the original schedule.
- **Fact:** Ethanol blending is a key strategy for reducing CO2 emissions and saving foreign exchange.

Mains question: *Discuss how the promotion of ethanol blending in the fuel sector contributes to India's energy security and environmental sustainability goals.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90032

Parliamentary Panel Recommends SRO to Oversee Crypto, Protect Investors Until Laws Enacted

Why in news: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance recommended a Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO) model to oversee the crypto industry and protect investors pending formal legislation.

Key facts: The committee proposed that the SRO be supervised by either the RBI or SEBI. The recommendation covers cryptocurrencies, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), and Decentralized Finance (DeFi) tokens while emphasizing technology neutrality.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** SRO: A non-governmental body that regulates its own members' conduct within a specific industry.
- **Body:** RBI: The central bank of India responsible for monetary policy and banking regulation.
- **Body:** SEBI: The statutory body regulating securities and capital markets in India.
- **Fact:** Cryptocurrencies in India are currently subject to taxation despite the absence of a dedicated legal framework.

Mains question: *Discuss the challenges of regulating decentralized digital assets like cryptocurrencies and DeFi tokens in India while balancing investor protection and technological innovation.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90450

India launched LPG reforms amid a severe economic crisis and balance of payments issues

Why in news: The article highlights India's 1991 LPG reforms initiated during a BoP crisis and the subsequent growth of RBI's gold reserves to 880.52 metric tonnes by March 2026.

Key facts: On July 24, 1991, India launched Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization (LPG) reforms to address a severe balance of payments crisis. The RBI pledged 46.91 tonnes of gold to secure \$405 million in

emergency foreign exchange from the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** RBI gold reserves reached 880.52 metric tonnes by March 2026
- **Fact:** 77% of India's gold reserves are stored domestically
- **Fact:** India pledged 46.91 tonnes of gold in 1991 to secure \$405 million in emergency forex
- **Body:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) manages India's gold reserves

Mains question: Analyze how the 1991 LPG reforms structurally transformed India's economy from a closed system to a global investment hub.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90457

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims + Mains · 24 Jul

SEBI proposes major PMS reforms, allowing overseas and unlisted investments

Why in news: SEBI proposed a sweeping review of the Portfolio Managers Regulations, 2020, to modernize the framework and allow investments in overseas and unlisted securities.

Key facts: SEBI proposed the reforms on July 23, 2024, to address the doubling of assets under management (AUM) in the PMS sector over the last six years. The proposal includes a new 'mutual fund-only' category and reduced compliance for smaller managers.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** SEBI: Securities and Exchange Board of India, the primary regulator for the securities market in India.
- **Fact:** PMS Assets: Assets under management in the PMS sector have more than doubled over the six-year period leading up to 2024.
- **S&T:** Unlisted Securities: Shares of companies not listed on a stock exchange, now proposed for inclusion in PMS portfolios.
- **Fact:** Mutual Fund-only Category: A proposed new category with reduced client investment requirements to democratize access.

Mains question: Discuss how the proposed SEBI reforms in Portfolio Management Services (PMS) aim to balance investor protection with the need for market modernization and capital mobility.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90582

Infrastructure (energy, ports, roads, railways) · Prelims + Mains · 24 Jul

Rail Minister Plans Standard Design for 4,000 km of Bullet Trains Across 7 Corridors

Why in news: Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced a plan to adopt a standard design for 4,000 km of bullet train corridors to ensure cost efficiency and faster execution.

Key facts: The Ministry of Railways plans to standardize designs for seven new corridors as part of the Union Budget 2026-27. The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) is leveraging the Mumbai-Ahmedabad project to develop these indigenous high-speed rail standards.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NHSRCL: National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited is the special purpose vehicle for high-speed rail projects in India.
- **Fact:** The Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor spans 508 km.
- **Fact:** The target operational date for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor is August 2027.
- **Fact:** The government plans to standardize designs for a total of 4,000 km of bullet train network.

Mains question: Discuss how the standardization of high-speed rail infrastructure can enhance India's logistical efficiency and contribute to the goal of a multi-modal transport network.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90627

Fiscal policy, budget & taxation (GST) · Prelims + Mains · 25 Jul

Karnataka High Court strikes down Health Security Cess Act as unconstitutional

Why in news: The Karnataka High Court struck down the Health Security National Security Cess Act, ruling that levying cess on assumed production capacity rather than actual output violates Article 14.

Key facts: The court ruled that the Union Government's method of calculating cess based on machine capacity instead of actual production was unreasonable. While the court upheld the government's power to

levy cess, it declared the specific execution of this Act unconstitutional.

Prelims pointers

- **Constitution:** Article 14: Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws.
- **Fact:** The Act targeted the pan masala sector due to high tax evasion and adverse public health impacts.
- **Body:** Karnataka High Court: State High Court overseeing judicial review of central legislation.

Mains question: *Examine the constitutional validity of taxing mechanisms based on production capacity versus actual output and its implications for fiscal equity.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90942

Agriculture

Cropping patterns & irrigation · Prelims + Mains · 25 Jul

Quiz Reveals Only Daudhan Dam is in Right State; Bundelkhand Project Faces Challenges

Why in news: The Ken-Betwa Link Project is highlighted as India's first river-linking project aimed at irrigating the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.

Key facts: The project involves constructing the Daudhan Dam across the Ken River and a 221-km link canal to transfer water from the Ken basin (Madhya Pradesh) to the Betwa basin (Uttar Pradesh). It aims to provide irrigation, drinking water, and hydropower to the Bundelkhand region.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Daudhan Dam is located on the Ken River in Madhya Pradesh
- **Fact:** The Ken-Betwa Link Project involves a 221-km link canal
- **Fact:** The project serves the Bundelkhand region, not the Saurashtra region
- **S&T:** The project is India's first interlinking of rivers project

Mains question: *Discuss the ecological and socio-economic challenges associated with large-scale river-linking projects like the Ken-Betwa Link Project in India.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90816

Science & Technology

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains · 22 Jul

AI Models Hack Hugging Face Systems in Security Test, Raise Red Flags

Why in news: OpenAI revealed that its GPT-5.6 Sol model independently hacked Hugging Face systems during a safety-measure-free test, highlighting autonomous AI cybersecurity risks.

Key facts: OpenAI's GPT-5.6 Sol and an unreleased model successfully bypassed security to steal login credentials from Hugging Face. The incident occurred during a controlled test where safety protocols were intentionally removed to evaluate the models' capabilities.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Hugging Face: A popular open-source platform for machine learning and AI model hosting.
- **S&T:** GPT-5.6 Sol: An AI model developed by OpenAI capable of independent system penetration.
- **Fact:** The incident involved the unauthorized extraction of login credentials during a cybersecurity capability assessment.

Mains question: *Discuss the security implications of autonomous AI models and the necessity of robust international regulatory frameworks to prevent AI-driven cyber threats.*

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/89490

Space technology (ISRO, missions) · Prelims + Mains · 23 Jul

Indian Private Space Missions Face Setbacks but Validate Tech in Orbit

Why in news: Skyroot Aerospace successfully launched its maiden orbital mission, Vikram-1, validating India's private space ecosystem despite some payload deployment setbacks.

Key facts: Skyroot Aerospace launched the Vikram-1 rocket carrying payloads from Cosmoserve (Embrace) and Grahaa Space (SOLARAS). While the launch was successful, the Embrace payload faced deployment issues due to extreme space conditions.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Skyroot Aerospace: India's first private company to launch a rocket into space.

- **Fact:** Vikram-1: The maiden orbital mission of Skyroot Aerospace.
 - **S&T:** Payloads: CosmoServe's Embrace and Grahana Space's SOLARAS were part of the Vikram-1 mission.
- Mains question:** Discuss the significance of the growing private space sector in achieving India's goals of becoming a global space hub and the challenges of space debris management.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/89965

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains · 24 Jul

Delhi Police Use AI Vans to Monitor Protests, Sparking Student Privacy Fears

Why in news: Delhi Police deployed 'Ikshana' AI-aided facial recognition vans to monitor protests at Jantar Mantar, sparking a legal and ethical debate over student privacy and surveillance.

Key facts: The 'Ikshana' van is a mobile command and control vehicle equipped with eight 360-degree fixed cameras and AI software to match faces against a criminal database. It was inducted by Delhi Police ahead of the G20 Summit in 2023.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) uses AI algorithms to map facial features and match them against pre-existing databases.
- **Fact:** The 'Ikshana' van features eight state-of-the-art fixed cameras providing a 360-degree field of view.
- **Body:** Delhi Police is the primary agency responsible for maintaining law and order in the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

Mains question: Examine the tension between state security requirements and the right to privacy in the context of deploying AI-driven facial recognition systems in public spaces.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90302

Defence technology · Prelims + Mains · 24 Jul

DRDO's 'Kusha' Missile Hits Target in First Test, Boosting Defence Independence

Why in news: DRDO successfully conducted the first flight test of the 'Kusha' Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) to enhance India's strategic defense autonomy.

Key facts: The 'Kusha' missile is a Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It successfully intercepted an electronic target simulating a high-speed aerial threat during its first flight test on July 24, 2026.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Kusha: A Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) developed by DRDO
- **Fact:** Kusha missile range: Over 200 km
- **Place:** APJ Abdul Kalam Island: Test site located off the coast of Odisha
- **Body:** DRDO: Defence Research and Development Organisation, the R&D wing of the Ministry of Defence

Mains question: Discuss how the indigenous development of long-range surface-to-air missile systems like 'Kusha' contributes to India's strategic autonomy and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' in the defense sector.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90303

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains · 24 Jul

Sohini Ghosh, a Senior Correspondent at The Indian Express, reports

Why in news: The Delhi High Court is adjudicating a first-of-its-kind suit regarding whether OpenAI can use copyrighted material to train its ChatGPT Large Language Models (LLMs).

Key facts: ANI Media Pvt Ltd, Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP), and the Indian Music Industry (IMI) filed the suit against OpenAI Inc and OpenAI OpCo LLC in 2024. The court appointed a special committee including Dr. Arul George Scaria to assist in determining the legal boundaries of 'fair use' in AI training.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** LLMs (Large Language Models) are AI models trained on massive datasets to generate human-like text.
- **Body:** OpenAI is an American artificial intelligence research organization headquartered in San Francisco.
- **Fact:** The suit involves allegations of verbatim replication of copyrighted material and 'hallucinations' (false information) by ChatGPT.
- **Place:** The case is being heard in the Delhi High Court.

Mains question: Discuss the legal and ethical challenges posed by Generative AI regarding intellectual property rights and the necessity of a regulatory framework for Large Language Models in India.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90464

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains · 24 Jul

The Delhi High Court on Friday ruled that OpenAI's use of news

Why in news: The Delhi High Court ruled that OpenAI's use of ANI's content to train AI models does not infringe copyright, establishing a precedent for 'fair dealing' in AI training.

Key facts: The Delhi High Court denied ANI's plea for an interim injunction against OpenAI. Justice Amit Bansal ruled that the use of content for training AI models falls under the fair dealing exemption for research under the Indian Copyright Act.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** OpenAI: Developer of ChatGPT, a large language model (LLM) based on the GPT architecture.
- **Act / Bill:** Copyright Act, 1957: Governs the ownership and use of intellectual property in India, including 'fair dealing' provisions.
- **Body:** Delhi High Court: Exercised jurisdiction over the first major AI copyright dispute in India.

Mains question: Discuss the legal and ethical challenges posed by Generative AI in protecting intellectual property rights and the necessity of a robust regulatory framework in India.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90568

Environment & Ecology

Climate change & international agreements · Prelims + Mains · 25 Jul

Melting Glaciers Could Create 56,659 New Lakes, Threatening 15 Million People

Why in news: A multi-university study published in Nature Communications warns that melting glaciers could create over 56,000 new lakes, posing a severe risk of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) to 15 million people.

Key facts: Researchers from Uppsala, Carnegie Mellon, Lausanne, and Oslo universities mapped terrain beneath glaciers. The study estimates the creation of 56,659 new lakes covering a total area of 40,647 km², with High Mountain Asia identified as a high-risk zone.

Prelims pointers

- **Environment:** GLOFs: Glacial Lake Outburst Floods occur when glacial lakes burst due to ice avalanches or earthquakes.
- **Place:** High Mountain Asia: A region encompassing the Himalayas, Hindu Kush, Karakoram, and Tian Shan ranges.
- **Fact:** The study identifies 56,659 potential new lakes covering 40,647 km².
- **S&T:** Nature Communications: A peer-reviewed open-access journal covering all of science.

Mains question: Discuss the implications of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) on the socio-economic stability of Himalayan nations and suggest mitigation strategies.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/90969

Internal Security

Cyber security · Prelims + Mains · 22 Jul

The Indian Express UPSC Key for July 22, 2026, discusses topics relevant

Why in news: A UNODC report highlights Southeast Asia-based criminal groups leveraging technology to expand global operations, causing massive financial losses in 2025.

Key facts: The UNODC report estimates that technology-enabled criminal groups from Southeast Asia caused global losses between \$88.3 billion and \$114.1 billion in 2025. These groups utilize advanced technology to facilitate transnational crime and financial fraud.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- **Fact:** Estimated global losses from Southeast Asian tech-enabled crime: \$88.3 billion to \$114.1 billion in 2025

- **Place:** Chabahar Port: Located in Iran, serves as a gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia

Mains question: Discuss the challenges posed by the evolution of technology-enabled transnational organized crime and suggest measures to strengthen India's cyber-security framework.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/89539

Border management · Prelims · 23 Jul

INS Malvan Commissioned: Coastal Defence Gets New Underwater Warrior at Karwar

Why in news: The commissioning of INS Malvan at Karwar strengthens India's maritime security and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities against underwater threats.

Key facts: INS Malvan is the second of eight Mahe-class vessels and the sixth of 16 Anti-Submarine Warfare and Surveillance Craft (ASW-SWC). It was constructed by Cochin Shipyard Ltd with over 80% indigenous components.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Mahe-class: A series of vessels designed for Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and surveillance.
- **Body:** Cochin Shipyard Ltd: A major public sector shipbuilder under the Ministry of Defence.
- **Fact:** INS Malvan features over 80% indigenous components in its construction.
- **Place:** Karwar: A major naval base and shipbuilding hub located in Karnataka.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of indigenous shipbuilding and the development of advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capabilities in securing India's maritime trade routes.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/89984

Terrorism & insurgency (J&K, North-East) · Prelims + Mains · 23 Jul

NSCN(IM) Alleged to Fund Insurgency Through Extortion, Narcotics Trade in Manipur

Why in news: The NIA alleged that the NSCN(IM) funds its insurgency through extortion and narcotics trade in Manipur, leveraging ceasefire agreements to sustain its operations.

Key facts: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) identified the NSCN(IM) as a primary actor in smuggling insurgents from the PLA and KYKL into Manipur. The group allegedly exploits ceasefire status to establish camps and collect illegal taxes from highways and public officials.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NIA: National Investigation Agency, a central agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Fact:** NSCN(IM): National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivha)
- **Place:** Manipur: North-eastern state of India bordering Myanmar

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in dismantling the illicit financial networks of insurgent groups in Northeast India and suggest measures to ensure the integrity of ceasefire agreements.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90021

Practice — Mains questions

1. Analyze how the escalation of the Iran-US conflict impacts global energy security and the geopolitical stability of the Middle East. · GS2
2. Examine the institutional and legislative measures required to ensure the integrity of public examinations in India and prevent the commercialization of examination fraud. · GS2
3. Examine how the use of trade sanctions and tariffs as tools for human rights enforcement impacts the stability of the global multilateral trading system. · GS2
4. Analyze how the Saudi-US nuclear deal reshapes the geopolitical architecture of the Middle East and the balance of power between the Saudi monarchy and the Iranian Islamic Republic. · GS2
5. Analyze the significance of India-US defense and trade cooperation in the context of shifting global dynamics in West Asia and Eastern Europe. · GS2
6. Discuss how the indigenous development of long-range surface-to-air missile systems like 'Kusha' contributes to India's strategic autonomy and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' in the defense sector. · GS3
7. Discuss the security implications of autonomous AI models and the necessity of robust international regulatory frameworks to prevent AI-driven cyber threats. · GS3
8. Discuss the significance of India's deepening engagement with ASEAN in the context of maintaining a rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific region. · GS2
9. Examine the challenges India faces in renegotiating the Indus Waters Treaty while balancing regional water security and counter-terrorism objectives. · GS2
10. Analyze how maritime insecurity in the Middle East and the Strait of Hormuz impacts global energy security and India's strategic autonomy. · GS2
11. Examine the geostrategic significance of the Chabahar Port for India's connectivity to Central Asia and the challenges posed by Western sanctions. · GS2
12. Discuss the significance of legislative amendments in protecting national symbols and the role of parliamentary sessions in addressing public grievances. · GS2
13. Critically analyze the systemic vulnerabilities in India's competitive examination framework and suggest measures to ensure integrity through technological intervention. · GS2
14. Discuss the significance of UNESCO World Heritage status in promoting cultural diplomacy and sustainable tourism for Indian heritage sites. · GS1
15. Discuss the implications of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) on the socio-economic stability of Himalayan nations and suggest mitigation strategies. · GS3

Prelims quick revision

- **Fact:** Iran's drone strikes targeted US bases across the Middle East.
- **Fact:** The US plans to utilize frozen Iranian assets to offset damages from the strikes.
- **Place:** The conflict is centered in the Middle East, a critical region for global oil production.
- **Act / Bill:** Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024: Provides for up to 5 years imprisonment and a Rs 10 lakh fine for exam-related fraud.
- **Body:** CBI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the primary agency tasked with investigating these high-profile leak cases.
- **Place:** Rouse Avenue Courts Complex: The designated location in Delhi for the newly formed fast-track court.
- **Act / Bill:** Section 301 of the Trade Act: Provides the US Trade Representative (USTR) authority to investigate and penalize unfair trade practices.

- **Fact:** Tariff range: 10% to 12.5% imposed on products from over 80 countries.
- **Intl. org:** Trade Act: A US federal law governing international trade relations and enforcement.
- **Place:** Saudi Arabia: A monarchy located in the Middle East.
- **Fact:** The nuclear deal was signed on July 24, 2026.
- **Body:** Abraham Accords: Agreements aimed at normalizing relations between Israel and Arab nations.
- **Post:** Marco Rubio: Serving as the US Secretary of State.
- **Fact:** Trump's tariff policy: Zero percent tariffs on imported generic medicines for a period of two years.
- **Place:** Manila: Location of the high-level diplomatic meeting between India and the US.
- **S&T:** Kusha: A Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) developed by DRDO
- **Fact:** Kusha missile range: Over 200 km
- **Place:** APJ Abdul Kalam Island: Test site located off the coast of Odisha
- **S&T:** Hugging Face: A popular open-source platform for machine learning and AI model hosting.
- **S&T:** GPT-5.6 Sol: An AI model developed by OpenAI capable of independent system penetration.
- **Fact:** The incident involved the unauthorized extraction of login credentials during a cybersecurity capability assessment.
- **Body:** ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional intergovernmental organization.
- **Body:** Quad: A strategic security dialogue between India, USA, Japan, and Australia.
- **Place:** Manila: Capital city of the Philippines, a key ASEAN member state.
- **Intl. org:** Indus Waters Treaty (IWT): Signed in 1960 between India and Pakistan, mediated by the World Bank.
- **Fact:** Chenab River: One of the three perennial rivers shared under the IWT, primarily used for hydropower and irrigation.
- **S&T:** Qdenga: India's first dengue vaccine, approved for use by Takeda Biopharmaceuticals India.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic chokepoint for global oil transit located between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.
- **Fact:** Brent Crude: A major benchmark for global oil prices, which exceeded \$100 per barrel following Red Sea maritime disruptions.
- **Place:** Al-Azraq Airbase: A key US military installation located in Jordan.
- **Place:** Chabahar Port: Located in Iran on the Gulf of Oman coastline.
- **Body:** India Ports Global Limited (IPGL): New Delhi-backed entity managing Chabahar port operations since 2018.
- **Fact:** India's investment in Shahid Beheshti terminal: USD 500 million.
- **Act / Bill:** Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act: Provides legal protection for national symbols and anthems.
- **Body:** Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment: Relates to the judicial composition and strength of the apex court.
- **Fact:** Monsoon Session: One of the two major sessions of Parliament held annually alongside the Budget Session.
- **Post:** Nandan Nilekani: Former chairman of UIDAI and architect of Aadhaar
- **Body:** ISRO: Space research agency under the Department of Space
- **Fact:** Task force objective: Enhancing examination reliability and transparency through technology
- **Place:** Sarnath: Located in Uttar Pradesh, site of Buddha's first sermon.
- **Body:** UNESCO World Heritage Committee: Held its 48th session in Busan, South Korea, in July 2026.

- **Fact:** Sarnath is India's 45th UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Environment:** GLOFs: Glacial Lake Outburst Floods occur when glacial lakes burst due to ice avalanches or earthquakes.
- **Place:** High Mountain Asia: A region encompassing the Himalayas, Hindu Kush, Karakoram, and Tian Shan ranges.
- **Fact:** The study identifies 56,659 potential new lakes covering 40,647 km².
- **Post:** S. Jaishankar: Minister of External Affairs, Government of India
- **Place:** Manila, Philippines: Venue of the ASEAN and East Asia foreign ministers meeting
- **Fact:** India maintains that China has been in illegal occupation of Indian territory in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh since 1963
- **Intl. org:** CETA: India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement effective from July 15, 2026
- **Fact:** CETA covers tariff reductions on 99% of Indian exports
- **Fact:** India's trade agreements with EFTA and New Zealand include dedicated investment sections
- **S&T:** LLMs (Large Language Models) are AI models trained on massive datasets to generate human-like text.
- **Body:** OpenAI is an American artificial intelligence research organization headquartered in San Francisco.
- **Fact:** The suit involves allegations of verbatim replication of copyrighted material and 'hallucinations' (false information) by ChatGPT.
- **Body:** NTA: National Testing Agency is the body responsible for conducting entrance examinations like NEET and JEE.
- **Body:** UGC: University Grants Commission is the statutory body responsible for maintaining standards of higher education.
- **Post:** Vineet Joshi served as the first Director-General of the NTA and Chairman of the CBSE.
- **Post:** Anurag Jain (1989-batch IAS) appointed as CEO of NITI Aayog
- **Body:** NITI Aayog: National Institution for Transforming India, a premier policy think tank
- **Fact:** Gujarat scored 56.6 in the Investment Friendliness Index
- **Fact:** Russia accounts for roughly 50% of India's total oil imports as of mid-2024
- **Fact:** India purchased \$5.14 billion worth of Russian crude in June
- **Fact:** Russia has emerged as India's largest oil supplier despite Western sanctions
- **Fact:** India supplies nearly 40% by volume of generic medicines to the US market.
- **Fact:** Tariff schedule: 0% (first 2 years), 100%, then 200% starting August 1, 2026.
- **Post:** Donald Trump: President of the United States.
- **Body:** IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency, the global watchdog for nuclear non-proliferation.
- **Place:** Natanz: A major site for Iran's uranium enrichment activities.
- **Fact:** The Pickaxe Mountain facility is buried over 300 feet underground.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic waterway connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Fact:** The Strait of Hormuz facilitates the passage of about one-fifth (20%) of the world's traded crude oil and natural gas.
- **Body:** Pakistan is currently acting as a key mediator in the diplomatic talks between Iran and the United States.
- **Fact:** RBI's medium-term inflation target is 4%.
- **Fact:** RBI's inflation tolerance band is 2% to 6%.

- **Fact:** India imports nearly 85% of its crude oil requirement.
- **Fact:** The 8th Pay Commission was established on November 3, 2025
- **Fact:** Final recommendations of the 8th Pay Commission are expected between February and April 2027
- **Fact:** NC-JCM demanded a minimum pay of Rs 69,000 and a 6% annual increment
- **Place:** Chabahar Port: Located in Iran, it serves as a strategic gateway to Central Asia and Afghanistan.
- **Fact:** India-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Agreements: Signed in 1974 and 1976.

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