

UPSC Current Affairs — 9 July 2026

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Geography

Geophysical phenomena (earthquakes, cyclones, volcanoes) · Prelims

Southwest Monsoon, Delayed By A Day, Covers Entire Country: Weather Office

Why in news: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported that the southwest monsoon has completed its coverage of the entire country, including the northern states, after a slight delay in its initial onset.

Key facts: The southwest monsoon arrived in Kerala on June 4th, one day later than the usual timeline. India recorded 101.9 mm of rainfall in the first nine days of July, surpassing the long-period average of 73.8 mm.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India received 101.9 mm of rainfall in the first nine days of July.
- **Fact:** The long-period average rainfall for the first nine days of July is 73.8 mm.
- **Body:** IMD (India Meteorological Department) is the primary agency responsible for monitoring and forecasting monsoon patterns in India.
- **Place:** The southwest monsoon typically makes its first landfall at the Kerala coast.

Mains question: Analyze the significance of the Southwest Monsoon for India's agrarian economy and discuss the challenges posed by its increasing variability due to climate change.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80417

GS2 · Polity · Governance · IR · 25

Polity & Constitution

Judiciary & landmark judgments · Prelims + Mains

Can a UK-style judicial review mechanism save India from UAPA?

Why in news: The Supreme Court highlighted the low conviction rate and lack of fair judicial review under the UAPA, prompting a debate on adopting a UK-style judicial review mechanism.

Key facts: The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) was enacted in 1967 to combat terrorism and unlawful activities. The UK's Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission (POAC) serves as a model for independent review of organizations banned by the state.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** UAPA: Enacted in 1967 to provide for the prevention of unlawful activities and terrorism.

- **Body:** POAC: A UK-based independent body that reviews the government's decision to proscribe organizations.
- **Fact:** UAPA is characterized by a historically low conviction rate despite high-profile arrests.

Mains question: *Critically examine the need for a structured judicial review mechanism for proscribed organizations under the UAPA to balance national security with the principles of natural justice.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80458

Fundamental rights, DPSP & duties · Prelims + Mains

The Supreme Court is examining whether providing written grounds of arrest is a mandatory legal requirement following a High Court ruling on a murder case in Meghalaya.

Why in news: The Supreme Court is examining whether providing written grounds of arrest is a mandatory legal requirement following a High Court ruling on a murder case in Meghalaya.

Key facts: The Supreme Court is reviewing an appeal from the Meghalaya government regarding the bail of Sonam Raghuvanshi. The High Court had previously ruled that the arrest memo lacked factual basis and was prepared without application of mind, despite the state's claim of a mere typographical error.

Prelims pointers

- **Constitution:** Article 22 of the Indian Constitution provides that any person arrested must be informed of the grounds of such arrest.
- **Body:** The Supreme Court of India has the power to refer matters to a larger bench for resolving conflicting judicial precedents.
- **Fact:** The next hearing for the matter is scheduled for July 14, 2024.

Mains question: *Examine the significance of 'written grounds of arrest' in upholding the personal liberty of citizens and preventing arbitrary state action under Article 22.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80353

Governance

Transparency, accountability & RTI · Prelims + Mains

RTI Replies Delayed: TN Commission Urges Online System for All Departments

Why in news: The Tamil Nadu Information Commission urged the state government to adopt a streamlined online system for RTI applications to address significant delays in responding to petitions.

Key facts: The Tamil Nadu Information Commission highlighted difficulties faced by Public Information Officers (PIOs) in managing online submissions. The commission recommended that all relevant departmental websites include direct links to the Commission's website to facilitate online filing.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Information Commission: Statutory body responsible for overseeing the Right to Information Act, 2005
- **Fact:** RTI Act, 2005: Provides a framework for citizens to request information from public authorities
- **Post:** Chief Information Commissioner: Head of the State Information Commission in Tamil Nadu

Mains question: *Examine how the transition from manual to digital RTI filing can enhance transparency and accountability in public administration while addressing the challenges faced by Public Information Officers.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80078

Social Justice

Health policy & public health · Mains

NFHS-6 Omits Anemia, Sanitation, Clean Cooking Fuel Data

Why in news: The omission of anemia, sanitation, and clean cooking fuel data in the NFHS-6 survey hampers the evidence-based evaluation of India's public health and social development programs.

Key facts: The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large-scale health survey conducted in India. NFHS-6 is noted for omitting key indicators despite India having the highest number of anemic populations globally.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NFHS: National Family Health Survey is a large-scale health survey conducted in India.
- **Fact:** India currently holds the highest number of anemic populations globally.

Mains question: How do data gaps in national health surveys impede the formulation of effective public health policies in India? Discuss with reference to anemia and sanitation.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80171

Health policy & public health · Prelims + Mains

India adopts guidelines for dignified death of terminally ill patients

Why in news: The State government approved guidelines for withdrawing life support from terminally ill patients to ensure a dignified death, following a 2018 Supreme Court ruling.

Key facts: The guidelines mandate the use of Advance Medical Directives for patients who may lose decision-making capacity. They also require the formation of medical boards to review cases and obtain consent from nominated guardians before life support withdrawal.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Advance Medical Directive: A legal document where a patient specifies medical preferences for future incapacity.
- **Body:** Medical Boards: Bodies mandated to review and provide oversight for the withdrawal of life support.
- **Fact:** Supreme Court ruling on passive euthanasia and dignified death was issued in 2018.

Mains question: Discuss the ethical and legal implications of 'passive euthanasia' in India, focusing on the balance between the right to life and the right to a dignified death.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80154

Poverty, hunger & nutrition · Mains

Slums built before 2011 in Maharashtra to be protected, eligible residents assured rehabilitation

Why in news: The Maharashtra government announced a policy to protect and rehabilitate slum dwellers in dwellings built before January 1, 2011, to address urban housing rights.

Key facts: The Maharashtra government is conducting a statewide survey to identify eligible slum residents. The policy specifically covers dwellings constructed before January 1, 2011, on government or forest lands for rehabilitation in designated housing projects.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Cut-off date for slum protection eligibility: January 1, 2011
- **Place:** State of Maharashtra
- **Body:** Revenue Department, Government of Maharashtra

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in balancing urban development with the housing rights of slum dwellers in rapidly urbanizing Indian states like Maharashtra.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80535

Education policy · Prelims + Mains

Private varsities in India grew 149% in a decade, government only 45% despite higher student share

Why in news: AISHE data reveals a massive 149% growth in private universities over a decade, highlighting a shift in the higher education landscape despite government institutions still holding the majority student share.

Key facts: The Ministry of Education's AISHE report shows private universities increased from 219 to 546 in a decade. While government universities still enroll over two-thirds of students, their share dropped from nearly four-fifths. India's GER for the 18-23 age group rose from 23.0 in 2013-14 to 30.0 in 2023-24.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for the 18-23 age group reached 30.0 in 2023-24.
- **Fact:** Private universities in India grew from 219 to 546 over the last decade.
- **Body:** AISHE (All India Survey on Higher Education) is the primary data source for higher education statistics in India.
- **Fact:** Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest growth in the number of private university institutions.

Mains question: Analyze the implications of the rapid expansion of private higher education institutions on the accessibility and equity of quality education in India.

Education policy · Prelims + Mains

Display fee structures so parents' purses don't burn, Madras High Court tells private schools

Why in news: The Madras High Court mandated private schools to publicly display fee structures to ensure transparency and protect parents from arbitrary charges.

Key facts: The court's ruling is based on the Tamil Nadu Private Schools (Regulation) Rules, 2023. It clarified that while private schools are exempt from the Right to Information (RTI) Act, they are still bound by state-specific statutory regulations regarding fee disclosure.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Madras High Court: A High Court in India with jurisdiction over the state of Tamil Nadu.
- **Act / Bill:** Tamil Nadu Private Schools (Regulation) Rules, 2023: State rules governing the operations and fee structures of private educational institutions.
- **Fact:** Private schools are generally not covered under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.

Mains question: Discuss the necessity of statutory regulations over private educational institutions to ensure transparency and prevent the commercialization of basic education.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80387

Vulnerable sections (SC/ST, minorities, disabled, elderly, children) · Prelims + Mains

'Shariat can't override child marriage law': Court says puberty not legal age

Why in news: The Allahabad High Court ruled that Shariat law permitting marriage after puberty cannot override the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) and POCSO Act.

Key facts: The court upheld the minimum marriage age of 18 for girls as mandated by the PCMA and POCSO. It ruled that these laws are based on public health and national policies with a scientific basis, overriding religious personal laws in this context.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA): Sets the legal minimum age for marriage at 18 for females and 21 for males.
- **Act / Bill:** POCSO Act: Provides legal framework for the protection of children from sexual offences, including child marriage.
- **Body:** Childline: A 24-hour emergency phone service for children in.

Mains question: Discuss the conflict between personal religious laws and secular legislation regarding child marriage in India. How does the judiciary balance individual religious rights with public health and child protection?

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80383

Education policy · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court Seeks Response on Gulf Students' Plea Against CBSE Assessment Scheme

Why in news: The Supreme Court sought responses from the Union Government and CBSE regarding a petition by Gulf-based students challenging the March 2024 assessment scheme for Class XII students.

Key facts: The petition was filed by approximately 30 students whose board exams were cancelled due to conflict in West Asia. The petitioners argue that the current scheme unfairly evaluates students based solely on school-level examinations rather than standardized board assessments.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CBSE: Central Board of Secondary Education, an autonomous national board of education in India
- **Place:** West Asia: Region where conflict led to the cancellation of board exams in early 2024
- **Fact:** The assessment scheme was officially released by CBSE on March 27, 2024

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in maintaining standardized educational assessment for students in conflict zones and the role of the judiciary in ensuring equitable educational opportunities.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80204

646 Assam govt. schools without electricity, 283 lack boys' toilets

Why in news: Assam Education Minister Ranoj Pegu highlighted infrastructure gaps in state schools, specifically regarding electricity and sanitation facilities.

Key facts: The Assam government has allocated ₹4 crore to provide electricity to 646 schools by March 2027. Currently, 10,033 out of 10,965 government-managed schools in the state possess digital learning facilities.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** 646 government schools in Assam currently lack electricity.
- **Fact:** 283 schools in Assam lack toilets for boys.
- **Fact:** Assam government allocated ₹4 crore for school electrification by March 2027.
- **Fact:** 91.6% (10,033/10,965) of government-managed schools in Assam have digital learning facilities.

Mains question: Examine how inadequate physical infrastructure and lack of basic amenities like sanitation and electricity hinder the achievement of the Right to Education Act's objectives.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80149

Uttarakhand Joins Elite Club: 6th Fully Literate State in India

Why in news: Uttarakhand achieved full literacy status, becoming the 6th state in India to meet the adult literacy benchmarks set by the Union Ministry of Education.

Key facts: Uttarakhand reached full literacy status under the framework of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The milestone was verified by the Department of School Education and Literacy under the Union Ministry of Education.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Uttarakhand is the 6th state in India to achieve full literacy status.
- **Body:** The Department of School Education and Literacy operates under the Union Ministry of Education.
- **Scheme:** National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides the framework for literacy benchmarks in India.

Mains question: Analyze the role of the National Education Policy 2020 in bridging the literacy gap between rural and urban demographics in Himalayan states like Uttarakhand.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80080

International Relations

PM Modi in Australia LIVE: PM Modi highlights India's growth, global trust at Melbourne diaspora event

Why in news: PM Modi and PM Albanese signed a Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation to deepen military engagement and maritime security between India and Australia.

Key facts: The agreement focuses on enhanced interoperability between armed forces and collaboration in defence science and industrial supply chains. It also includes a push for a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) to bolster trade ties.

Prelims pointers

- **Intl. org:** Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation: A bilateral agreement between India and Australia.
- **Fact:** CECA: A proposed bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between India and Australia.
- **S&T:** The declaration includes specific provisions for collaboration in defence science and technology.

Mains question: Analyze the significance of India-Australia strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and its implications for maritime security and defence industrial supply chains.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80476

US strikes Iran for second night – is the peace process all over now? | US-Israel war on Iran News

Why in news: The United States launched a second night of airstrikes on Iran following Iranian attacks on commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz, threatening the stability of the interim peace agreement.

Key facts: The US launched airstrikes targeting Iranian cities and military sites in retaliation for maritime attacks in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran accused the US of violating a June interim peace agreement and the US threatened to seize the Kharg island oil-production hub.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic maritime chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman.
- **Place:** Kharg Island: A major Iranian oil and gas production and export hub.
- **Fact:** The interim peace agreement between the US and Iran was signed in June.

Mains question: Analyze the geopolitical implications of maritime insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz on global energy markets and regional stability in the Middle East.

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/80425

Photos: Iran to bury slain supreme leader in culmination of mass funeral | US-Israel war on Iran News

Why in news: Iran is conducting a mass funeral for Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who was killed in an Israeli strike on February 28, 2024, marking a significant escalation in regional tensions.

Key facts: The funeral ceremony in Mashhad is expected to draw approximately 15 million people. Mojtaba Khamenei has been designated as the successor to the slain leader.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Mashhad: A major city in northeastern Iran, significant as a religious center.
- **Post:** Ali Khamenei: Served as the Supreme Leader of Iran until his death on February 28, 2024.
- **Fact:** Estimated attendance of 15 million people for the funeral ceremonies.

Mains question: Analyze the implications of the escalating Iran-Israel conflict on the geopolitical stability of the Middle East and its impact on global energy security.

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/80504

57% of New Zealand's exports to India will be tariff-free, says PM Luxon ahead of Modi's visit

Why in news: PM Christopher Luxon announced that 57% of New Zealand's exports to India will be tariff-free ahead of PM Modi's visit to New Zealand.

Key facts: The two nations currently have a free trade agreement that eliminates 95% of tariffs on goods. Total bilateral trade between India and New Zealand reached \$2.4 billion in 2024.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Total trade between India and New Zealand reached \$2.4 billion in 2024
- **Fact:** Current free trade agreement eliminates 95% of tariffs on goods
- **Fact:** 57% of New Zealand's exports to India will be tariff-free from day one of the new arrangement

Mains question: Examine how deepening bilateral trade agreements with nations like New Zealand contribute to India's objective of becoming a global manufacturing and export hub.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80344

Iran War Live Updates: US planning 'multi-week' bombing blitz in Iran; Chabahar port among 90 sites hit so far

Why in news: The US launched a multi-week bombing campaign against Iranian military and port infrastructure, including the Chabahar port, leading to retaliatory strikes by the IRGC.

Key facts: The US targeted 90 sites including air defense systems, missile storage, and naval capabilities. Iran's Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) retaliated by striking US bases in Bahrain and Kuwait. The conflict centers on the Strait of Hormuz, a critical choke point for global oil and gas trade.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Chabahar Port: A strategic deep-sea port in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Body:** IRGC: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is Iran's elite military branch responsible for internal and external security.
- **Fact:** The US targeted 90 sites including coastal surveillance assets and logistics infrastructure.

Mains question: Analyze the geopolitical and economic implications of escalating military tensions in the Strait of Hormuz on global energy security and maritime trade routes.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/80300

India's bilateral relations · Mains

Ukraine war Putin May Escalate Ukraine War Despite Peace Efforts By Trump: Report

Why in news: Reports suggest Vladimir Putin may escalate the Russia-Ukraine conflict by targeting NATO bases and pursuing full control of the Donbas region despite Western peace mediation efforts.

Key facts: The conflict has led to significant domestic fuel shortages within Russia. Kremlin sources indicate a rejection of ceasefire proposals along current front lines in favor of capturing the entire Donbas region.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Donbas: A region in eastern Ukraine that has been a primary theater of conflict since 2014
- **Body:** NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a collective defense alliance of 32 member states
- **Fact:** Russia-Ukraine conflict: Ongoing since February 2022 (full-scale invasion)

Mains question: Analyze the implications of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on European security architecture and the potential for escalation into a broader NATO confrontation.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80593

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

US Iran War news US Strike Targeted Bushehr Nuclear Plant Perimeter, Says Iranian Official

Why in news: The US conducted airstrikes on the perimeter of Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant, raising international concerns regarding nuclear safety and regional escalation.

Key facts: The US targeted the perimeter of the Bushehr nuclear plant, a military base, and a fishing pier in Iran. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expressed concern over the safety of the facility following these strikes.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Bushehr: Province in Iran housing the country's only civilian nuclear power plant.
- **Body:** IAEA: International body responsible for nuclear safeguards and safety standards.
- **Fact:** The strikes occurred on a Thursday in the current calendar year.

Mains question: Discuss the implications of military actions near nuclear facilities on global non-proliferation norms and regional security stability in the Middle East.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80524

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

Australia, India strike deal on uranium exports during PM Modi's visit

Why in news: India and Australia signed a long-term uranium export agreement to support India's nuclear energy goals and clean energy objectives.

Key facts: The agreement allows Australia to export uranium to India exclusively for peaceful purposes. It aims to support India's target of achieving 100 GW of nuclear energy capacity by 2047.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's nuclear energy capacity target: 100 GW by 2047
- **S&T:** Uranium is a primary fuel source for nuclear fission in power generation
- **Body:** Australia is a major global supplier of uranium and critical minerals

Mains question: Examine how the strengthening of bilateral energy and mineral partnerships between India and Australia contributes to India's strategic autonomy and energy security goals.

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/80442

Canada, Arshdeep Singh Gill: US Hardeep Nijjar Persuaded Gangster Arsh Dalla To Flee To Canada, Chargesheet Reveals

Why in news: Delhi Police filed a chargesheet revealing that Hardeep Nijjar facilitated the escape of ganglord Arsh Dalla to Canada to establish a terrorist network.

Key facts: The Delhi Police chargesheet alleges that Arsh Dalla was appointed commander-in-chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF). The report claims Dalla received support from Pakistan's ISI and orchestrated anti-India activities from Canada.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Hardeep Nijjar was killed in Canada in June 2023
- **Fact:** Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) is a banned organization in India
- **Fact:** ISI: Inter-Services Intelligence is the primary intelligence agency of Pakistan

Mains question: Discuss the challenges India faces in neutralizing transnational terrorism and the role of foreign soil in facilitating radicalization and criminal networks.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80512

"Terror Camps Crumbled During Op Sindoor": PM To Indian Diaspora In Melbourne

Why in news: PM Modi addressed the Indian diaspora in Melbourne, highlighting 'Operation Sindoor' as a decisive strike against terror camps in Pakistan and PoK.

Key facts: The 'Melbourne Meets Modi' event saw a turnout of over 30,000 people. PM Modi highlighted Operation Sindoor as a response to the Pahalgam attack, focusing on air strikes against terror infrastructure.

Prelims pointers

- **Post:** Narendra Modi: Prime Minister of India
- **Fact:** Melbourne Meets Modi: Attended by over 30,000 people in Australia
- **Place:** Pahalgam: Located in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir

Mains question: Discuss the significance of India's proactive 'neighborhood first' policy and its stance on counter-terrorism in the context of regional security.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80434

India and Myanmar reaffirm commitment to peace, security during 23rd meeting

Why in news: India and Myanmar held the 23rd National Level Meeting to reaffirm security commitments and prevent the use of Myanmar territory against India's interests.

Key facts: The 23rd National Level Meeting focused on border security and transnational crime cooperation. Myanmar committed to ensuring its territory is not utilized to undermine India's security interests.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Myanmar is a key neighbor of India sharing a land border in the Northeast.
- **Fact:** The 23rd National Level Meeting was held to discuss bilateral security and transnational crime.
- **Body:** National Level Meetings serve as a mechanism for bilateral security coordination between India and Myanmar.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of India-Myanmar border security in the context of combating transnational crimes and ensuring regional stability in Northeast India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80269

India, US share gangster hideouts in crackdown on Bishnoi network

Why in news: India and the US have enhanced intelligence sharing regarding the Bishnoi gang and other transnational criminal networks following the deportation of Anmol Bishnoi.

Key facts: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) facilitated the sharing of hideout locations and associate details of Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldy Brar with US law enforcement. The intelligence was derived from technical surveillance and disclosures from arrested associates.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** MEA: Ministry of External Affairs is the nodal ministry for India's foreign policy and international cooperation.
- **Fact:** Anmol Bishnoi was deported from the US to India in 2023.
- **Post:** Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldy Brar are key figures in organized crime networks targeted in this crackdown.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of bilateral security cooperation between India and the US in tackling transnational organized crime and cross-border criminal networks.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80211

International institutions & agencies (UN, WTO, IMF...) · Prelims

ADB sanctions 190-MLD water treatment plant for Kochi at ₹523 crore

Why in news: The Kerala government received administrative sanction for a ₹523 crore water treatment plant in Aluva, funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to address Kochi's water shortage.

Key facts: The project involves a 190-million liters per day (MLD) water treatment plant in Aluva, Kerala. It is part of the Kerala Urban Water Supply Improvement Project, with a total estimated cost of ₹523 crore.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** ADB: Asian Development Bank is a regional development bank providing loans and technical assistance to developing countries.
- **Fact:** The Aluva water treatment plant has a capacity of 190 MLD.
- **Fact:** The project cost is sanctioned at ₹523 crore as of July 2026.
- **Place:** Aluva is a municipality in the Ernakulam district of Kerala.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of multilateral development bank funding in improving urban infrastructure and water security in Indian states.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80196

GS3 · Economy · S&T · Environment · Security · 29

Economy

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

Rs 1.47 Lakh Crore Per Year: Indian Metros Bleed Billions In Traffic Jams

Why in news: The Economic Survey 2025-26 highlighted the massive economic drain caused by traffic congestion in India's major metros, estimating a collective loss of Rs 1.47 lakh crore annually.

Key facts: The Economic Survey 2025-26 identifies traffic congestion as a primary urban crisis. In Delhi, workers lose up to Rs 25,900 annually in income penalties due to delays, while Bengaluru loses approximately Rs 11.7 billion in productive hours.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's four largest metropolises lose an estimated Rs 1.47 lakh crore annually due to traffic congestion.
- **Fact:** Bengaluru experiences lost productive hours amounting to approximately Rs 11.7 billion.
- **Fact:** Delhi workers face annual income penalties of up to Rs 25,900 due to traffic delays.

Mains question: Analyze how urban traffic congestion acts as a barrier to India's goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy. Suggest structural shifts in urban planning to mitigate these losses.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80507

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims + Mains

India's US Treasury holding hits a 6-year low amid gold push

Why in news: The RBI's holdings of US Treasuries have hit a 6-year low as the central bank pivots toward increasing gold reserves to diversify its portfolio.

Key facts: The RBI's US Treasury holdings fell below \$232 billion from their 2022 peak. India's gold reserves have reached 881 metric tonnes, reflecting a strategic shift toward precious metals over foreign currency assets.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** RBI's US Treasury holdings fell below \$232 billion from the 2022 peak.
- **Fact:** India's gold reserves currently stand at 881 metric tonnes.
- **S&T:** Gold is used by central banks as a hedge against currency volatility and geopolitical risks.

Mains question: Analyze the strategic reasons behind the Reserve Bank of India's shift from foreign currency assets like US Treasuries toward increasing gold reserves.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/80219

Growth, inflation & macro indicators · Prelims

India Soars: FDI Jumps 43.6%, Leaps to 11th Global Rank

Why in news: India's FDI inflows surged by 43.6% to \$38.9 billion in 2025, making it the 11th largest global recipient.

Key facts: India attracted \$38.9 billion in FDI in 2025, significantly exceeding the global average growth rate of 6%. Outward FDI also reached a record high of \$35.7 billion in 2025.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's FDI inflow in 2025: \$38.9 billion
- **Fact:** India's outward FDI in 2025: \$35.7 billion
- **Fact:** India's global rank as FDI recipient in 2025: 11th
- **Fact:** Global average FDI growth rate: 6%

Mains question: Analyze the factors contributing to India's rising position in global FDI inflows and its implications for the country's industrial growth.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80102

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

Inside Gujarat's Plan To Build The World's Largest Data Centre City

Why in news: Gujarat launched the Viksit Gujarat Data Centre Policy 2026-29 to establish a massive digital ecosystem and transform Dholera into a global data centre hub.

Key facts: The policy targets a 7.5 GW data centre capacity with a projected investment of Rs 6 lakh crore. It includes infrastructure support like new transport links and a dedicated desalination plant for water supply.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Target capacity: 7.5 GW of data centre capacity by the end of the policy period.
- **Fact:** Projected investment: Rs 6 lakh crore under the Viksit Gujarat Data Centre Policy.
- **Place:** Dholera: The designated site for the world's largest data centre city in Gujarat.
- **Body:** Department of Science and Technology: The nodal body overseeing policy implementation.

Mains question: Discuss how the development of large-scale data centre hubs contributes to India's goal of becoming a global leader in Artificial Intelligence and cloud computing infrastructure.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80603

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims

UPSC Essentials subject-wise quiz : Economy (Week 170)

Why in news: The RBI's Survey on International Trade in Banking Services (ITBS) and the mechanism of Offer for Sale (OFS) are key indicators of India's financial footprint and capital market dynamics.

Key facts: The RBI conducts the ITBS annually to track financial services provided by Indian banks in foreign markets. An Offer for Sale (OFS) involves the sale of existing shares by promoters or early investors during an IPO process.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** RBI: The central bank of India responsible for conducting the Survey on International Trade in Banking Services (ITBS)
- **Fact:** OFS: A method where existing shares are sold by promoters/investors rather than issuing new shares to the public
- **Fact:** ITBS: Provides data on the volume and value of financial services rendered by Indian banks abroad

Mains question: Analyze how the expansion of Indian banking services abroad and the mechanism of Offer for Sale (OFS) contribute to India's capital market depth and global financial integration.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80547

Value buyers lift India bonds; US-Iran war jitters, oil risks weigh

Why in news: Indian government bonds saw a rebound due to significant foreign bank investment in June 2024, despite volatility from US-Iran tensions and rising oil prices.

Key facts: Foreign lenders significantly increased investment in Indian bonds during June 2024. Investors showed specific interest in Fully Accessible Route (FAR) bonds, primarily driven by the potential for inclusion in global indices.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Fully Accessible Route (FAR): A mechanism allowing foreign portfolio investors to invest in Indian government securities without the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) limit.
- **Fact:** US Treasury Yields: A key global benchmark; rising yields in the US often lead to capital outflows from emerging markets like India.
- **Fact:** Oil Price Volatility: Driven by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East (e.g., US-Iran relations), impacting India's current account deficit.

Mains question: Analyze the factors influencing the volatility of Indian government bonds and the implications of global geopolitical tensions on India's capital markets.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/80528

India's listed new-age companies may hit \$1 trillion market value by 2030: Redseer

Why in news: Redseer India's 'IPO Report: 2026' predicts that India's new-age companies could reach a market capitalization of nearly USD 150 billion by 2030.

Key facts: The report estimates approximately 210 new-age companies are poised for IPOs over the next two years. India's IPO market has seen an eightfold increase in proceeds over the last decade, currently ranking third globally.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's IPO market currently ranks third globally in terms of proceeds.
- **Fact:** Redseer India estimates a potential market capitalization of nearly USD 150 billion by 2030 for new-age companies.
- **Fact:** The IPO market has witnessed an eightfold increase in proceeds over the past decade.

Mains question: Discuss the factors driving the expansion of India's IPO market and the implications of shifting investor preferences toward profitable new-age companies.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/80522

Vikram Solar to invest ₹15,037 crore in BESS facility at Gangaikondan SIPCOT in Tirunelveli

Why in news: Tamil Nadu government signed an MoU with Vikram Solar Limited to establish a ₹15,037 crore Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) manufacturing facility in Tirunelveli.

Key facts: Vikram Solar Limited will establish a BESS facility at the SIPCOT Industrial Park in Gangaikondan, Tirunelveli. The project investment is valued at ₹15,037 crore and is projected to generate 2,670 jobs.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Investment amount for the BESS facility is ₹15,037 crore.
- **Place:** The facility is located in Gangaikondan, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.
- **S&T:** BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) are critical for stabilizing renewable energy grids.
- **Fact:** The project is expected to create 2,670 jobs.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) in achieving India's renewable energy targets and the role of state-led industrial policies in fostering such investments.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80473

Indian GCCs' costs rising, other countries copying us, cautions CEA Nageswaran

Why in news: Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran warned that India's competitive edge in Global Capability Centres (GCCs) is threatened by rising costs and international replication of the Indian model.

Key facts: GCCs are offshore hubs where multinational corporations establish centers for global operations, including IT, R&D, and back-office functions. The Indian government has introduced tax certainty and simplified transfer pricing rules to bolster the GCC ecosystem.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** GCCs are shifting from cost-efficiency models to innovation-led and human-driven decision-making hubs.
- **Body:** Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) is a senior position in the Ministry of Finance, India.
- **Fact:** Transfer pricing rules are regulations governing the pricing of transactions between different entities of the same multinational corporation.

Mains question: Discuss the transition of India's Global Capability Centres (GCCs) from cost-arbitrage hubs to innovation centers. What policy interventions can ensure India's long-term competitiveness?

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80468

External sector, trade & FDI · Mains

Why India is chasing the wrong trade deals

Why in news: An analysis of India's trade surplus with the US versus the EU/UK/Japan suggests that a formal India-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is more critical for growth than current deals.

Key facts: India maintains an average annual trade surplus of \$42 billion with the United States. This surplus exceeds the combined surplus maintained with the European Union, United Kingdom, and Japan.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's average annual trade surplus with the US is \$42 billion.
- **S&T:** Key sectors identified for trade benefits include pharmaceuticals, electronics, and IT services.

Mains question: Analyze the strategic importance of a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the United States in enhancing India's manufacturing and service exports.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80414

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims

Demat accounts reach 231.5 million, see highest additions in January and February

Why in news: The number of demat accounts in India reached a record 231.5 million, driven by a surge in retail participation in mid- and small-cap segments.

Key facts: The growth was reported by the Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) and National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL). The highest additions to these accounts were recorded in the months of January and February.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NSDL and CDSL are the two primary central securities depositories in India.
- **Fact:** Total demat accounts reached 231.5 million as of the reporting period.
- **Fact:** Growth is specifically noted in mid-cap and small-cap market segments.

Mains question: Analyze the factors driving the rapid expansion of retail participation in Indian capital markets and its implications for market stability.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/80309

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims + Mains

EPF interest of over ₹1.44 lakh crore to be credited by July 15, 2026

Why in news: Union Labour Minister announced the credit of ₹1.44 lakh crore in EPF interest to 34 crore members by July 15, 2026, following Finance Ministry approval of an 8.25% interest rate.

Key facts: The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) will credit interest amounting to over ₹1.44 lakh crore to 34 crore subscribers. The interest rate of 8.25% was recommended by the EPFO's Central Board of Trustees and approved by the Union Finance Ministry.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Total EPF interest amount to be credited: ₹1.44 lakh crore
- **Fact:** Number of beneficiaries: 34 crore members
- **Fact:** Approved interest rate: 8.25% for the relevant period
- **Body:** EPFO: Employees' Provident Fund Organisation is the primary body managing the fund

- **Fact:** Credit deadline: July 15, 2026

Mains question: Discuss the significance of the Employees' Provident Fund as a tool for social security and its role in promoting formalization of the Indian workforce.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80261

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims + Mains

Sensex plunges over 1,700 points amid West Asia crisis, new EPFO portal launched

Why in news: The Sensex plummeted over 1,700 points due to escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia and the launch of a new digital portal by the EPFO.

Key facts: The Sensex experienced a sharp decline of over 1,700 points following reports of potential US military action in West Asia. Simultaneously, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) launched a new digital portal to streamline PF interest tracking and claim settlements.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Sensex plummeted by over 1,700 points in a single trading session.
- **Body:** EPFO: Statutory body under the Ministry of Labour and Employment responsible for managing provident funds.
- **S&T:** The new EPFO portal is designed for digital tracking of PF interest and automated claim settlements.
- **Place:** Kharg Island: A strategic oil and gas production site in the Persian Gulf.

Mains question: Analyze how geopolitical instability in West Asia impacts India's capital markets and the stability of the Indian Rupee.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80242

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims

FCNR-B flows taper as higher costs trip math for double-digit returns

Why in news: Indian banks are facing a slowdown in FCNR-B deposit flows as rising overseas borrowing costs make it difficult to offer competitive returns to high-net-worth individuals (HNIs).

Key facts: The RBI has a special program to attract 3-year and 5-year FCNR-B deposits with a hedging backstop. The model relies on banks borrowing from overseas markets to provide leverage to HNI clients, but rising demand for higher spreads over US Treasury bonds is squeezing margins.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** FCNR-B: Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank accounts allow NRIs to hold deposits in foreign currencies like USD.
- **Body:** RBI: The Reserve Bank of India regulates the pricing and hedging mechanisms for FCNR-B deposits.
- **Fact:** US Treasury Bonds: Used as a global benchmark for risk-free interest rates in international lending.

Mains question: Analyze how rising global interest rates and overseas borrowing costs impact the stability of India's foreign currency deposit ecosystem and the liquidity of domestic banks.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/80220

Infrastructure (energy, ports, roads, railways) · Prelims

Amit Shah orders third-party studies to reduce airport passenger delays

Why in news: Union Home Minister Amit Shah directed the CISF and Ministry of Civil Aviation to conduct third-party studies to address passenger delays at major airports.

Key facts: The directive was issued during a review meeting involving the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Intelligence Bureau, Airports Authority of India (AAI), and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). The study aims to identify bottlenecks during peak travel seasons to improve passenger experience.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CISF: Central Industrial Security Force, a federal paramilitary force under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Body:** AAI: Airports Authority of India, the principal public sector enterprise for management of civil aviation infrastructure.
- **Post:** Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu: Union Minister for Civil Aviation.

Mains question: Discuss the logistical and security challenges in managing passenger flow at major Indian airports during peak seasons and suggest measures to enhance operational efficiency.

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

How Karnataka plans to tackle Bengaluru traffic with 40-km tunnels and 500-km metro lines

Why in news: Karnataka CM D K Shivakumar announced a ₹1.5 lakh crore investment plan for Bengaluru's infrastructure and a policy to decentralize industrial growth to tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

Key facts: The Karnataka government plans to invest ₹1.5 lakh crore in Bengaluru's infrastructure, including 40-km tunnels and 500-km metro lines. The plan includes doubling the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for tier-2 and tier-3 cities to promote high-rise construction and industrial decentralization.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Total investment planned for Bengaluru infrastructure: ₹1.5 lakh crore
- **Fact:** Proposed metro expansion length: 500 km
- **Fact:** Proposed tunnel road length: 40 km
- **Fact:** Policy measure: Doubling of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for tier-2 and tier-3 cities

Mains question: Discuss the role of infrastructure investment and urban planning in managing the challenges of rapid urbanization and traffic congestion in India's tier-1 cities.

Source: Indian Express · [satyadheesh.in/news/80118](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/80118)

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims

Sebi Amends Rules for FPIs, Updates Registration Fee and Form Requirements

Why in news: Sebi amended FPI registration rules to update fee structures and application requirements to enhance regulatory compliance.

Key facts: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) updated registration fees for Category-I FPIs and Foreign Venture Capital Investors (FVCIs). The new rules mandate the inclusion of date of birth/incorporation and require Depository Participants to remit fees within five working days.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** SEBI: The primary regulator for the securities and capital markets in India.
- **Fact:** Category-I FPIs: Investors who meet specific criteria regarding investment source and ownership.
- **Fact:** DDPs: Designated Depository Participants are responsible for collecting and remitting registration fees to Sebi.
- **Fact:** Timeline: The amended rules became effective six months after July 3, 2024.

Mains question: Discuss how streamlining FPI registration processes and fee structures contributes to deepening India's capital markets and ensuring regulatory integrity.

Source: Economic Times · [satyadheesh.in/news/80112](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/80112)

Agriculture

Cropping patterns & irrigation · Prelims + Mains

Scientists create smartwatch-like plant wearables that let farmers monitor crops in real time, detecting drought, disease and nutrient problems days before plants show visible signs of stress

Why in news: Engineers developed wearable leaf sensors and stem bands that use plant sweat to detect drought, disease, and nutrient stress in real-time before visible symptoms appear.

Key facts: The technology utilizes tattoo-like leaf sensors and stretchable stem bands powered by plant sweat. It distinguishes between specific stressors including water shortages, salinity stress, and disease to provide early intervention data.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Plant wearables: Sensors powered by plant sweat to monitor physiological distress.
- **Fact:** Early detection: Sensors identify stress signals days before visible physical symptoms appear.
- **S&T:** Stressors monitored: Water shortage, salinity stress, and disease.

Mains question: How can the integration of wearable sensor technology in precision agriculture mitigate crop losses and enhance resource efficiency in Indian farming?

Source: Times of India · [satyadheesh.in/news/80600](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/80600)

Science & Technology

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims

No Mobile Towers? BSNL's New Satellite Phone Can Keep You Connected

Why in news: BSNL launched a satellite phone in partnership with Inmarsat to provide connectivity in regions lacking mobile network coverage, specifically targeting defense and disaster response.

Key facts: BSNL, a state-owned telecom company, launched a satellite phone priced at Rs 1,34,166. The device connects directly to satellites and includes an SOS emergency feature for use in remote areas like mining sites and maritime operations.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Satellite phones connect directly to orbiting satellites rather than terrestrial cellular towers.
- **Body:** Inmarsat is a global satellite communications company that partnered with BSNL for this device.
- **Fact:** The BSNL satellite phone is priced at Rs 1,34,166.
- **Post:** BSNL is a state-owned telecommunications company in India.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of satellite communication technologies in enhancing India's disaster management capabilities and ensuring connectivity in geographically challenging terrains.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80523

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains

WhatsApp's reply on notice over 'username' feature due July 9: IT Secretary

Why in news: The Indian government issued a notice to Meta regarding WhatsApp's proposed 'username' feature to prevent potential spikes in online fraud and impersonation.

Key facts: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) directed Meta to halt the rollout of the username feature pending consultations. The government is also seeking information from Telegram and Signal regarding their existing username functionalities.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Meta: Parent company of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram
- **Fact:** The IT Ministry's notice focuses on risks of phishing and impersonation via usernames
- **Body:** MeitY: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is the nodal body for IT regulations in India

Mains question: Discuss the challenges posed by anonymous or pseudonymized communication features on messaging platforms and the role of the state in balancing user privacy with cybersecurity.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80491

Nuclear & new energy technology · Prelims

Exclusive | Nitin Gadkari: Mileage 'marginally' impacted by E20, but vehicle damage not a risk

Why in news: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari addressed concerns regarding the impact of E20 (20% ethanol, 80% petrol) fuel blends on vehicle mileage and engine integrity.

Key facts: E20 fuel consists of 20% ethanol and 80% petrol. The Minister cited Brazil's successful use of a 27% ethanol-petrol blend for over 40 years as a benchmark for safety and efficiency.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** E20 fuel: A blend containing 20% ethanol and 80% petrol
- **Fact:** Brazil has successfully utilized a 27% ethanol-petrol blend for over four decades
- **S&T:** Flex-fuel engines: Designed to run on multiple fuel types including ethanol and gasoline
- **S&T:** Methanol: Identified as a potential alternative fuel for transportation and marine operations

Mains question: Discuss the potential of ethanol blending and flex-fuel technology in achieving India's decarbonization goals while addressing technical and economic concerns.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80397

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims

OpenAI set to launch most capable GPT model after delayed rollout

Why in news: OpenAI is set to launch GPT-5.6 after the Trump administration approved the release following national security concerns.

Key facts: OpenAI is releasing GPT-5.6 alongside lower-cost models named Terra and Luna. The launch followed delays due to U.S. government security reviews. Elon Musk's SpaceXAI also announced the public release of Grok 4.5.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** GPT-5.6: The most advanced AI model from OpenAI as of the current release cycle.
- **S&T:** Terra and Luna: Lower-cost AI models released by OpenAI alongside GPT-5.6.
- **S&T:** Grok 4.5: The leading AI model released by Elon Musk's SpaceXAI.
- **Fact:** OpenAI's launch was delayed specifically due to U.S. government national security concerns.

Mains question: Discuss the implications of rapid AI advancement on national security and the necessity of government oversight in regulating private AI development.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/80249

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains

Scientists invented a fake eye disease to see if AI chatbots could spot it, but the experiment took an unexpected turn when ChatGPT, Gemini started treating the fictional illness as a real medical condition

Why in news: Researchers at the University of Gothenburg demonstrated how AI chatbots can confidently generate and propagate 'bixonimania'—a fabricated eye disease—highlighting the risks of AI-driven medical misinformation.

Key facts: The study involved testing Large Language Models (LLMs) with a fictional disease called 'bixonimania'. It revealed that AI systems not only hallucinated details about the disease but also led some scientists to cite fabricated research papers in their own work.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Large Language Models (LLMs) are AI systems trained to understand and generate human-like text.
- **Fact:** The experiment identified 'hallucination' as a primary risk where AI generates plausible but false information.
- **S&T:** AI-generated misinformation in healthcare can lead to incorrect self-diagnosis or clinical errors.

Mains question: Discuss the ethical implications and risks associated with the use of Large Language Models in healthcare and the necessity of robust verification frameworks.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/80108

Environment & Ecology

Climate change & international agreements · Prelims + Mains

Extreme Weather Patterns: Is Climate Change Writing India's Weather Map?

Why in news: Analysis of rising surface air temperatures and increased monsoon variability in India due to climate-induced moisture capacity changes.

Key facts: India's surface air temperature rose by 0.7°C between 1901 and 2018. Climate change is intensifying monsoon patterns by increasing atmospheric moisture capacity and causing shorter dry spells followed by intense rainfall bursts.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's surface air temperature rose by 0.7°C during the period 1901-2018.
- **S&T:** Climate change increases atmospheric moisture capacity, leading to more intense storm systems.
- **Environment:** Monsoon variability in India is characterized by shorter dry spells and intense rainfall bursts.

Mains question: Discuss how climate-induced changes in monsoon patterns necessitate a shift from traditional disaster management to climate-resilient urban infrastructure planning in India.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80371

Pollution (air, water, plastic) · Prelims

Antarctic: Scientists find nanoplastics in Antarctic soil for the first time, including tyre-wear particles, raising concerns that tiny plastic pollution can travel through the atmosphere to Earth's most remote places

Why in news: Scientists detected nanoplastics, including tire-wear particles, in Antarctic soil for the first time, highlighting the reach of atmospheric plastic pollution.

Key facts: The study, published in Scientific Reports, identified nanoplastics in the McMurdo Dry Valleys of Antarctica. The particles originated from tire wear and common plastic products, indicating both local and long-range atmospheric transport.

Prelims pointers

- **Environment:** Nanoplastics: Microplastics smaller than 1 micrometer that can penetrate biological membranes.
- **Place:** McMurdo Dry Valleys: A large, ice-free valley in Victoria Land, Antarctica.
- **Fact:** Nanoplastics were found in soil despite the lack of permanent human population in the region.

Mains question: Discuss the implications of transboundary nanoplastic pollution on polar ecosystems and the challenges in establishing a global monitoring framework for micro-pollutants.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/80552

Species, protected areas & wetlands · Prelims + Mains

Ex-forest officials, conservationists challenge functioning of India's apex Wildlife Board in Delhi HC

Why in news: Retired forest officials and conservationists filed a PIL in the Delhi High Court challenging the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) for allegedly approving 97% of land diversion proposals between 2014 and 2026.

Key facts: The petition alleges that the Standing Committee of the NBWL (SC-NBWL) approved over 97% of proposals for diverting or de-notifying protected land between 2014 and 2026. The petitioners seek binding guidelines to ensure transparency and legal compliance in decision-making regarding protected areas.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** National Board for Wildlife (NBWL): Statutory body established under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- **Fact:** The SC-NBWL reportedly considered over 100 proposals in a single day's meeting during the period under scrutiny.
- **Place:** Delhi High Court: The forum where the PIL challenging the NBWL's functioning was filed.

Mains question: Critically analyze the institutional mechanisms for balancing infrastructure development with wildlife conservation in India's protected areas.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/80448

Biodiversity & conservation · Prelims

A study in Ecological Entomology revealed that bumblebees accumulate significantly higher concentrations of toxic metals than honeybees, highlighting the inadequacy of honeybees as sole indicators for pollinator health.

Why in news: A study in Ecological Entomology revealed that bumblebees accumulate significantly higher concentrations of toxic metals than honeybees, highlighting the inadequacy of honeybees as sole indicators for pollinator health.

Key facts: The study identified higher concentrations of arsenic, chromium, cobalt, lead, and tin in bumblebees compared to honeybees. Differences are attributed to foraging behavior, habitat use, and body hair characteristics.

Prelims pointers

- **Environment:** Bumblebees and honeybees are key wild pollinators whose health is affected by heavy metal contamination.
- **Fact:** Bumblebees can carry up to seven times more toxic metals than honeybees even when foraging in the same fields.
- **S&T:** Heavy metals like arsenic, chromium, cobalt, lead, and tin are primary pollutants affecting pollinator biodiversity.

Mains question: Discuss how heavy metal contamination in agricultural landscapes affects pollinator biodiversity and the implications for food security and ecosystem services.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/80447

NASA researchers utilized satellite imagery to reveal a net increase in global mangrove forests between 2000 and 2020, highlighting the success of restoration efforts against the threat of sea-level rise.

Why in news: NASA researchers utilized satellite imagery to reveal a net increase in global mangrove forests between 2000 and 2020, highlighting the success of restoration efforts against the threat of sea-level rise.

Key facts: The study analyzed nearly two decades of Earth observation data to track mangrove health. While restoration initiatives have reversed decades of decline, accelerating sea-level rise remains a critical threat to these coastal ecosystems.

Prelims pointers

- **Environment:** Mangroves: Halophytic trees/shrubs that grow in coastal saline/brackish water.
- **S&T:** NASA uses Earth observation satellites to monitor global ecosystem health and resilience.
- **Fact:** Global mangrove forests showed a net increase in area between the years 2000 and 2020.

Mains question: Discuss the role of coastal ecosystems like mangroves in climate change mitigation and the challenges posed by accelerating sea-level rise to their long-term survival.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/80342

Internal Security

Terrorism & insurgency (J&K, North-East) · Prelims

Manipur Security Ops To Be Stepped Up After Ambush, CoBRA To Lead Charge

Why in news: The Centre and Manipur government agreed to step up security operations and deploy CoBRA commandos following an ambush on an Assam Rifles patrol.

Key facts: The counter-offensive focuses on the Ukhrul and Kangpokpi districts of Manipur. CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) commandos, known for anti-Naxal operations, are leading the intensified counter-insurgency measures.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CoBRA: A specialized unit of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) trained for jungle warfare and counter-insurgency.
- **Body:** Assam Rifles: A paramilitary force of the Ministry of Home Affairs, primarily responsible for guarding India's borders.
- **Place:** Ukhrul and Kangpokpi: Districts in the state of Manipur currently experiencing heightened security operations.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in managing internal security in Northeast India and evaluate the role of specialized paramilitary forces in counter-insurgency operations.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/80445

Practice — Mains questions

1. Analyze the significance of India-Australia strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and its implications for maritime security and defence industrial supply chains. · GS2
2. Analyze the geopolitical implications of maritime insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz on global energy markets and regional stability in the Middle East. · GS2
3. Analyze the implications of the escalating Iran-Israel conflict on the geopolitical stability of the Middle East and its impact on global energy security. · GS2
4. Examine how deepening bilateral trade agreements with nations like New Zealand contribute to India's objective of becoming a global manufacturing and export hub. · GS2
5. Analyze the geopolitical and economic implications of escalating military tensions in the Strait of Hormuz on global energy security and maritime trade routes. · GS2
6. Analyze the implications of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on European security architecture and the potential for escalation into a broader NATO confrontation. · GS2
7. Discuss the implications of military actions near nuclear facilities on global non-proliferation norms and regional security stability in the Middle East. · GS2
8. Analyze how urban traffic congestion acts as a barrier to India's goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy. Suggest structural shifts in urban planning to mitigate these losses. · GS3

Prelims quick revision

- **Intl. org:** Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation: A bilateral agreement between India and Australia.
- **Fact:** CECA: A proposed bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between India and Australia.
- **S&T:** The declaration includes specific provisions for collaboration in defence science and technology.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic maritime chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman.
- **Place:** Kharg Island: A major Iranian oil and gas production and export hub.
- **Fact:** The interim peace agreement between the US and Iran was signed in June.
- **Place:** Mashhad: A major city in northeastern Iran, significant as a religious center.
- **Post:** Ali Khamenei: Served as the Supreme Leader of Iran until his death on February 28, 2024.
- **Fact:** Estimated attendance of 15 million people for the funeral ceremonies.
- **Fact:** Total trade between India and New Zealand reached \$2.4 billion in 2024
- **Fact:** Current free trade agreement eliminates 95% of tariffs on goods
- **Fact:** 57% of New Zealand's exports to India will be tariff-free from day one of the new arrangement
- **Place:** Chabahar Port: A strategic deep-sea port in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Body:** IRGC: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is Iran's elite military branch responsible for internal and external security.
- **Place:** Donbas: A region in eastern Ukraine that has been a primary theater of conflict since 2014
- **Body:** NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a collective defense alliance of 32 member states
- **Fact:** Russia-Ukraine conflict: Ongoing since February 2022 (full-scale invasion)
- **Place:** Bushehr: Province in Iran housing the country's only civilian nuclear power plant.

- **Body:** IAEA: International body responsible for nuclear safeguards and safety standards.
- **Fact:** The strikes occurred on a Thursday in the current calendar year.
- **Fact:** India's four largest metropolises lose an estimated Rs 1.47 lakh crore annually due to traffic congestion.
- **Fact:** Bengaluru experiences lost productive hours amounting to approximately Rs 11.7 billion.
- **Fact:** Delhi workers face annual income penalties of up to Rs 25,900 due to traffic delays.
- **Act / Bill:** UAPA: Enacted in 1967 to provide for the prevention of unlawful activities and terrorism.
- **Body:** POAC: A UK-based independent body that reviews the government's decision to proscribe organizations.
- **Fact:** UAPA is characterized by a historically low conviction rate despite high-profile arrests.
- **Fact:** India's nuclear energy capacity target: 100 GW by 2047
- **S&T:** Uranium is a primary fuel source for nuclear fission in power generation
- **Body:** Australia is a major global supplier of uranium and critical minerals
- **Fact:** India's surface air temperature rose by 0.7°C during the period 1901-2018.
- **S&T:** Climate change increases atmospheric moisture capacity, leading to more intense storm systems.
- **Environment:** Monsoon variability in India is characterized by shorter dry spells and intense rainfall bursts.
- **Fact:** RBI's US Treasury holdings fell below \$232 billion from the 2022 peak.
- **Fact:** India's gold reserves currently stand at 881 metric tonnes.
- **S&T:** Gold is used by central banks as a hedge against currency volatility and geopolitical risks.
- **Body:** NFHS: National Family Health Survey is a large-scale health survey conducted in India.
- **Fact:** India currently holds the highest number of anemic populations globally.
- **Act / Bill:** Advance Medical Directive: A legal document where a patient specifies medical preferences for future incapacity.
- **Body:** Medical Boards: Bodies mandated to review and provide oversight for the withdrawal of life support.

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