

UPSC Current Affairs — 13 July 2026

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History & Culture

Heritage sites, UNESCO & GI tags · Prelims

West Bengal sets 29-day deadline for RITES to map tram revival in Kolkata

Why in news: The West Bengal government tasked RITES to map a restoration plan for 70 former tram routes in Kolkata to modernize the city's iconic transport system.

Key facts: The West Bengal government has mandated RITES (Rail India Technical Services Ltd) to complete a restoration map within 29 days. The plan includes modernizing coaches, introducing air-conditioned trams, and expanding routes to Salt Lake and New Town.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** RITES: A Mini Ratna Category-I Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Railways.
- **Place:** Kolkata: The only city in India that still operates a tram network.
- **Fact:** The restoration plan covers nearly 70 former tram routes in the Kolkata metropolitan area.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of preserving heritage transport systems like Kolkata's trams in the context of sustainable urban mobility and cultural identity.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82679

Heritage sites, UNESCO & GI tags · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court to Urgently Hear Petitions Over Bhojshala Complex Temple Claim

Why in news: The Supreme Court of India is urgently hearing petitions challenging a Madhya Pradesh High Court order regarding the religious status of the Bhojshala complex in Dhar.

Key facts: The Madhya Pradesh High Court quashed an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) order that had permitted Friday prayers at the Bhojshala complex. The site is contested between the Hindu community, who view it as a temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, and the Muslim community, who refer to it as the Kamal Maula Mosque.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Bhojshala complex is located in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh
- **Body:** Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is the body responsible for protecting and preserving cultural heritage sites
- **Fact:** The Supreme Court scheduled the urgent listing of petitions for July 14, 2026

Mains question: Discuss the legal and cultural complexities involved in managing heritage sites with contested religious identities in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/82644

Geography

Places in news / mapping · Prelims

Underwater forests found in five lakes worldwide, from Oregon to India

Why in news: The identification of underwater forests in five global lakes, including India's Lake Periyar, highlights unique submerged ecosystems formed by geological and anthropogenic factors.

Key facts: Underwater forests are found in Clear Lake (Oregon, USA), Lake Volta (Ghana), Lake Kaindy (Kazakhstan), Lake Periyar (India), and Caddo Lake (USA). These ecosystems are preserved by volcanic activity, landslides, dam construction, or flooding.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Lake Periyar: Located in Kerala, India; submerged following the construction of the Mullaperiyar Dam.
- **Place:** Lake Kaindy: Located in Kazakhstan; formed by a landslide in 1911 blocking a river.
- **Place:** Lake Volta: Located in Ghana; created by the construction of the Akosombo Dam in the 1960s.
- **Place:** Clear Lake: Located in Oregon, USA; formed by volcanic activity.
- **Place:** Caddo Lake: Located on the Texas-Louisiana border, USA; contains living cypress trees.

Mains question: Discuss how anthropogenic interventions like dam construction and natural geological events contribute to the formation of unique submerged ecosystems and their ecological significance.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/82948

Geophysical phenomena (earthquakes, cyclones, volcanoes) · Prelims

Monsoon break hits India, but east soaks in extreme rains

Why in news: The IMD announced a week-long monsoon break for most of India while forecasting extreme rainfall in the East and Northeast due to a fresh cyclonic circulation.

Key facts: The IMD reported a significant drop in rainfall deficit from 40% in June to 15% in July. A fresh cyclonic circulation over the north Bay of Bengal is expected to impact eastern and northeastern states until Wednesday.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** IMD: India Meteorological Department is the primary agency for monitoring and forecasting monsoon patterns.
- **Fact:** Rainfall deficit in India dropped from 40% in June to 15% in July.
- **Place:** Meghalaya: Recorded extremely heavy rain during the current monsoon cycle.
- **S&T:** Cyclonic circulation: A low-pressure area that causes heavy rainfall and localized weather disturbances.

Mains question: Analyze the impact of erratic monsoon patterns and cyclonic circulations on India's agricultural productivity and disaster management preparedness.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82561

GS2 · Polity · Governance · IR · 18

Polity & Constitution

Judiciary & landmark judgments · Prelims + Mains

On July 13, 2026, the Supreme Court said a petition by advocate

Why in news: The Supreme Court directed the Union Government to formulate a national policy to address easy online access to pornography for minors, labeling it a matter of 'paramount public importance'.

Key facts: On July 13, 2026, the Supreme Court observed that existing laws primarily penalize the production and distribution of pornography rather than the act of viewing. The court mandated a national action plan to protect minors from online pornographic content.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Supreme Court of India: The highest judicial body in India, exercising judicial review.
- **Fact:** Current legal framework: Primarily focuses on production and distribution of pornographic material.
- **Post:** Union Government: The executive body responsible for formulating national policies and action plans.

Mains question: Discuss the legal and ethical challenges in regulating online pornography in India while balancing the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/82698

Elections, ECI & electoral reforms · Prelims

New Voters in Bihar Must Provide Parents' SIR Details to Register Elections

Why in news: The Election Commission of India (ECI) mandated the submission of parents' Special Intensive Revision (SIR) details for new voters in Bihar to streamline electoral roll management.

Key facts: The requirement was implemented in Bihar starting in June 2023 for new voters filing Form 6. The SIR system is designed to map electors and eliminate ineligible entries while simplifying the documentation process for eligible citizens.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Election Commission of India (ECI) is the constitutional body responsible for administering elections in India.
- **Fact:** Form 6 is the specific application form used for the inclusion of a new name in the electoral roll.
- **Fact:** The SIR (Special Intensive Revision) is a process used by the ECI to update and verify the accuracy of voter lists.

Mains question: Discuss the measures taken by the Election Commission to ensure the integrity of electoral rolls while balancing the ease of voter registration.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/82585

Panchayati Raj & urban local bodies · Prelims + Mains

DDCs' Five-Year Term Ends with Local Institutions Idle, Sparking Debate on Effectiveness

Why in news: The District Development Councils (DDCs) in Jammu and Kashmir completed their five-year term on February 24, 2026, without new elections, sparking a debate on the efficacy of decentralized governance in the region.

Key facts: DDCs were established in 2021 to promote direct local democracy in Jammu and Kashmir. The councils completed their initial five-year mandate on February 24, 2026, leading to a current period of institutional inactivity.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** District Development Councils (DDCs) are local bodies designed to facilitate grassroots governance in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Fact:** The initial term for DDCs in Jammu and Kashmir was established in 2021 and concluded on February 24, 2026.

Mains question: Critically analyze the role of District Development Councils in fostering grassroots democracy and decentralization in conflict-affected regions like Jammu and Kashmir.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/82598

Governance

Role of civil services · Prelims

Kerala forms panel to overhaul ₹20,000 crore infrastructure fund

Why in news: The Kerala government formed a committee headed by retired IAS officer Sudha Pillai to restructure the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) to improve governance and fund utilization.

Key facts: The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) manages a significant infrastructure fund for the state. A five-member panel was constituted on July 13, 2024, to review its objectives, resource mobilization, and legal compliance over a three-month period.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** KIIFB: A state-level infrastructure investment fund in Kerala designed to pool resources for large-scale projects.
- **Post:** Sudha Pillai: Retired IAS officer appointed to head the restructuring committee.
- **Fact:** The fund involved in the overhaul is valued at approximately ₹20,000 crore.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of state-level infrastructure investment funds in accelerating regional development and the importance of robust governance frameworks in managing large-scale public funds.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/82913](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82913)

Transparency, accountability & RTI · Prelims + Mains

FSSAI serves notices to Swiggy Instamart over multiple expired food complaints

Why in news: FSSAI issued notices to Swiggy Instamart for allegedly supplying expired, rotten, and contaminated food products, highlighting lapses in quick-commerce food safety protocols.

Key facts: FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) issued notices to Swiggy Instamart following multiple consumer complaints regarding expired and unsafe food. The regulator demanded documentation on quality assurance, inventory management, and hygiene standards for products like 'NOICE Eggs' and 'Healthify 100% Whey Protein'.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** FSSAI: The primary regulatory body for food safety and standards in India.
- **Fact:** Swiggy shares dropped over 4% in the two trading sessions following the FSSAI notices.
- **Fact:** FSSAI requires companies to maintain specific inventory management and stock rotation protocols to prevent the sale of expired goods.

Mains question: Examine the challenges in regulating food safety standards within the rapidly expanding quick-commerce and e-commerce delivery models in India.

Source: Economic Times · [satyadheesh.in/news/82719](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82719)

Transparency, accountability & RTI · Prelims + Mains

CAG flags Rs 3,541.16 crore excess in Maharashtra's Ladki Bahin scheme

Why in news: The CAG flagged a ₹3,541.16 crore expenditure excess in Maharashtra's Ladki Bahin scheme due to lack of justification and improper fund parking in VPDAs.

Key facts: The CAG State Finances Audit Report 2024-25 revealed that the Women and Child Development Department spent ₹33,237.24 crore against an authorized budget of ₹29,693.09 crore. The report highlighted the use of Virtual Personal Deposit Accounts (VPDAs) for large-scale fund parking.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CAG: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India is the supreme audit institution of the country.
- **Fact:** The Ladki Bahin scheme saw an expenditure excess of ₹3,541.16 crore in the 2024-25 audit period.
- **Fact:** The authorized budget for the Women and Child Development Department was ₹29,693.09 crore.

Mains question: Examine how the lack of fiscal discipline and transparency in state-sponsored welfare schemes can undermine legislative oversight and public accountability.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/82575](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82575)

Government policies & schemes · Prelims

ASR District Tops Nation in Basic Infrastructure, Leading in Water, Roads, and Health Centers

Why in news: ASR District ranked first in India for basic infrastructure under NITI Aayog's Aspirational Districts Programme as of March 2026.

Key facts: The Alluri Sitharama Raju (ASR) district achieved the top rank due to improvements in drinking water, roads, electricity, health centers, schools, and public toilets. The ranking is based on the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) metrics monitored by NITI Aayog.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NITI Aayog: The premier policy think tank of the Government of India.
- **Scheme:** Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP): Launched in 2018 to transform 112 most-backward districts across India.
- **Fact:** ASR District ranked first in basic infrastructure as of March 2026.
- **Place:** Alluri Sitharama Raju (ASR) District: Located in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Mains question: Examine how the Aspirational Districts Programme serves as a tool for decentralized development and bridging regional disparities in India.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/82462](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82462)

Bombay High Court backs Rs 37,000 crore redevelopment, rejecting housing society petitions

Why in news: The Bombay High Court upheld the state's policy for the integrated redevelopment of MHADA layouts in Bandra Reclamation and Adarsh Nagar, prioritizing holistic urban planning over individual housing society petitions.

Key facts: The Bombay High Court upheld the redevelopment of MHADA layouts valued at over Rs 37,000 crore. The court supported the state's policy allowing a single private Construction & Demolition (C&D) agency to manage large-scale redevelopment instead of fragmented individual society projects.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** MHADA: Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority, a state body for housing and urban planning.
- **Fact:** The redevelopment projects in Bandra Reclamation and Adarsh Nagar are valued at over Rs 37,000 crore.
- **Place:** Bandra Reclamation and Adarsh Nagar (Worli) are key urban redevelopment sites in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Mains question: Discuss the trade-offs between individual property rights and integrated urban planning in the context of large-scale urban redevelopment projects in Indian metropolitan cities.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82388

Social Justice

Andhra Pradesh Launches "Mission March SSC-2027" for 100% Pass Rate

Why in news: Andhra Pradesh launched 'Mission March SSC-2027' to achieve a 100% pass rate in the 2027 SSC Public Examinations through competency-based learning.

Key facts: The initiative was launched by the Andhra Pradesh School Education Department on July 13, 2026. It features daily academic support sessions from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. and categorizes students into 'Rising Stars' and 'Shining Stars' for differentiated learning.

Prelims pointers

- **Scheme:** Mission March SSC-2027: State-level initiative by Andhra Pradesh to improve SSC examination outcomes.
- **Fact:** Daily academic support sessions are scheduled from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. under the mission.
- **S&T:** The mission aligns with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023.
- **Fact:** The action plan phase-1 is scheduled for implementation until November 30, 2026.

Mains question: Discuss how competency-based learning and differentiated instruction can address learning gaps in secondary education in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/82331

International Relations

US Strikes Iran Targets After Gulf Attacks, Tensions Soar

Why in news: The US launched retaliatory strikes on Iranian targets in Khuzestan province following attacks by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on US assets in the Gulf.

Key facts: The US strikes targeted multiple sites in Iran's Khuzestan province. The escalation follows an IRGC attack on US military assets in the Gulf region. The incident has triggered heightened security alerts across the Middle East.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Khuzestan: A province in Iran known for its oil and gas resources.
- **Body:** IRGC: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is an elite branch of the Iranian Armed Forces.
- **Fact:** Delhi food racket: Police seized goods worth over Rs 20 lakh involving expired products.

Mains question: Analyze the implications of escalating US-Iran tensions on regional maritime security and India's energy security in the Middle East.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82619

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

US Uses Sea Drones to Strike Iran's Port Facility for First Time

Why in news: US Central Command (CENTCOM) conducted the first-ever combat use of unmanned surface vessels (sea drones) to strike an Iranian port facility in Bandar Abbas.

Key facts: CENTCOM deployed three Corsair unmanned surface vessels to target a submarine and ship maintenance facility at Bandar Abbas port. The operation was initiated to degrade Iran's ability to target commercial shipping in the region.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CENTCOM: United States Central Command, responsible for the Middle East, Central Asia, and parts of South Asia.
- **S&T:** Corsair: The specific model of unmanned surface vessel (USV) used by the US for this operation.
- **Place:** Bandar Abbas: A major port city in Iran located on the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Fact:** This marks the first time the US has used sea drones in a combat operation.

Mains question: Analyze the implications of unmanned maritime systems in modern naval warfare and their impact on regional maritime security in the Middle East.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/82934

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

India Denies Rejection of US Trade Deal, Announces Finalized Agreement Framework

Why in news: Union Minister Piyush Goyal refuted reports of India rejecting a US trade deal, confirming that a bilateral trade agreement framework has been finalized.

Key facts: India and the US have finalized a framework for a bilateral trade agreement with most key issues resolved. The agreement aims to provide balanced, commercially meaningful benefits for businesses, farmers, and workers in both nations.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India and the US finalized the bilateral trade agreement framework in July 2026.
- **Post:** Jamieson Greer serves as the United States Trade Representative (USTR).
- **Body:** The USTR is the principal trade negotiator for the United States.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of bilateral trade agreements in strengthening India's economic position and its strategic ties with major global economies.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/82771

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

Trump Announces F-35 Sale to Turkey, Igniting Regional Firestorm

Why in news: US President Donald Trump announced the lifting of sanctions and openness to selling F-35 fighter jets to Turkey on July 8, 2026, despite Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 systems.

Key facts: The Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II is a 5th-generation multirole fighter jet. Turkey is reportedly seeking an initial delivery of six jets and potential engines for its homegrown KAAN fighter aircraft.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** F-35 Lightning II: A 5th-generation multirole fighter jet manufactured by Lockheed Martin.
- **Fact:** Turkey is seeking an initial delivery of six F-35 jets as of July 2026.
- **Place:** The announcement was made at a NATO summit in Ankara on July 8, 2026.
- **S&T:** S-400: A long-range surface-to-air missile system manufactured by Russia.

Mains question: Analyze how the shift in US defense cooperation with Turkey impacts the regional balance of power in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/82713

Modi visits Indonesia Australia New Zealand to reaffirm India's open Indo-Pacific commitment

Why in news: PM Modi visited Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand to strengthen India's strategic presence and economic ties in the Indo-Pacific region.

Key facts: India signed a \$630 million missile deal with Indonesia and established a Strategic Partnership with New Zealand. The visit aimed to counter China's regional integration and explore deeper economic ties through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Indonesia missile deal: \$630 million signed during PM Modi's visit
- **Body:** RCEP: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (India is currently not a member)
- **Body:** CPTPP: Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
- **Place:** Indo-Pacific: Region encompassing the Pacific and Indian Oceans

Mains question: Analyze the significance of India's 'Act East' policy and its strategic maneuvers to ensure an open and inclusive Indo-Pacific order.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82636

Indian nationals attacked off Oman; one missing as MEA calls for de-escalation

Why in news: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) condemned an attack on the commercial vessel GFS Galaxy off the coast of Oman, where 10 Indian nationals were rescued and one remains missing.

Key facts: The incident involved the commercial vessel GFS Galaxy off the coast of Oman. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed that 10 out of 11 Indian nationals were rescued, with one still missing. Omani authorities are currently assisting in the search and rescue operations.

Prelims pointers

- **Post:** MEA: Ministry of External Affairs is the primary body for India's foreign policy and diplomatic relations.
- **Place:** Oman: A country in the Arabian Peninsula, a key strategic partner for India in the Gulf region.
- **Fact:** GFS Galaxy: The specific commercial vessel targeted in the maritime incident off the Oman coast.

Mains question: Discuss the implications of maritime insecurity in the West Asia region on India's energy security and the safety of its merchant shipping fleet.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82531

India's oil costs may surge as US-Iran tensions threaten Strait of Hormuz: Parekh

Why in news: Energy economist Kirit S Parekh warned that escalating US-Iran tensions could disrupt oil supplies and increase import costs for India due to the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz.

Key facts: India imports over 85% of its crude oil from the Gulf region. The Strait of Hormuz is a critical maritime chokepoint for global energy supplies, particularly impacting LPG-dependent industries.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India imports over 85% of its crude oil from the Gulf region
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic maritime chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman
- **S&T:** LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas): A primary fuel source for various Indian industrial sectors

Mains question: Analyze the geopolitical and economic implications of maritime chokepoints on India's energy security and suggest strategies to mitigate supply chain disruptions.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/82637

Taliban Minister Abdullah Omari Discusses Agriculture with India's Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Why in news: Taliban Agriculture Minister Abdullah Omari visited India to discuss agricultural cooperation, trade, and food security with Indian officials and agencies.

Key facts: On July 12, 2026, Abdullah Omari (Taliban Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock) concluded a six-day visit to India. Discussions involved cooperation with NABARD, ICAR, IARI, FICCI, and PHDCCI regarding climate-resilient crops and infrastructure.

Prelims pointers

- **Post:** Abdullah Omari: Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock in the Taliban administration.
- **Body:** NABARD: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, provides financing for rural infrastructure.
- **Body:** ICAR: Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the apex body for agricultural research in India.
- **Fact:** India has upgraded its embassy team in Kabul to chargé d'affaires level despite not recognizing the Taliban.

Mains question: Discuss the complexities of India's 'de-hyphenated' policy towards Afghanistan and the strategic implications of engaging with the Taliban on agricultural and food security fronts.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/82475](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82475)

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

Nepal Students Lead Surge: 58,134 Enroll in India, Up 47% Since 2013

Why in news: A report highlights a 47% surge in Nepali students enrolling in Indian educational institutions since 2013, reflecting growing bilateral academic ties.

Key facts: During the 2023-24 academic year, India hosted 58,134 foreign students from 173 countries. Nepal remains the largest source, accounting for 24.1% of the total enrollment, with Karnataka emerging as the leading host state.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Nepal students accounted for 24.1% of total foreign student enrollment in India during the 2023-24 academic year.
- **Fact:** Karnataka hosted the highest number of foreign students (7,914) among Indian states.
- **Fact:** Undergraduate programmes are the preferred choice for 73.6% of international students in India.
- **Fact:** The UAE, USA, and Bangladesh are the next largest contributors to foreign student enrollment in India, each at 5.9%.

Mains question: Analyze the role of educational diplomacy in strengthening India's bilateral ties with its neighborhood, specifically focusing on the growing influx of students from Nepal.

Source: Indian Express · [satyadheesh.in/news/82360](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82360)

GS3 · Economy · S&T · Environment · Security · 20

Economy

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims + Mains

SEBI tightens rules: Officials must now recuse from family-linked matters

Why in news: SEBI implemented stricter investment and recusal rules for officials to prevent conflicts of interest following allegations against former chief Madhabi Puri Buch.

Key facts: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) mandated that officials must now recuse themselves from matters involving family members. New rules require disclosure of future employment negotiations within 30 days and cap exposure to a single SEBI-regulated fund manager at 25% of total investments.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** SEBI: Statutory body established under the SEBI Act, 1992, to regulate the securities market.
- **Fact:** Investment Cap: SEBI officials' exposure to a single regulated fund manager is capped at 25% of total investments.
- **Fact:** Disclosure Timeline: Officials must disclose future employment negotiations within 30 days.
- **Fact:** Asset Management: Officials must liquidate or freeze equity holdings before joining SEBI.

Mains question: Discuss the importance of robust conflict-of-interest frameworks in regulatory bodies to ensure market integrity and public trust in financial governance.

Source: Economic Times · [satyadheesh.in/news/82859](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82859)

India's MSME Growth Hobbled by High Startup Costs, Complex Regulations: Report

Why in news: A NITI Aayog and FED report highlights how high startup costs and complex regulatory compliance hinder MSME growth compared to competitors like China and Vietnam.

Key facts: The report by NITI Aayog and the Foundation for Economic Development (FED) identifies regulatory friction as a primary barrier to MSME formalization. It specifically notes that India's compliance burden exceeds that of Vietnam and China, impacting the ability of small manufacturers to scale and compete globally.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NITI Aayog: The premier policy think tank of the Government of India.
- **Fact:** MSMEs are a significant contributor to India's manufacturing output and employment.
- **Body:** Foundation for Economic Development (FED): A non-profit organization involved in economic research and policy analysis.

Mains question: Analyze how regulatory friction and high entry costs impede the formalization of MSMEs and suggest measures to enhance their global competitiveness.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/82711

India requires Rs 770 lakh crore in infrastructure investments over the next

Why in news: The report highlights a massive infrastructure investment requirement of Rs 770 lakh crore over the next two decades, emphasizing the role of NaBFID in bridging financing gaps.

Key facts: India requires Rs 770 lakh crore for infrastructure, with Rs 370 lakh crore specifically for urban infrastructure over the next 20 years. NaBFID aims to grow its outstanding book to Rs 4.5-5 lakh crore to support these investments.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NaBFID (National Bank for Financing Infrastructure) provides transaction advisory and support for municipal bonds.
- **Fact:** Urban infrastructure investment requirement is estimated at Rs 370 lakh crore over the next two decades.
- **Fact:** NaBFID target outstanding book size is Rs 4.5-5 lakh crore.

Mains question: Discuss the institutional and structural bottlenecks hindering private investment in India's infrastructure sector despite the growing demand for urban and renewable energy projects.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/82613

Tamil Nadu Minister Rejects Privatisation: Cites Better Power Quality, Lower Losses

Why in news: Tamil Nadu Minister R. Nirmalkumar rejected the privatization of electricity distribution, citing superior state-run performance metrics and the risk of neglecting rural/agricultural consumers.

Key facts: Tamil Nadu's AT&C (Aggregate Technical and Commercial) losses are 10.92%–10.96%, significantly lower than the national average of 15%. The state's transformer failure rate is 2.65%, compared to the national average of 5.02%.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Tamil Nadu AT&C losses: 10.92% to 10.96% (as of current reporting period)
- **Fact:** National average AT&C losses: 15%
- **Fact:** Tamil Nadu transformer failure rate: 2.65% vs. National average: 5.02%
- **Body:** Prayas: A non-profit organization and think tank that conducts studies on power sector reforms in India.

Mains question: Examine the trade-offs between privatizing power distribution and maintaining universal access to electricity in rural and agricultural sectors in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/82917

Supreme Court to hear plea against sky-high airfares today

Why in news: Justice Vikram Nath is set to hear a plea for an independent mechanism to regulate predatory pricing in the aviation sector to protect passengers.

Key facts: The petition cites the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam of 2024 and a Rajya Sabha report as basis for an independent body. It highlights that high fares currently affect approximately 10 lakh daily air travelers.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam: The primary legislative framework for aviation in India as of 2024.
- **Fact:** Daily air passenger volume affected by pricing issues: approximately 10 lakh.
- **Body:** Independent mechanism: Proposed body to enforce reasonable tariffs and address passenger grievances.

Mains question: Discuss the necessity of an independent regulatory body to curb predatory pricing in the aviation sector while ensuring the commercial viability of airlines.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/82583

Crypto traders face 1% TDS since July 2022, must file by July 31, 2026

Why in news: The Income Tax Department enforces a 1% TDS on crypto trades under Section 194S, necessitating accurate record-keeping for taxpayers filing returns by July 31, 2026.

Key facts: Since July 2022, all crypto transactions in India attract a 1% TDS under Section 194S of the Income Tax Act. Crypto gains are taxed at a flat rate of 30%, allowing only the cost of acquisition as a deductible expense.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Section 194S of the Income Tax Act mandates 1% TDS on Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs).
- **Fact:** Crypto gains are taxed at a flat rate of 30% in India.
- **Fact:** Only the cost of acquisition is deductible against crypto gains; no other expenses are allowed.
- **Fact:** Taxpayers must file returns for FY 2025-26 by the deadline of July 31, 2026.
- **Body:** Form 26AS and AIS (Annual Information Statement) are the primary tools for verifying TDS and crypto transactions.

Mains question: Discuss the implications of taxing Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs) on the growth of the digital economy and the challenges of monitoring decentralized financial transactions.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/82578

Agriculture

In Rajasthan, Rampal Mundhiyara, executive engineer, stated that authorities excavated a 28km

Why in news: Rajasthan authorities announced the excavation of a 28km artificial lake to ensure water security for 5 million people during Indira Gandhi Canal maintenance.

Key facts: The reservoir costs ₹242 crore and has a capacity of 1.41 billion litres. It is lined with plastic to prevent seepage into the surrounding sand, with filling scheduled to begin in May 2026.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** The artificial lake reservoir capacity is approximately 1.41 billion litres.
- **Fact:** The project cost for the reservoir is ₹242 crore.
- **Place:** The project serves the Jaisalmer and Barmer districts in Rajasthan.
- **Fact:** Filling of the reservoir is scheduled to commence in May 2026.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of artificial reservoirs and lining technologies in ensuring water security for arid regions of India during irrigation infrastructure maintenance.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/82893

India Meteorological Department forecasts below-normal July rainfall

Why in news: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasted a 'below-normal' rainfall for July 2026, raising concerns over Kharif crop yields and water security.

Key facts: The IMD reported a 40% rainfall deficit in the first month of the monsoon and a 39.8% drop from normal in June 2026. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan warned of potential impacts due to a 'super' El Niño phenomenon.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** IMD: India's primary agency for meteorological observations and forecasting.
- **Fact:** June 2026 rainfall recorded a 39.8% deficit compared to the normal.
- **S&T:** El Niño: A climate pattern characterized by the warming of surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Mains question: Analyze the impact of erratic monsoon patterns and El Niño phenomena on India's food security and agrarian economy.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/82830](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82830)

Andhra CM N. Chandrababu Naidu Announces Completion of 89% Polavaram Project

Why in news: Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu announced that 89% of the Polavaram irrigation project is complete as of July 2026, aiming for completion before the Godavari Pushkarams-2027.

Key facts: The Polavaram project involves the renovation of the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage (SACB) at Dowleswaram. The state plans to spend ₹1,200 crore on Pushkarams facilities and develop Pichuka Lanka as a tourism destination.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Polavaram Project: A major multi-purpose irrigation project located on the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Place:** Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage: Located at Dowleswaram, it is a key irrigation structure in the Godavari basin.
- **Fact:** Construction status: 89% of the Polavaram project was reported complete as of July 2026.
- **Fact:** Budget allocation: ₹1,200 crore earmarked for Pushkarams facilities and tourism development.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of large-scale multi-purpose irrigation projects like Polavaram in ensuring food security and regional economic development in drought-prone regions of India.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/82794](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82794)

Water Authority steps up pace of Jal Jeevan Mission work in Thiruvananthapuram district

Why in news: The Kerala Water Authority (KWA) is accelerating the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) in Thiruvananthapuram.

Key facts: The Kerala Water Authority (KWA) is currently ranked fourth in Kerala for JJM works. The agency aims to complete all targeted water supply schemes and components by December 2027, contingent on fund availability.

Prelims pointers

- **Scheme:** Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM): A central government initiative to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) to every rural household.
- **Body:** Kerala Water Authority (KWA): The state body responsible for water supply and management in Kerala.
- **Fact:** KWA target completion date for Thiruvananthapuram water schemes: December 2027.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in achieving universal rural water coverage under the Jal Jeevan Mission and the role of state-level agencies in ensuring sustainable infrastructure.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/82460](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/82460)

Science & Technology

Biotechnology & health research · Prelims

World's Most Detailed 3D Brainstem Atlas Created at IIT-Madras

Why in news: Scientists at IIT-Madras's Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre developed 'Anchor', the world's most detailed 3D brainstem atlas to aid neurological disease research.

Key facts: The atlas was created using over 500 tissue sections ranging from foetal to adult brains. It integrates MRI scans with microscopic imagery to map over 200 cell clusters and nerve pathways.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Anchor: A 3D atlas of the human brainstem developed at IIT-Madras
- **Fact:** The atlas identifies more than 200 distinct cell clusters and nerve pathways
- **Body:** Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre (SGBC) is a research facility at IIT-Madras

Mains question: Discuss how advancements in high-resolution neuro-imaging and 3D mapping can revolutionize the diagnosis and treatment of neurodegenerative diseases in India.

Source: BBC · satyadheesh.in/news/82574

Space technology (ISRO, missions) · Prelims

ISRO succeeds in critical Gaganyaan tests, ensuring safe crew module separations

Why in news: ISRO successfully conducted three critical Gaganyaan crew module tests on July 12, 2026, to ensure safe separation and stability during the mission.

Key facts: ISRO conducted three specific tests: upright positioning post-splashdown using a cold-gas-based system, umbilical mechanism separation between crew and service modules, and structural integrity during apex cover separation. These tests are vital for the safety of the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Gaganyaan: India's first human spaceflight mission to send a crew to orbit.
- **S&T:** Cold-gas-based system: Used in Gaganyaan to ensure upright positioning of the crew module post-splashdown.
- **S&T:** ISRO: Space agency under the Department of Space, Ministry of Science and Technology.
- **Fact:** Three major tests were successfully completed on July 12, 2026.

Mains question: Discuss the technological challenges and safety protocols involved in India's Gaganyaan mission and its significance for India's aspirations in the global space economy.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/82470

Nuclear & new energy technology · Prelims

PM Modi set to launch India's first hydrogen-powered train developed by ICF

Why in news: PM Modi is set to launch India's first hydrogen-powered train developed by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) to promote green mobility.

Key facts: The train was approved by the Railway Board on May 22, 2026, and will operate on the Jind-Sonipat route at a speed of 75 kmph. It utilizes a 1,200 kW hydrogen fuel cell system that emits only water vapour as a byproduct.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Hydrogen fuel cell system: Converts hydrogen into electricity via chemical reaction, emitting only water vapour.
- **Fact:** The hydrogen-powered train will operate at a speed of 75 kmph on the Jind-Sonipat route.
- **Body:** Integral Coach Factory (ICF): A production unit of the Ministry of Railways located in Chennai.
- **Fact:** The train is powered by a 1,200 kW hydrogen fuel cell system.

Mains question: Examine the potential of hydrogen-powered rail transport in achieving India's net-zero emissions targets while addressing the logistical challenges of green hydrogen infrastructure.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82454

Indian Navy inducts INS Mahendragiri with 75% indigenous content into Eastern Fleet

Why in news: The Indian Navy inducted INS Mahendragiri, the sixth Project 17A frigate, into its Eastern Fleet to bolster maritime security and indigenous manufacturing.

Key facts: INS Mahendragiri is an advanced stealth frigate with a displacement of ~6,670 tonnes and a top speed of 28 knots. It features over 75% indigenous content and is equipped with BrahMos supersonic missiles and an Integrated Anti-Submarine Defence System.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** INS Mahendragiri features over 75% indigenous content.
- **S&T:** Project 17A frigates are designed as multi-mission platforms with advanced stealth and anti-submarine warfare capabilities.
- **Fact:** INS Mahendragiri is equipped with BrahMos supersonic surface-to-surface missiles.
- **Place:** The ship was inducted into the Eastern Fleet at Visakhapatnam.
- **Fact:** Six out of seven Project 17A frigates were commissioned by January 2025.

Mains question: Examine how the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative in the defence sector contributes to India's maritime security and strategic autonomy.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82441

Japan Develops Flexible Perovskite Solar Cells for Everyday Items

Why in news: Japan is developing ultra-thin, flexible perovskite solar cells to integrate solar power into everyday items like clothing and vehicles to overcome space constraints.

Key facts: Japan's Agency for Natural Resources and Energy (ANRE) supports the development of perovskite cells. These cells are printed using techniques similar to newspaper printing and are designed to be flexible and ultra-thin compared to traditional silicon panels.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Perovskite solar cells: A next-generation photovoltaic technology using perovskite-structured compounds.
- **Body:** ANRE: Agency for Natural Resources and Energy (Japan) supports the development of these solar technologies.
- **Fact:** Commercialization target: Japan plans to commercialize perovskite cells over a decade-long timeframe.

Mains question: Discuss how the development of flexible perovskite solar cells can address the challenges of urban energy density and decentralized power generation in densely populated regions.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/82928

India's Water Crisis Deepens: Ancient Techniques Lost to Modern Urbanization

Why in news: The report highlights India's acute water scarcity and the loss of traditional rainwater harvesting systems due to rapid urbanization, prompting a focus on the Jal Shakti Abhiyan.

Key facts: India supports 18% of the world's population but possesses only 4% of global freshwater resources. Ancient techniques involved interconnected tanks to manage flood cycles and recharge groundwater.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's share of global freshwater: 4%
- **Fact:** India's share of world population: 18%
- **Scheme:** Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Government initiative for water conservation and rainwater harvesting
- **Place:** IIT Bombay: Academic institution involved in water resource research

Mains question: Discuss how rapid urbanization in India has compromised traditional water management systems and suggest measures to integrate ancient wisdom with modern engineering to ensure water security.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/82783

"William Bateson's 'Alleles': Gene Variants Reshaping Genetics, Medicine Since 1902

Why in news: The historical significance of William Bateson's 1902 concept of 'Alleles' is highlighted as a foundational principle for modern genetic medicine and agricultural breeding.

Key facts: William Bateson introduced the term 'Alleles' in 1902 to describe alternative forms of the same gene. Alleles occupy the same position on a chromosome and determine variations in inherited traits across species.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Alleles: Alternative forms of a gene occupying the same locus on a chromosome.
- **S&T:** William Bateson: British-Australian botanist who coined the term 'Alleles' in 1902.
- **Fact:** Applications of Allele analysis include diagnosing genetic disorders, forensic identification, and crop improvement.

Mains question: Discuss how the understanding of allelic variation has revolutionized modern precision medicine and agricultural biotechnology in India.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/82761

At the 56th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) 2026 in Bucaramanga, Colombia, India

Why in news: India secured a joint first place at the 56th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) 2026 in Colombia, highlighting India's consistent excellence in global science competitions.

Key facts: India participated for the 27th time in the IPhO, securing a joint first place with six other countries. The competition involved 381 students from 87 countries competing in both theoretical and experimental physics.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** IPhO: International Physics Olympiad is a global competition for high school students.
- **Fact:** India secured a joint first place at the 56th IPhO held in Bucaramanga, Colombia in 2026.
- **Fact:** India has maintained a decade-long streak of winning either gold or silver medals in the IPhO.

Mains question: Discuss the importance of international science olympiads in fostering scientific temper and enhancing India's position in global human resource development.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82659

Holtec International Files for \$10 Billion IPO to Fund Reactor Projects

Why in news: American firm Holtec International filed for a \$10 billion IPO to fund global reactor manufacturing and expansion into India's atomic sector.

Key facts: Holtec International is a US-based nuclear firm cleared by the US Department of Energy (DoE) to invest in India's atomic sector. The firm plans to manufacture and operate Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), specifically the SMR-300 model, at decommissioned sites.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** SMR (Small Modular Reactor): Nuclear fission reactors with power capacity typically below 300 MW.
- **Body:** US Department of Energy (DoE): The federal agency responsible for nuclear energy regulation and investment in the US.
- **Fact:** Holtec International IPO target: \$10 billion to fund reactor manufacturing and global installations.
- **Post:** NTPC: India's largest power utility, identified as a potential collaborator for nuclear projects.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) in achieving India's clean energy goals while addressing safety and waste management concerns.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82616

Internal Security

Left-wing extremism · Mains

Senior Correspondent Unearths Digital Scams, Covers Historic Maoist Surrender

Why in news: Reporting on the historic surrender of the final Maoist cadres in Madhya Pradesh in late 2025, leading to the state being declared Maoist-free.

Key facts: The surrender involved the final Maoist cadres in Madhya Pradesh, resulting in the state being declared Maoist-free. The reporting highlighted backchannel negotiations and a 'vacuum of command' within the insurgency. The coverage also touched upon institutional lapses regarding the National Security Act (NSA) and custodial safety.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Madhya Pradesh was declared Maoist-free in late 2025.
- **Act / Bill:** National Security Act (NSA) is used for preventive detention of individuals deemed a threat to national security.
- **Place:** Kuno National Park is the primary site for Project Cheetah in Madhya Pradesh.

Mains question: *Analyze the factors contributing to the decline of Maoist insurgency in Central India and the role of backchannel negotiations in achieving peace.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/82942

Practice — Mains questions

1. Analyze the implications of escalating US-Iran tensions on regional maritime security and India's energy security in the Middle East. · GS2
2. Analyze the implications of unmanned maritime systems in modern naval warfare and their impact on regional maritime security in the Middle East. · GS2
3. Analyze the factors contributing to the decline of Maoist insurgency in Central India and the role of backchannel negotiations in achieving peace. · GS3
4. Discuss the importance of robust conflict-of-interest frameworks in regulatory bodies to ensure market integrity and public trust in financial governance. · GS3
5. Discuss the significance of bilateral trade agreements in strengthening India's economic position and its strategic ties with major global economies. · GS2
6. Analyze how the shift in US defense cooperation with Turkey impacts the regional balance of power in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. · GS2
7. Analyze how regulatory friction and high entry costs impede the formalization of MSMEs and suggest measures to enhance their global competitiveness. · GS3
8. Discuss the legal and ethical challenges in regulating online pornography in India while balancing the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression. · GS2

Prelims quick revision

- **Place:** Khuzestan: A province in Iran known for its oil and gas resources.
- **Body:** IRGC: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is an elite branch of the Iranian Armed Forces.
- **Fact:** Delhi food racket: Police seized goods worth over Rs 20 lakh involving expired products.
- **Body:** CENTCOM: United States Central Command, responsible for the Middle East, Central Asia, and parts of South Asia.
- **S&T:** Corsair: The specific model of unmanned surface vessel (USV) used by the US for this operation.
- **Place:** Bandar Abbas: A major port city in Iran located on the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Fact:** Madhya Pradesh was declared Maoist-free in late 2025.
- **Act / Bill:** National Security Act (NSA) is used for preventive detention of individuals deemed a threat to national security.
- **Place:** Kuno National Park is the primary site for Project Cheetah in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Body:** SEBI: Statutory body established under the SEBI Act, 1992, to regulate the securities market.
- **Fact:** Investment Cap: SEBI officials' exposure to a single regulated fund manager is capped at 25% of total investments.
- **Fact:** Disclosure Timeline: Officials must disclose future employment negotiations within 30 days.
- **Fact:** India and the US finalized the bilateral trade agreement framework in July 2026.
- **Post:** Jamieson Greer serves as the United States Trade Representative (USTR).
- **Body:** The USTR is the principal trade negotiator for the United States.
- **S&T:** F-35 Lightning II: A 5th-generation multirole fighter jet manufactured by Lockheed Martin.
- **Fact:** Turkey is seeking an initial delivery of six F-35 jets as of July 2026.
- **Place:** The announcement was made at a NATO summit in Ankara on July 8, 2026.
- **Body:** NITI Aayog: The premier policy think tank of the Government of India.
- **Fact:** MSMEs are a significant contributor to India's manufacturing output and employment.

- **Body:** Foundation for Economic Development (FED): A non-profit organization involved in economic research and policy analysis.
- **Body:** Supreme Court of India: The highest judicial body in India, exercising judicial review.
- **Fact:** Current legal framework: Primarily focuses on production and distribution of pornographic material.
- **Post:** Union Government: The executive body responsible for formulating national policies and action plans.
- **Fact:** Indonesia missile deal: \$630 million signed during PM Modi's visit
- **Body:** RCEP: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (India is currently not a member)
- **Body:** CPTPP: Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
- **Body:** NaBFID (National Bank for Financing Infrastructure) provides transaction advisory and support for municipal bonds.
- **Fact:** Urban infrastructure investment requirement is estimated at Rs 370 lakh crore over the next two decades.
- **Fact:** NaBFID target outstanding book size is Rs 4.5-5 lakh crore.
- **S&T:** Anchor: A 3D atlas of the human brainstem developed at IIT-Madras
- **Fact:** The atlas identifies more than 200 distinct cell clusters and nerve pathways
- **Body:** Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre (SGBC) is a research facility at IIT-Madras
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- **S&T:** ISRO: Space agency under the Department of Space, Ministry of Science and Technology.
- **S&T:** Hydrogen fuel cell system: Converts hydrogen into electricity via chemical reaction, emitting only water vapour.
- **Fact:** The hydrogen-powered train will operate at a speed of 75 kmph on the Jind-Sonipat route.
- **Body:** Integral Coach Factory (ICF): A production unit of the Ministry of Railways located in Chennai.
- **Fact:** INS Mahendragiri features over 75% indigenous content.

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