

UPSC Current Affairs — 15 July 2026

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History & Culture

Art, architecture & culture · Prelims

S.P. Bharathi Announces National Theatre Festival 2026 for Vande Mataram Anniversary

Why in news: S.P. Bharathi of Sangeet Natak Akademi announced the National Theatre Festival 2026 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the 'Vande Mataram' slogan.

Key facts: The festival is scheduled for July 15, 2026, featuring plays in 150 locations across India. Sangeet Natak Akademi is the apex body for performing arts in India, under the Ministry of Culture.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Sangeet Natak Akademi: The national academy for music, dance, and theatre in India.
- **Fact:** National Theatre Festival 2026: Scheduled to be held in 150 locations nationwide.
- **Place:** Vijayawada: Location of one of the selected play performances in Andhra Pradesh.

Mains question: Discuss the role of performing arts in preserving and promoting India's cultural heritage and national identity in the contemporary era.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84043

Ancient & medieval India · Prelims + Mains

Explained: Challenges to Madhya Pradesh HC on Bhojshala-Kamal Maula dispute

Why in news: The Supreme Court declined to restore the status quo at the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula mosque complex in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, following a High Court ruling declaring the site a temple.

Key facts: The Madhya Pradesh High Court ruled in May 2024 that the site is a temple dedicated to Goddess Vagdevi (Saraswati). The dispute involves a 2003 Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) order that previously allowed Hindu worship on Tuesdays and Muslim prayers on Fridays.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Bhojshala-Kamal Maula mosque complex is located in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh
- **Body:** Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is the body responsible for archaeological research and preservation
- **Fact:** The 2003 ASI order permitted Hindu worship on Tuesdays and Muslim prayers on Fridays

Mains question: Discuss the legal and constitutional complexities involved in determining the religious character of historical monuments and the protection of minority religious rights.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84002

Indian Society

Social diversity, caste & tribes · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court Slams Monitoring Committee for Racial Discrimination Inaction

Why in news: The Supreme Court of India criticized a court-mandated monitoring committee for its failure to act on grievances regarding racial discrimination against people from Northeastern States.

Key facts: The monitoring committee was established following the death of Nido Tania in 2014 to address racial violence. It comprises representatives from various government departments and Northeastern States. The Supreme Court noted a specific instance where a complainant's grievance remained unaddressed despite email communication.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** The monitoring committee is a court-mandated body tasked with addressing racial discrimination against Northeastern Indians.
- **Fact:** The committee's mandate originated following the 2014 death of Nido Tania.
- **Post:** Justice Sanjay Kumar presided over the proceedings questioning the committee's efficacy.

Mains question: Critically analyze the institutional challenges in addressing regional discrimination and ensuring the safety of minority populations in India's Northeast.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84568

Geography

Geophysical phenomena (earthquakes, cyclones, volcanoes) · Prelims

Flash floods in Arunachal Pradesh wash away 84-metre bridge, cut off eight villages

Why in news: Flash floods and landslides in Arunachal Pradesh caused significant infrastructure damage and isolated villages, highlighting the vulnerability of Himalayan regions to extreme weather.

Key facts: Flash floods and landslides in Arunachal Pradesh affected 97,182 people across 425 villages. The disaster destroyed an 84-metre bridge over the Kumey river and blocked surface transport to Mechuka near the China border.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Mechuka: A region in Arunachal Pradesh located near the border with China.
- **Body:** ITBP: Indo-Tibetan Border Police, a central armed police force responsible for border guarding.
- **Fact:** The Kumey river is a significant river in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Fact:** The disaster resulted in 7 fatalities and 29 injuries across the affected villages.

Mains question: Discuss the geographical and climatic factors contributing to increasing frequency of flash floods in the Himalayan region and suggest measures for disaster-resilient infrastructure.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84546

GS2 · Polity · Governance · IR · 31

Polity & Constitution

Constitution, amendments & basic structure · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court Upholds 1971 Population Base for Lok Sabha Seats, Rejecting PIL Challenge

Why in news: The Supreme Court dismissed a PIL challenging the use of 1971 census data for delimiting Lok Sabha seats, upholding the constitutional validity of the current delimitation process.

Key facts: The Supreme Court ruled that the right to vote is independent of the delimitation process. The court upheld the use of 1971 population figures for parliamentary seat allocation, ensuring that representation remains consistent with the established constitutional framework.

Prelims pointers

- **Constitution:** Delimitation of constituencies is governed by the provisions of the Constitution of India and the Delimitation Act.
- **Fact:** The 1971 Census data is currently the baseline for determining the number of Lok Sabha seats in each state.

- **Body:** The Supreme Court of India has the power of judicial review over legislative amendments to ensure they do not violate the 'Basic Structure' of the Constitution.

Mains question: *Examine the constitutional balance between ensuring proportional population representation and maintaining federal stability in the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/83950

Judiciary & landmark judgments · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court Orders Controversial Report on Sexual Offences Online

Why in news: The Supreme Court directed the online publication of the National Judicial Academy's report on judicial sensitivity in sexual offence cases to ensure uniform legal standards.

Key facts: The Supreme Court's order follows specific rulings by the Allahabad High Court (March 17) and Patna High Court (July 9) regarding the definition of attempted rape. The court emphasized that judges must adhere to established handbooks when registering FIRs and instructed states to train police stations accordingly.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** National Judicial Academy (NJA): An autonomous body established to provide judicial training to judges in India.
- **Post:** Chief Justice of India (CJI): The highest judicial officer in India, presiding over the Supreme Court.
- **Fact:** The Supreme Court mandated the online publication of the NJA report to ensure transparency and accessibility for all judicial officers.

Mains question: *Discuss the importance of judicial sensitivity and standardized protocols in handling sexual offence cases to ensure the protection of victims' rights.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/83844

Elections, ECI & electoral reforms · Prelims

Election Commission Extends Voter Roll Updates Till August 8 Amid High Demand

Why in news: The Chief Electoral Officer of Karnataka extended the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls until August 8, 2024, to accommodate high voter demand.

Key facts: The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) aims to update the electoral rolls through enumeration forms. As of the announcement, 95.69% of forms were distributed, with 40.70% already digitized.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** 95.69% of enumeration forms were distributed for the SIR in Karnataka as of the announcement.
- **Fact:** Draft electoral rolls are scheduled for publication on August 17, 2024.
- **Fact:** The final electoral roll for the revision is scheduled for publication on October 19, 2024.
- **Body:** The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) is the state-level authority responsible for the conduct of elections and electoral roll maintenance.

Mains question: *Discuss the significance of periodic electoral roll revisions in ensuring the integrity of the democratic process and the challenges in achieving universal voter registration.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84426

Fundamental rights, DPSP & duties · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court Rejects Petition to Curb Derogatory Content on Prophet Muhammed

Why in news: The Supreme Court dismissed a petition seeking to curb derogatory social media content about Prophet Muhammed, emphasizing that Article 32 should not be used to bypass standard legal procedures.

Key facts: On July 15, 2026, a Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe dismissed a writ petition filed by Mohd. Anas Chaudhary. The Court directed the petitioner to utilize specific laws and the Information Technology Rules of 2009 instead of seeking direct judicial intervention under Article 32.

Prelims pointers

- **Constitution:** Article 32 of the Indian Constitution provides the right to move the Supreme Court for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights.
- **Body:** The Supreme Court of India is the highest judicial body in the country.
- **Fact:** The Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rules were established in 2009.

- **Fact:** The petition was dismissed on July 15, 2026.

Mains question: *Examine the balance between the right to freedom of speech and the state's obligation to prevent communal disharmony in the digital age.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84174

Panchayati Raj & urban local bodies · Prelims + Mains

Ladakh plans to extend LAHDC Act benefits to 7 districts, empowering local councils

Why in news: The Ladakh administration plans to extend the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Act benefits to all seven districts to decentralize governance in the Union Territory.

Key facts: The LAHDC Act was originally introduced in 1997 to provide elected councils with executive powers over local governance. Ladakh was established as a Union Territory without a legislature in 2019 and currently comprises 32 tehsils across its districts.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** LAHDC: An autonomous body in Ladakh with executive powers over local governance issues.
- **Fact:** Ladakh currently comprises 32 tehsils following the notification of 17 new ones.
- **Place:** Ladakh: A Union Territory without a legislature, carved out from Jammu & Kashmir in 2019.

Mains question: *Examine the role of autonomous hill councils in ensuring participatory democracy and effective local governance in ecologically sensitive and border regions like Ladakh.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84074

Elections, ECI & electoral reforms · Prelims + Mains

ECI Examines Curbs on Political Campaigns Targeting Children in Tamil Nadu Elections

Why in news: The Election Commission of India (ECI) informed the Madras High Court regarding the examination of curbs on political campaigns targeting children during the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly elections.

Key facts: The ECI stated that children do not legally influence voter behavior as voters are protected adults. The ECI is considering guidelines to regulate political campaigning targeting children due to social media accessibility. The ECI reported the seizure of ₹599.24 crore in cash to prevent illegal distribution during the election period.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Election Commission of India (ECI) is the constitutional body responsible for administering elections in India.
- **Fact:** ECI seized ₹599.24 crore in cash during preventive measures against illegal cash distribution in Tamil Nadu.
- **Post:** The Madras High Court is the judicial body overseeing the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) regarding election conduct.

Mains question: *Discuss the measures taken by the Election Commission of India to ensure a level playing field and prevent the exploitation of vulnerable groups during electoral processes.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/83946

Governance

Bills, Acts & ordinances · Prelims

Shivakumar Sets August 6 Deadline for Feedback on KAOMA Bill Affecting 2.5M Flats

Why in news: Karnataka Chief Minister D K Shivakumar announced the Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Bill, 2026 (KAOMA) to regulate apartment ownership and redevelopment in Bengaluru.

Key facts: The KAOMA Bill aims to address grievances for approximately 2.5 to 3 million flats across 25,000 apartment buildings in Bengaluru. It mandates collective ownership of project land and common areas, requiring a 75% owner consent for redevelopment.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** KAOMA Bill: Proposed legislation in Karnataka to regulate apartment ownership and management.
- **Fact:** The bill affects approximately 2.5 to 3 million flats in Bengaluru.

- **Fact:** Redevelopment under the proposed bill requires consent from at least 75% of owners.

Mains question: Discuss how legislative frameworks for apartment ownership and redevelopment can balance individual property rights with collective urban planning needs in rapidly urbanizing Indian cities.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84369

Transparency, accountability & RTI · Prelims + Mains

Delhi Cabinet approves bill fining officials up to Rs 5,000 for unjustified delays

Why in news: The Delhi Cabinet approved the Right to Citizen Time-Bound Delivery of Service Bill, 2026, to penalize officials for administrative delays and ensure transparency.

Key facts: The bill mandates fixed deadlines for government services and imposes a fine of up to Rs 5,000 on officials for unjustified delays. It introduces a unique tracking number system for online applications and establishes grievance redressal authorities in every department.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Right to Citizen Time-Bound Delivery of Service Bill, 2026: A Delhi state legislation to ensure timely service delivery.
- **Fact:** Maximum fine for unjustified delays by officials: Rs 5,000.
- **Body:** Grievance Redressal Authorities: Established at the departmental level to handle service-related complaints.

Mains question: Discuss how legislative measures like time-bound service delivery can enhance administrative accountability and improve the ease of living for citizens.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84330

Social Justice

Health policy & public health · Mains

Telangana Health Minister orders plan to integrate food safety departments to fight adulteration

Why in news: Telangana Health Minister ordered the integration of Food Safety and Drugs Control departments to streamline the fight against food adulteration and counterfeit medicines.

Key facts: The Telangana government is planning to merge the Food Safety and Drugs Control Administration departments to address operational hurdles like staff shortages and investigation delays. The initiative includes modernizing laboratories with new equipment to facilitate faster inspections and sample collection.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Food Safety and Drugs Control Administration: State-level body responsible for monitoring food quality and drug safety.
- **Fact:** The initiative aims to address staff shortages and laboratory modernization in Telangana.

Mains question: Discuss how the integration of regulatory bodies can enhance the efficacy of public health surveillance and food safety enforcement in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84564

Education policy · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court Asks Union Government to Address CBSE On-Screen Marking Issues

Why in news: The Supreme Court directed the Union Government to address technical defects in the CBSE On-Screen Marking system for Class 12 exams following a petition regarding irregularities affecting 17 lakh students.

Key facts: The Supreme Court sought a status report from the Solicitor General on a probe committee's investigation into CBSE's On-Screen Marking system. The petition highlighted that technical irregularities contributed to a decline in the pass rate to 85.2% for the current academic cycle.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CBSE: Central Board of Secondary Education, an autonomous national board of education in India
- **Fact:** The pass rate for Class 12 exams affected by the marking issues was reported at 85.2% in 2026
- **Post:** Solicitor General: The highest-ranking government lawyer who represents the Union Government in the Supreme Court

Mains question: *Examine the challenges in transitioning to digital evaluation systems in large-scale national examinations and suggest measures to ensure transparency and technical reliability.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84473

Health policy & public health · Prelims

Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurates ₹211-crore ESIC OPD block in Hyderabad

Why in news: Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated a new OPD block at ESIC Medical College and Hospital in Telangana to expand healthcare access for insured workers.

Key facts: The new OPD block at ESIC Sanathnagar was constructed at a cost of ₹211.13 crore over 43,611.04 square metres. It is designed to serve over 12.3 lakh insured persons in Telangana, contributing to ESIC's growing beneficiary base of 15 crore.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** ESIC (Employees' State Insurance Corporation) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- **Fact:** India's social security coverage increased from 19% in 2014 to over 64% as of the current period.
- **Fact:** ESIC's beneficiary base has expanded from 7.5 crore to 15 crore.
- **Place:** The new OPD block is located in Sanathnagar, Telangana.

Mains question: *Discuss the significance of expanding social security coverage for the unorganized sector and the role of ESIC in achieving universal health coverage in India.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84039

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

Elderly Get Land Registration at Home: CM Launches Sabka Samman, Jeevan Aasan in Patna

Why in news: Bihar CM Samrat Choudhary launched the 'Sabka Samman, Jeevan Aasan' initiative to provide doorstep land registration for citizens aged 75 and above.

Key facts: The initiative provides mobile registry units for seniors aged 75+ to register property documents at home. It involves online slot booking, biometric authentication, and digital deed delivery via SMS. It is currently operational in 10 offices, including Patna and Hajipur.

Prelims pointers

- **Scheme:** Sabka Samman, Jeevan Aasan: Bihar state initiative for doorstep land registration for seniors aged 75+.
- **Fact:** The initiative is currently operational in 10 offices across Bihar as of July 2026.
- **S&T:** The process utilizes a mobile registry network and biometric authentication for secure document verification.

Mains question: *Examine how the integration of e-governance and doorstep services can enhance the dignity and ease of living for the elderly in India.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84013

Education policy · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court Questions CBSE's Classification of English as Non-Native Language

Why in news: The Supreme Court questioned the CBSE's classification of English as a 'non-native' language, suggesting its status as an indigenous Indian language after 300 years of usage.

Key facts: On July 14, 2026, a three-judge bench headed by CJI Surya Kant examined the CBSE three-language scheme. The court noted English has been used for official communication in at least five Indian States for over 300 years.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CBSE: Central Board of Secondary Education, an autonomous national board of education in India
- **Fact:** English has been used for official communication in at least five Indian States for over 300 years
- **Post:** CJI Surya Kant: Chief Justice of India as of July 2026

Mains question: *Discuss the implications of linguistic classification on the National Education Policy and the preservation of India's multi-lingual heritage.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/83897

International Relations

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

India-UK free trade agreement takes effect after four years of talks

Why in news: The India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) officially took effect on July 15, 2026, following four years of negotiations to reduce trade barriers and boost bilateral commerce.

Key facts: The FTA reduces tariffs on British cars from 110% to 30% (initially) and then to 10%. It also cuts duties on British spirits from 150% to 75% (initially) and eventually to 40%, while introducing a self-declaration system for export origins in the UK.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India-UK FTA took effect on July 15, 2026
- **Fact:** Tariff reduction for British cars: 110% to 30% (initial) and then to 10%
- **Fact:** Tariff reduction for British spirits: 150% to 75% (initial) and then to 40%
- **Fact:** Professional exemption: 75,000 Indian professionals exempt from UK National Insurance for 5 years
- **Fact:** Trade concessions provided for Indian textiles, gems & jewellery, and footwear

Mains question: Examine how bilateral trade agreements like the India-UK FTA can reshape India's supply chain dependencies and influence its position in global value chains.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84438

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

The India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement came into force on Wednesday

Why in news: The India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) came into force, providing zero-duty access for 99% of Indian exports to the UK.

Key facts: The agreement provides zero-duty access to nearly 99% of Indian exports to the UK, specifically benefiting textiles and pharmaceuticals. It covers 137 service sub-sectors and aims to double bilateral trade to approximately \$120 billion by 2030.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** The India-UK CETA provides zero-duty access to nearly 99% of Indian exports.
- **Fact:** The agreement covers 137 service sub-sectors including IT and professional services.
- **Fact:** Target bilateral trade volume is projected to reach \$120 billion by 2030.

Mains question: Examine how the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement can serve as a catalyst for India's 'Make in India' initiative and its goal of becoming a global manufacturing hub.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84115

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

After shutting Hormuz, Iran threatens more West Asia energy export routes

Why in news: The US reimposed a naval blockade and intensified airstrikes on Iran following Tehran's attacks on ships in the Strait of Hormuz, escalating maritime security risks.

Key facts: The US and Iran are engaged in a naval and aerial confrontation over the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has threatened to close the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in response to military operations in Yemen.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Place:** Bab el-Mandeb Strait: A narrow strait connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.
- **Post:** IRGC: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is an elite branch of the Iranian Armed Forces.
- **Fact:** The Strait of Hormuz is a primary transit point for global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports.

Mains question: Analyze the geopolitical implications of maritime chokepoint disruptions in the Middle East on global energy security and international trade routes.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84377

US strikes Iran, Trump threatens more attacks as oil prices soar

Why in news: The US Centcom launched strikes on Iranian coastal defenses and missile sites, leading to threats of trade route blockades and a surge in global oil prices.

Key facts: US Centcom targeted Iran's coastal defenses and missile sites in response to escalating tensions. Iran threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz, a critical maritime chokepoint for global oil transit.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic maritime passage connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Body:** US Centcom: United States Central Command, responsible for military operations in the Middle East.
- **Fact:** The Strait of Hormuz is a primary transit point for a significant portion of the world's oil supply.

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

Source: BBC · satyadheesh.in/news/84310

US Strikes Iran, Iran Hits Back, Killing Crew in Tanker Attack

Why in news: Escalation of military strikes between the US and Iran led to the collapse of the June 2024 peace memorandum and heightened maritime insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz.

Key facts: The US conducted strikes on Iran's Khuzestan province and Qeshm Island to degrade Iranian maritime capabilities. Iran retaliated by targeting ships in Omani waters and striking Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan, resulting in a crew fatality on a tanker.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Place:** Khuzestan Province: A province in southwestern Iran known for its oil and gas resources.
- **Fact:** June 17, 2024: Date of the peace memorandum that was terminated following the escalation.
- **Place:** Qeshm Island: An Iranian island in the Persian Gulf, significant for maritime trade and security.

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

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/83832

SEBI tightens rules: Officials must recuse for family, financial ties over ₹2 million

Why in news: SEBI introduced stricter code of conduct provisions requiring officials to recuse themselves from matters involving family or material financial interests exceeding ₹2 million to prevent conflicts of interest.

Key facts: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) mandated recusal for officials if a conflict involves relatives, close friends, or associates from the previous three years. The threshold for material financial interest is set at ₹2 million or 5% of total investments.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** SEBI: Statutory body established under the SEBI Act, 1992, to regulate the securities market.
- **Fact:** Recusal threshold: Material financial interests exceeding ₹2 million or 5% of total investments.
- **Fact:** Look-back period: Officials must recuse from matters involving associates from the previous three years.

Mains question: Discuss the importance of robust conflict-of-interest frameworks in ensuring the integrity of independent regulatory bodies like SEBI.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/84590

Iran Threatens to Block Red Sea Oil, Saudi Boosts Exports via Yanbu

Why in news: Iran threatened to expand maritime disruptions to the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb strait in response to US actions, impacting global oil supply chains.

Key facts: Saudi Arabia increased crude exports via the Yanbu port to average 4 million barrels per day. The Bab el-Mandeb strait and the Strait of Hormuz are the primary maritime chokepoints for Gulf oil exports.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Bab el-Mandeb Strait: Connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A critical maritime chokepoint between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.
- **Fact:** Saudi Arabia's Yanbu port exports averaged 4 million barrels per day in recent shipments.

Mains question: Analyze the geopolitical implications of maritime chokepoint disruptions in the Middle East on global energy security and international trade routes.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84424

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

India-U.K. DCC Allows 60-Month Social Security Exemption for Workers Starting July 15, 2026

Why in news: The India-U.K. Double Contributions Convention (DCC) was established to provide a 60-month social security exemption for workers moving between the two nations starting July 15, 2026.

Key facts: The DCC allows temporary workers to avoid dual social security contributions for up to 60 months. It complements the India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and requires an EPFO certificate for eligibility.

Prelims pointers

- **Intl. org:** DCC: India-U.K. Double Contributions Convention allows 60-month social security exemption.
- **Body:** EPFO: Employees must obtain an EPFO certificate to claim the exemption under the DCC.
- **Fact:** The DCC becomes effective from July 15, 2026, and is not retroactive.
- **Intl. org:** CETA: The DCC acts as a complementary framework to the India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

Mains question: Discuss how bilateral social security agreements like the India-U.K. DCC facilitate labor mobility and enhance the efficacy of comprehensive economic trade agreements.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84346

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

'Next week comes bridges, power plants': Donald Trump says US strikes on Iran to escalate in three days

Why in news: US President Donald Trump convened a high-level meeting to discuss expanding military operations against Iran following retaliatory strikes and threats to infrastructure.

Key facts: US President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio met in the situation room to discuss military expansion. The meeting followed four days of US strikes on Iranian air defenses and infrastructure near the Strait of Hormuz.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic maritime chokepoint in the Middle East connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.
- **Fact:** Iran retaliated with missile and drone attacks on US bases located in Jordan, Kuwait, and Bahrain.
- **S&T:** The US warned of intensifying attacks on Iranian power plants and bridges to pressure negotiations on the nuclear program.

Mains question: Analyze the geopolitical 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/84327

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

India Secures 85% Steel Exemption in UK FTA, Faces Global Tariff Battle

Why in news: India secured an 85% steel exemption in the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) scheduled to commence on July 15, 2024, amidst rising global protectionism.

Key facts: The India-UK FTA provides 99% tariff-free access for Indian exports. India secured an 85% exemption for baseline steel trade with the UK, while facing potential hurdles from the UK's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

Prelims pointers

- **Intl. org:** CBAM: A carbon pricing mechanism by the UK/EU to put a fair price on carbon emissions embedded in imports.
- **Fact:** India secured an 85% exemption for baseline steel trade under the India-UK FTA.
- **Fact:** The India-UK FTA aims to provide 99% tariff-free access for Indian exports.
- **Place:** UK: United Kingdom

Mains question: *Examine how the shift towards 'transactional' Free Trade Agreements and carbon-based trade barriers like CBAM impact India's export competitiveness in the global steel market.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84179

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

US senators introduce revised Russia sanctions bill easing tariffs on China, India

Why in news: US senators introduced a revised Russia sanctions bill to recalibrate trade penalties, reducing proposed tariffs on major buyers like India and China from 500% to 100%.

Key facts: The bill maintains sanctions on Russian officials while offering exemptions for countries importing less than 15% of Russia's natural gas. The five largest buyers of Russian crude are China, India, Slovakia, Hungary, and Azerbaijan.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Proposed tariff reduction: From 500% to 100% for major buyers of Russian oil and gas.
- **Fact:** Exemption threshold: Countries importing less than 15% of Russia's natural gas may qualify for exemptions.
- **Fact:** Top Russian crude buyers: China, India, Slovakia, Hungary, and Azerbaijan.
- **Fact:** Top Russian natural gas importers: China, France, Japan, Hungary, and Belgium.

Mains question: *Discuss how the recalibration of Western sanctions on Russian energy exports reflects the complex interplay between geopolitical security and global energy security.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84073

India's bilateral relations · Mains

Israeli Attacks Kill Eight Children, Hit Gaza Hospitals Amid International Scrutiny

Why in news: Israel's intensified military operations in Gaza and West Bank have resulted in significant civilian casualties and infrastructure destruction, drawing international scrutiny over humanitarian law violations.

Key facts: Israeli strikes in Gaza have resulted in over 1,100 deaths in the territory since October 2023. The attacks have targeted hospitals, aid workers (including World Central Kitchen), and displaced persons' camps, while West Bank operations involve intensified outposts and settler raids.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Total death toll in Gaza since October 2023 exceeded 1,100.
- **Fact:** Overall death toll in the conflict reached 73,231 as of the reporting period.
- **Place:** West Bank: A territory occupied by Israel since 1967, currently facing intensified settler raids and infrastructure demolition.

Mains question: *Discuss the implications of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza on international law and the role of the UN in ensuring the protection of non-combatants in urban warfare.*

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/83892

Policies of other countries affecting India · Prelims

China Viewed More Positively Than US in 25 of 36 Countries, Study Shows

Why in news: A Pew Research Center study revealed a significant shift in global public perception where China is viewed more favorably than the US in 25 out of 36 surveyed countries.

Key facts: The study conducted by Pew Research Center between February and May 2024 surveyed 36 countries. It found that favorable views of Xi Jinping exceeded those of Donald Trump in most polled nations, with notable shifts in Spain, Indonesia, Italy, Greece, and Canada.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Pew Research Center: A non-profit 'fact tank' that conducts opinion polling and demographic research.
- **Fact:** China was viewed more positively than the US in 25 out of 36 surveyed countries.

- **Fact:** The study tracked public perception shifts from the baseline year of 2002.

Mains question: Analyze the factors contributing to the shifting global perception of China's leadership and its implications for the existing US-led liberal international order.

Source: BBC · satyadheesh.in/news/84540

India & neighbourhood · Prelims + Mains

Cauvery Crisis: CWRC Postpones Action as Storage Plummets to 56.77 tmcft

Why in news: The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) postponed issuing directions due to a severe drop in water storage levels in Karnataka's Cauvery catchment area.

Key facts: The CWRC met in New Delhi to address the water crisis between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Current storage levels plummeted to 56.77 tmcft, a significant decrease from the 107.18 tmcft recorded in the previous year.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CWRC: Cauvery Water Regulation Committee is the body responsible for managing water sharing between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- **Fact:** Current storage level in Cauvery catchment area: 56.77 tmcft (as of July 2024).
- **Fact:** Previous year storage level: 107.18 tmcft.
- **Place:** Cauvery River: Flows through Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges of inter-state water sharing in India and the role of regulatory bodies in mitigating interstate water conflicts.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84421

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

Indian MEA clarifies: Passport is for travel, not citizenship proof

Why in news: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) clarified that an Indian passport is a travel document for regulating departure, not a legal proof of citizenship.

Key facts: The MEA clarified that passports are issued under The Passports Act, 1967 and Rules, 1980. It was noted that less than 8% of the Indian population currently holds a passport.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** The Passports Act, 1967: Primary legislation governing the issuance and regulation of passports in India.
- **Fact:** Less than 8% of the Indian population holds a passport as of the recent MEA briefing.
- **Body:** Ministry of External Affairs (MEA): Responsible for issuing passports and managing India's foreign relations.

Mains question: Discuss the legal distinction between a travel document and a certificate of citizenship in the context of global mobility and national security.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84067

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

Sonowal orders global tracking dashboard for Indian seafarers after tanker attacks

Why in news: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal ordered a global tracking dashboard for Indian seafarers following attacks on oil tankers and the death of nine Indians in the West Asia crisis.

Key facts: The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways initiated a real-time vessel tracking dashboard and a dedicated liaison officer system for affected families. Since the West Asia crisis began, 29 incidents involving Indian seafarers have been recorded, resulting in nine fatalities.

Prelims pointers

- **Post:** Sarbananda Sonowal: Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways
- **Fact:** 29 incidents involving Indian seafarers recorded since the West Asia crisis began
- **Fact:** 9 Indian fatalities reported in tanker attacks as of July 2026

Mains question: Examine the challenges faced by Indian seafarers in high-risk maritime zones and suggest measures to enhance maritime safety and crew protection.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/83958

On July 17, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually inaugurate the upgraded

Why in news: PM Modi to inaugurate the upgraded Godhra railway station on July 17, 2024, as part of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme to enhance rail infrastructure.

Key facts: The Godhra railway station redevelopment involves a Rs 7 crore investment. Key upgrades include a new second entrance, a 650-square-metre building, and a 1,500-square-metre circulating area to reduce congestion.

Prelims pointers

- **Scheme:** Amrit Bharat Station Scheme: A central government initiative to modernize and upgrade railway stations across India.
- **Fact:** Godhra station redevelopment cost: Rs 7 crore.
- **Fact:** Godhra station infrastructure: Includes a 650-square-metre building and a 1,500-square-metre circulating area.

Mains question: Discuss how the modernization of railway infrastructure under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme contributes to enhancing last-mile connectivity and improving the ease of travel for marginalized commuters.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/83928

MEA Spokesperson: 13 Indians Killed, 3 Missing in Gulf Conflict Since February

Why in news: The MEA reported the death and disappearance of 13 Indian nationals in the Gulf region due to the escalating Iran-US-Israel conflict, highlighting India's diplomatic efforts to ensure maritime safety.

Key facts: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed 13 Indians killed and 3 missing since February due to the Gulf conflict. Two vessels carrying 30 Indians were attacked in the Strait of Hormuz, resulting in one death and multiple injuries.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic chokepoint in the Persian Gulf connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.
- **Post:** Randhir Jaiswal: Spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- **Fact:** India reported 13 fatalities and 3 missing persons in the Gulf region since February.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges India faces in ensuring the safety of its diaspora in volatile geopolitical zones and the role of maritime diplomacy in the Strait of Hormuz.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/83846

GS3 · Economy · S&T · Environment · Security · 40

Economy

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved India's second iteration of the Semiconductor

Why in news: The Union Cabinet approved the India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 (ISM 2.0) with a ₹1.27 lakh crore outlay to bolster domestic chip manufacturing and design.

Key facts: The ISM 2.0 initiative involves a total outlay of ₹1.27 lakh crore to subsidize chip manufacturing supply chains and research. It targets manufacturing chips for 70-75% of domestic applications by 2029 and aims for India to become a top global semiconductor nation by 2035.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** ISM 2.0 total outlay is ₹1.27 lakh crore
- **Fact:** Target: Manufacture chips for 70-75% of domestic applications by 2029
- **Fact:** Long-term goal: Become a top global semiconductor nation by 2035
- **Scheme:** ISM 2.0 provides research subsidies over a six-year period

Mains question: Discuss the significance of the India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 in achieving 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and reducing India's dependence on global electronics supply chains.

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims

IDBI Bank shares jump 3% as Fairfax set to make biggest foreign investment in Indian lender, buy stake worth Rs 53,000 cr

Why in news: The Indian government and LIC decided to sell a combined stake in IDBI Bank to Fairfax, marking the largest foreign investment in an Indian bank.

Key facts: The government is selling a 30.48% stake while LIC is selling an additional 30.24% stake in IDBI Bank. The total deal size is approximately Rs 53,000 crore, with Fairfax increasing its offer to Rs 81 per share.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Total deal size for IDBI Bank stake sale is approximately Rs 53,000 crore.
- **Fact:** Fairfax's increased offer price is Rs 81 per share.
- **Body:** RBI (Reserve Bank of India) approval is mandatory for foreign investment in Indian banks.
- **Fact:** The government's stake sale in IDBI Bank is 30.48%.

Mains question: Discuss the implications of increasing foreign equity ownership in Public Sector Banks (PSBs) on the Indian banking landscape and financial stability.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/84112

Employment & inclusive growth · Prelims + Mains

PMIS Expands: 1 Crore Internships in Top Firms for Final-Year Students

Why in news: The Government expanded the Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) to include final-year students and new industrial sectors like semiconductors and GCCs to bridge the skill gap.

Key facts: The PMIS aims to provide 1 crore paid internships over a five-year period. Selected candidates receive a 12-month internship with a monthly stipend of Rs 5,000 and a one-time incidental grant of Rs 6,000.

Prelims pointers

- **Scheme:** PMIS: A central initiative to provide 1 crore paid internships in top Indian companies over 5 years
- **Fact:** Stipend: Selected candidates receive Rs 5,000 monthly assistance and a one-time grant of Rs 6,000
- **Fact:** Eligibility: Students aged 18-25 in their final year of study with an academic No Objection Certificate (NOC)
- **Fact:** New Sectors: Inclusion of Global Capability Centres (GCCs), semiconductors, and Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

Mains question: Discuss how structured internship schemes like PMIS can address the structural mismatch between higher education curricula and industry requirements in India.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84065

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims + Mains

RBI Grants Banks More Control, Allowing Directors Extra Time on Long-Term Issues

Why in news: The RBI introduced amendments effective October 1, 2024, to banking governance rules to grant boards more autonomy over long-term strategic issues following high-profile leadership exits.

Key facts: The RBI clarified that bank boards can now implement decisions without an 'action taken report' and restricted the delegation of certain powers to committees. Key areas requiring full board approval include credit, investments, risk management, IT, compliance, KYC, and compensation.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** RBI: The central bank of India responsible for monetary policy and banking regulation.
- **Fact:** Amendments became effective on October 1, 2024.
- **Fact:** Full board approval is mandatory for credit, investments, risk management, IT, compliance, KYC, and compensation.
- **Fact:** Committees are permitted to oversee operational matters like annual audit plans and digital banking performance.

Mains question: Discuss how the RBI's move to decentralize certain board decisions while retaining oversight on core risk parameters balances operational efficiency with financial stability.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/84012

RBI MPC Faces Dilemma as Food Inflation Hits 5.32%, Monsoon Fails

Why in news: The RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) faces a policy dilemma as food inflation hit 5.32% amidst a below-normal monsoon affecting kharif sowing.

Key facts: Food inflation reached 5.32% with significant spikes in ginger, tomato, and raisin prices. Below-normal monsoon rainfall led to a 16% reduction in kharif sowing compared to the previous year.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** MPC: The Monetary Policy Committee of the RBI is responsible for determining the benchmark repo rate.
- **Fact:** Kharif sowing reduction: 16% decrease compared to the previous year due to monsoon failure.
- **Fact:** Food inflation rate: Recorded at 5.32% in the current period.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges faced by the Monetary Policy Committee in managing inflation when supply-side shocks, such as monsoon failure, dominate the price index.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/83995

RBI Proposes One-Time Approval for Funds to Re-acquire Up to 10% in Banks

Why in news: The RBI proposed a one-time approval for institutional investors to re-acquire up to 10% stakes in banks without further consent if holdings fall below 5%.

Key facts: The proposal is part of the draft RBI (Commercial Banks — Acquisition and Holding of Shares or Voting Rights) Amendment Directions, 2026. Eligible entities include mutual funds, insurance companies, and pension funds registered with SEBI, IRDAI, or PFRDA.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** RBI: The central bank of India responsible for regulating the banking sector and monetary policy.
- **Fact:** The proposed threshold for re-acquisition without further RBI consent is up to 10% of the bank's stake.
- **Fact:** The trigger for this one-time approval is when an institution's holding falls below 5%.
- **Body:** SEBI, IRDAI, and PFRDA: The respective regulatory bodies for mutual funds, insurance companies, and pension funds.

Mains question: Discuss how simplifying the shareholding norms for institutional investors can enhance the capital structure and stability of the Indian banking sector.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/83823

MSMEs urged to tap defence sector opportunities

Why in news: The Bharat Chamber of Commerce and Department of Defence Production held a conclave in Tirupati to promote MSME integration into India's indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem.

Key facts: The Union Budget allocated over ₹7 lakh crore for defence, with 75% earmarked for domestic procurement. The conclave highlighted the PM-SETU initiative for strategic partnerships and policies promoting indigenous production.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** 75% of the Union Budget's defence allocation is earmarked for domestic procurement.
- **Body:** Bharat Chamber of Commerce is a private body representing Indian business interests.
- **Scheme:** PM-SETU is a platform for facilitating strategic partnerships in the defence sector.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of integrating MSMEs into the defence manufacturing sector to achieve the goal of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84608

Modi Approves ₹3,907 Crore Rail Projects, Set to Boost Connectivity for 14 Lakh People

Why in news: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved ₹3,907 crore for rail infrastructure projects in Odisha and Jharkhand to enhance multi-modal connectivity.

Key facts: The projects include doubling the Paradeep–Haridaspur line and adding a fourth line on the Rajkharsawan–Dangoaposi route. These initiatives will add 145 km to the Indian Railways network and improve freight capacity by 44 MTPA.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Total project cost approved: ₹3,907 crore
- **Fact:** Network expansion: 145 km of new rail lines
- **Fact:** Freight capacity increase: 44 MTPA
- **Scheme:** PM-Gati Shakti: National Master Plan for integrated multi-modal connectivity
- **Body:** Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA): Chaired by the Prime Minister

Mains question: Discuss how the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan addresses the logistical bottlenecks in India's freight transport and regional connectivity.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84541

Growth, inflation & macro indicators · Prelims + Mains

Karnataka Cities Starve as Grants Stall: ₹2,244 Per Urban Resident Falls Last

Why in news: A Janaagraha report revealed that Karnataka ranks last among comparable states in per capita State Finance Commission (SFC) grants to cities, highlighting a severe urban funding crisis.

Key facts: Karnataka provides ₹2,244 per urban resident, significantly lower than Kerala's ₹6,251. While peer states like Tamil Nadu and Odisha doubled their allocations since 2018-19, Karnataka's allocation increased by only 25%.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Karnataka's per capita SFC grant to cities: ₹2,244
- **Fact:** Kerala's per capita SFC grant to cities: ₹6,251
- **Body:** State Finance Commission (SFC): A constitutional body under Article 243-I and 243-Y to recommend distribution of taxes between State and local bodies
- **Fact:** Karnataka accepted only 50% devolution with 30% specifically for urban areas from the 5th SFC recommendations

Mains question: Analyze the impact of inadequate fiscal devolution on urban governance and infrastructure development in Indian states. How can the SFC framework be strengthened to ensure equitable urban funding?

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84479

Industry, investment & MSMEs · Prelims

Guar Korma futures debut: NCDEX launches contracts from September 2026 to January 2027

Why in news: NCDEX is launching Guar Korma futures contracts (Sept 2026–Jan 2027) to provide price risk management for high-protein feed ingredients exported to Europe.

Key facts: The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX) is introducing regulated futures for Guar Korma. These contracts are designed to help exporters and processors manage price volatility for high-protein feed ingredients.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NCDEX: National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited is a major commodity derivatives exchange in India.
- **Fact:** Guar Korma: A high-protein feed ingredient primarily exported to European markets.
- **Fact:** Contract Period: The debut contracts will expire between September 2026 and January 2027.

Mains question: Discuss how the formalization of commodity derivatives markets for agricultural feed ingredients can enhance India's export competitiveness and price stability.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/84419

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

CAG finds Maharashtra's fiscal deficit at 3.20%, breaching 3% limit in 2024-25

Why in news: The CAG identified that Maharashtra's fiscal deficit for 2024-25 reached 3.20% of GSDP, exceeding the FRBM Act limit of 3% due to off-budget borrowings.

Key facts: The CAG audit revealed that off-budget borrowings through the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) added Rs 18,440 crore to the state's deficit. This discrepancy arose from the government's reported figure of 2.74% versus the audited 3.20% figure.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CAG: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India is the supreme audit institution of the country.
- **Fact:** FRBM Act Limit: The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act sets a fiscal deficit limit of 3% of GSDP.
- **Fact:** Maharashtra Fiscal Deficit: Audited at 3.20% for the 2024-25 period.
- **Body:** MSRDC: Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation is a state-level body involved in infrastructure.

Mains question: Discuss the implications of off-budget borrowings on state fiscal health and the challenges in maintaining fiscal discipline under the FRBM Act.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84183

Growth, inflation & macro indicators · Prelims

Chinese banks dominate top 10 globally, with seven spots; no Indian bank in sight

Why in news: The Banker's July 2026 ranking highlights the dominance of Chinese state-owned banks in the global financial hierarchy, with no Indian banks appearing in the top 10.

Key facts: In July 2026, The Banker reported that seven of the top 10 global banks are Chinese. The top four positions are held by ICBC, China Construction Bank, Agricultural Bank of China, and Bank of China. A total of 22 Chinese banks are ranked within the top 100 globally.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** ICBC, China Construction Bank, Agricultural Bank of China, and Bank of China occupy the top four global banking spots as of July 2026
- **Fact:** 22 Chinese banks are ranked among the top 100 largest banks globally as of July 2026
- **Body:** The Banker is a prominent financial publication providing global banking rankings

Mains question: Analyze the factors contributing to the rapid expansion of Chinese state-owned banks in the global financial system compared to the growth trajectory of Indian public and private sector banks.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84170

Industry, investment & MSMEs · Prelims + Mains

E20 Petrol Sparks Anger: Drivers Report Car Damage and Lower Mileage

Why in news: Motorists reported vehicle damage and reduced mileage following the government's accelerated transition to E20 petrol (20% ethanol blend) in June 2026.

Key facts: The Government of India advanced the target for 20% ethanol blending in petrol from 2030 to 2025. E20 petrol contains 20% ethanol and 80% gasoline, intended to reduce crude oil imports and carbon emissions.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** E20 petrol contains a 20% ethanol and 80% gasoline blend.
- **Fact:** The government accelerated the ethanol blending target from 2030 to 2025.
- **S&T:** Ethanol is a biofuel derived from sugarcane, maize, and other biomass sources.

Mains question: Examine the technical and economic challenges associated with the rapid transition to high-percentage ethanol blending in India's fuel mix.

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/84165

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims

Indian equity benchmarks open higher; Sensex up 170 points, Nifty gains 50 points

Why in news: Indian equity benchmarks (Sensex and Nifty) rose following the announcement of the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and news regarding the Strait of Hormuz.

Key facts: The India-UK CETA provides tariff elimination on nearly 99% of Indian exports. Key beneficiary sectors include textiles, apparel, gems and jewellery, leather, and engineering goods. The agreement also facilitates mobility for skilled professionals in the services sector.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Sensex and Nifty are the primary benchmark indices of the Indian stock market.
- **Fact:** The India-UK CETA eliminates tariffs on approximately 99% of Indian export value.
- **Fact:** Strait of Hormuz is a critical maritime chokepoint for global oil and trade.
- **Fact:** CETA includes provisions for regulatory cooperation in chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

Mains question: Analyze how Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreements (CETAs) can catalyze India's export-oriented sectors and address structural barriers in the services industry.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84161

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims

RBI governor warns banks: Geopolitical tensions push oil prices 9% higher

Why in news: The RBI Governor warned bank CEOs about the inflationary pressure on oil prices and the risks of market volatility on forex inflows due to geopolitical tensions.

Key facts: Oil prices surged by 9% to reach \$83.30 per barrel following US actions against Iran. The RBI highlighted slow FCNR (B) inflows as a consequence of current market volatility.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Oil price surge: 9% increase to \$83.30 per barrel post-US actions against Iran
- **Body:** FCNR (B): Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) accounts are used by non-residents to park funds in Indian banks
- **S&T:** RBI is actively promoting the adoption of Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)

Mains question: Analyze how geopolitical-driven commodity price volatility impacts India's monetary policy and the stability of the banking sector's foreign currency reserves.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/84005

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

Railway Minister demands action on 1.27 crore stolen linen items, theft up 56%

Why in news: Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw demanded action on the theft of 1.27 crore linen items from AC coaches, highlighting a 56% rise in theft since 2022.

Key facts: Over 1.27 crore linen items were stolen from Indian Railways AC coaches over a four-year period. The theft resulted in a financial loss of Rs 104.51 crore to bedroll contractors.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Theft of linen items in AC coaches increased by 56% since 2022.
- **Fact:** Total financial loss to bedroll contractors reported at Rs 104.51 crore.
- **Body:** RPF (Railway Protection Force) is the primary security agency for railway property.
- **Post:** Ashwini Vaishnaw is the current Minister of Railways.

Mains question: Discuss the institutional and logistical challenges in securing railway infrastructure and suggest measures to mitigate large-scale theft of public assets.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/83971

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

Kolkata Set for Driverless Metro, Joining Delhi and Bengaluru on Green Line

Why in news: The Commissioner of Railway Safety cleared the Kolkata Metro Green Line for autonomous (driverless) operations, joining Delhi and Bengaluru.

Key facts: The Green Line (East-West Corridor) connects Howrah Maidan to Salt Lake Sector V. The project utilizes Communication-Based Train Control (CBTC) signaling and includes platform screen doors and derailment detection systems.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** CBTC (Communication-Based Train Control): A signaling system used for high-frequency, automated train operations.
- **Place:** Kolkata Metro Green Line: Connects Howrah Maidan to Salt Lake Sector V.
- **Fact:** Kolkata is the third city in India (alongside Delhi and Bengaluru) to operate driverless metro trains.

Mains question: Discuss how the adoption of autonomous metro systems and CBTC signaling contributes to urban mobility and sustainable infrastructure development in Indian metropolitan cities.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/83807

Agriculture

Farm subsidies & support · Prelims + Mains

Central government bans deadly paraquat linked to thousands of deaths

Why in news: The Central Government banned paraquat dichloride, a highly toxic herbicide, following reports of thousands of fatalities and severe health risks.

Key facts: The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare issued the ban based on reports from an Experts Committee and the Registration Committee. The decision was prompted by the lack of an antidote and high fatality rates from self-harm, homicides, and accidents.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Insecticides Act of 1968: The primary legislation governing the registration and regulation of pesticides in India.
- **Fact:** Paraquat dichloride: A non-selective herbicide known for high toxicity and lack of a specific antidote.
- **Body:** Registration Committee: The body responsible for evaluating the safety and efficacy of pesticides under the Insecticides Act.

Mains question: Discuss the regulatory challenges in balancing agricultural productivity with public health safety in the management of hazardous pesticides in India.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/84018](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/84018)

Land reforms · Prelims

On July 4, Gujarat state government issued a notification on land compensation

Why in news: Gujarat government's notification on land compensation for transmission towers sparked protests from farmers in Morbi demanding higher compensation and insurance.

Key facts: The Gujarat government issued a notification on July 4 regarding compensation for transmission towers and cables. Farmers from over 300 villages in Morbi are demanding 400% compensation for tower installation areas and 260% of market price for Right of Way (RoW) in rural areas.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Farmers in Morbi are demanding 400% compensation for tower installation areas.
- **Fact:** Farmers are seeking 260% of market price for Right of Way (RoW) in rural areas.
- **Place:** Morbi is a district in the state of Gujarat.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in balancing infrastructure development with the land rights and livelihoods of rural farming communities in India.

Source: Indian Express · [satyadheesh.in/news/83977](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/83977)

Science & Technology

Nuclear & new energy technology · Prelims + Mains

Norway firm to set up India's first river kinetic energy demo plant in Arunachal

Why in news: Arunachal Pradesh signed an MoU with Norway's Tidal Sails AS to establish India's first kinetic energy demonstration plant to harness river currents.

Key facts: The project aims to generate 500 kW of electricity from river currents using kinetic energy technology. It is supported by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Innovation Norway under the India-Norway Green Partnership.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Kinetic energy from river currents: A method of generating electricity without large-scale dam infrastructure.
- **Fact:** The demonstration plant in Arunachal Pradesh has a target capacity of 500 kW.
- **Body:** Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE): The nodal ministry for renewable energy in India.
- **Place:** Arunachal Pradesh: State in Northeast India identified for high hydropower and kinetic energy potential.

Mains question: Discuss the potential of kinetic energy from river currents as a sustainable alternative to large-scale hydropower projects in ecologically sensitive zones of India.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/83932](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/83932)

Publishers and Author Sue Google: AI Training Allegedly Uses Millions of Copyrighted Books

Why in news: Publishers and authors sued Google in a New York federal court alleging the unauthorized use of millions of copyrighted books to train Gemini AI models.

Key facts: Hachette Book Group, Cengage Learning, Elsevier, and author Scott Turow filed the lawsuit against Google. The litigation alleges that Google repurposed texts from Google Books for AI training without authorization, with potential fines reaching up to \$100 billion.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Gemini: Google's multimodal AI model capable of processing text, images, and code.
- **Fact:** The lawsuit alleges the use of millions of copyrighted books for AI training purposes.
- **S&T:** Generative AI: AI systems capable of creating new content (text, images, audio) based on patterns learned from massive datasets.

Mains question: Discuss the legal and ethical challenges posed by the use of copyrighted intellectual property in training Large Language Models (LLMs) and its impact on the creative economy.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84580

Agnikul Cosmos Appoints Somanath S as Board Observer for Mission 02

Why in news: Agnikul Cosmos appointed former ISRO Chairman Somanath S as a Board Observer to oversee Mission 02, which aims to achieve India's first orbital rocket booster recovery.

Key facts: Agnikul Cosmos is a Chennai-based private launch vehicle company. Mission 02 focuses on recovering an orbital rocket booster and extending the upper stage into an on-orbit platform to advance space reusability.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Agnikul Cosmos: A private Indian space-tech company based in Chennai
- **S&T:** Mission 02: Aims to achieve orbital rocket booster recovery and upper stage extension
- **Post:** Somanath S: Former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

Mains question: Discuss the significance of private sector participation and rocket reusability in making India a global hub for low-cost space exploration.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84549

Nuclear Plant Blueprints Leaked as Ransomware Hits Kudankulam Again

Why in news: The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant faced a ransomware attack by the 'World Leaks' group, resulting in the leak of blueprints and supplier information on the dark web.

Key facts: The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant is located in Tamil Nadu and has a capacity of 6,000 MW. This is the second reported cyberattack on the facility since 2019, involving the theft of blueprints and equipment reviews.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant: Located in Tamil Nadu, operated by the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL).
- **Fact:** Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant capacity: 6,000 MW.
- **S&T:** NPCIL: The primary body responsible for the commissioning and operation of nuclear power plants in India.
- **S&T:** Ransomware: A type of malware designed to deny access to a computer system or data until a ransom is paid.

Mains question: Examine the security challenges posed by cyber-warfare on India's critical infrastructure, specifically in the nuclear energy sector, and suggest measures to fortify cyber-resilience.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84484

Black hole collision confirms Hawking's theory with 99.999% certainty

Why in news: LIGO detectors captured gravitational wave signal GW250114, confirming Stephen Hawking's 1971 black hole area law with 99.999% certainty.

Key facts: The collision occurred 1.3 billion light-years away, resulting in a merged black hole whose surface area increased from 240,000 to 400,000 square kilometres. The data was published in Physical Review Letters on September 10, 2025.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** GW250114: Gravitational wave signal confirming the black hole area law.
- **Body:** LIGO: Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory, located in Washington and Louisiana, USA.
- **S&T:** Hawking's Area Law: Predicts that the surface area of a black hole's event horizon cannot decrease over time.
- **Body:** Virgo and KAGRA: International gravitational wave detectors collaborating with LIGO.

Mains question: Discuss how advancements in gravitational wave astronomy are reshaping our fundamental understanding of general relativity and black hole thermodynamics.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/84352

YouTube, X drive 5.7 million visits to sites making non-consensual deepfakes

Why in news: The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) reported that YouTube and X drove over 5.7 million visits to sites creating non-consensual deepfakes, highlighting a failure in platform enforcement of AI safety guardrails.

Key facts: The ISD report highlights that YouTube accounted for approximately 30% of the traffic to 'nudify' apps between December 2025 and March 2026. These apps utilize generative AI to create non-consensual explicit imagery, posing significant privacy and safety risks.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Generative AI: Technology capable of creating new content (text, images, video) based on patterns learned from existing data.
- **Fact:** YouTube and X platforms were identified as primary drivers of traffic to non-consensual deepfake sites.
- **Body:** The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) is a UK-based independent non-profit organization focused on security and policy.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in regulating generative AI on social media platforms to prevent the creation of non-consensual deepfakes and ensure digital safety.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84218

DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis urges US-led global AI watchdog to regulate AGI risks

Why in news: DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis proposed a US-led global AI watchdog modeled after FINRA to regulate Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) risks.

Key facts: Demis Hassabis, CEO of DeepMind and Google's AI division, advocated for a regulatory framework to set safety benchmarks for AI models before market release. The proposed model suggests a transition from voluntary reviews to mandatory oversight to manage AGI risks.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** AGI (Artificial General Intelligence): AI capable of performing any intellectual task a human can do.
- **Body:** FINRA: A private corporation that acts as a self-regulatory organization for brokerage firms and exchange markets in the US.
- **Post:** Demis Hassabis: CEO of DeepMind and Google's AI division.

Mains question: Discuss the necessity of international regulatory frameworks for Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) and the challenges in achieving global consensus on AI safety benchmarks.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84191

India's Ministry of Road Transport mandates horn decibel limits to curb noise pollution

Why in news: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is enforcing strict decibel limits on vehicle horns to mitigate noise pollution-related health risks like hearing loss and cardiovascular issues.

Key facts: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways mandates specific decibel standards for vehicle horns under the Motor Vehicles Act. Continuous honking is linked to impaired childhood development and cardiovascular diseases.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Motor Vehicles Act: Primary legislation governing vehicle safety and noise regulations in India
- **Fact:** Noise pollution: Linked to hearing loss and cardiovascular diseases in urban environments
- **Body:** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways: Responsible for formulating road safety and vehicle standards

Mains question: Discuss how urban noise pollution acts as a significant public health hazard and evaluate the effectiveness of legislative measures in curbing such environmental externalities.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84180

Kerala celebrates NASA astronaut Anil Menon's historic journey to ISS

Why in news: Anil Menon, a NASA astronaut from Kerala, launched to the International Space Station (ISS) as part of Expedition 74, marking a significant milestone for Indian representation in space.

Key facts: Anil Menon is an emergency medicine physician and the great-grandson of Sir C. Sankaran Nair. He joined Expedition 74 to the ISS, following his wife Anna Wilhelm's space travel in September 2024.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** ISS: International Space Station is a modular space station in low Earth orbit.
- **Post:** Anil Menon: NASA astronaut and emergency medicine physician.
- **Fact:** Expedition 74: The specific NASA mission identifying the current crew rotation to the ISS.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of increasing private and individual participation in space exploration for India's burgeoning space economy and scientific outreach.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84024

Sugars Crucial for Life Detected in Space, Hinting at Asteroid Delivery to Earth

Why in news: Researchers detected four-carbon sugars in the Interstellar Medium, suggesting that the building blocks of life may have been delivered to Earth via asteroids.

Key facts: The study, published in Nature Astronomy, identified four-carbon sugars in the Milky Way's Interstellar Medium. These findings support the theory of panspermia or the delivery of organic molecules to Earth through asteroid impacts.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Interstellar Medium: The matter and radiation that exist in the space between the densely-packed regions of stars.
- **S&T:** Four-carbon sugars: Organic molecules that serve as fundamental building blocks for biological life.
- **Fact:** The discovery was published in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Astronomy.

Mains question: Discuss how the discovery of organic molecules in interstellar space supports the theory of the extraterrestrial origin of life's building blocks.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/83987

Cosmic Bloom: 16.95-carat diamond lotus set for space aboard Vikram-1

Why in news: A diamond lotus artwork named 'Cosmic Bloom' is set to be launched into space aboard Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 rocket as part of Mission Agaman.

Key facts: The 'Cosmic Bloom' consists of 32 lab-grown pear-cut diamonds totaling 16.95 carats mounted on an aluminum plate. It is being launched by Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 rocket, marking a milestone for India's private space sector.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Vikram-1 is a rocket developed by Skyroot Aerospace, a private Indian space startup.
 - **Fact:** The Cosmic Bloom artwork is composed of 32 lab-grown pear-cut diamonds weighing 16.95 carats.
 - **S&T:** Mission Aagaman involves the deployment of private sector payloads into orbital spaceflight.
- Mains question:** Discuss the significance of the growing private space sector in India and its role in fostering technological innovation and cultural representation in space exploration.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/83786

Space technology (ISRO, missions) · Prelims

NASA chief attends as Russian and US astronauts launch for 8-month ISS stay

Why in news: Russian and US astronauts launched from Baikonur Cosmodrome for an 8-month ISS stay, highlighting continued space cooperation despite geopolitical tensions.

Key facts: Russian astronauts Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina and NASA astronaut Anil Menon launched from Kazakhstan's Baikonur Cosmodrome. NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman attended the launch, marking his first visit to the site in eight years.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Baikonur Cosmodrome: Located in Kazakhstan, it is the world's first and largest operational spaceport.
- **S&T:** International Space Station (ISS): A modular space station in low Earth orbit involving NASA, Roscosmos, ESA, and JAXA.
- **Post:** NASA Administrator: The head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Mains question: Discuss how international space cooperation serves as a platform for 'science diplomacy' amidst escalating geopolitical tensions between major powers.

Source: Al Jazeera · satyadheesh.in/news/83779

Environment & Ecology

Climate change & international agreements · Prelims + Mains

El Niño Surges: India Faces 40% Monsoon Deficit, Crop Crisis

Why in news: NOAA confirmed rapid El Niño intensification, leading to a 40% monsoon deficit in India during June, threatening rice crop production.

Key facts: NOAA predicts a peak Nino 3.4 anomaly of 3.6 degrees Celsius by late 2026. India's southwest monsoon rainfall deficit reached nearly 40% below average in June, exacerbated by a neutral Indian Ocean Dipole status.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Nino 3.4 anomaly: A key metric for El Niño monitoring measuring sea surface temperatures in the central equatorial Pacific.
- **Fact:** India's southwest monsoon rainfall deficit reached nearly 40% below average in June.
- **S&T:** Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD): A climate phenomenon involving the difference in sea surface temperatures between the western and eastern parts of the Indian Ocean.
- **S&T:** El Niño: Characterized by the warming of surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, often leading to erratic monsoon patterns in India.

Mains question: Analyze how the increasing frequency and intensity of El Niño events pose a systemic threat to India's food security and agrarian economy.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84477

Climate change & international agreements · Prelims + Mains

Darker Ice Spurs Faster Melting: Greenland Loses 105 Billion Tonnes in 2024-25

Why in news: A study in *Nature* highlights that Greenland lost 105 billion tonnes of ice in the 2024–25 season due to a feedback loop where darker ice accelerates melting.

Key facts: Greenland's ice sheet lost approximately 105 billion tonnes of ice during the 2024–25 season. The melting is exacerbated by 'darker ice' caused by dust, soot, and wildfire smoke residues which increase solar energy absorption.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Greenland ice loss: 105 billion tonnes in the 2024–25 season
- **S&T:** Albedo effect: Darker ice (soot/dust) absorbs more solar radiation than fresh snow, accelerating melt
- **Environment:** Feedback mechanism: Increased melting leads to more exposed dark surfaces, further increasing heat absorption

Mains question: Discuss how the feedback loop of ice-sheet melting in the Arctic poses a significant threat to global ocean circulation and sea-level rise.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/84526

Pollution (air, water, plastic) · Prelims

MCD and NDDDB sign MoU for 80 biogas plants to clean Yamuna

Why in news: The MCD and NDDDB signed an MoU to establish 80 biogas plants to treat cattle waste and prevent pollution in the Yamuna River.

Key facts: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB) signed the MoU to set up compressed biogas plants using cow dung. The initiative includes a payment of Rs 1 per kg of cow dung to farmers and aims to prevent waste from entering the Yamuna.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NDDDB: National Dairy Development Board operates under the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying
- **Fact:** The MoU targets the establishment of 80 biogas treatment plants across Delhi
- **Fact:** Farmers are to be incentivized with Rs 1 per kg of cow dung collected
- **Fact:** Target deadline for zero dirty water entry into Yamuna is December 2028

Mains question: Discuss the role of waste-to-energy initiatives in achieving the 'Namami Gange' and 'Yamuna Action Plan' objectives while promoting circular economy principles in urban waste management.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84516

Climate change & international agreements · Mains

Heating forest soil by 5 degrees for decades releases hidden carbon, boosting CO2

Why in news: A 37-year study at Harvard Forest revealed that a 5°C increase in soil temperature triggers the decomposition of stable deep-soil carbon, creating a positive climate feedback loop.

Key facts: The study conducted at Harvard Forest (Massachusetts) spanned 37 years. It demonstrated that heating forest soil by 5°C causes previously stable deep-soil carbon to decompose and release CO2 into the atmosphere.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Carbon feedback loops: Positive feedback occurs when a change in one variable (temperature) triggers a process that further amplifies that change (CO2 release).
- **Fact:** The study specifically measured the impact of a 5°C temperature increase on deep-soil carbon stability.
- **Place:** Harvard Forest is located in Massachusetts, USA.

Mains question: How do deep-soil carbon feedback loops complicate global climate mitigation strategies? Discuss the necessity of integrating soil carbon dynamics into current climate modeling.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/84458

Disaster Management

Natural disasters & response · Prelims

On Tuesday, the flood situation in Assam worsened, with the death toll

Why in news: The flood situation in Assam worsened with a rising death toll and over 35,000 people affected, highlighting the recurring vulnerability of the Brahmaputra basin.

Key facts: The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) reported that floods submerged 1,103.94 hectares of agricultural land and affected 16,139 animals. Six districts were impacted, with Lakhimpur being the hardest hit with 35,696 people affected.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** ASDMA: Assam State Disaster Management Authority is the nodal agency for disaster response in the state.
- **Place:** Sonitpur and Lakhimpur: Districts in Assam severely impacted by the current flood cycle.
- **Fact:** 1,103.94 hectares of agricultural land submerged and 16,139 animals affected as per ASDMA reports.

Mains question: *Analyze the geographical and systemic factors contributing to the recurring flood crisis in Assam and suggest measures for building climate-resilient infrastructure in the Brahmaputra basin.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84082

Internal Security

Border management · Prelims + Mains

BSF Plans 90km Sundarbans Fence, Faces Wildlife Sanctuary Hurdles

Why in news: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs and BSF are planning a 90km fence along the India-Bangladesh border in the Sundarbans to enhance security following the August 2024 change in the Bangladesh government.

Key facts: The BSF is conducting feasibility studies for a 90km fence in the West Bengal mangrove forests. Approximately 71km of this stretch falls within the Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary, creating a conflict between border security and wildlife protection.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** BSF: Border Security Force is the primary agency for guarding India's international borders.
- **Place:** Sundarbans: A mangrove forest and wildlife sanctuary shared by India (West Bengal) and Bangladesh.
- **Fact:** The proposed fence covers a 90km stretch along the India-Bangladesh border.
- **Post:** Praveen Kumar: Director-General of the Border Security Force (BSF).

Mains question: *Discuss the challenges of balancing national security requirements with ecological conservation in ecologically sensitive border zones like the Sundarbans.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/84505

Cyber security · Prelims + Mains

Ransomware Group Dumps Nuclear Plant Blueprints and Supplier Details on Dark Web

Why in news: The ransomware group 'World Leaks' dumped blueprints and supplier details of India's Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant on the dark web, highlighting critical infrastructure vulnerabilities.

Key facts: The breach involved over 19,000 files totaling 14.3 gigabytes of data. The leak originated from Yotta-hosted servers and included sensitive blueprints and supplier information from the Reliance Group.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** World Leaks: Ransomware group responsible for the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant data breach.
- **Place:** Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant: Located in Tamil Nadu, India.
- **S&T:** Ransomware: A type of malware designed to encrypt files and demand payment for their release.

Mains question: *Discuss the security implications of cyber-attacks on critical national infrastructure and suggest measures to fortify India's nuclear power grid against ransomware threats.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/84485

Border management · Prelims

Vijay, Mohanlal To Share Stage For Anti-Drug Campaign: Kerala Minister Ramesh Chennithala

Why in news: Kerala and Tamil Nadu leaders announced a multi-state cooperation for 'Operation Toofan: The Narco Hunt' to combat drug trafficking through enhanced border surveillance.

Key facts: Kerala Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala and Tamil Nadu CM C Joseph Vijay agreed to coordinate police efforts and intelligence sharing. The initiative involves cooperation with Karnataka and central agencies to create a regional anti-drug strategy.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Operation Toofan: The Narco Hunt is a coordinated anti-drug campaign involving Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka.

- **Post:** Ramesh Chennithala serves as the Home Minister of Kerala.
- **Fact:** A high-level meeting on July 10 included senior officials from southern states and central agencies to discuss anti-drug strategies.

Mains question: *Discuss the challenges in curbing interstate drug trafficking in India and evaluate the effectiveness of inter-state cooperation in narcotics enforcement.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84399

Left-wing extremism · Prelims

Army condemns IED attack that killed Assam Rifles personnel in Nagaland

Why in news: The Indian Army condemned an IED attack in Nagaland's Chumoukedima district that killed an Assam Rifles personnel, highlighting ongoing insurgency challenges.

Key facts: An IED blast in Chumoukedima district, Nagaland, resulted in the death of Havildar Mohammad Iqbal and injured four other Assam Rifles personnel. The NSCN-IM denied involvement in the attack.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Chumoukedima is a district located in the state of Nagaland.
- **Body:** Assam Rifles is a paramilitary force under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Fact:** NSCN-IM (National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah) is a prominent insurgent group in Northeast India.

Mains question: *Discuss the persistent challenges in neutralizing insurgency in Northeast India despite various peace accords and security measures.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/84190

Practice — Mains questions

1. Examine how bilateral trade agreements like the India-UK FTA can reshape India's supply chain dependencies and influence its position in global value chains. · GS2
2. Examine how the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement can serve as a catalyst for India's 'Make in India' initiative and its goal of becoming a global manufacturing hub. · GS2
3. Discuss the significance of the India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 in achieving 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and reducing India's dependence on global electronics supply chains. · GS3
4. Examine the constitutional balance between ensuring proportional population representation and maintaining federal stability in the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies. · GS2
5. Analyze the geopolitical implications of maritime chokepoint disruptions in the Middle East on global energy security and international trade routes. · GS2
6. Analyze the geopolitical implications of maritime insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz on global energy security and international trade routes. · GS2
7. Analyze the geopolitical implications of escalating maritime insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz on global energy security and regional stability. · GS2
8. Discuss the importance of robust conflict-of-interest frameworks in ensuring the integrity of independent regulatory bodies like SEBI. · GS2

Prelims quick revision

- **Fact:** India-UK FTA took effect on July 15, 2026
- **Fact:** Tariff reduction for British cars: 110% to 30% (initial) and then to 10%
- **Fact:** Tariff reduction for British spirits: 150% to 75% (initial) and then to 40%
- **Fact:** The India-UK CETA provides zero-duty access to nearly 99% of Indian exports.
- **Fact:** The agreement covers 137 service sub-sectors including IT and professional services.
- **Fact:** Target bilateral trade volume is projected to reach \$120 billion by 2030.
- **Fact:** ISM 2.0 total outlay is ₹1.27 lakh crore
- **Fact:** Target: Manufacture chips for 70-75% of domestic applications by 2029
- **Fact:** Long-term goal: Become a top global semiconductor nation by 2035
- **Constitution:** Delimitation of constituencies is governed by the provisions of the Constitution of India and the Delimitation Act.
- **Fact:** The 1971 Census data is currently the baseline for determining the number of Lok Sabha seats in each state.
- **Body:** The Supreme Court of India has the power of judicial review over legislative amendments to ensure they do not violate the 'Basic Structure' of the Constitution.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Place:** Bab el-Mandeb Strait: A narrow strait connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.
- **Post:** IRGC: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is an elite branch of the Iranian Armed Forces.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic maritime passage connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Body:** US Centcom: United States Central Command, responsible for military operations in the Middle East.

- **Fact:** The Strait of Hormuz is a primary transit point for a significant portion of the world's oil supply.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Place:** Khuzestan Province: A province in southwestern Iran known for its oil and gas resources.
- **Fact:** June 17, 2024: Date of the peace memorandum that was terminated following the escalation.
- **Body:** SEBI: Statutory body established under the SEBI Act, 1992, to regulate the securities market.
- **Fact:** Recusal threshold: Material financial interests exceeding ₹2 million or 5% of total investments.
- **Fact:** Look-back period: Officials must recuse from matters involving associates from the previous three years.
- **S&T:** Nino 3.4 anomaly: A key metric for El Niño monitoring measuring sea surface temperatures in the central equatorial Pacific.
- **Fact:** India's southwest monsoon rainfall deficit reached nearly 40% below average in June.
- **S&T:** Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD): A climate phenomenon involving the difference in sea surface temperatures between the western and eastern parts of the Indian Ocean.
- **Place:** Bab el-Mandeb Strait: Connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A critical maritime chokepoint between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.
- **Fact:** Saudi Arabia's Yanbu port exports averaged 4 million barrels per day in recent shipments.
- **Intl. org:** DCC: India-U.K. Double Contributions Convention allows 60-month social security exemption.
- **Body:** EPFO: Employees must obtain an EPFO certificate to claim the exemption under the DCC.
- **Fact:** The DCC becomes effective from July 15, 2026, and is not retroactive.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic maritime chokepoint in the Middle East connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.
- **Fact:** Iran retaliated with missile and drone attacks on US bases located in Jordan, Kuwait, and Bahrain.
- **S&T:** The US warned of intensifying attacks on Iranian power plants and bridges to pressure negotiations on the nuclear program.
- **Intl. org:** CBAM: A carbon pricing mechanism by the UK/EU to put a fair price on carbon emissions embedded in imports.
- **Fact:** India secured an 85% exemption for baseline steel trade under the India-UK FTA.
- **Fact:** The India-UK FTA aims to provide 99% tariff-free access for Indian exports.
- **Fact:** Total deal size for IDBI Bank stake sale is approximately Rs 53,000 crore.

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