

UPSC Current Affairs — 18 July 2026

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History & Culture

Art, architecture & culture · Prelims

At the 72nd National Film Awards announced in New Delhi on Saturday

Why in news: The 72nd National Film Awards were announced in New Delhi, recognizing excellence in Indian cinema and highlighting the cultural significance of films like 'Article 370' and 'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar'.

Key facts: The 72nd National Film Awards were announced in New Delhi. 'Article 370' won Best Feature Film and Best Music Direction, while Randeep Hooda won Best Debut Director for 'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar'.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** National Film Awards: Recognizes excellence in the field of Indian cinema across various categories.
- **Fact:** 72nd National Film Awards: Announced in New Delhi.
- **Post:** Randeep Hooda: Awarded Best Debut Director for the film 'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar'.

Mains question: Discuss the role of Indian cinema as a tool for cultural preservation and the promotion of national narratives in a diverse society.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86803

Ancient & medieval India · Prelims

Greek Theatre Meets Indian Rasa: Yavanika Bridges Ancient Worlds

Why in news: The article highlights the historical cultural synthesis between Greek and Indian theatrical traditions, specifically the origin of the 'Yavanika' (stage curtain).

Key facts: The term 'Yavanika' is derived from 'Yavana,' the Sanskrit term for Greeks. This cultural exchange flourished following Alexander the Great's campaigns in the 4th century BCE, resulting in fusion styles seen in Gandharan art.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Gandharan art: A fusion of Greek and Indian artistic styles in northwestern India.
- **Fact:** Yavanika: The Sanskrit term for the stage curtain, derived from 'Yavana' (Greeks).
- **Fact:** 4th Century BCE: Period of significant Greek-Indian cultural exchange following Alexander's campaigns.

Mains question: Discuss how the synthesis of Greek and Indian artistic traditions influenced the evolution of Indian performing arts and Gandharan architecture.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86279

Geography

Distribution of natural resources · Prelims

Andhra Pradesh Overhauls Land Use Rules, Excluding Capital City Area

Why in news: The Andhra Pradesh government notified the Common Zoning Regulations, 2026, to establish a uniform land-use framework across the state (excluding the capital city area) to balance economic growth with environmental safety.

Key facts: The Common Zoning Regulations, 2026, replaces G.O.Ms.No.216 from October 22, 2025. It rationalizes land use into nine categories using a 'negative-list' approach to regulate urban development and public safety.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** The Common Zoning Regulations, 2026, applies to the entire state of Andhra Pradesh except the capital city area.
- **Fact:** The new regulations categorize land use into nine distinct categories.
- **Act / Bill:** The regulations replace the previous G.O.Ms.No.216 issued in October 2025.

Mains question: Discuss how uniform land-use zoning regulations can balance rapid industrial urbanization with environmental conservation and public safety in developing states.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/86604](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/86604)

GS2 · Polity · Governance · IR · 25

Polity & Constitution

Constitutional bodies (CAG, UPSC, FC, NCSC...) · Prelims

EC Chief Reveals 95 Crore Voters, 12 Lakh Auditors at Media Conference

Why in news: Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar highlighted the scale of India's electoral rolls and the auditing role of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) during a media conference on July 17, 2026.

Key facts: The Election Commission of India (ECI) reported nearly 95 crore voters on the electoral rolls. The process involves 12 lakh Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and 15 lakh Booth Level Agents (BLAs) acting as concurrent auditors.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's electoral rolls contain nearly 95 crore voters as of July 2026
- **Body:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) is an independent constitutional body
- **Post:** Gyanesh Kumar served as the Chief Election Commissioner of India in 2026
- **Fact:** 12 lakh Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and 15 lakh Booth Level Agents (BLAs) function as concurrent auditors in the electoral process

Mains question: Examine the significance of the 'concurrent auditing' mechanism by Booth Level Officers in ensuring the integrity of the electoral process in a large democracy like India.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/86109](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/86109)

Judiciary & landmark judgments · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court Slams "Second-Class Passenger" Term, Awards ₹8 Lakh Compensation

Why in news: The Supreme Court criticized the use of the term 'second-class passenger' in official documents, labeling it as unconstitutional and offensive due to its historical associations with class divisions.

Key facts: The Supreme Court awarded ₹8,00,000 compensation to the wife of Chandrakant Thakkar, who died in a 2015 train accident. The court observed that the terminology used in railway documentation reflects regressive historical class divisions.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Supreme Court of India: The highest judicial body and the final court of appeal under the Constitution.
- **Fact:** Compensation awarded: ₹8,00,000 for the victim's family in the 2015 train accident case.
- **Post:** The Supreme Court has the power of judicial review to strike down unconstitutional terminology or practices.

Mains question: Discuss the role of the judiciary in safeguarding the dignity of citizens against regressive administrative terminology and ensuring social justice for victims of public infrastructure accidents.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86087

Governance

e-Governance & citizen services · Prelims + Mains

RGI Cracks Down: Stricter Checks to Thwart Fraud in Digitized Birth, Death Records

Why in news: The Registrar General of India (RGI) is enforcing stricter verification protocols to prevent fraudulent entries in digitized birth and death records under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 2023.

Key facts: The RGI identified compromised credentials due to shared user IDs and passwords in June 2024. On July 6, 2024, the RGI mandated verification against original registers and district registrar approval for all digitized records. The Ministry of Home Affairs plans to introduce an amendment bill in the Monsoon session of 2024.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Registrar General of India (RGI): The primary authority responsible for the registration of births and deaths in India.
- **Act / Bill:** Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 2023: Mandates online registration via the Central Civil Registration System portal.
- **Fact:** Security measures include mandatory e-signatures, district registrar approval, and secure preservation of legacy records.
- **Body:** Ministry of Home Affairs: The nodal ministry responsible for the administration of birth and death registration.

Mains question: How does the digitization of civil registration records enhance administrative transparency while posing risks to data integrity and security? Discuss.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86143

Transparency, accountability & RTI · Prelims + Mains

Lokayukta forms committee to probe large-scale PDS irregularities, demands report by August 20

Why in news: The Karnataka Lokayukta formed a high-level committee to probe large-scale irregularities in the Public Distribution System (PDS) and recommend systemic reforms.

Key facts: The Lokayukta initiated a suo motu inquiry into KFCSCSCL wholesale depots and TAPCMS godowns across Karnataka. A committee headed by Harsha Gupta was tasked to submit a report on administrative lapses and financial losses by August 20.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Lokayukta: A statutory body in Karnataka (and other states) tasked with investigating corruption and administrative lapses.
- **Fact:** The committee is mandated to submit its findings on PDS irregularities by August 20.
- **Body:** KFCSCSCL: Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation Limited, the state agency responsible for PDS operations.

Mains question: Examine the institutional role of the Lokayukta in ensuring transparency in the Public Distribution System and suggest measures to curb leakages in essential commodity distribution.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86794

Government policies & schemes · Prelims

GPSC launches 'Avsar' to help job seekers find work in public and private sectors

Why in news: The Gujarat Public Service Commission (GPSC) launched 'Avsar' to facilitate employment for candidates who failed state government job interviews by sharing their data with private and public sectors.

Key facts: GPSC launched 'Avsar' to assist candidates who failed Class I and II state government job interviews. A database of 18,000 candidates will be shared with PSUs, government departments, and private firms with a minimum annual turnover of Rs 10 crore, subject to candidate consent.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** GPSC: Gujarat Public Service Commission is the state agency responsible for recruiting civil servants in Gujarat.
- **Fact:** Avsar database includes 18,000 candidates who failed Class I and II state government job interviews.
- **Fact:** Private firms eligible for the database must have a minimum annual turnover of Rs 10 crore.

Mains question: Discuss how public-private partnerships in human resource management can address the issue of underemployment among aspirants of competitive examinations.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86504

e-Governance & citizen services · Prelims + Mains

NITI Aayog meets tech firms to assess India's online content blocking requirements

Why in news: NITI Aayog met with tech firms and industry bodies (Nasscom, IMAI) to assess the feasibility of online content blocking requirements and transparency timelines for platform governance.

Key facts: The meeting took place on June 25, 2024, involving NITI Aayog, Nasscom, and IMAI. The discussion focused on cybersecurity, data protection, and gaming regulations, with NITI Aayog set to submit findings to the IT Ministry.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NITI Aayog: NITI Aayog is the premier policy think-tank of the Government of India.
- **Body:** Nasscom: The apex trade body for the Indian IT-BPM industry.
- **Body:** IMAI: Internet and Mobile Association of India, a non-profit trade body for the internet industry.
- **Fact:** The meeting specifically addressed the feasibility of shortened takedown timelines for online content.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in balancing platform governance with freedom of expression while ensuring rapid content takedown in India's digital ecosystem.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86373

e-Governance & citizen services · Prelims

Gujarat plans Urban Observatory to track real-time city data, address traffic woes

Why in news: The Gujarat government announced the establishment of an Urban Observatory (UO) and AI Cell to collect real-time data for urban planning and traffic management.

Key facts: The initiative was recommended in a 2025 report to monitor urban services, environment, and mobility. A committee chaired by Commissioner of Municipalities Administration Remya Mohan was notified to oversee the project's implementation.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Urban Observatory (UO): A proposed data-gathering hub for real-time urban metrics in Gujarat.
- **S&T:** AI Cell: A dedicated unit to leverage Artificial Intelligence for addressing infrastructure gaps and traffic congestion.
- **Fact:** The project focuses on four key metrics: urban services, environment, mobility, and citizen behavior.

Mains question: Discuss how the integration of real-time data and AI in urban governance can address the challenges of rapid urbanization and infrastructure management in Indian cities.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86220

Social Justice

Poverty, hunger & nutrition · Prelims + Mains

The Indian Express UPSC Key for July 18, 2026, covers EPFO reform

Why in news: The Government is developing 'EPFO Reform 3.0' to introduce a new contributory pension scheme for both organized and unorganized sector workers.

Key facts: The proposed scheme aims to accumulate contributions into a 'Target Retirement Sum' (TRS) invested in government-backed securities. It targets workers currently excluded from the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) and includes provisions for gig/platform workers via aggregators.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** EPFO: Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, the primary body for managing social security funds for workers in India.

- **Scheme:** Unified Pension Scheme (UPS): A recently introduced pension framework distinct from the National Pension Scheme (NPS).
- **Fact:** Reform 3.0 proposes a defined contribution framework allowing contributions from workers, employers, and CSR funds.
- **Fact:** Workers may have the flexibility to decide the purpose of their retirement savings at the age of 55 years.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of expanding social security coverage to the unorganized and gig economy workers through the proposed EPFO Reform 3.0.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86746

Education policy · Prelims + Mains

NMC to Stop Processing Faculty Eligibility Requests Effective July 16, 2026

Why in news: The National Medical Commission (NMC) announced it will cease processing routine faculty eligibility requests from July 16, 2026, to shift accountability to medical institutions.

Key facts: The Post Graduate Medical Education Board (PGMEB) will oversee the transition. Institutions must pay a fee of ₹25,000 plus tax for complex cases. Applicants have a 60-day window to appeal if an institution fails to forward their case.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NMC: National Medical Commission is the apex body regulating medical education in India
- **Fact:** Effective date for cessation of routine processing: July 16, 2026
- **Fact:** Fee for complex case referrals: ₹25,000 plus applicable taxes
- **Fact:** Appeal window: 60 days if institution fails to forward the case

Mains question: Discuss how shifting administrative accountability to medical institutions can improve the quality of medical education and faculty standards in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86946

Education policy · Prelims + Mains

NDTV Exposes B.Ed College Irregularities; Ministry Forms Committee to Verify Allegations

Why in news: The Ministry of Education formed an independent committee to investigate allegations of fraudulent B.Ed college operations in Madhya Pradesh following an NDTV report.

Key facts: The Ministry of Education directed the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) to verify irregularities on July 15, 2024. A joint committee comprising officials from the Ministry, UGC, and the Madhya Pradesh government began field verifications on July 17, 2024.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NCTE: National Council for Teacher Education is the statutory body for regulating teacher education in India
- **Body:** UGC: University Grants Commission oversees higher education standards and recognition
- **Fact:** Field verification on July 17, 2024, identified four colleges operating from a single premises in Madhya Pradesh

Mains question: Critically analyze the regulatory framework governing teacher education in India and suggest measures to curb the proliferation of 'ghost' colleges.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86853

Education policy · Prelims

Over 5 lakh students take second chance in CBSE Class 10 exams

Why in news: CBSE released results for the Class 10 second board examination, an initiative under NEP 2020 allowing students to improve scores.

Key facts: Over 5 lakh students registered for the second board examination attempt. The first board examination saw an overall pass rate of 93.70% for the current academic cycle.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CBSE: A national-level board of education in India
- **Fact:** Minimum passing marks for CBSE Class 10: 33%
- **Scheme:** NEP 2020: National Education Policy 2020 introduced the second board exam option

- **Fact:** First board pass rate: 93.70% for the current cycle

Mains question: How does the provision of a second board examination under NEP 2020 address student anxiety and academic inclusivity? Discuss.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86799

Health policy & public health · Prelims + Mains

Kerala High Court Judges Inspect Overcrowded Mental Health Centre, Promise Judicial Orders

Why in news: Kerala High Court judges inspected the Thiruvananthapuram Mental Health Centre to address severe infrastructure deficiencies and staffing shortages, highlighting the reliance on judicial intervention for public health i...

Key facts: The Mental Health Centre (MHC) in Thiruvananthapuram spans 26 acres and includes a high-security forensic block. A proposed ₹100 crore master plan was replaced by an ₹87 crore initiative that has seen no progress as of July 2026.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Thiruvananthapuram Mental Health Centre: Located in Kerala, spanning 26 acres.
- **Fact:** The approved initiative for the centre's infrastructure is valued at ₹87 crore.
- **Post:** Justice Devan Ramachandran and Justice Basant Balaji: Judges of the Kerala High Court.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in the management of public mental health infrastructure in India and the role of judicial activism in ensuring the right to health.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86696

Education policy · Prelims

Up to 2,914 Students Drop Out of Kerala State Schools in 2024-25 Academic Year

Why in news: Kerala reported 2,914 student dropouts in the 2024-25 academic year, highlighting significant challenges in retaining migrant children and students in rural districts.

Key facts: In the 2024-25 academic year, Kerala recorded 2,914 school dropouts. Notably, 36.65% (1,068) of these dropouts were children of migrant workers from states like Assam and Bihar or countries like Nepal.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** 36.65% of school dropouts in Kerala (2024-25) were children of migrant workers from Assam, Bihar, and Nepal.
- **Scheme:** Jyothi programme: A Kerala government initiative launched to address student dropout rates.
- **Fact:** Wayanad district was identified as a major area for dropouts due to lack of interest in studies.

Mains question: Analyze the socio-economic factors contributing to high dropout rates among migrant children in Kerala and suggest measures to ensure inclusive education.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86652

Health policy & public health · Prelims

CDSCO Approves Novo Nordisk's Wegovy for Fatty Liver Disease in India

Why in news: The CDSCO approved Novo Nordisk's Wegovy (semaglutide) as the first injectable GLP-1 therapy in India specifically for treating Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatohepatitis (MASH).

Key facts: The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) approved Wegovy (semaglutide 2.4 mg) for adults with moderate to advanced liver fibrosis. The approval is based on the ESSENCE trial, which showed a 63% resolution of steatohepatitis and a 37% reduction in fibrosis.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CDSCO: The national regulatory body for cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices in India.
- **S&T:** Semaglutide: A GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) receptor agonist used to treat obesity and metabolic disorders.
- **Fact:** Wegovy dosage: Approved at 2.4 mg via injection for MASH treatment.
- **Fact:** ESSENCE Trial: Clinical trial demonstrating 63% steatohepatitis resolution and 37% fibrosis reduction.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of GLP-1 receptor agonists in managing metabolic disorders and the role of regulatory bodies in ensuring the safety of novel pharmaceutical therapies in India.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86313

Karnataka Education Dept Publishes New Rules for Teacher Recruitment Met With Objections

Why in news: The Karnataka Education Department published new recruitment rules on July 14, 2026, increasing the weightage of competitive exam scores for teacher positions.

Key facts: The new rules mandate a 70% weightage for written exam marks for Primary School Teachers and Graduate Primary School Teachers. For Physical Education Teacher posts, the written exam weightage is increased to 85%.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Written exam weightage for Primary School Teachers: 70% as of July 2026
- **Fact:** Written exam weightage for Physical Education Teachers: 85% as of July 2026
- **Body:** Karnataka Education Department: State body responsible for teacher recruitment rules

Mains question: Discuss the implications of prioritizing competitive examination scores over other criteria in teacher recruitment for the quality of public education in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86233

International Relations

India's B28 High-Speed Train to Run Mumbai-Ahmedabad Corridor Until Japanese E10s Arrive Early 2030s

Why in news: The Ministry of External Affairs announced that India will use indigenously developed B28 high-speed trains for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor until Japanese E10 series Shinkansen trains arrive in the early 2030s.

Key facts: The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project will initially utilize the B28 train, an indigenous high-speed model. Japan is slated to provide the E10 series Shinkansen trains by the early 2030s. The first section of the corridor is expected to open in 2027.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** B28: India's indigenously developed high-speed train for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor.
- **Fact:** E10 series: The Shinkansen train model to be provided by Japan in the early 2030s.
- **Fact:** 2027: Expected opening year for the first section of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor.
- **Body:** Ministry of External Affairs (MEA): The nodal ministry for managing the bilateral rail cooperation with Japan.

Mains question: Discuss how the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail project serves as a catalyst for India's 'Make in India' initiative and strengthens bilateral cooperation with Japan.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86315

US Embassy: Another MH-60R Seahawk delivered to Indian Navy, two more arriving soon

Why in news: The US Embassy announced the delivery of MH-60R Seahawk helicopters to the Indian Navy, marking a milestone in the bilateral defense cooperation agreement signed in 2020.

Key facts: India signed an agreement in February 2020 to procure 24 MH-60R Seahawk helicopters from the US. The Indian Ministry of Defence signed Letters of Offer and Acceptance (LOAs) on November 28, 2025, for sustainment support worth approximately Rs 7,995 crore.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** MH-60R Seahawk: A maritime variant of the Blackhawk helicopter designed for all-weather missions with advanced avionics.
- **Fact:** India's procurement agreement for MH-60R Seahawk helicopters was signed in February 2020 for a total of 24 units.
- **Body:** Lockheed Martin: The US aerospace and defense company responsible for manufacturing the MH-60R Seahawk.
- **Fact:** The sustainment support for the MH-60R fleet was valued at approximately Rs 7,995 crore under the Foreign Military Sales programme.

Mains question: Discuss how the deepening of bilateral defense cooperation with the United States contributes to India's maritime security and its role as a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86174

Policies of other countries affecting India · Prelims + Mains

India's Defence Minister Highlights Growing Strategic Influence and Defence Exports

Why in news: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh highlighted India's expanding strategic influence in the Indo-Pacific and the rapid growth of the domestic defence export sector.

Key facts: India currently exports defence products to nearly 100 countries. The annual production value reached ₹1.78 lakh crore as of July 2026, with a target of ₹3 lakh crore by 2029.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's current annual defence production value is ₹1.78 lakh crore as of July 2026
- **Fact:** India aims to reach a defence production target of ₹3 lakh crore by 2029
- **Fact:** India exports defence products to nearly 100 countries
- **Post:** Rajnath Singh is the current Union Minister of Defence

Mains question: Discuss how the expansion of India's defence exports and strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific contributes to its objective of becoming a net security provider.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86695

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

The US military conducted its seventh consecutive night of strikes on Iran

Why in news: The US military conducted seven consecutive nights of strikes on Iran's infrastructure, escalating regional tensions in the Middle East.

Key facts: The US Central Command (Centcom) utilized fighter aircraft, drones, and warships to target Iranian surveillance and maritime assets. Iran's Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) claimed oil tanker explosions in the Strait of Hormuz, while Jordan reported intercepting 10 Iranian missiles.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic maritime chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.
- **Body:** CENTCOM: United States Central Command, responsible for US military operations in the Middle East.
- **Post:** IRGC: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an elite branch of the Iranian Armed Forces.
- **Fact:** Jordan intercepted 10 Iranian missiles during the escalation.

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

Source: BBC · satyadheesh.in/news/86411

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

US strikes miss Indian terminal at Chabahar port, escape damage

Why in news: India confirmed that the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Iran's Chabahar port escaped damage during recent US strikes against Iranian infrastructure.

Key facts: The Shahid Beheshti terminal was developed jointly by India and Iran to facilitate trade via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The terminal provides India with a strategic maritime gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. The US strikes occurred after the expiration of sanctions waivers in April 2024.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Chabahar Port: Located on the Gulf of Oman in Iran, serving as a key maritime gateway for India.
- **Body:** INSTC: International North-South Transport Corridor, a multi-modal network connecting India, Iran, and Russia.
- **Fact:** Shahid Beheshti Terminal: A joint Indian-Iranian infrastructure project for trade and connectivity.
- **S&T:** Sanctions Waivers: Specific permissions granted by the US to allow Indian investment in Iranian infrastructure.

Mains question: Examine the strategic importance of the Chabahar Port and the INSTC in diversifying India's connectivity to Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Policies of other countries affecting India · Prelims

On Friday, Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the redeveloped Koppal station

Why in news: PM Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the redeveloped Koppal station in Karnataka as part of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

Key facts: The Koppal station redevelopment cost ₹21.14 crore and includes modern amenities like escalators, lifts, and free Wi-Fi. The project is part of a nationwide initiative to dedicate 75 stations to the nation, including four in Karnataka.

Prelims pointers

- **Scheme:** Amrit Bharat Station Scheme: A central government initiative to modernize and redevelop railway stations.
- **Fact:** Koppal station redevelopment cost: ₹21.14 crore.
- **Fact:** Total stations dedicated to the nation under this specific phase: 75.

Mains question: Discuss how the modernization of railway infrastructure under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme contributes to regional connectivity and economic integration in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86231

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

Railway Minister launches Ramnagar-Dehradun Express to boost Uttarakhand tourism

Why in news: Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched the Ramnagar-Dehradun Express and announced Rishikesh as a feeder station to decongest Haridwar and boost Uttarakhand's tourism.

Key facts: The initiative involves the development of Rishikesh railway station to alleviate congestion at Haridwar. It includes the launch of the Ramnagar-Dehradun Express and the redevelopment of Haridwar and Dehradun stations to accommodate peak season passenger loads.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Rishikesh: Designated as a feeder station to ease congestion at Haridwar railway station.
- **Fact:** Ramnagar-Dehradun Express: Launched on July 18, 2026, to enhance tourism and pilgrimage connectivity.
- **Place:** Haridwar and Dehradun: Stations slated for redevelopment with enhanced passenger facilities.

Mains question: Discuss how improving railway infrastructure in pilgrimage hubs can balance the demands of mass tourism with environmental sustainability in the Himalayan region.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86721

Policies of other countries affecting India · Prelims + Mains

On July 20, the Supreme Court will hear pleas seeking a fair

Why in news: The Supreme Court is hearing pleas for a time-bound probe and forensic audit into alleged embezzlement of donations at the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.

Key facts: The Uttar Pradesh government formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) on June 13, 2024, following allegations of misappropriation. Petitioners are seeking a CBI probe and forensic audits of the trust's finances.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** SIT: Special Investigation Team formed by the UP Government on June 13, 2024
- **Body:** Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust: The body managing the Ayodhya Ram Temple
- **Post:** Supreme Court: The highest judicial body in India hearing the plea on July 20, 2024

Mains question: Discuss the importance of forensic audits and independent oversight in managing large-scale religious trusts to ensure financial transparency and public accountability.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86638

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

Supreme Court Grants Assam Government Two Weeks to Respond on Five Women's Citizenship Status

Why in news: The Supreme Court granted the Assam government two weeks to respond to pleas regarding the citizenship status of five women declared as illegal foreigners.

Key facts: On July 16, 2026, a Supreme Court Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued the order. The court had previously ordered a status quo on the deportation of the five women pending further hearings.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Supreme Court of India: The highest judicial body in India, established in 1950.
- **Fact:** The court granted a two-week deadline for the Assam government's response as of July 16, 2026.
- **Place:** Assam: A state in Northeast India where citizenship status and illegal migration are significant legal issues.

Mains question: Discuss the judicial role in balancing individual fundamental rights with state interests regarding citizenship and illegal migration in border states like Assam.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86634

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

India Engages US on Stricter Visa Policies for Students and Scholars

Why in news: The Indian government is engaging with the US to address new Department of Homeland Security guidelines that restrict grace periods and extended stays for Indian students and scholars on F, J, and I visas.

Key facts: The US Department of Homeland Security recently implemented stricter visa guidelines affecting foreign scholars and exchange visitors. These changes specifically impact the grace periods and duration of stay for individuals holding F, J, and I visa categories.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** F, J, and I visas: US visa categories for students, exchange visitors, and research scholars respectively
- **Body:** Department of Homeland Security (DHS): The US federal agency responsible for preventing terrorist activities and managing immigration
- **Fact:** The news involves diplomatic engagement between the Ministry of External Affairs (India) and US authorities regarding visa policy changes

Mains question: Discuss how changes in visa policies and mobility restrictions can impact India's 'soft power' and the academic exchange between India and the United States.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86473

GS3 · Economy · S&T · Environment · Security · 34

Economy

Industry, investment & MSMEs · Prelims + Mains

Top 5 states attract 85% of FDI, leaving northeast with less than 1%

Why in news: Niti Aayog released the Investment Friendliness Index 2026, highlighting a severe regional disparity where the top five states capture 85% of FDI while the Northeast receives less than 1%.

Key facts: The Investment Friendliness Index 2026 ranks states on infrastructure, business climate, and regulatory ease. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Goa emerged as the top-performing states in the report.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Niti Aayog: The premier policy think tank of the Government of India.
- **Fact:** Top 5 states (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Goa) attract 85% of total FDI.
- **Fact:** Northeast states receive less than 1% of total FDI as per the 2026 Index.

Mains question: Analyze the factors contributing to regional investment disparities in India and suggest measures to integrate the Northeast region into the national industrial growth trajectory.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86135

Growth, inflation & macro indicators · Prelims + Mains

RBI Governor forecasts 6.6% GDP growth despite weak monsoon, global uncertainties

Why in news: RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra projected a 6.6% GDP growth for the current financial year despite monsoon and global headwinds.

Key facts: The RBI projected a 6.6% GDP growth for the current financial year with inflation raised to 5.1% for FY2027. India recorded \$95 billion in FDI inflows last year and \$7 billion in the first two months of the current financial year.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's projected GDP growth for the current financial year is 6.6%.
- **Fact:** RBI raised the inflation forecast for FY2027 to 5.1%.
- **Fact:** Agriculture contributes approximately 17% to India's GDP.
- **Fact:** India received \$95 billion in FDI inflows in the previous year.
- **Fact:** RBI is exploring AI adoption in banking with a focus on cybersecurity and data privacy.

Mains question: *Analyze the factors that sustain India's macroeconomic resilience against global uncertainties and climate-related shocks to the agricultural sector.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86153

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

Bengaluru-Mumbai Vande Bharat Sleeper Service Trainsets Undergo Checks at KSR Station

Why in news: Vande Bharat Sleeper trainsets built by BEML are undergoing pre-commissioning checks at KSR Bengaluru station for the Bengaluru-Mumbai route.

Key facts: The Vande Bharat Sleeper service aims to reduce travel time between Bengaluru and Mumbai to approximately 15 hours via Solapur and Kalaburagi. The trainsets are manufactured by Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) and are awaiting formal handover to Indian Railways.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** BEML: A central public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Defence responsible for manufacturing railway and defense equipment.
- **Fact:** The Bengaluru-Mumbai Vande Bharat Sleeper route is designed to complete the journey in nearly 15 hours.
- **Place:** KSR Bengaluru City Railway Station: The primary railway hub in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

Mains question: *Discuss how the expansion of high-speed rail corridors like the Vande Bharat Sleeper service contributes to regional connectivity and economic integration in India.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86786

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims + Mains

SEBI warns of 'boss scam': Fraudsters use AI deepfakes to trick companies

Why in news: SEBI issued a warning regarding 'boss scams' where fraudsters utilize AI-driven deepfakes and voice cloning to impersonate corporate executives and defraud companies.

Key facts: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) identified a scam involving AI-generated deepfake videos and voice cloning to trick employees into unauthorized fund transfers. Fraudsters also utilize malware via .zip files to hijack WhatsApp sessions for sending fraudulent payment instructions.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** SEBI: Statutory body established to regulate the securities and commodity markets in India.
- **S&T:** Deepfakes: Synthetic media in which a person in an existing image or video is replaced with someone else using artificial intelligence.
- **Fact:** Malware delivery: Fraudsters use .zip files to distribute malicious software and hijack messaging sessions.

Mains question: *Discuss the growing threat of AI-driven cyber-fraud in the financial sector and suggest measures to strengthen corporate cybersecurity frameworks in India.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86559

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

V.D. Satheesan to Launch EXIM Operations at Vizhinjam Port on Aug 18, 2026

Why in news: Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan is set to launch EXIM (Export-Import) operations at Vizhinjam international seaport on August 18, 2026, as part of a 100-day action plan.

Key facts: The Vizhinjam international seaport is a joint development project between the Kerala government and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ). It is designed to function as a major cargo gateway to

reduce freight costs and enhance supply chain efficiency under the Mission Samudra initiative.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Vizhinjam Port: Located in the state of Kerala, functioning as an international seaport.
- **Fact:** Launch Date: EXIM operations are scheduled to commence on August 18, 2026.
- **Body:** APSEZ: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone is the private entity co-developing the port infrastructure.
- **Scheme:** Mission Samudra: A maritime development initiative aimed at boosting employment and maritime infrastructure.

Mains question: Discuss how the development of deep-water ports like Vizhinjam can enhance India's maritime trade competitiveness and contribute to the 'Sagarmala' objectives.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86459

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims

AMFI Simplifies Mutual Fund Transfers Post-Death to Ease Beneficiary Hurdles

Why in news: AMFI simplified the mutual fund unit transfer process post-death to reduce administrative hurdles for beneficiaries caused by minor documentation discrepancies.

Key facts: The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) issued new guidelines for Asset Management Companies (AMCs) to streamline inheritance transfers. The framework mandates reliance on the latest documented address and adopts SEBI's protocols for name or signature mismatches.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** AMFI: Association of Mutual Funds in India, a self-regulatory body for the mutual fund industry
- **Body:** SEBI: Securities and Exchange Board of India, the primary regulator for securities markets in India
- **Fact:** Beneficiaries must use an investor service request form or an office visit to rectify major discrepancies

Mains question: Discuss how simplifying administrative procedures in capital markets enhances investor protection and promotes financial inclusion for vulnerable beneficiaries.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86449

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims

RBI seeks 68,000 reams of polymer for new durable notes to fight counterfeiting

Why in news: The RBI initiated a trial for polymer currency notes to enhance durability and combat the rising threat of counterfeit currency.

Key facts: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and its subsidiary Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Private Limited (BRBNMPL) are floating a global tender for 68,000 reams of polymer substrate. The project involves collaboration with the Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India (SPMCIL) to produce notes for two specific denominations.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** BRBNMPL: A subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) involved in printing banknotes.
- **Body:** SPMCIL: Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India, responsible for high-security printing.
- **Fact:** The RBI announced the polymer currency trial on July 17, 2026.
- **Fact:** The tender seeks 68,000 reams of polymer substrate by August 18, 2026.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of transitioning to polymer-based currency in enhancing the integrity of the monetary system and curbing the menace of counterfeit notes in India.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86320

Employment & inclusive growth · Prelims + Mains

Gig work set to soar: India's workforce to hit 17-21 million by 2030

Why in news: Redseer Strategy Consultants projected a massive expansion of India's gig internet workforce to 17-21 million by 2030, highlighting its role in livelihood creation and female workforce participation.

Key facts: The gig internet workforce is projected to grow from over 6 million to 17-21 million by 2030. Gig work can offer up to 2.5 times higher earnings than comparable traditional jobs. Platforms are increasingly integrating welfare measures like insurance and emergency assistance.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Projected gig internet workforce in India: 17-21 million by 2030
- **Fact:** Current gig internet workforce: Over 6 million
- **Fact:** Earnings potential: Up to 2.5 times higher than comparable jobs
- **Fact:** Report Publication Date: July 18, 2026

Mains question: Discuss how the expansion of the gig economy can drive inclusive growth and female labor force participation in India while addressing the challenges of worker welfare.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86294

Monetary policy, RBI & banking · Prelims + Mains

PFRDA Chair Raman Unveils AI-Powered Pension Platform, NPS Swasthya

Why in news: PFRDA Chairperson S. Raman announced an AI-powered pension advisory platform and 'NPS Swasthya', a bundled pension and health insurance product, to enhance financial inclusion.

Key facts: The PFRDA plans to redesign the National Pension System (NPS) to simplify enrollment and provide multilingual financial assistance. The initiative includes 'NPS Swasthya', which integrates pension benefits with health insurance coverage.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** PFRDA: Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority is the statutory body regulating the pension sector in India.
- **S&T:** AI-powered pension advisory platform: Proposed to provide personalized investment advice and simplify pension management.
- **Fact:** NPS Swasthya: A bundled product combining pension savings with health insurance coverage.
- **Post:** S. Raman: Chairperson of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

Mains question: Discuss how the integration of Artificial Intelligence and bundled insurance products can enhance the reach and efficacy of the National Pension System in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86219

Industry, investment & MSMEs · Prelims

MSME to Establish 15 Coir Clusters in Andhra Pradesh

Why in news: The Ministry of MSME announced the establishment of 15 coir clusters in Andhra Pradesh to boost the regional coir industry and support local MSMEs.

Key facts: The Coir Board and Ministry of MSME are spearheading the initiative to establish 15 coir clusters in Andhra Pradesh. The plan includes setting up 20 coir-based MSME units over the next quarter with support for technology and marketing.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Coir Board: A statutory body under the Ministry of MSME responsible for the development of the coir industry.
- **Fact:** 15 coir clusters to be established in Andhra Pradesh by the Ministry of MSME.
- **Fact:** 20 coir-based MSME units planned for establishment over the next quarter.
- **Place:** Amalapuram: Location of the conclave in Andhra Pradesh.

Mains question: Discuss how the development of industrial clusters can enhance the competitiveness of MSMEs in the primary sector and promote rural industrialization in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86164

Agriculture

Cropping patterns & irrigation · Prelims + Mains

Delhi to Rishikesh in 3 hours: Centre OKs 150-km RRTS extension

Why in news: The Centre gave in-principle approval to extend the Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) by 150 km to Haridwar and Rishikesh to enhance regional connectivity.

Key facts: The proposed extension covers a 150-km corridor from Modipuram (Meerut) to Haridwar and Rishikesh. The project aims to reduce travel time from Delhi to Rishikesh from 5-6 hours to approximately 3 hours.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NCRTC (National Capital Region Transport Corporation) is the body responsible for the RRTS project.
- **Fact:** The proposed RRTS extension corridor length is 150 km.
- **Place:** Modipuram in Meerut is the starting point for the proposed extension.
- **Fact:** The project aims to reduce Delhi-Rishikesh travel time to 3 hours.

Mains question: Discuss how the expansion of Regional Rapid Transit Systems (RRTS) can act as a catalyst for regional economic development and tourism in the Himalayan foothills.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86565

Science & Technology

Space technology (ISRO, missions) · Prelims + Mains

Skyroot launched the Vikram-1 rocket, marking India's first privately developed orbital mission

Why in news: Skyroot Aerospace successfully launched the Vikram-1 rocket on July 18, 2026, marking India's first privately developed orbital mission.

Key facts: Skyroot Aerospace, a private Indian space startup, launched the Vikram-1 rocket on July 18, 2026. The mission was a tribute to Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, whose leadership led to India's first satellite launch via SLV-3 on July 18, 1980.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Vikram-1: India's first privately developed orbital rocket launched by Skyroot Aerospace.
- **S&T:** SLV-3: India's first indigenous satellite launch vehicle, which placed the Rohini satellite in orbit in 1980.
- **Post:** Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam: Former President of India and key figure in India's space program.
- **Fact:** The Vikram-1 launch occurred exactly 46 years after the SLV-3 mission on July 18, 2026.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of the growing private space sector in India's space economy and the role of the government in fostering private orbital missions.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86845

Space technology (ISRO, missions) · Prelims + Mains

India's space economy, valued at \$8.4 billion and including over 400 startups

Why in news: India's space economy is expanding rapidly with over 400 startups and a target of a \$44 billion industry by 2033, highlighted by Skyroot Aerospace's upcoming orbital-class rocket launch.

Key facts: India's space economy is currently valued at \$8.4 billion. ISRO has launched over 430 foreign satellites. The government aims for a \$44 billion space industry by 2033.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India's space economy is valued at \$8.4 billion as of 2024.
- **Fact:** India aims to achieve a \$44 billion space industry by 2033.
- **S&T:** Skyroot Aerospace is a key private player aiming to launch India's first private orbital-class rocket.
- **Fact:** ISRO has successfully launched over 430 foreign satellites.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of liberalizing the space sector for India's economic growth and the role of private startups in achieving the \$44 billion industry target by 2033.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86513

Space technology (ISRO, missions) · Prelims

SCTIMST and HSFC Sign Agreement for India's First Postdoctoral Fellowship in Bioastronautics

Why in news: SCTIMST and ISRO's HSFC signed an agreement on July 18, 2026, to launch India's first Postdoctoral Fellowship in Bioastronautics to study human health in space.

Key facts: The agreement was signed between Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) and the Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC). The fellowship will offer two positions annually starting from July 2026 to research space travel challenges.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** HSFC: Human Space Flight Centre is a specialized unit under the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **S&T:** Bioastronautics: The study of biological systems and human physiology in space environments.
- **Fact:** The fellowship programme will advertise two positions annually starting from July 2026.

- **Body:** SCTIMST: A premier medical research institute located in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of bioastronautics in India's Gaganyaan mission and the necessity of interdisciplinary research in space exploration.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/86887](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/86887)

Nuclear & new energy technology · Prelims + Mains

Ladakh commissions India's first geothermal wells at Puga Valley

Why in news: The Ladakh administration commissioned India's first geothermal wells at Puga Valley to establish a pilot power plant for clean energy.

Key facts: Two 1000-metre-deep geothermal wells were commissioned at Puga Valley, Ladakh. The project aims to power a one-megawatt pilot plant utilizing temperatures reaching up to 135 degrees Celsius.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Puga Valley: Located in the Union Territory of Ladakh, identified for geothermal potential.
- **Fact:** Well Depth: The commissioned geothermal wells are 1000 metres deep.
- **Fact:** Temperature: Geothermal resources at the site can reach temperatures up to 135 degrees Celsius.
- **Fact:** Capacity: The pilot power plant is designed for a 1-megawatt output.

Mains question: Discuss the potential of geothermal energy as a viable solution for India's clean energy transition, highlighting the geographical and technical challenges in the Himalayan region.

Source: NDTV · [satyadheesh.in/news/86509](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/86509)

Space technology (ISRO, missions) · Prelims + Mains

Vikram-1 launch marks India's leap in private space race from Sriharikota

Why in news: Skyroot Aerospace is preparing to launch Vikram-1 from Sriharikota, marking a significant milestone for India's private space sector and the emergence of private launch vehicles.

Key facts: Skyroot Aerospace was founded in 2018 by former ISRO engineers Pawan Kumar Chandana and Naga Bharath Daka. The Vikram-1 rocket underwent rigorous technical and safety reviews by IN-SPACe, mirroring ISRO's internal standards.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Vikram-1 is a private orbital rocket developed by Skyroot Aerospace.
- **Body:** IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre) is the nodal agency for private space sector regulation in India.
- **Place:** Sriharikota is the primary spaceport for India's space missions.
- **Fact:** Skyroot Aerospace was established in 2018.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of the 'NewSpace' policy in fostering private participation in India's space sector and the role of IN-SPACe in ensuring safety and standards.

Source: NDTV · [satyadheesh.in/news/86478](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/86478)

Nuclear & new energy technology · Prelims + Mains

Modi launches India's first hydrogen train, zero-emission 10-coach marvel covering 356 km daily

Why in news: Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off India's first hydrogen-powered train between Jind and Sonipat to showcase zero-emission railway technology.

Key facts: The train is a 10-coach marvel capable of speeds up to 75 kmph. It operates on a daily schedule of two round trips covering a total of 356 km, consuming approximately 300 kg of hydrogen per day.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Hydrogen fuel cells: Power source for the first hydrogen-powered train in India.
- **Fact:** Operational speed: Up to 75 kmph.
- **Fact:** Daily hydrogen consumption: Approximately 300 kg per day.
- **Fact:** Route: Jind to Sonipat, Haryana.

Mains question: Examine the potential of hydrogen fuel cell technology in decarbonizing the Indian railway network and the logistical challenges in establishing a green hydrogen supply chain.

Source: Indian Express · [satyadheesh.in/news/86388](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/86388)

AI Maps 64,000 Square Miles of Heat-Resistant Coral Reefs for Global Conservation

Why in news: An international team used AI to map 64,000 square miles of heat-resistant coral reefs to guide global conservation efforts against bleaching.

Key facts: The study identified coral sanctuaries across 71 countries and 100 territories. The research was presented at the Our Ocean Conference in Mombasa, Kenya, highlighting reefs resilient to severe heat stress.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** AI application: Used for mapping and identifying heat-resistant coral reef structures.
- **Fact:** Scale: Over 64,000 square miles of coral reefs mapped.
- **Place:** Our Ocean Conference: Held in Mombasa, Kenya.
- **Fact:** Scope: Research covers 71 countries and 100 territories.

Mains question: Discuss how Artificial Intelligence can be leveraged to mitigate the impacts of climate change on marine biodiversity and coral reef ecosystems.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/86195

Nuclear Power Plant Documents Leaked on Dark Web for a Month by Ransomware Group

Why in news: A ransomware group leaked documents from the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant on the dark web, highlighting vulnerabilities in India's critical energy infrastructure.

Key facts: The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) operates the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNP). The breach involved non-critical facility documents and was linked to the 'World Leaks' ransomware group.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** NPCIL: Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd, a public sector undertaking under the Department of Atomic Energy.
- **Place:** Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant: Located in the state of Tamil Nadu, India.
- **S&T:** DTrack: A malware and cyber-espionage tool used in the 2019 breach of Indian nuclear networks.
- **Fact:** The 2019 cyberattack was attributed to the Lazarus Group, a state-sponsored hacking collective.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in securing India's critical infrastructure against state-sponsored cyber-attacks and suggest measures to fortify the nuclear energy sector's digital defenses.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86833

Space scientists face DoS approval for exits after 100 ISRO resignations

Why in news: The Department of Space (DoS) mandated that all voluntary retirements or resignations of scientists on key missions like Gaganyaan must receive DoS approval to prevent project delays.

Key facts: The DoS issued a memorandum on July 14, 2026, following the resignation of approximately 100 scientists from ISRO. The rule specifically targets Group 'A' scientific and technical personnel involved in strategically important projects.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** ISRO: Indian Space Research Organisation, the national space agency of India
- **Post:** Group 'A' personnel: High-level scientific and technical staff in government service
- **Fact:** Approximately 100 scientists resigned from ISRO in the period leading up to July 2026
- **S&T:** Gaganyaan: India's first human spaceflight mission

Mains question: Discuss the challenges of human resource retention in high-stakes national R&D projects and the implications of administrative controls on scientific autonomy.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86666

Lions Feast on Wild Prey, Not Livestock: Study Shows 64% Diet from Wildlife

Why in news: A study published in July 2026 revealed that Asiatic lions in Gujarat primarily consume wild prey rather than livestock, challenging previous assumptions about human-wildlife conflict.

Key facts: The study analyzed 160 lion scat samples collected between March and April 2024 in Gujarat's coastal districts. It found that 64% of the lions' diet and nearly 70% of their biomass consumption comes from wildlife, with the blue bull (nilgai) contributing 51% of the biomass.

Prelims pointers

- **Environment:** Asiatic lions (*Panthera leo leo*) are primarily found in the Gir Forest of Gujarat.
- **Fact:** Blue bull (Nilgai) was identified as the largest contributor to the lion's biomass diet at 51%.
- **Fact:** 64% of the Asiatic lion's diet in coastal Gujarat is derived from wild prey.

Mains question: Discuss the ecological significance of maintaining natural prey bases for apex predators and its implications for mitigating human-wildlife conflict in fringe habitats.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86579

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains

AI models shut down attacks after "context bombing" technique discovered by Tracebit researchers

Why in news: Tracebit researchers discovered 'context bombing,' a technique where embedding malicious commands with sensitive data forces LLMs to shut down attacks.

Key facts: Tracebit researchers demonstrated that 'context bombing' reduces successful admin privilege escalation in leading LLMs from 57% to 5%. The method builds on previous decoy resource strategies for early detection of prompt injections on AWS.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Prompt Injection: A technique where malicious instructions are embedded into user prompts to manipulate LLM outputs.
- **Fact:** Context Bombing: A security technique that reduced admin privilege escalation from 57% to 5% in tested models.
- **S&T:** Tracebit: The research entity identifying the context bombing vulnerability and mitigation.

Mains question: Discuss the security implications of Large Language Models (LLMs) in enterprise environments and evaluate the efficacy of 'context bombing' as a defense against prompt injection attacks.

Source: Wired · satyadheesh.in/news/86570

Space technology (ISRO, missions) · Prelims

NRSC Director Announces Oceansat-3A Likely to Launch Before Year-End

Why in news: NRSC Director announced the upcoming launch of Oceansat-3A and the inauguration of the NICES-CORAL laboratory for coastal observation.

Key facts: The Oceansat-3A satellite is scheduled for launch before the end of 2024. The NICES-Coastal Observation Research Laboratory (CORAL) at Andhra University was established with a funding of ₹10 crore to ₹12 crore for equipment and maintenance.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Oceansat-3A: A satellite designed for ocean observation and coastal monitoring by ISRO.
- **Body:** NRSC: National Remote Sensing Centre, an autonomous body under the Department of Space.
- **Place:** CORAL: Located at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, for ground-truth data collection.
- **Fact:** Funding for CORAL: ₹10 crore to ₹12 crore for equipment procurement and maintenance.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of satellite-based remote sensing in enhancing India's coastal management and disaster mitigation strategies.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86189

Environment & Ecology

Pollution (air, water, plastic) · Prelims

District Collector A. Siri, Municipal Commissioner Challa Obulesu Launch Bulk Waste Generator Registration Process

Why in news: District Collector A. Siri and Municipal Commissioner Challa Obulesu launched the 'Bulk Waste Generator' registration process under the Solid Waste Management Rules-2026 to formalize waste management for large entities.

Key facts: The initiative mandates entities generating over 100 kg of solid waste daily to register as 'Bulk Waste Generators' on the CPCB portal. The state also inaugurated Wealth Creation Centres, including a facility in Bethamcherla capable of processing 10 tonnes of dry waste daily.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CPCB: Central Pollution Control Board is the primary regulatory body for waste management in India
- **Fact:** Bulk Waste Generator threshold: Entities producing >100 kg of solid waste daily
- **Act / Bill:** Solid Waste Management Rules-2026: Framework for scientific waste processing and registration
- **Place:** Bethamcherla Nagar Panchayat: Site of a new Wealth Creation Centre in Andhra Pradesh

Mains question: Discuss the significance of mandatory registration for bulk waste generators in achieving the goals of the Swachh Survekshan programme and sustainable urban waste management.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86900

Climate change & international agreements · Prelims

WRI India Launches Tool to Estimate Food Waste Emissions in India

Why in news: WRI India launched a tool to estimate greenhouse gas emissions from food waste management to help urban bodies and businesses identify intervention points for emission reduction.

Key facts: The India Food Waste GHG Emission Estimation Tool was launched on July 17, 2026. It utilizes India-specific emission factors for transportation and international factors for other waste management methods. India generated approximately 62 million tonnes of municipal solid waste in 2022-23.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India generated 62 million tonnes of municipal solid waste in 2022-23
- **Fact:** Food waste emissions in India were projected at 106.62 million tonnes CO₂e in 2023
- **Body:** WRI India (World Resources Institute) developed the Excel-based estimation tool

Mains question: Discuss how quantifying food waste emissions can facilitate India's transition toward a circular economy and achieve its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86842

Pollution (air, water, plastic) · Prelims + Mains

Delhi's Water Minister Proposes Mandatory Rainwater Harvesting for New Borewells

Why in news: Delhi's Water Minister proposed making rainwater harvesting mandatory for all new borewell permissions to address severe groundwater depletion in the capital.

Key facts: Delhi's water extraction exceeded recharge levels in 2024. The proposal links the granting of borewell permissions to the mandatory installation of rainwater harvesting systems to ensure groundwater replenishment.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Delhi's groundwater extraction exceeded recharge levels in 2024
- **S&T:** Rainwater harvesting: A technique to collect and store rainwater for later use or to recharge groundwater aquifers
- **Place:** Delhi: Facing severe groundwater stress due to high extraction rates

Mains question: Discuss the efficacy of mandatory rainwater harvesting as a strategy to mitigate groundwater depletion in rapidly urbanizing regions like Delhi.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86425

Species, protected areas & wetlands · Prelims

Gujarat Forest Dept Studies Lion Attacks, 31 Lions Captured After 9 Incidents

Why in news: The Gujarat Forest Department partnered with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) to study behavioral changes in Asiatic lions following a surge in human-wildlife conflict incidents.

Key facts: The Gujarat Forest Department captured 31 lions, designating seven as 'maneaters' for captivity following nine reported attacks. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) was commissioned to analyze the behavioral shifts and the role of human harassment in these incidents.

Prelims pointers

- **Environment:** Asiatic Lions (*Panthera leo leo*) are primarily found in the Gir National Park and surrounding areas of Gujarat.

- **Body:** Wildlife Institute of India (WII) is a premier autonomous institution for wildlife research and conservation.
- **Fact:** Seven lions were officially declared 'maneaters' and moved to captivity following a series of attacks in July 2024.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges of managing human-wildlife conflict in protected areas and suggest measures to mitigate the risk of 'maneater' incidents while ensuring ecological integrity.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86338

Biodiversity & conservation · Prelims

Migratory birds return, reviving Manasbal Lake in Kashmir with 46 species

Why in news: The ecological recovery of Manasbal Lake in Kashmir is evidenced by the return of 46 migratory bird species due to restoration efforts by the Wullar-Manasbal Development Authority (WMDA).

Key facts: Manasbal Lake is Kashmir's deepest freshwater lake. The Wullar-Manasbal Development Authority (WMDA) implemented weed removal and dredging to improve water quality. The recovery was noted during the period of December 2025 to January 2026.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Manasbal Lake: Deepest freshwater lake located in the Kashmir Union Territory.
- **Body:** WMDA: Wullar-Manasbal Development Authority is the body responsible for lake conservation and development.
- **Fact:** 46 species of migratory birds were recorded returning to the lake in the 2025-2026 period.
- **S&T:** Dredging and weed removal are primary physical interventions used to restore lake bathymetry and water quality.

Mains question: Discuss the importance of lake restoration in maintaining regional biodiversity and the role of local development authorities in balancing ecological health with regional development.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86292

Species, protected areas & wetlands · Prelims

UPSC Essentials Quiz on Environment and Geography: Option (b) Correct

Why in news: The desert rain frog (*Breviceps macrops*) was recently highlighted in a quiz regarding its conservation status and habitat in Namibia and South Africa.

Key facts: The desert rain frog (*Breviceps macrops*) is endemic to a narrow strip of coastal dunes in Namibia and South Africa. It spends most of its life burrowed beneath sand and is currently listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List.

Prelims pointers

- **Environment:** Desert rain frog (*Breviceps macrops*) is endemic to coastal dunes in Namibia and South Africa.
- **Environment:** The desert rain frog is listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List (not Critically Endangered).
- **Fact:** Population of the desert rain frog is projected to decline by approximately 20% over the next two decades.
- **Environment:** Primary threats to the desert rain frog include habitat loss due to diamond mining.

Mains question: Discuss the impact of extractive industries like diamond mining on the biodiversity of coastal dune ecosystems and suggest measures for their conservation.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/86217

Species, protected areas & wetlands · Prelims

Himalayan pangolin confirmed as new species in 2024

Why in news: Researchers confirmed the Himalayan pangolin (**Manis aurita**) as a distinct new species in 2024 based on DNA analysis of scales found on the China-Myanmar border.

Key facts: The species was first observed in 1836 by Brian Houghton Hodgson in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley. Recent genetic studies by Kai He and Narayan Prasad Koju confirmed its distinctiveness from other pangolin species.

Prelims pointers

- **Environment:** Himalayan pangolin (*Manis aurita*) is a newly confirmed distinct species as of 2024

- **Place:** The species was first recorded in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal
- **Fact:** DNA analysis and morphological studies were used to differentiate the species from other *Manis* varieties

Mains question: Discuss the importance of genetic biodiversity mapping in the Himalayan region for the conservation of endangered species like the Himalayan pangolin.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/86210

Pollution (air, water, plastic) · Prelims

Meghalaya government to ban uranium mining, addressing radiation fears and health threats

Why in news: The Meghalaya government announced a resolution to formally prohibit uranium mining to mitigate radiation hazards and ecological damage.

Key facts: The Meghalaya government, led by CM Conrad K. Sangma, is moving a resolution in the State Assembly to ban uranium mining. The move responds to long-standing opposition from civil society regarding public health risks and environmental degradation.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Meghalaya: A North-Eastern state in India known for its biodiversity and mineral resources.
- **Fact:** Uranium mining: A process involving the extraction of uranium ore, which poses significant radiation risks to surrounding ecosystems.
- **Body:** State Assembly: The legislative body of Meghalaya responsible for passing state-level resolutions and laws.

Mains question: Discuss the conflict between mineral extraction for energy security and the preservation of ecological integrity and public health in ecologically sensitive zones.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/86100

Internal Security

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

Kerala launches State Narcotics Control Bureau with 389 posts to fight drug crimes

Why in news: The Kerala government launched the State Narcotics Control Bureau (State NCB) to modernize the investigation and enforcement of organized narcotic offenses.

Key facts: The State NCB is established under the Excise Department and headquartered in Thiruvananthapuram. It features 389 sanctioned posts and specialized wings for operations, intelligence, research, and cyber intelligence.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** State Narcotics Control Bureau (State NCB) is a specialized wing under the Excise Department of Kerala
- **Fact:** The State NCB has 389 sanctioned posts to combat drug-related crimes
- **Place:** The headquarters of the State NCB is located in Thiruvananthapuram
- **S&T:** The bureau includes a dedicated cyber intelligence wing utilizing redeployed IT experts

Mains question: Discuss the institutional and technological requirements for curbing organized narcotics trafficking in India's coastal states.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/86949

Border management · Prelims

Shah turns Siliguri into 'impenetrable fortress,' inaugurates ₹77.06 crore projects

Why in news: Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated ₹77.06 crore security projects in the Siliguri corridor to enhance border surveillance and infrastructure.

Key facts: On July 18, 2026, the Union Home Minister inaugurated projects worth ₹77.06 crore at the Jhumagachh Border Outpost. The initiatives focus on the Siliguri corridor, a strategic land bridge connecting the Siliguri subdivision to the rest of India.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Siliguri Corridor: A narrow strip of land connecting the northeastern states of India with the rest of the country.

- **Body:** Border Security Force (BSF): The primary agency responsible for guarding India's international borders.
- **S&T:** Intruder Warning System: Technology deployed at border outposts to detect and alert authorities of unauthorized crossings.
- **Fact:** Project Value: ₹77.06 crore allocated for infrastructure and technology upgrades in the Siliguri corridor.

Mains question: *Analyze the strategic importance of the Siliguri Corridor and evaluate the role of technological integration in securing India's sensitive border regions.*

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/86920](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/86920)

Border management · Prelims

Heavy cross-border firing lasts nearly two hours in Rajouri sector

Why in news: Heavy cross-border firing and a subsequent search operation occurred in the Rajouri sector of Jammu and Kashmir following a ceasefire violation by Pakistani forces.

Key facts: The exchange of fire lasted nearly two hours starting at 9:50 am on Friday in the Rajouri sector. The Indian Army launched a search operation on Saturday to detect infiltrators following the incident.

Prelims pointers

- **Place:** Rajouri: A district in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir located in the western region.
- **Fact:** Line of Control (LoC): The de facto border between India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Post:** Indian Army: The land-based branch of the Indian Armed Forces responsible for border defense.

Mains question: *Analyze the security challenges posed by cross-border infiltration and ceasefire violations along the Line of Control in the Jammu and Kashmir region.*

Source: NDTV · [satyadheesh.in/news/86567](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/86567)

Practice — Mains questions

1. Discuss the significance of the growing private space sector in India's space economy and the role of the government in fostering private orbital missions. · GS3
2. Discuss the significance of liberalizing the space sector for India's economic growth and the role of private startups in achieving the \$44 billion industry target by 2033. · GS3
3. Analyze the factors contributing to regional investment disparities in India and suggest measures to integrate the Northeast region into the national industrial growth trajectory. · GS3
4. Discuss how the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail project serves as a catalyst for India's 'Make in India' initiative and strengthens bilateral cooperation with Japan. · GS2
5. Discuss how the deepening of bilateral defense cooperation with the United States contributes to India's maritime security and its role as a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific. · GS2
6. Discuss the significance of bioastronautics in India's Gaganyaan mission and the necessity of interdisciplinary research in space exploration. · GS3
7. Discuss the significance of expanding social security coverage to the unorganized and gig economy workers through the proposed EPFO Reform 3.0. · GS2
8. Discuss how the expansion of India's defence exports and strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific contributes to its objective of becoming a net security provider. · GS2

Prelims quick revision

- **S&T:** Vikram-1: India's first privately developed orbital rocket launched by Skyroot Aerospace.
- **S&T:** SLV-3: India's first indigenous satellite launch vehicle, which placed the Rohini satellite in orbit in 1980.
- **Post:** Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam: Former President of India and key figure in India's space program.
- **Fact:** India's space economy is valued at \$8.4 billion as of 2024.
- **Fact:** India aims to achieve a \$44 billion space industry by 2033.
- **S&T:** Skyroot Aerospace is a key private player aiming to launch India's first private orbital-class rocket.
- **Body:** Niti Aayog: The premier policy think tank of the Government of India.
- **Fact:** Top 5 states (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Goa) attract 85% of total FDI.
- **Fact:** Northeast states receive less than 1% of total FDI as per the 2026 Index.
- **Fact:** B28: India's indigenously developed high-speed train for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor.
- **Fact:** E10 series: The Shinkansen train model to be provided by Japan in the early 2030s.
- **Fact:** 2027: Expected opening year for the first section of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor.
- **S&T:** MH-60R Seahawk: A maritime variant of the Blackhawk helicopter designed for all-weather missions with advanced avionics.
- **Fact:** India's procurement agreement for MH-60R Seahawk helicopters was signed in February 2020 for a total of 24 units.
- **Body:** Lockheed Martin: The US aerospace and defense company responsible for manufacturing the MH-60R Seahawk.
- **Body:** HSFC: Human Space Flight Centre is a specialized unit under the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **S&T:** Bioastronautics: The study of biological systems and human physiology in space environments.
- **Fact:** The fellowship programme will advertise two positions annually starting from July 2026.

- **Body:** EPFO: Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, the primary body for managing social security funds for workers in India.
- **Scheme:** Unified Pension Scheme (UPS): A recently introduced pension framework distinct from the National Pension Scheme (NPS).
- **Fact:** Reform 3.0 proposes a defined contribution framework allowing contributions from workers, employers, and CSR funds.
- **Fact:** India's current annual defence production value is ₹1.78 lakh crore as of July 2026
- **Fact:** India aims to reach a defence production target of ₹3 lakh crore by 2029
- **Fact:** India exports defence products to nearly 100 countries
- **Place:** Puga Valley: Located in the Union Territory of Ladakh, identified for geothermal potential.
- **Fact:** Well Depth: The commissioned geothermal wells are 1000 metres deep.
- **Fact:** Temperature: Geothermal resources at the site can reach temperatures up to 135 degrees Celsius.
- **S&T:** Vikram-1 is a private orbital rocket developed by Skyroot Aerospace.
- **Body:** IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre) is the nodal agency for private space sector regulation in India.
- **Place:** Sriharikota is the primary spaceport for India's space missions.
- **Place:** Strait of Hormuz: A strategic maritime chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.
- **Body:** CENTCOM: United States Central Command, responsible for US military operations in the Middle East.
- **Post:** IRGC: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an elite branch of the Iranian Armed Forces.
- **S&T:** Hydrogen fuel cells: Power source for the first hydrogen-powered train in India.
- **Fact:** Operational speed: Up to 75 kmph.
- **Fact:** Daily hydrogen consumption: Approximately 300 kg per day.
- **S&T:** AI application: Used for mapping and identifying heat-resistant coral reef structures.
- **Fact:** Scale: Over 64,000 square miles of coral reefs mapped.
- **Place:** Our Ocean Conference: Held in Mombasa, Kenya.
- **Fact:** India's projected GDP growth for the current financial year is 6.6%.

Notes are generated automatically from SatyaDheesh's news feed and mapped to the UPSC CSE syllabus. Check facts against the original report or PIB before using them in an answer.

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