

UPSC Current Affairs — 24 July 2026

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Indian Society

Urbanisation · Prelims + Mains

Urban fires rage as outdated rules and lax enforcement put millions at risk

Why in news: Recent urban fire incidents in hospitals and high-rises have highlighted the risks posed by outdated fire safety regulations and fragmented enforcement mechanisms in rapidly growing Indian cities.

Key facts: The National Building Code (NBC) provides technical standards for fire safety but lacks a unified national enforcement mechanism. Current oversight is fragmented across local bodies, electrical inspectors, and law enforcement agencies.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** National Building Code (NBC): Provides technical standards for building safety and fire prevention in India
- **Fact:** Urban fire risks are exacerbated by mixed land use and narrow roads in rapidly expanding metropolitan areas
- **S&T:** Proposed reforms include micro-fire stations and smart technology integration for real-time emergency response

Mains question: Discuss how rapid urbanization and fragmented regulatory oversight contribute to urban fire hazards in India. Suggest measures to streamline fire safety enforcement.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90610

GS2 · Polity · Governance · IR · 18

Governance

Bills, Acts & ordinances · Prelims + Mains

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024: Provides for up to 5 years imprisonment and a Rs 10 lakh fine for exam-related fraud.
- **Body:** CBI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the primary agency tasked with investigating these high-profile leak cases.

- **Place:** Rouse Avenue Courts Complex: The designated location in Delhi for the newly formed fast-track court.

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

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90176

Role of civil services · Prelims + Mains

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90595

Transparency, accountability & RTI · Prelims + Mains

Kerala Court Allows Exclusion of "Landing Page" Viewership from TV Ratings

Why in news: The Kerala High Court lifted a stay on the Centre's Television Rating Policy, 2026, allowing the exclusion of 'landing page' viewership from official TV ratings.

Key facts: The Kerala High Court vacated an interim stay on the Television Rating Policy, 2026. The policy mandates that only actively chosen programmes count towards Television Rating Points (TRPs), excluding 'forced' landing page impressions.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** BARC: Broadcast Audience Research Council, the primary body for measuring TV viewership in India.
- **Body:** TRAI: Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, which previously set guidelines on TRP methodologies.
- **Fact:** Television Rating Policy, 2026: The central policy governing the methodology for calculating TRPs.

Mains question: *Discuss the implications of changing TRP calculation methodologies on the transparency of the Indian media landscape and the commercial viability of digital-integrated broadcasting.*

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90569

Role of civil services · Prelims

Cabinet Secretariat splits Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs into two departments

Why in news: The Cabinet Secretariat bifurcated the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to create specialized departments for Delhi's capital development and national urban schemes.

Key facts: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs was split into the Department of Capital Development (for Delhi) and the Department of Urban Development (for national schemes). D Thara and Satendra Singh were appointed as Secretaries for these respective departments.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Cabinet Secretariat: The nodal body responsible for coordinating the execution of Cabinet decisions.
- **Post:** Secretary: The highest-ranking civil servant in a department, responsible for administrative leadership.
- **Fact:** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting now oversees stationery and printing responsibilities.

Mains question: *Discuss how the administrative bifurcation of ministries can enhance governance efficiency and specialized policy implementation in urban development.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90280

Social Justice

Education policy · Prelims + Mains

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90226

Education policy · Prelims + Mains

In 2017, NEET saw 16 candidates per MBBS seat; competition peaked

Why in news: Data reveals a significant expansion in India's medical infrastructure, with MBBS seats increasing to 1,36,939 by 2026-27 to address intense competition in the NEET exam.

Key facts: India expanded medical colleges from 314 in 2010-11 to 823 by 2026-27. The total MBBS seats reached 1,36,939 by 2026-27, with 63,296 seats in government colleges and 382 private institutions.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Total MBBS seats in India projected to reach 1,36,939 by the 2026-27 academic year.
- **Fact:** Number of medical colleges increased from 314 in 2010-11 to 823 by 2026-27.
- **Body:** National Medical Commission (NMC) is the body responsible for the seat matrix and medical education standards.
- **Fact:** Competition for MBBS seats peaked at 21 candidates per seat in 2024.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges of balancing the rapid expansion of medical seats with the need for quality assurance and affordability in India's healthcare education system.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90643

Health policy & public health · Prelims + Mains

West Bengal Cabinet OKs Rs 2 Egg Hike, New Health Scheme

Why in news: The West Bengal Cabinet approved the 'Mukhya Mantri Swasthya Bima Yojana' to provide health insurance to residents excluded from the central Ayushman Bharat scheme.

Key facts: The West Bengal Cabinet approved a Rs 2 per plate increase for egg allocations in Anganwadi centres. The state also approved the establishment of a National Investigation Agency (NIA) station and land allocation for BSF and SSB for border security in districts like Jalpaiguri and Malda.

Prelims pointers

- **Scheme:** Mukhya Mantri Swasthya Bima Yojana: A West Bengal state health insurance scheme for residents not covered under Ayushman Bharat.
- **Body:** NIA: National Investigation Agency, a central agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Body:** BSF: Border Security Force, responsible for guarding India's international borders.
- **Fact:** West Bengal Cabinet approved a Rs 2 per plate increase for egg allocation in Anganwadi centres.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of state-specific health insurance schemes in achieving Universal Health Coverage in India's federal structure.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90356

International Relations

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

Trump Imposes Tariffs on 80 Countries Over Forced Labor Claims

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

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

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

Saudi Arabia signed a nuclear deal with the Donald Trump administration

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

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

India's bilateral relations · Prelims

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

Source: BBC · satyadheesh.in/news/90477

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

India, Israel wrap FTA talks, narrow gaps amid \$3.93 billion trade

Why in news: India and Israel concluded the second round of FTA negotiations (July 2025) to streamline trade in goods, services, and IP rights.

Key facts: The negotiations took place from July 20-23, 2025. The total merchandise trade between India and Israel reached \$3.93 billion in the 2025-26 period.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Total merchandise trade between India and Israel reached \$3.93 billion in 2025-26
- **Intl. org:** FTA: A bilateral agreement aimed at reducing/eliminating tariffs and trade barriers between two nations
- **Post:** Negotiations covered trade in goods, services, intellectual property rights (IPR), and customs procedures

Mains question: *Examine the strategic and economic significance of a Free Trade Agreement between India and Israel in the context of India's 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/90553

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

On Thursday, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer announced new 10% to 12.5%

Why in news: US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer announced new 10% to 12.5% tariffs on top trade partners, including India, invoking Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974.

Key facts: The US Trade Representative announced tariffs on 60 trade partners including the UK, China, EU, Canada, Japan, and India. The tariffs range from 10% to 12.5% based on compliance with forced labor import bans. The move is legally grounded in Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974: Provides the US Trade Representative the authority to investigate and respond to unfair trade practices.
- **Fact:** Tariff rates: 10% for partners with enforced bans on forced labor; 12.5% for others.
- **Post:** Jamieson Greer: Appointed as the US Trade Representative.

Mains question: *Discuss how unilateral trade measures like Section 301 tariffs impact the principles of the multilateral trading system and India's export-led growth strategy.*

Source: BBC · satyadheesh.in/news/90337

Regional & global groupings (QUAD, BRICS, SCO, G20...) · Prelims + Mains

India Calls for Dialogue on Gulf, Myanmar Conflicts at East Asia Summit

Why in news: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar advocated for multilateral dialogue on Gulf and Myanmar conflicts at the 21st East Asia Summit (EAS) in Manila.

Key facts: The 21st East Asia Summit was held in Manila on July 23, 2026. India emphasized maritime safety, international law, and a two-state solution for Israel-Palestine while condemning Pakistan's stance on the Indus Waters Treaty.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** East Asia Summit (EAS): A primary forum for regional cooperation involving ASEAN members and partners like India, Australia, and Japan.
- **Place:** Manila, Philippines: Host city for the 21st East Asia Summit in July 2026.
- **Fact:** Indus Waters Treaty: A water-sharing treaty between India and Pakistan signed in 1960.
- **Post:** S. Jaishankar: Serving as the Minister of External Affairs of India.

Mains question: *Examine India's role as a 'bridge' power in mediating regional conflicts in the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia within the framework of the East Asia Summit.*

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/90251

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

Iran airlifts IRGC troops and weapons to Yemen, fueling Red Sea attacks

Why in news: Iran airlifted IRGC commanders and weaponry to Yemen to bolster Houthi capabilities, escalating maritime security risks in the Red Sea.

Key facts: On July 13, 2024, Iran deployed IRGC commanders and missile/drone equipment to Yemen via Mahan Air. The Houthis subsequently announced a naval blockade of Saudi Arabia and attacked two oil tankers.

Prelims pointers

- **Post:** IRGC: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iran's elite military branch
- **Place:** Hodeidah: A strategic port city in Yemen
- **Fact:** Mahan Air: An Iranian airline used for transporting military equipment to Yemen

- **Fact:** Red Sea: A critical maritime corridor for global oil and cargo shipping

Mains question: Analyze how non-state actors and proxy dynamics in the Red Sea impact global maritime trade and India's energy security.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90191

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

India Says Ship Carried "Grain" After Moscow Claims Strike on Military Supplies Ship

Why in news: India protested against Russia's claim that a ship carrying military supplies for Ukraine was targeted, asserting the vessel carried grain.

Key facts: The MV Golden Leo was the vessel involved in the incident in the Black Sea. India confirmed the ship departed on 19 July 2026 carrying grain as cargo. Four Indian nationals were reported killed in the strike.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** MV Golden Leo: Commercial vessel involved in the Black Sea incident on 19 July 2026
- **Post:** S. Jaishankar: Minister of External Affairs, Government of India
- **Place:** Black Sea: Region where the maritime strike occurred

Mains question: Discuss the challenges India faces in maintaining its strategic autonomy while navigating the complexities of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and maritime security in the Black Sea.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90655

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Proposes First Cauvery Water Meeting in 14 Years

Why in news: Tamil Nadu CM proposed a meeting with Karnataka CM to resolve the long-standing Cauvery water sharing dispute, potentially the first such high-level dialogue in 14 years.

Key facts: Tamil Nadu claims an entitlement of 3,000 million cubic feet (tmc ft.) of Cauvery water. The state currently receives approximately 3.5 tmc ft., leading to a reported shortfall of 28 tmc ft. The proposed meeting window is between July 31 and August 3.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Tamil Nadu's current Cauvery water allocation is approximately 3.5 tmc ft.
- **Fact:** Tamil Nadu claims a shortfall of 28 tmc ft. in Cauvery water distribution.
- **Place:** Cauvery River: A major river in South India, a primary source of water for Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

Mains question: Discuss the challenges in inter-state water sharing in India and suggest measures to ensure equitable distribution while maintaining ecological sustainability.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/90510

India's bilateral relations · Prelims + Mains

Jaishankar calls for "zero tolerance for terrorism" after Amarnath Yatra policeman killed

Why in news: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar advocated for 'zero tolerance for terrorism' at the 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial Meeting following the killing of a policeman on Amarnath Yatra duty.

Key facts: The statement was made during the 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial Meeting in Manila. The incident involved the killing of a policeman on duty during the Amarnath Yatra. The meeting also covered maritime security, China's Indo-Pacific behavior, and AI applications.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF): An intergovernmental forum for security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Post:** S. Jaishankar: Serving as the Minister of External Affairs of India.
- **Place:** Manila: Host city for the 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial Meeting.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of the ASEAN Regional Forum in addressing maritime security and counter-terrorism efforts in the Indo-Pacific region.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90237

276 Personnel from 27 Countries Wrap Up Maritime Security Drills in India

Why in news: The Indian Navy concluded 'Operation Southern Readiness 26-2', a multilateral maritime security drill involving 27 countries to enhance regional maritime cooperation.

Key facts: The exercise took place from July 20 to July 23, 2026, under the Southern Naval Command. It involved 276 personnel from 27 countries, including the Indian Navy and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** CTF 154: A maritime task force operating under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) framework.
- **Body:** Combined Maritime Forces (CMF): A multinational naval-led security organization based in Bahrain.
- **Fact:** Operation Southern Readiness 26-2: A four-day maritime security training event concluded on July 23, 2026.
- **Post:** Southern Naval Command: The naval command responsible for maritime security in the southern Indian Ocean region.

Mains question: Discuss the significance of multilateral maritime security exercises in ensuring the safety of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean Region.

Source: The Hindu · [satyadheesh.in/news/90217](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/90217)

GS3 · Economy · S&T · Environment · Security · 21

Economy

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

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

Source: Indian Express · [satyadheesh.in/news/90627](https://www.satyadheesh.in/news/90627)

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims + Mains

SEBI proposes major PMS reforms, allowing overseas and unlisted investments

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

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

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** SEBI: Securities and Exchange Board of India, the primary regulator for the securities market in India.
- **Fact:** PMS Assets: Assets under management in the PMS sector have more than doubled over the six-year period leading up to 2024.

- **S&T:** Unlisted Securities: Shares of companies not listed on a stock exchange, now proposed for inclusion in PMS portfolios.
- **Fact:** Mutual Fund-only Category: A proposed new category with reduced client investment requirements to democratize access.

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

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

Growth, inflation & macro indicators · Prelims + Mains

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90457

Capital markets & SEBI · Prelims + Mains

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90450

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

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Why in news: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved a Rs 1,264 crore project to construct the third and fourth railway lines of the Ballari-Guntakal section to enhance freight capacity and logistics efficiency.

Key facts: The project covers 46 km across three districts in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. It aims to increase freight traffic by 16.22 MTPA and is scheduled for completion by 2028-29.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Project cost: Rs 1,264 crore for the Ballari-Guntakal section.
- **Fact:** Freight capacity increase: 16.22 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum).
- **Scheme:** PM-Gati Shakti: National Master Plan for integrated multi-modal connectivity.
- **Place:** Ballari-Guntakal section: Spans across Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Fact:** Completion target: 2028-29.

Mains question: Discuss how the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan addresses the logistical bottlenecks in India's freight corridors and its role in reducing the national carbon footprint.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90561

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

India Post revenue soars to over ₹2,100 crore as minister inaugurates modern reforms

Why in news: Union Minister Pemasani Chandra Sekhar inaugurated modernized post offices in Guntur, highlighting India Post's revenue growth to over ₹2,100 crore through digital reforms.

Key facts: India Post's revenue surged from ₹200 crore to over ₹2,100 crore following modernization. Key initiatives include IT 2.0, Gen-Z post offices, and logistics partnerships with private companies.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** India Post revenue reached over ₹2,100 crore following modernization reforms.
- **S&T:** IT 2.0 and Gen-Z post offices are specific initiatives for digital transformation and youth-centric services.
- **Body:** India Post operates under the Ministry of Communications and Rural Development.

Mains question: Discuss how the modernization of India Post through digital transformation and private partnerships can enhance rural financial inclusion and logistics efficiency in India.

Source: The Hindu · satyadheesh.in/news/90635

Employment & inclusive growth · Prelims

8th Central Pay Commission resumes consultations amid union demands for 1.2 crore employees

Why in news: The 8th Central Pay Commission resumed consultations to address union demands regarding revised pay scales and pensions for approximately 1.2 crore Central government employees.

Key facts: The 8th Central Pay Commission resumed consultations in Delhi on August 7 and 10. The commission is tasked with reviewing the pay structure and pension benefits for nearly 1.2 crore Central government employees and pensioners.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** Central Pay Commission (CPC): A body constituted by the Government of India to review and recommend changes to the pay structure of central government employees.
- **Fact:** The 8th CPC covers approximately 1.2 crore Central government employees and pensioners.
- **Post:** Manjeet Singh Patel: National President of the All India NPS Employees Federation.

Mains question: Discuss the fiscal implications and administrative challenges of periodic pay revisions for the central government workforce in the context of India's fiscal deficit targets.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90527

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

Kerala High Court backs Aadhaar for Tatkal bookings, hints at PAN Card alternative

Why in news: The Kerala High Court upheld the IRCTC's use of Aadhaar-based OTP for Tatkal bookings while suggesting PAN Card as an alternative to balance security and accessibility.

Key facts: On July 24, 2026, the Kerala High Court dismissed a PIL challenging Aadhaar-based OTP authentication for Tatkal tickets. The court ruled that while Aadhaar is justified to prevent bulk booking deceit, IRCTC should explore dual authentication options including PAN Cards.

Prelims pointers

- **Body:** IRCTC: A subsidiary of Indian Railways responsible for online ticketing and catering.
- **Fact:** Aadhaar: A 12-digit unique identity number issued by UIDAI.
- **Fact:** PAN: A 10-digit alphanumeric identifier issued by the Income Tax Department.

Mains question: Discuss the balance between using biometric/digital identity for preventing ticket scalping and ensuring the right to accessible public infrastructure for all citizens.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90461

North India leads India's investor base at 36.8%: NSE report

Why in news: NSE's Market Pulse report highlights a demographic shift in India's capital markets as North India emerges as the largest contributor to the registered investor base.

Key facts: North India accounts for 36.8% of India's registered investor base as of July 2024. Maharashtra remains the leading state at 15.5%, while Uttar Pradesh has overtaken Gujarat to become the second-highest contributor.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** North India's share of registered investors: 36.8% as of July 2024
- **Fact:** Maharashtra's contribution to investor base: 15.5%
- **Fact:** North India investor base expansion: 6.3 times growth from FY19 to FY27 (to date)
- **Body:** NSE (National Stock Exchange) released the Market Pulse report

Mains question: Analyze the factors driving the democratization of capital markets in India and its implications for inclusive economic growth.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/90359

Adani Power Eyes Nuclear Leap at Thermal Sites in Madhya Pradesh

Why in news: Adani Power is evaluating the conversion of existing thermal power sites in Madhya Pradesh into nuclear power hubs to meet its 2035 nuclear capacity targets.

Key facts: Adani Power is evaluating the Bina and Nigrie sites in Madhya Pradesh for nuclear projects. These sites currently house thermal plants acquired from Jaiprakash Associates. The company's target is to achieve a 10 GWe nuclear capacity by 2035.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Adani Power's target nuclear capacity: 10 GWe by 2035
- **Place:** Bina and Nigrie: Locations in Madhya Pradesh identified for nuclear power conversion
- **S&T:** Nuclear power: A key component of India's goal to achieve net-zero emissions

Mains question: Discuss the logistical and regulatory challenges in repurposing existing thermal power infrastructure for nuclear energy generation in India.

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90234

Agriculture

Floods in Assam: Seven Lakh Affected, Seven Missing as Waters Recede

Why in news: Heavy flooding in upper Assam has affected approximately seven lakh people, necessitating a central assessment team visit on July 25, 2024.

Key facts: The floods have cut off 20-25% of Sivasagar and Charaideo districts in upper Assam. Rescue operations are being conducted by the Indian Army, NDRF, and SDRF despite mud-covered road obstructions.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** Approximately 700,000 people were affected by the floods in upper Assam.
- **Body:** NDRF: National Disaster Response Force, a specialized force for disaster management.
- **Body:** SDRF: State Disaster Response Force, state-level units for disaster mitigation.
- **Place:** Sivasagar and Charaideo: Districts in the state of Assam.

Mains question: Discuss the geographical and infrastructural vulnerabilities that exacerbate flood disasters in the Brahmaputra basin and suggest measures for climate-resilient disaster management.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90656

Science & Technology

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90568

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

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

Defence technology · Prelims + Mains

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

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

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains

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

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

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

Prelims pointers

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

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

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

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims + Mains

AI orchestrates chip design, breaking bottlenecks in India's semiconductor surge

Why in news: Agentic AI is being integrated into Electronic Design Automation (EDA) to orchestrate complex semiconductor chip design workflows, addressing scalability bottlenecks in India's semiconductor push.

Key facts: Electronic Design Automation (EDA) tools have traditionally automated individual chip design tasks but struggled with cross-tool collaboration. Agentic AI differs by interpreting high-level intent and coordinating the entire design lifecycle across multiple workflows.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Agentic AI: AI systems capable of autonomous reasoning and multi-step task orchestration to achieve specific goals.
- **S&T:** EDA Tools: Software used to automate the design of integrated circuits (ICs) and printed circuit boards (PCBs).
- **Fact:** Semiconductor Industry: India's focus on 'Design-led' growth to democratize access to high-end chip expertise.

Mains question: *Discuss how the integration of Agentic AI in Electronic Design Automation (EDA) can accelerate India's ambitions to become a global semiconductor hub.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90544

Space technology (ISRO, missions) · Prelims

Scientists from the University of Delaware created 'Moon cement' using lunar

Why in news: Scientists at the University of Delaware developed 'Moon cement' using lunar and Martian soil simulants to facilitate sustainable construction for future lunar bases.

Key facts: The study was published in 'Advances in Space Research' on May 15, 2026. Tests conducted outside the International Space Station (ISS) for six months showed no degradation, with one sample achieving 35% higher compressive strength than Earth-based controls.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Moon cement: Construction material developed using lunar and Martian soil simulants.
- **S&T:** ISS: International Space Station, a modular space station in low Earth orbit.
- **Fact:** One lunar soil simulant sample showed 35% higher compressive strength than Earth controls.

Mains question: *Discuss how the utilization of In-Situ Resource Utilization (ISRU) technologies can ensure the long-term sustainability of human habitation on the Moon and Mars.*

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/90540

IT, AI, semiconductors & computing · Prelims

Karnataka to Build India's First Museum of Innovation and Startup Technology in Bengaluru

Why in news: Karnataka announced the construction of India's first Museum of Innovation and Startup Technology (MIST) in Bengaluru to showcase technological advancements and startup culture.

Key facts: The MIST project is a ₹300 crore public-private partnership (PPP) project located on the unused NGEF campus land in Bengaluru. It is being developed by the Karnataka Technology Innovation Museum Foundation and is scheduled for completion in 2028.

Prelims pointers

- **Fact:** MIST project budget: ₹300 crore
- **Place:** Location: NGEF campus land, Bengaluru, Karnataka

- **Post:** Karnataka Technology Innovation Museum Foundation: Chaired by Prashanth Prakash
- **Fact:** Target completion year: 2028

Mains question: Discuss how dedicated institutions like the Museum of Innovation and Startup Technology can foster a robust startup ecosystem and promote indigenous technological innovation in India.

Source: NDTV · satyadheesh.in/news/90496

Biotechnology & health research · Prelims

NASA shows tobacco relative can produce medicines in space using virus

Why in news: NASA researchers demonstrated that the plant *Nicotiana benthamiana* can be used as a bio-factory to produce medicines in space using the Cowpea mosaic virus (CPMV).

Key facts: The study utilized *Nicotiana benthamiana*, a relative of the tobacco plant, and the Cowpea mosaic virus (CPMV) to synthesize therapeutic proteins. This method was tested under simulated space conditions to facilitate in-situ medicine production for long-duration lunar and Martian missions.

Prelims pointers

- **S&T:** Nicotiana benthamiana: A plant species used in biotechnology as a host for producing recombinant proteins.
- **S&T:** Cowpea mosaic virus (CPMV): A plant virus used as a vector for protein expression in plant-based systems.
- **Post:** NASA: The US space agency responsible for the research on space-based pharmaceutical production.

Mains question: Discuss how advancements in plant-based biotechnology and space medicine can facilitate long-duration human space exploration and reduce Earth-dependency.

Source: Times of India · satyadheesh.in/news/90414

Biotechnology & health research · Prelims + Mains

Stranded Ships Become Breeding Grounds for Invasive Species, Study Warns

Why in news: A study in Biological Invasions warns that stranded vessels in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman are becoming breeding grounds for invasive marine species like barnacles and mussels.

Key facts: Research led by the University of Maryland and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution identifies stranded ships as 'bioinvasion super-spreaders.' Vessels idling for more than 30 days require urgent hull cleaning to mitigate ecological risks and increased fuel consumption.

Prelims pointers

- **Environment:** Barnacles and mussels are identified as primary invasive species colonizing stranded hulls.
- **Fact:** The study identifies a 30-day threshold for hull idling before significant biofouling occurs.
- **Place:** The study focuses on stranded vessels in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

Mains question: Discuss the ecological risks posed by biofouling on commercial shipping and suggest regulatory frameworks to mitigate the spread of invasive species across international waters.

Source: Economic Times · satyadheesh.in/news/90388

Internal Security

Cyber security · Prelims + Mains

The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) ordered GitHub to disable access

Why in news: The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) ordered GitHub to block access to Bitchat repositories to prevent evasion of lawful surveillance during internet restrictions.

Key facts: The I4C invoked Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, and Rule 3(1)(d) of the IT Rules, 2021. The order targeted Bitchat, an offline messaging app, to ensure compliance with government-mandated internet restrictions.

Prelims pointers

- **Act / Bill:** Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act, 2000, mandates intermediaries to remove content or access to content that violates the law.
- **Body:** I4C (Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre) is a nodal agency for coordinating cybercrime response and information sharing.
- **Fact:** The order was issued on July 23, 2026, specifically targeting repositories on GitHub.

- **S&T:** Bitchat is an offline messaging application designed to function without active internet connectivity.

Mains question: *Discuss the tension between the state's power to regulate digital platforms for national security and the fundamental right to freedom of speech and privacy.*

Source: Indian Express · satyadheesh.in/news/90580

Practice — Mains questions

1. Examine how the use of trade sanctions and tariffs as tools for human rights enforcement impacts the stability of the global multilateral trading system. · GS2
2. Examine the institutional and legislative measures required to ensure the integrity of public examinations in India and prevent the commercialization of examination fraud. · GS2
3. Analyze how the Saudi-US nuclear deal reshapes the geopolitical architecture of the Middle East and the balance of power between the Saudi monarchy and the Iranian Islamic Republic. · GS2
4. Analyze how the escalation of the Iran-US conflict impacts global energy security and the geopolitical stability of the Middle East. · GS2
5. Discuss how the standardization of high-speed rail infrastructure can enhance India's logistical efficiency and contribute to the goal of a multi-modal transport network. · GS3
6. Critically examine the systemic vulnerabilities in the conduct of national-level entrance examinations and suggest measures to ensure the integrity of the examination process. · GS2
7. Discuss how the proposed SEBI reforms in Portfolio Management Services (PMS) aim to balance investor protection with the need for market modernization and capital mobility. · GS3
8. Discuss the legal and ethical challenges posed by Generative AI in protecting intellectual property rights and the necessity of a robust regulatory framework in India. · GS3

Prelims quick revision

- **Act / Bill:** Section 301 of the Trade Act: Provides the US Trade Representative (USTR) authority to investigate and penalize unfair trade practices.
- **Fact:** Tariff range: 10% to 12.5% imposed on products from over 80 countries.
- **Intl. org:** Trade Act: A US federal law governing international trade relations and enforcement.
- **Act / Bill:** Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024: Provides for up to 5 years imprisonment and a Rs 10 lakh fine for exam-related fraud.
- **Body:** CBI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the primary agency tasked with investigating these high-profile leak cases.
- **Place:** Rouse Avenue Courts Complex: The designated location in Delhi for the newly formed fast-track court.
- **Place:** Saudi Arabia: A monarchy located in the Middle East.
- **Fact:** The nuclear deal was signed on July 24, 2026.
- **Body:** Abraham Accords: Agreements aimed at normalizing relations between Israel and Arab nations.
- **Fact:** Iran's drone strikes targeted US bases across the Middle East.
- **Fact:** The US plans to utilize frozen Iranian assets to offset damages from the strikes.
- **Place:** The conflict is centered in the Middle East, a critical region for global oil production.
- **Body:** NHRCL: National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited is the special purpose vehicle for high-speed rail projects in India.
- **Fact:** The Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor spans 508 km.
- **Fact:** The target operational date for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor is August 2027.
- **Body:** NTA: National Testing Agency is an autonomous body responsible for conducting major entrance exams like NEET and JEE.
- **Fact:** The proposed draft bill seeks to impose fines of up to Rs 10 crore for exam paper leaks.

- **Fact:** The draft bill proposes a maximum imprisonment term of 10 years for those involved in paper leaks.
- **Body:** SEBI: Securities and Exchange Board of India, the primary regulator for the securities market in India.
- **Fact:** PMS Assets: Assets under management in the PMS sector have more than doubled over the six-year period leading up to 2024.
- **S&T:** Unlisted Securities: Shares of companies not listed on a stock exchange, now proposed for inclusion in PMS portfolios.
- **S&T:** OpenAI: Developer of ChatGPT, a large language model (LLM) based on the GPT architecture.
- **Act / Bill:** Copyright Act, 1957: Governs the ownership and use of intellectual property in India, including 'fair dealing' provisions.
- **Body:** Delhi High Court: Exercised jurisdiction over the first major AI copyright dispute in India.
- **Fact:** Total merchandise trade between India and Israel reached \$3.93 billion in 2025-26
- **Intl. org:** FTA: A bilateral agreement aimed at reducing/eliminating tariffs and trade barriers between two nations
- **Post:** Negotiations covered trade in goods, services, intellectual property rights (IPR), and customs procedures
- **S&T:** LLMs (Large Language Models) are AI models trained on massive datasets to generate human-like text.
- **Body:** OpenAI is an American artificial intelligence research organization headquartered in San Francisco.
- **Fact:** The suit involves allegations of verbatim replication of copyrighted material and 'hallucinations' (false information) by ChatGPT.
- **Fact:** RBI gold reserves reached 880.52 metric tonnes by March 2026
- **Fact:** 77% of India's gold reserves are stored domestically
- **Fact:** India pledged 46.91 tonnes of gold in 1991 to secure \$405 million in emergency forex
- **Body:** SRO: A non-governmental body that regulates its own members' conduct within a specific industry.
- **Body:** RBI: The central bank of India responsible for monetary policy and banking regulation.
- **Body:** SEBI: The statutory body regulating securities and capital markets in India.
- **Act / Bill:** Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974: Provides the US Trade Representative the authority to investigate and respond to unfair trade practices.
- **Fact:** Tariff rates: 10% for partners with enforced bans on forced labor; 12.5% for others.
- **Post:** Jamieson Greer: Appointed as the US Trade Representative.
- **S&T:** Kusha: A Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) developed by DRDO

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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