



CURRENT AFFAIRS COMPENDIUM

SEPTEMBER 2026



*Key Developments
Shaping India
and the World*





CURRENT AFFAIRS COMPENDIUM

SEPTEMBER 2026

PRELIMS EDITION

253 topics • 8 subjects • Why in News • Key Facts • Static Linkages • Maps

Compiled from the daily current affairs and PIB backgrounders published on yourunlearningspace.com, 1–30 September 2026

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SECTION 1

Polity & Governance

Indian Constitution, governance, public policy, rights issues, judiciary, Parliament & legislation — September 2026 • 30 topics

1. Distinguished Jurist Route for SC Judges

WHY IN NEWS Supreme Court Judge Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, speaking at the 13th convocation of the National Law University, Delhi, questioned why India has never used the "distinguished jurist" route under Article 124(3)(c) to appoint a Supreme Court judge.

- Article 124(3)(c) allows a person to be appointed a Supreme Court judge if, in the President's opinion, they are a "distinguished jurist" — a third eligibility route alongside the two conventional ones: five years as a High Court judge, or ten years as a High Court advocate.
- Justice Bhuyan pointed out that despite the Constitution being in force for more than 76 years, no one — including any legal academic — has ever been elevated to the Supreme Court through this route, calling it one of the Constitution's unused mandates.
- He argued that a distinguished jurist could add real value to the Bench through scholarship and a broader public-law perspective, without being confined by narrow procedural technicalities — echoing the original intent behind the provision, which was to diversify the Bench beyond career judges and practising lawyers.
- The provision traces back to the Constituent Assembly debates, where a member cited the example of judges at the International Court of Justice at The Hague to argue for including "distinguished jurist" as a valid route to the Supreme Court.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 124(3) qualifications for Supreme Court judges and the Collegium system.

2. Caste Census

WHY IN NEWS Caste enumeration has become one of the most politically charged items on India's governance agenda.

- Census conducted under the Census Act, 1948; subject falls under Union List, Entry 69.
- India's last full caste count: 1931 Census (British India).
- 16th Census: two phases — House Listing Operation (HLO) and Population Enumeration (PE); reference date 1 October 2026 for snow-bound J&K, HP, Uttarakhand, Ladakh, and 1 March 2027 elsewhere.
- SECC 2011 collected caste data but it was never officially released/used.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Census Act 1948 (Union List Entry 69), SECC 2011 and the 1931 caste census.

3. SC: Bar Councils Can't Discipline Law Students

WHY IN NEWS On August 14, 2026, a Supreme Court bench headed by CJI Surya Kant restrained the Bar Council of India (BCI) from taking any punitive or disciplinary action against students, faculty, or administration of NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, after the BCI sought to block the enrolment of an entire graduating batch over...

- The row began when NALSAR students objected to inviting CJI Surya Kant as chief guest at their convocation; the university proceeded with the invitation regardless.
- On August 13, 2026, the BCI chairperson directed all State Bar Councils to halt enrolment of NALSAR's entire 2026 graduating batch and sought an inquiry into those behind the protest campaign.
- The BCI later withdrew the enrolment bar but initially retained the demand for an inquiry (subsequently closed).
- CJI Surya Kant termed the BCI's intervention "absolutely uncalled for," asserting students have a right to protest even if their views are considered incorrect, and that "BCI doesn't have any business" interfering in a university's internal matter.
- The Court ordered: no punitive action shall be taken against students/faculty of any national law university pending final disposal, and issued notice to the BCI for a counter-affidavit.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Advocates Act 1961 and the Bar Council of India's functions.

4. NRC Demand in Manipur

WHY IN NEWS The Centre deferred the Census 2027 house-listing exercise in Manipur after sustained protests by Meitei and Naga civil society groups demanding implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) before any population count.

- Protests were led by groups such as the Campaign for Just and Fair Delimitation (JFD) and the Coordination Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI).
- Demand: NRC with 1951 as the base year to identify "illegal immigrants," amid concerns about migration from Myanmar.
- The decision to defer was taken after Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high-level review meeting.
- Despite deferment, a 24-hour bandh was still observed across five valley districts (Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Kakching).
- Kuki organisations have rejected the NRC demand, alleging it is aimed at branding their

community as "illegal migrants," and have separately demanded a "Separate Administration."

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Citizenship Act 1955, NRC in Assam and the Inner Line Permit.

5. Article 142 & CJP Cases

WHY IN NEWS The Supreme Court invoked its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to quash, en masse, FIRs registered against student protesters linked to the "Cockroach Janata Party (CJP)" protests over exam paper leaks (including the NEET issue).

- Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court to pass any order necessary for "complete justice" in a matter pending before it.
- The Centre, through Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, itself urged the Court to invoke Article 142 to quash the FIRs.
- The order was passed by a bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, along with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana.
- Legal commentators have flagged the case as reigniting the debate on whether Article 142 amounts to "judicial overreach" or a legitimate discretionary remedy — since such powers, unlike ordinary judicial orders, are not easily subject to appeal.
- Constitutional scholars note that Article 142 orders must still remain consistent with fundamental rights and statutory law, per past Supreme Court rulings.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 142 ('complete justice') and its landmark uses.

6. Punjab & Haryana HC Chief Justice Oath Row

WHY IN NEWS The Punjab Cabinet, chaired by CM Bhagwant Mann, objected to the Centre notifying Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra as Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court without first receiving the state government's views, and resolved to put the oath-taking on hold.

- Justice Mishra has been Acting Chief Justice since 2 June 2026; his elevation followed a Supreme Court Collegium recommendation dated 6 August.
- Punjab's objection rests on Para 6 of the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) for appointment of High Court judges, which requires the Union Law Minister to obtain the state government's views before sending the proposal to the Prime Minister/President.
- Legal nuance: Constitutional experts point out that Punjab's consent is not mandatory — only its views must be sought. The Centre had written to Punjab on 12 August seeking its opinion; the state did not respond before the notification was issued, exposing a procedural gap in the MoP (it prescribes no timeline for a state's response).

- The row adds to existing Punjab-Centre friction over RDF fund devolution, flood-relief packages, and BBMB rules.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Articles 217 and 219 (appointment and oath of HC judges).

7. Collegium's Agenda: Judicial Vacancies

WHY IN NEWS With the Punjab & Haryana HC row spotlighting appointment procedures, attention turns to the Supreme Court Collegium's upcoming agenda — filling vacancies in the apex court itself.

- The Collegium is currently led by CJI Surya Kant (took office November 2025), and includes justices who will serially become future CJIs — reflecting the seniority-based convention for appointing the CJI.
- Earlier in 2026, the Union Cabinet approved, and the President promulgated an ordinance for, an increase in the Supreme Court's sanctioned strength from 34 to 38 judges — a rare and swift legislative move aimed at reducing pendency.
- The Collegium system, evolved through the Three Judges Cases (not the Constitution), continues to face criticism over lack of transparency and the absence of a fixed timeframe for filling vacancies — a criticism reinforced by the ongoing Punjab HC episode.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Articles 124 and 217, Memorandum of Procedure and Collegium system.

8. SGPC Elections Delayed 15 Years

WHY IN NEWS The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) — the apex representative body of Sikhs, often called the "mini parliament of the Sikhs" — continues to function without fresh elections since its last polls.

- SGPC was established under the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, following the Gurdwara Reform Movement of the 1920s, which wrested control of gurdwaras from hereditary mahants.
- The current General House was elected in 2011; its five-year term legally expired in December 2016, but elections have not been held since — a gap of roughly 15 years, and a 50%+ decline in registered voters compared to 2011.
- SGPC has 179–180 members: 159 directly elected, plus co-opted members and the jathedars of the five Takhts and the head granthi of the Golden Temple.
- Reasons behind the delay include: extended litigation (including on voting rights of Sehajdhari Sikhs), the carving out of a separate Haryana SGPC after a Supreme Court directive, and slow voter registration.
- Elections are conducted by the Union Home Ministry through the Gurdwara Election Commission, Chandigarh — making the delay a recurring bone of contention in Centre-Punjab and Akali Dal politics.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925 and the Gurdwara Elections Commission.

9. Article 371 Offer for Ladakh

WHY IN NEWS In ongoing talks with the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), the Centre has offered Article 371-style special provisions and a legislative body for Ladakh — instead of the Sixth Schedule status that Ladakhi groups have demanded. No final agreement has been reached.

- Since the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019, Ladakh has been a Union Territory without a legislature, administered by a Lieutenant Governor.
- Four key demands of LAB/KDA: full statehood, Sixth Schedule inclusion, a separate Ladakh Public Service Commission, and two Lok Sabha seats.
- Article 371 (and variants 371A–371J) grants special provisions to certain states (e.g., Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam) for local customs, land, and resources — distinct from the Sixth Schedule, which creates Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) with legislative, judicial and administrative powers for tribal areas (currently in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram).
- The dialogue follows the September 24, 2025 violence in Leh, in which four people died (including a Kargil war veteran) and hundreds were injured/detained; a judicial inquiry by a retired Supreme Court judge was subsequently ordered.
- Activist Sonam Wangchuk, who undertook a widely-publicised fast in early 2023 over Ladakh's environmental and constitutional status, has remained central to the movement; talks with an MHA sub-committee resumed through 2026 with representatives citing proposals modelled on Articles 371A and 371G.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Articles 371–371J, Sixth Schedule and UT status of Ladakh.

10. Marital Rape: SC Hearing

WHY IN NEWS A Supreme Court Bench led by CJI Surya Kant, along with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V.

- The colonial-era exception — carried forward into the new criminal law framework — states that non-consensual sexual acts by a husband with his adult wife are not rape.
- The case originated from a split verdict of the Delhi High Court (Justices Rajiv Shakdher and C. Hari Shankar) and is titled *RIT Foundation & Ors. v. Union of India*.
- The Union Government has previously opposed complete criminalisation, calling it potentially “excessively harsh and disproportionate,” while conceding a husband has no fundamental right to violate consent.
- The matter was listed on September 9, 2026 as Item 108 for final hearing — a batch of eight matters: four arising from the Delhi High Court's split-verdict reference, and three fresh petitions (including one filed in 2026).
- Senior Advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for the petitioners, told the Court the Union had not yet

filed a substantive affidavit on merits, only a preliminary objection, and that copies of all petitions had not been exchanged among counsel.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Exception 2 to Sec 375 IPC / Sec 63 BNS and Article 21.

11. No Breakthrough in Ladakh Talks

WHY IN NEWS Talks between the Leh Apex Body (LAB), the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), and the Union Home Ministry's sub-committee ended without a breakthrough.

- Core Ladakhi demands: Sixth Schedule status, statehood, a separate Public Service Commission, and two Lok Sabha seats (currently one).
- The “non-negotiables” presented include supremacy of an elected UT leader over bureaucracy and control over law and order.
- This follows the 2023 “in-principle” understanding and periodic rounds of stalled dialogue since Ladakh's 2019 bifurcation from Jammu & Kashmir.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Sixth Schedule, Article 371 and Leh Apex Body/KDA demands.

12. MMDR Amendment Act & Federalism

WHY IN NEWS The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2026 has triggered a sharp Centre-State standoff, with Odisha's opposition BJD — led by former CM Naveen Patnaik — calling it a “black day” for cooperative federalism.

- The Act expands Union control over “mineral-bearing lands” and, under a new Section 9D, restricts States from levying taxes/cess on mineral rights except under Centre-approved conditions.
- Odisha contributes an estimated 44% of India's mineral wealth; BJD warns of massive revenue losses.
- The dispute follows the Supreme Court's landmark ruling affirming States' power to tax mineral rights — which this amendment is seen as diluting.
- BJD has sought President Droupadi Murmu's intervention and organised protests; some Left/Opposition parties have called for a state-wide bandh.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise MMDR Act 1957, Union List Entry 54 and State List Entry 23.

13. 1951 NRC Baseline in Manipur

WHY IN NEWS Manipur's government has stated that 1951 will be the base year for a proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) update, and is tracing physical 1951 census/NRC records while awaiting the Centre's approval. The demand has led the Union government to defer the house-listing phase of Census 2027 in the state.

- The demand is driven mainly by Meitei and Naga civil-society groups (including the Campaign for Just and Fair Delimitation), who argue citizenship verification must precede the Census and any delimitation exercise.
- It stems from concerns over alleged illegal migration from Myanmar, especially amid the Meitei-Kuki-Zo ethnic conflict raging since May 2023, which has killed over 250 people.
- Kuki-Zo organisations have largely rejected the NRC demand, viewing it as targeting their community, given ethnic ties to Myanmar's Chin population.
- Critics note that using 1951-era administrative and community classifications retrospectively is legally and technically complex — a key reason the "data is contentious."
- Assam remains the only state where a full NRC update has been completed, following the Assam Accord and a Supreme Court-monitored process.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise NRC, cut-off dates and Citizenship Act 1955.

14. CJI on Public Trust

WHY IN NEWS Delivering the keynote address at the 6th Ram Jethmalani Memorial Lecture on the theme "Justice Seen To Be Done: Transparency and Public Trust as Pillars of the Legal System," Chief Justice of India Surya Kant made a sharp distinction between judicial legitimacy and popularity.

- CJI Kant said, "A court does not earn trust by being liked" — the true test of institutional credibility is whether even a losing litigant believes the process was fair, impartial, and procedurally legitimate.
- He invoked the classic 1924 English case *Rex v. Sussex Justices*, source of the maxim: "Justice must not only be done but must also be seen to be done."
- He cited *Pila Pahan v. State of Jharkhand* (May 2026), where the Supreme Court directed reserved judgments be pronounced ordinarily within three months, and High Court websites must display dates judgments are reserved and delivered — to make judicial delay visible.
- He said the judiciary must remain open to scrutiny, calling fair, informed criticism "a legitimate and necessary feature of a vibrant constitutional democracy" contributing to accountability and self-correction.
- Referencing Alexander Hamilton's *Federalist No. 78*, he noted the judiciary has "neither FORCE nor WILL, but merely judgment," and depends on public willingness to comply with its rulings.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise judicial accountability and independence of judiciary.

15. Hindi Diwas & Language Question

WHY IN NEWS Hindi Diwas, observed every 14 September, marks the day in 1949 when the Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi in the Devanagari script as the official language of the Union after intense three-day debate.

- The provision, discussed on 12, 13, and 14 September 1949, is based on the Munshi-Ayyangar formula — a compromise between drafting committee members K.M. Munshi and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar.
- Article 343(1): Hindi in Devanagari script is the official language of the Union.
- Article 343(2): English was to continue for official purposes for 15 years from the Constitution's commencement (i.e., till 25 January 1965).
- Article 343(3): Empowers Parliament to extend English's official use beyond 1965 — done via the Official Languages Act, 1963.
- Part XVII of the Constitution (Articles 343–351) deals with official languages; the Eighth Schedule currently lists 22 languages.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Articles 343–351, Munshi-Ayyangar Formula and Official Languages Act 1963.

16. BJP's State Route for UCC

WHY IN NEWS Rather than pursuing a single national law through Parliament, the BJP has adopted a state-by-state strategy to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), expanding steadily across NDA-ruled states.

- Uttarakhand became the first state in independent India to enact and implement a UCC (February 2024, operational January 2025); tribal communities were exempted.
- Gujarat passed its UCC Bill in March 2026, becoming the second state.
- Assam followed, becoming the first North-Eastern state to enact a UCC (tribals exempted).
- Madhya Pradesh passed its UCC Bill on 21 July 2026, becoming the fourth state; over 1,164 suggestions were reportedly collected, with claimed majority public support.
- Maharashtra (ninth BJP/NDA state to announce plans) has set up a committee headed by retired Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, who also chairs UCC panels for Gujarat, MP, Rajasthan, and West Bengal.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 44, Uttarakhand UCC 2024 and Goa Civil Code.

17. Same-Sex Partner Medical Consent Plea

WHY IN NEWS The Delhi High Court pulled up the Central Government for failing, over a year, to file its counter-affidavit in a petition seeking legal recognition of same-sex partners as medical representatives empowered to give consent during treatment or emergencies.

- Petition filed by a woman in a same-sex relationship since 2015; the couple married in New Zealand (2023) and has lived together in Delhi since 2018.
- The plea challenges the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002, which recognise only a "husband or wife, parent, or guardian" for medical consent — excluding same-sex partners.
- Notices were first issued to the Centre and the National Medical Commission (NMC) in July 2025.
- Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma orally observed: "The law recognises a live-in relationship between a man and a woman. Why will it not allow a live-in relationship between a man and a man?" — and gave the Centre one final week to respond.
- Next hearing: 17 September 2026.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Navtej Johar (2018), Supriyo (2023) and Article 21.

18. PMLA Authority Without Judicial Member

WHY IN NEWS A 3-judge Supreme Court Bench (CJI Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana) reserved its verdict on whether the Adjudicating Authority under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 — which confirms ED's provisional property attachments — must include a judicial member, or whether a single-member,...

- Central legal question revolves around Sections 5, 6, and 8 of PMLA: Section 5 empowers ED's provisional attachment; Section 6 governs the composition of the Adjudicating Authority; Section 8 empowers it to confirm or release the attachment (a decision with "civil consequences").
- Petitioners (including Karvy Realty (India) Ltd.) argue that in Vijay Madanlal Choudhary v. Union of India (2022) — the landmark judgment upholding most PMLA provisions — the Court's reasoning assumed a three-member Adjudicating Authority (including a person qualified to be a district judge) as an institutional safeguard.
- Key issue raised: does the absence of a judicial member violate the separation of powers doctrine when a quasi-judicial body decides matters with civil consequences?
- The Adjudicating Authority must confirm attachment within 180 days, and courts have noted the sheer case volume raises questions on whether it can "adequately apply its mind."

- This challenges a 2024 Telangana High Court ruling that a single-member (non-judicial) bench can validly exercise these powers.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise PMLA 2002: Adjudicating Authority and attachment of property.

19. SC on Re-Arrests: Article 22

WHY IN NEWS In Jaskaran Jeet Singh Deol v. State of Punjab (2026 INSC 1022), the Supreme Court closed what commentators are calling the "re-arrest loophole" under Article 22 of the Constitution. A Bench headed by Justice Ujjal Bhuyan held that once a person's arrest is declared illegal for violating Article 22(1) (failure to...

- Case: Jaskaran Jeet Singh Deol vs. State of Punjab, 2026 INSC 1022.
- Violations found: Non-supply of written grounds of arrest (Article 22(1)) and detention beyond 24 hours without timely production before a Magistrate (Article 22(2)).
- Core ruling: The power to re-arrest cannot vest with the same authority that committed the original constitutional violation; a magistrate's judicial sanction is now mandatory.
- Precedents reaffirmed: Pankaj Bansal v. Union of India and Mihir Rajesh Shah v. State of Maharashtra — both held that furnishing written grounds of arrest in a language the accused understands is a mandatory constitutional right, not a procedural formality.
- Significance: The Court held that the gravity of the offence cannot override constitutional safeguards — the Punjab & Haryana High Court's earlier reasoning (that serious charges justified a fresh arrest) was expressly overturned.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 22, BNSS arrest provisions and D.K. Basu guidelines.

20. Article 371(K) for Ladakh

WHY IN NEWS On 9 September 2026, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) proposed a new special constitutional provision for Ladakh — informally called Article 371(K) — during talks with the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA).

- What exists already — Article 371 to 371-J: These provide asymmetric federal special provisions for select states/regions:
- 371-A — Nagaland (protects Naga customary law, land and resource ownership).
- 371-B — Assam (special provision for tribal areas).
- 371-C — Manipur (Hill Areas Committee).
- 371-D & 371-E — Andhra Pradesh/Telangana (equitable opportunities, local cadres; Central University at Hyderabad).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Articles 371 to 371J and states covered.

21. SC Strengthens Re-Arrest Safeguards

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Fundamental Rights (Articles 21 and 22), Judiciary, Criminal Justice

- Context: In a judgment decided on 21 September 2026, the Supreme Court held that arrested persons must be given the grounds of arrest in writing and in a language they understand, irrespective of the offence's gravity, including under special laws like UAPA and PMLA.
- Bench: Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and Atul S. Chandurkar.
- Origin of the case: A POCSO case in Punjab, where a magistrate released the accused for not being given arrest grounds, police sought re-arrest the same day, and the Punjab and Haryana High Court allowed it before the accused approached the Supreme Court.
- Precedent relied on: *Mihir Rajesh Shah v. State of Maharashtra*.
- Gravity is no excuse: The safeguard does not depend on the nature or gravity of the offence and cannot be read restrictively.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 22 and personal liberty under Article 21.

22. Constituent Assembly Debate on UCC

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Directive Principles, Salient Features of the Constitution; GS Paper 1 – Secularism

- Context: The debate has revived because Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on September 13 that the UCC will be implemented in all 21 NDA-governed states before 2029.
- Uttarakhand has had a UCC in force since 27 January 2025, while UCC Bills passed by Assam, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh await Presidential assent.
- Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh have set up committees to recommend a draft UCC.
- In March 2026, a Supreme Court bench led by CJI Surya Kant observed the time had come for a UCC, but said striking down the Shariat inheritance law would create a legal vacuum and left it to the legislature.
- Goa has operated a common civil code since the Portuguese era (1867 Civil Code).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 44 and Constituent Assembly debates.

23. EC Appointment Case Before CJI

WHY IN NEWS A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court delivered a split verdict on whether petitions challenging the law on appointing the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) should be referred to a Constitution Bench.

- The split: Justice Dipankar Datta rejected the Centre's request for a reference; Justice Satish Chandra Sharma accepted it, holding that the

case raises a substantial, unsettled question of constitutional interpretation.

- Why the CJI: Both judges agreed the matter should go directly to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant to constitute a bench of appropriate strength, since routing it through a three-judge bench first would cause further delay.
- Who sought the reference: The Union government, under Article 145(3) of the Constitution.
- The law under challenge: The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023. Its selection committee has the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the PM, replacing the CJI.
- The earlier verdict: In *Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India* (2 March 2023), a five-judge bench ordered a panel of the PM, the CJI and the Leader of Opposition to select ECs until Parliament made a law.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 324 and CEC and Other ECs Act 2023.

24. Demand to Split Uttar Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS UP Cabinet Minister and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) chief Om Prakash Rajbhar told a rally in Deoria that Uttar Pradesh will be divided into four states after the caste census, claiming Prime Minister Narendra Modi had assured him of this.

- Proposed states: Purvanchal, Madhyanchal, Bundelkhand and Harit Pradesh.
- No official confirmation: Neither the Centre nor the BJP has announced any such decision.
- Timing: The claim comes months before the 2027 UP Assembly election.
- History, the Mayawati resolution: In November 2011, ahead of the 2012 polls, the Mayawati government got the Assembly to pass (by voice vote, amid uproar) a resolution to split UP into Avadh Pradesh, Purvanchal, Bundelkhand and Paschim Pradesh. The Centre did not act on it.
- Earlier division: Uttarakhand was carved out of UP in 2000.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 3 and State Reorganisation Commissions.

25. SC Defends the Collegium

WHY IN NEWS In the same EC appointments ruling (Topic 2), the Centre defended the executive-dominated EC selection panel by comparing it with the collegium system, where "judges appoint judges". Justice Dipankar Datta firmly rejected this analogy.

- The core remark: Justice Datta described the government's attempt to justify the 2023 law through a parallel with the collegium as "disingenuous, evasive and disquieting".
- "Judges appoint judges" is a myth: He said the executive actually holds decisive control over

judicial appointments at every level, leaving the judiciary "playing second fiddle".

- Selective clearance: He criticised the government's practice of clearing most recommended names while holding back chosen ones, saying this erodes the sanctity of collegium resolutions.
- Balanced view: He admitted the collegium has sometimes erred, but said aberrations are exceptions, and executive supremacy is not the cure.
- First Judges Case (1981): Executive primacy; "consultation" did not mean "concurrence".

STATIC LINKAGE Revise NJAC case (2015), Second and Third Judges cases.

26. Monsoon Session Sine Die Adjournment

WHY IN NEWS Parliament's Monsoon Session was adjourned sine die on 13 August 2026 but, 46 days later, has still not been prorogued, the third-longest such gap on record.

- The session (Eighth Session of the 18th Lok Sabha) ran from 20 July to 13 August 2026. Normally the President prorogues a session within 3–4 days of a sine die adjournment. The delay has fuelled speculation that the government may reconvene the House without a fresh summons.
- longest sine die adjournments without prorogation
- Year | Gap (days) | Context
- 1987 | 76 | Bofors disruptions; JPC on Bofors set up
- 1989 | 61 | Opposition MPs resigned after CAG report on Bofors

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Articles 85 and 107, prorogation vs adjournment sine die.

27. Demand for J&K Statehood

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS II – Indian Constitution, Federalism, Union Territories

- Why in news: On 28 September 2026, the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly passed a resolution by voice vote urging the Government of India to restore full statehood. The BJP, led by Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma, walked out. The BJP objected to the resolution's reference to earlier autonomy and special-status resolutions.
- Supported by the NC, Congress, PDP, Peoples Conference, CPI(M), AAP and independents.
- The text builds on two earlier House resolutions: the autonomy resolution of 26 June 2000 and the special-status resolution of 6 November 2024.
- It is the third resolution by the J&K Assembly and Cabinet on statehood and special status since the government formed in October 2024.
- Amendments seeking restoration of special status were withdrawn before the vote.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise J&K Reorganisation Act 2019 and Article 3.

28. Statutory Rules on Minors & Social Media

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS II – Governance, Rights of Children, Government Policies; GS III – Cyber Security

- Why in news: On 28 September 2026, the Supreme Court asked the Centre to examine framing statutory rules so that social media platforms comply with Indian law on minors, including 18 as the minimum age for independently accepting a platform's terms. The Bench (CJI Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana) was hearing a PIL by the Just Rights for Children Alliance (JRCA). The matter returns in four weeks.
- Core legal argument: Signing up means accepting the platform's terms of service, which is a contract. Under Section 11 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, a minor is not competent to contract; such an agreement is void ab initio (Mohori Bibee v. Dharmodas Ghose, 1903).
- Justice Bagchi said the safeguard should not remain a guideline and should get a statutory format under the intermediary rules; platforms must design software in line with Indian law.
- The Court suggested amending the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
- Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the Centre would examine it, citing Section 79 of the IT Act (intermediary safe harbour) and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise DPDP Act 2023 (verifiable parental consent) and IT Rules 2021.

29. NSA Detention: Confession Not Enough

WHY IN NEWS On 29 September 2026, the Supreme Court held that a confession made by an accused before a police officer cannot, by itself, justify preventive detention under the National Security Act (NSA), 1980.

- Inadmissible in trial, so unfit for detention: Criminal law treats a confession to police as inherently suspect because it may be coerced. If it cannot prove guilt in a trial, it cannot form the "subjective satisfaction" a detaining authority needs.
- Exceptional power: Preventive detention must be used with the utmost caution and only in the rarest of cases.
- Other material test: Where the authority relied on material beyond the confession, courts must check whether that material alone can sustain the order.
- Precedent clarified: Earlier observations that a confession can ground detention were held to be obiter dicta, not binding law.

- The detenu had consistently alleged the confession was extracted under threat and torture.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise National Security Act 1980 and Article 22(3)–(7).

30. J&K: From Article 370 to UT

WHY IN NEWS On 28 September 2026, the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly passed a resolution, moved by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, seeking the immediate and urgent restoration of full statehood.

- The resolution is not legally binding. Statehood can be restored only by an Act of Parliament. The Centre has maintained it will restore statehood at an “appropriate time”.
- Year | Milestone
- 1947 | Maharaja Hari Singh signs the Instrument of Accession (26 October)
- 1949–50 | Article 370 (then Article 306A) added as a “temporary provision”
- 1954 | Presidential Order extends parts of the Constitution; Article 35A inserted

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 370, Instrument of Accession and 2019 Reorganisation Act.

SECTION 2

International Relations

India's bilateral relations, global groupings, West Asia, international organisations & global affairs —
 September 2026 • 59 topics

1. Modi-Pezeshkian Talks at SCO

WHY IN NEWS On the sidelines of the 26th SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) Summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, PM Modi held bilateral talks with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian — their first in-person meeting since the US-Iran conflict escalated.

- The talks came amid renewed tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, following a US strike near the strait and Iranian retaliation.
- Modi called for safeguarding freedom of navigation and commerce, stressing that civilians, civilian infrastructure, commercial shipping and seafarers must never be harmed.
- Both leaders agreed to expand and diversify bilateral trade, even as the US pursues an "economic isolation" campaign against Tehran, threatening secondary sanctions on countries trading with Iran.
- Iran's President reportedly urged Modi to use India's diplomatic reach to help move the conflict toward dialogue.
- India reiterated readiness to engage through multilateral platforms like SCO and BRICS, and Modi invited Pezeshkian to the upcoming BRICS Summit in New Delhi.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-Iran relations: Chabahar Port, INSTC and the Strait of Hormuz.

2. Modi-Putin Meeting at SCO

WHY IN NEWS In a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the SCO Summit in Bishkek, PM Modi delivered a pointed peace message on the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

- Modi's remark — "we must move away from endless war towards an end to the war" — echoes his 2022 Samarkand statement that "today's era is not an era of war."
- Modi emphasised that every day of conflict "sets humanity back" and reaffirmed India's consistent call for resolution through dialogue and diplomacy.
- Modi invited Putin to the 18th BRICS Summit, scheduled for 12–13 September 2026 in New Delhi — significant as India holds the BRICS chairmanship in 2026.
- The meeting also covered cooperation in trade, energy, and fertiliser security.
- Context: The meeting followed the Trump-Putin Alaska summit (August 2026), part of ongoing efforts to broker peace in Ukraine.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership and India's stand on the Ukraine war.

3. US Interest in Venezuelan Crude

WHY IN NEWS The United States is currently the world's largest crude oil producer, driven by shale output, yet continues to pursue influence over Venezuela's crude reserves — home to the world's largest proven oil reserves, mostly heavy/extra-heavy crude in the Orinoco Belt.

- Refining complementarity: US Gulf Coast refineries are configured for heavy crude (like Venezuela's), which is different from the light shale oil the US produces domestically.
- Geopolitical leverage: Reducing Venezuela's oil revenue links to sanctions strategy and pressure on the Maduro government.
- Countering rival influence: Limiting the space for China and Russia, both of which have deepened energy and financial ties with Caracas.
- Regional migration & security concerns: Instability in Venezuela has driven large migration flows into the US and Latin America, linking energy policy to broader hemispheric strategy.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise OPEC, global oil reserves (Venezuela, Saudi Arabia) and heavy vs light crude.

4. PM Modi at SCO Summit

WHY IN NEWS Addressing the 26th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for resolving global conflicts through dialogue rather than the battlefield.

- PM Modi pointed to the West Asia crisis as proof that a conflict in one region no longer stays confined there — it ripples outward into global energy security, maritime trade, and supply chains, with the Global South absorbing the heaviest costs.
- He reaffirmed India's consistent diplomatic line: all tensions and wars should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy, never on the battlefield.
- On connectivity, Modi backed initiatives that link markets and ease trade, but stressed that any such effort must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations — a line widely read as an indirect message to China regarding projects like the Belt and Road Initiative.
- He also flagged drug trafficking as a serious and growing threat to the region's youth and security.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise SCO: founding (2001), members, RATS and India's membership (2017).

5. SCO Declaration on Terrorism

WHY IN NEWS PM Modi described terrorism as a continuing challenge to humanity and called for dismantling the entire ecosystem behind it — financing networks, recruitment pipelines, radicalisation, and safe havens.

- He reiterated India's long-standing position that there can be no room for double standards when it comes to terrorism.
- This messaging comes against the backdrop of India's post-Pahalgam attack posture, where New Delhi has repeatedly accused Pakistan of using cross-border terrorism as an instrument of state policy.
- At earlier SCO summits too, Modi has argued that some countries treat cross-border terrorism as a policy tool, and that SCO members should not shy away from naming such conduct.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise SCO RATS and India's position on cross-border terrorism.

6. Hague Court Order on Indus Waters Treaty

WHY IN NEWS On 31 August 2026, the Court of Arbitration (CoA) at The Hague ruled that the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) remains fully binding despite India placing it "in abeyance," and issued interim restrictions on India's Ratle Hydroelectric Project. India has categorically rejected the ruling.



Map: Indus river system shared by India and Pakistan

- The tribunal issued two separate rulings — one on the status of the treaty itself, and another ordering interim measures concerning the Ratle Hydro-Electric Plant.
- On the treaty's status, the Court held that India's April 2025 decision to place the IWT "in abeyance" following the Pahalgam terror attack does not amount to a legal suspension or termination, since the treaty contains no provision allowing either side to unilaterally suspend it — it remains binding unless both countries jointly agree to modify or end it.
- The Court rejected every ground India cited for suspension, including sovereignty, alleged material breach by Pakistan, terrorism, demographic and technological change, climate change, and the state of armed conflict.

- On Ratle, the tribunal restricted construction on the dam wall and power-intake structure above specified levels, with these limits to stay in place until 90 days after a World Bank-appointed Neutral Expert delivers a final decision — expected around July 2027.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs firmly rejected the verdict, arguing that the Court of Arbitration has no jurisdiction to pronounce on India's sovereign decisions, and maintaining that the World Bank's separate Neutral Expert mechanism — which India requested and continues to participate in — is the only treaty-consistent forum for resolving the Kishenganga and Ratle design disputes.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Indus Waters Treaty 1960: eastern/western rivers, Neutral Expert and Court of Arbitration.

7. US Strikes on Iran

WHY IN NEWS The US-Iran conflict, which escalated sharply through mid-2026, has continued in cycles of strike and retaliation.



Map: Persian Gulf region — box marks the Strait of Hormuz

- Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman; flanked by Iran (north) and Oman's Musandam exclave (south).
- US regional command overseeing the strikes: CENTCOM (US Central Command).
- Iran's paramilitary force conducting retaliatory strikes: IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps).
- India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) caverns are located at Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, and Padur.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Gulf geography, Strait of Hormuz and the JCPOA.

8. Nepal PM Thanks India for Flood Aid

WHY IN NEWS Following devastating flash floods triggered by a glacial-lake outburst/ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border — which battled districts like Rasuwa and killed hundreds while leaving thousands missing or displaced — Nepal's Prime Minister publicly thanked India for its swift humanitarian response.

- Legal basis of India-Nepal ties: Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950.
- Nepal's current PM (as of the floods): Balendra Shah.
- Disaster origin: glacial/ice-rock collapse near the Nepal-Tibet border, worst-hit district — Rasuwa.
- India's disaster-response mechanism domestically: National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950 and HADR diplomacy.

9. Jaishankar in Kyiv

WHY IN NEWS External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Kyiv, Ukraine on September 3, 2026 — his first visit to the country — where he met Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and called on President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, amid the Russia-Ukraine war entering its fifth year.

- Jaishankar stated the conflict will not be solved because somebody is buying or not buying oil, alumina, minerals, metals or fertiliser — it requires dialogue, diplomacy and negotiation.
- India remains Russia's second-largest crude oil buyer, after China, since the 2022 invasion.
- The visit coincided with a US Senate-passed bill giving the President discretionary power to impose tariffs of up to 100% on the top five buyers of Russian crude/gas — a list that includes India and China.
- Jaishankar underlined the challenge of energy security for India's 1.4 billion people amid a difficult global energy situation, while stressing that both India's and Ukraine's positions "should be respected."
- He also condoled the death of an Indian national in a recent Kyiv attack and discussed the impact of the war on commercial shipping and Indian seafarers.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-Ukraine relations and India's stand on Russia-Ukraine war.

10. India-Belgium Ties

WHY IN NEWS India and Belgium have deepened cooperation across defence, semiconductors, green hydrogen, and trade/fintech, building on the India-Belgium Strategic Dialogue launched in Brussels (July 2026) and reinforced by Belgium's high-level economic and defence delegations to India through 2026.

- The first India-Belgium Strategic Dialogue was co-chaired by EAM S. Jaishankar and Belgium's Deputy PM Maxime Prévot in Brussels (July 15,

2026), covering trade, green energy transition, technology, connectivity, defence and security.

- Defence: Belgium is exploring an "institutionalised defence cooperation mechanism" with India; Belgian firms John Cockerill Defence and Thales Belgium have partnered with Indian companies (e.g., co-manufacturing turrets for DRDO/L&T's Zorawar light tank) — aligned with Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Belgium will also post a Defence Attaché in New Delhi.
- Semiconductors: Belgium's IMEC (Leuven) will train Indian engineers, linking to India's Semicon 2.0 push.
- Green Energy: Cooperation planned between Belgium's Zeebrugge green-hydrogen expertise and India's Gujarat hubs.
- Trade & Fintech/Investment: Belgian FDI in Indian ports, pharmaceuticals, and diamonds exceeds €4 billion cumulatively; Indian IT firms employ over 3,000 people in Antwerp and Ghent.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-EU relations and the India-EU FTA negotiations.

11. India and 'Unethical Trade' Charge

WHY IN NEWS Amid continued Western criticism (including US trade adviser Peter Navarro's "laundromat" remark) over India's purchase of discounted Russian crude oil, commentary in the Indian press has cautioned that India must ensure its energy trade does not become a conduit for sanctions evasion or "unethical trade," even while...

- India is the world's fourth-largest exporter of petroleum products, a status that predates the Ukraine war; Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has stated India's export volumes and refining margins have "remained broadly the same."
- Russian oil is not sanctioned outright like Iranian or Venezuelan crude — it operates under a G-7/EU price-cap mechanism designed to keep supply flowing while capping Russian revenues.
- The US imposed sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil (Russia's two largest oil firms, producing ~half of Russia's output) in late 2025, prompting Indian refiners to pause fresh purchases from sanctioned entities and banks to halt trade credit for Russia-linked refiners (e.g., Nayara Energy, 49%-owned by Rosneft).
- The US also passed legislation enabling tariffs of up to 100% on the top five buyers of Russian crude/gas, alongside an earlier 25% punitive tariff on Indian goods.
- Government sources maintain that India's energy transactions are legitimate, legal, and non-discriminatory, using compliant shipping, insurance and audited channels, and that countries themselves importing Russian energy (or self-sufficient in oil) "cannot credibly" demand India restrict trade.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise G7 price cap on Russian oil and India's refined product exports.

12. India-China Corps Commander Meeting (NE)

WHY IN NEWS India and China are preparing for a fresh round of military-level engagement, with an Indian Corps Commander expected to meet his Chinese counterpart in the Northeast sector for the first time — a departure from the usual Chushul-Moldo (Ladakh/Western Sector) venue.

- The upcoming talks follow discussions between NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing.
- The meeting is expected to focus on the situation around Taksing, in Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Subansiri district.
- India and China are also setting up two new military hotlines connecting the Eastern Army Command (Kolkata) and Central Army Command (Lucknow) with their Chinese counterparts.
- Joshimath (Uttarakhand) and Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh) have been identified as new Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) points for the Central and Eastern sectors respectively.
- This builds on the mechanism used in Eastern Ladakh since the 2020 standoff, where over 20 rounds of Corps Commander talks have already been held.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise LAC sectors, WMCC and Special Representatives mechanism.

13. Rubio's Visit & Quad Summit

WHY IN NEWS Reports suggest US Secretary of State Marco Rubio may visit India again around October 2026, with discussions underway on holding a Quad Leaders' Summit on the margins of a G20-related event in the United States.

- The US holds the G20 presidency in 2026; the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting is scheduled in Atlanta, Georgia (October 30–31, 2026), and the G20 Leaders' Summit is planned for December 14–15, 2026, in Miami, Florida.
- The Quad (India, US, Japan, Australia) has not held a Leaders'-level summit in some time; recent Quad engagement has largely been at the Foreign Ministers' level.
- Rubio earlier visited India in May 2026 for a Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting, where outcomes included a critical minerals initiative (up to \$20 billion in mobilised support) and an Indo-Pacific Energy Security initiative.
- India-US ties have been strained by tariff disputes, US outreach to Pakistan, and uncertainty over America's China policy.
- UPSC Angle: Track the evolution of the Quad from a security dialogue to an economic/supply-chain-focused grouping, and the significance of India hosting/not hosting Quad summits.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Quad: members, origin (2004 tsunami) and key initiatives.

14. India's Engagement on Russia-Ukraine

WHY IN NEWS External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, speaking in Warsaw, Poland, said India remains in continuous touch with both Russia and Ukraine, exploring ideas to help de-escalate and eventually end the conflict.

- Jaishankar noted he visited Moscow recently and that PM Modi met President Putin in Bishkek, followed by Jaishankar's own visit to Kyiv.
- India's consistent position: the conflict cannot be resolved on the battlefield, only through dialogue and diplomacy.
- India has repeatedly stated it will meet its own energy security needs (buying discounted Russian oil) regardless of pressure, since it must serve 1.4 billion people.
- This reflects India's long-standing strategic autonomy and its role as a country trusted by both sides of the conflict.
- UPSC Angle: Link this to India's non-alignment/multi-alignment doctrine and past examples of Indian diplomatic mediation efforts.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's strategic autonomy and UN voting record on Ukraine.

15. Belgian PM on Tariffs & India-EU FTA

WHY IN NEWS Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever, during a visit to Mumbai for the India-Belgium High-Level Dialogue on the India-EU FTA, criticised unnamed countries for imposing "arbitrary" tariffs — widely seen as a veiled reference to US trade policy — while praising the India-EU Free Trade Agreement as a shield against such...

- The dialogue was jointly organised by the Port of Antwerp-Bruges, Belgium's Chancellery, and the Consulate-General of Belgium in Mumbai.
- Union Minister Piyush Goyal and Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis were also present.
- The India-EU FTA was under negotiation for 25 years before conclusion; Goyal described it as a "win-win" deal benefiting farmers, startups, and women entrepreneurs.
- A full Belgian delegation from ports, logistics, chemistry, and energy sectors is expected to visit India in February 2027.
- Belgium is among India's top trading partners within the EU.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-EU Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement and CBAM.

16. India–China Corps Commander Talks (Arunachal)

WHY IN NEWS India and China held their first-ever Corps Commander-level military talks in the Eastern Sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), at the Wacha (Vacha)-Damai Border Meeting Point in Arunachal Pradesh, on 6 September 2026, amid reported friction in the Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district.

- Until now, Corps Commander-level talks between the two armies were held almost exclusively at the Chushul-Moldo meeting point in Ladakh (Western Sector) — the mechanism that emerged after the 2020 Galwan clash.
- The Indian side at Wacha was represented by Lt Gen Girish Kalia, GOC of the Rangapahar-based 3 Corps. The other formation guarding the Arunachal LAC is the Tezpur-based 4 Corps.
- The talks follow recent diplomatic engagement between NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing, and reflect an effort to widen the border-management architecture beyond Ladakh.
- India and China continue to hold differing perceptions of the LAC, which is not a single demarcated, mutually agreed line — a recurring theme in India's border-management debates.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise LAC Eastern Sector, McMahon Line and border mechanisms.

17. India–US Trade Deal 'Very Close'

WHY IN NEWS US Ambassador to India Sergio Gorrer reiterated that the proposed India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) is "almost finalised in principle," with only legal and technical language pending — even as Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal insists India will not sign until it secures a preferential/comparative tariff advantage...

- India and the US had earlier discussed an 18% tariff rate framework, contingent on India getting a comparative advantage versus rival exporting nations — not a flat rate matching everyone else.
- Goyal will travel to the US in late September for the G-20 Trade Ministerial in Milwaukee (2–3 October) and hold bilateral talks with USTR Jamieson Greer.
- Trade talks are unfolding alongside separate US pressure on countries buying Russian oil (see Topic 11) and amid India's parallel FTA push — deals with New Zealand are set to go live soon, followed by the India-EU FTA.
- India currently has nine FTAs, covering economies worth roughly \$60 trillion in combined GDP.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-US trade, tariffs and bilateral trade agreements.

18. Banque Misr Sanctions

WHY IN NEWS The US Treasury, under its "Operation Economic Outcast" campaign, proposed cutting off the UAE branches of Banque Misr (Egypt's second-largest bank) from the US financial system, accusing them of facilitating Iran-linked transactions.

- The action uses Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act — invoked for the first time under this campaign — designating Banque Misr UAE as a foreign financial institution of "primary money-laundering concern."
- Treasury's FinCEN says the UAE branches processed ~\$1.8 billion in potentially Iran-linked transactions for 103 companies between January 2024 and June 2026, of which ~\$520 million occurred in the 12 months to June 2026 — spanning the period of the ongoing US-Iran war (which began 28 February 2026).
- The measure targets only Banque Misr's six UAE branches, not its operations in Egypt or elsewhere — signalling US caution about penalising a major regional partner.
- Alongside this, OFAC sanctioned the manager of Bank Melli's Dubai branch and a Hong Kong-based front company allegedly laundering funds for a sanctioned Iranian exchange house.
- Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent is separately pushing G-20 counterparts to join the economic isolation of Iran.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise US sanctions regime (OFAC) and secondary sanctions.

19. PM's 22-Country Diplomacy

WHY IN NEWS Union Home Minister Amit Shah, addressing a function in Panaji, Goa to confer the President's Colour on the Goa Police, linked India's economic resilience to PM Modi's global diplomatic outreach.



Map: South Asia — India's immediate neighbourhood

- PM Modi travelled to 22 countries over the past year; heads of state from around 15 countries visited India in the same period.
- India recorded a GDP growth rate of 7.8% in Q1 (April–June) of FY 2026-27.
- India has concluded nine Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) by 2026.
- Shah attributed India's steady growth to sustained dialogue amid global turbulence caused by the Russia-Ukraine war and the US-Iran-Gulf conflict.
- He reiterated PM Modi's vision of a "Viksit Bharat" by 2047 (India's 100th year of independence).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's foreign policy doctrines (Neighbourhood First, Act East).

20. Rise of AfD in Germany

WHY IN NEWS Germany's far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) made a historic breakthrough in the Saxony-Anhalt state election (6 September 2026), polling far ahead of the CDU and threatening to become a governing party at the state level for the first time.

- AfD was founded in 2013 as a Eurosceptic party; it failed to cross the 5% threshold that year but grew steadily — 12.6% (2017), 20.8% (2025 federal election, becoming the second-largest party).
- In the Saxony-Anhalt (Sept 2026) state poll, AfD-aligned support was estimated around 41%, roughly 20 points ahead of the CDU — enough for a potential outright majority if smaller parties (like the SPD) fall below the 5% threshold.
- The AfD's growth is built on anti-immigration and "remigration" (mass deportation) rhetoric, Euroscepticism, and dissatisfaction with mainstream economic policy.
- Germany's mainstream parties have long maintained the "Brandmauer" (firewall) — an informal pact never to cooperate with the AfD — but this consensus has been weakening (e.g., a 2025 CDU-backed asylum-tightening vote that passed with AfD support).
- Germany's domestic intelligence agency (the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution) has classified several state units of the AfD as confirmed right-wing extremist, and the national party as a suspected extremist organisation.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise far-right politics in Europe and the German Bundestag.

21. Houthi Attacks on Saudi Oil

WHY IN NEWS Yemen's Houthi rebels launched a wave of missile and drone strikes on four Saudi Arabian cities — Abha, Khamis Mushait, Jazan, and Najran — hitting oil facilities and utilities, wounding more than 70 people and forcing a temporary halt to operations at some Saudi energy sites.

- The Iran-aligned Houthis control most of Yemen's populated areas, including the capital, Sanaa.
- The strikes came after weeks of escalating clashes between the Houthis and Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces, effectively ending a four-year-old truce in Yemen's civil war.
- Saudi Arabia is the world's top oil exporter; even a localised disruption pushed Brent crude prices higher.
- This is not the first such episode — a comparable 2019 strike on Aramco's Abqaiq and Khurais facilities had briefly knocked out roughly 5.7 million barrels per day, about 5% of global oil supply at the time.
- The escalation adds fresh pressure on global shipping through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, already strained by parallel disruptions near the Strait of Hormuz.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Yemen conflict, Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb.

22. Putin-Modi Talks Before BRICS

WHY IN NEWS Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed that Russian President Vladimir Putin will hold bilateral talks with PM Modi in New Delhi on Friday, September 11, 2026, ahead of the 18th BRICS Summit.

- India is the BRICS Chair for 2026 and will host the summit in New Delhi.
- The bilateral agenda is expected to cover India–Russia trade and investment, the Ukraine conflict, and reportedly the potential sale of Russia's Su-57 fighter jets to India.
- Peskov described the Modi–Putin relationship as consistently "pragmatic" and open on sensitive issues.
- A significant proportion of Russia–BRICS trade is now settled in national currencies, reflecting continued efforts to work around Western sanctions.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India–Russia annual summits and BRICS.

23. Nepal's Climate Compensation Demand

WHY IN NEWS Following a devastating flash flood — triggered by a glacial collapse on the China–Nepal border and described locally as a "Himalayan Tsunami" — Nepal is seeking climate compensation from India, China, and the United States, the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters.

- The flood, centred on the Bhotekoshi/Trishuli river basins, killed close to 1,200 people, with thousands still missing.
- Nepal PM Balen(dra) Shah may raise the issue at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), shifting Kathmandu's diplomatic framing from "aid" to "justice and compensation."
- Nepal has approached the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), a climate finance mechanism operating under the UNFCCC.
- Nepal contributes only around 0.1% of global GHG emissions yet remains acutely vulnerable to glacial and flood hazards — a textbook case of climate injustice.
- India and China provided immediate relief assistance and rescue support, which Nepal has separately acknowledged.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Loss and Damage Fund (COP27) and climate finance.

24. Iran Strikes Vessels Near Hormuz

WHY IN NEWS Iran's Revolutionary Guards reportedly attacked more than a dozen vessels — including US ships and oil tankers — attempting to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, pushing Brent crude above \$101 a barrel, the highest level since May 2026.



Map: Strait of Hormuz with shipping lanes and maritime borders

- The Strait of Hormuz, between Iran and Oman, normally carries about one-fifth of the world's oil supply and connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea.
- The ongoing US–Israel–Iran conflict (active since February 28, 2026) has cut daily transits through the strait from an average of over 130 to just a handful — the UKMTO reports no more than five vessels/day passing since the war began.

- The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects an average shut-in of 5.7 million barrels/day through end-2026, with pre-war export levels unlikely to return before Q2 2027; global oil inventories have fallen by roughly 400 million barrels in 2026.
- Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei has publicly defended the Hormuz blockade as a strategic "lever" that "must continue to be used" against the US and its allies.
- Goldman Sachs raised its Brent forecast to \$85/barrel for December 2026 (from \$80) and has warned prices could spike above \$120/barrel in 2027 if Gulf output stays ~4 million barrels/day below pre-war levels.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Strait of Hormuz, Strategic Petroleum Reserves and Brent crude.

25. BRICS Sherpas & Delhi Declaration

WHY IN NEWS Ahead of the 18th BRICS Summit (September 12–13, 2026, Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi), BRICS Sherpas and Sous-Sherpas met to bridge sharp differences — chiefly between Iran and the UAE — over how the Delhi Declaration should characterise the West Asia conflict.

- 2026 marks 20 years of BRICS and India's fourth BRICS Chairship (after 2012, 2016, 2021).
- India's Sherpa is Sudhakar Dalela, Secretary (Economic Relations), MEA; the first Sherpa meeting of the year was held in New Delhi in February 2026.
- 2026 theme: "Building Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."
- Disagreement over West Asia language earlier prevented BRICS foreign and trade ministers from issuing a joint statement; the friction is chiefly between Iran and the UAE/Saudi Arabia bloc.
- Belarus (a BRICS partner country) took part in Sherpa-level talks for the first time in 2026, signalling continued expansion of the BRICS Partner Country framework alongside full members.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise BRICS: members, expansion and India's 2026 chairship.

26. UK Ban on Settlement Goods

WHY IN NEWS The UK, under Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband, announced a ban on the import of all goods produced in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, alongside sanctions on individuals and companies involved in settlement expansion — one of Britain's strongest moves since it recognised Palestinian statehood in 2025.

- The UK explicitly labelled settler activity as "ethnic cleansing" and reaffirmed that West Bank settlements are "unlawful," aligning with the 2024 ICJ advisory opinion.
- Measures include a ban on settlement goods, a ban on advertising settlement properties, sanctions on extremist settlers, and further

restrictions on arms export licences linked to the occupation.

- Approximately 750,000 Israeli settlers live across the West Bank and East Jerusalem; UK trade specifically sourced from settlements is estimated at a small fraction of UK-Israel's roughly £6 billion annual trade.
- Israel responded by announcing closure of the British consulate in East Jerusalem.
- The UK, France, and Canada are among 12 countries that have jointly backed restrictions on trade with illegal Israeli settlements, marking coordinated Western pressure rather than unilateral UK action.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Israel–Palestine: West Bank, Oslo Accords and two-state solution.

27. Xi's India Visit & BRICS Bilateral

WHY IN NEWS Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in New Delhi to attend the 18th BRICS Leaders' Summit, hosted at Bharat Mandapam under India's 2026 BRICS chairship — his first visit to India in nearly seven years and the first since the 2020 Galwan Valley clash.

- This is the 18th BRICS Summit, marking 20 years since the grouping's founding; India is chairing for the fourth time.
- The theme is centred on resilience, innovation, cooperation, and sustainability.
- The Modi–Xi meeting is expected to cover the Line of Actual Control (LAC) situation, trade imbalances, and steps to normalise ties strained since Galwan.
- The visit comes despite recent irritants, including a probe recommendation into a major Chinese electronics company's India operations.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India–China relations and Panchsheel.

28. Houthis Advance Along Yemen Coast

WHY IN NEWS Iran-aligned Houthi forces have seized Yemen's port city of Mocha and advanced toward the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, raising fresh alarm over Red Sea shipping and Saudi oil exports.

- The Houthis have reached the Hanish Islands, gaining leverage over Bab el-Mandeb — one of the world's most critical shipping chokepoints, on the opposite side of the Arabian Peninsula from the Strait of Hormuz.
- The UN Special Envoy for Yemen has warned of "a new and more dangerous phase" in the conflict.
- Saudi Arabia has increasingly relied on the Red Sea route as the Hormuz corridor faces disruption from the wider Iran conflict; Brent crude prices have risen on the news.
- Yemeni, Iranian, and regional sources say the Houthi advance came with direct guidance from Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Yemen's geography, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

29. Challenges for BRICS

WHY IN NEWS As India hosts the 18th BRICS Summit, editorials highlight the bloc's core paradox: India wants BRICS to amplify the Global South's voice without becoming an anti-Western, China–Russia-dominated platform.

- BRICS now has 11 full members plus an expanding list of partner countries with widely varying political systems and strategic interests, making consensus increasingly difficult.
- India needs China inside BRICS for the grouping's global heft, even as the two remain strategic rivals with an unresolved border and deep concerns over Chinese dominance of critical supply chains.
- Intra-BRICS trade has grown significantly since 2003, but a comprehensive, bloc-wide trade agreement remains absent; UNCTAD notes persistent gaps in policy coordination.
- Debates continue over de-dollarisation and a potential BRICS currency — an idea India remains cautious about.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise BRICS institutions (NDB, CRA) and expansion.

30. Modi on Weaponisation of Tech; Xi's Open AI

WHY IN NEWS At the concluding session of the summit, PM Modi cautioned that the "weaponisation of technology and critical minerals can hinder our shared progress," stressing the need for inclusive access to technology.

- In contrast, Chinese President Xi Jinping used his address to unveil a five-point initiative, the centrepiece of which is a BRICS AI open-source community — with China positioning itself as the lead architect. The initiative includes cooperation on large language models, specialised AI training programmes, and the creation of an open AI ecosystem for the Global South. Xi also called for BRICS nations to leverage ties with emerging markets to build a large, integrated, and resilient supply chain.
- Xi's open-source AI proposal is one of five points in his BRICS initiative — the others cover manufacturing, trade and supply chain integration.
- China will host the 19th BRICS Summit, meaning Beijing will chair the AI open-source community's rollout.
- Modi's "weaponisation" remark used two nouns together — technology and critical minerals — a phrase worth remembering verbatim for Prelims statement-based questions.
- The concluding session was the second day of the two-day summit (Sept 12–13, 2026).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise BRICS and global AI governance.

31. Modi's 10-Point Global South Roadmap

WHY IN NEWS Opening the summit, PM Modi argued that global governance today resembles a "pyramid of privilege" — where power is concentrated at the top while the Global South, most affected by global crises, has little say in decision-making. He called for transforming this into a "platform of partnership," built on three pillars:

- Modi proposed that BRICS jointly draft 10 proposals for global governance reform, to be consolidated into a BRICS Reform Roadmap by the next summit (to be hosted by China). He also floated a Seafarers' Emergency Support Network to protect mariners caught in regional conflict zones, a BRICS continuity and implementation mechanism with a digital repository to track outcomes, and a fresh 20-year agenda for the grouping.
- The 3 R's of Modi's reform pillars: Representation, Responsiveness, Rule-making — a classic Prelims match-the-following trap.
- Modi's remarks were made at the opening session, themed "Inclusive Global Governance and Strengthening Multilateralism" (Sept 12, 2026).
- The BRICS Reform Roadmap (10 proposals) is targeted for completion by the next summit, i.e., hosted by China.
- New proposal: "Seafarers' Emergency Support Network" — for mariners affected by regional conflicts (Ukraine, West Asia, Black Sea).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Voice of Global South Summits and G20 African Union inclusion.

32. Bilaterals with Egypt, Indonesia, South Africa

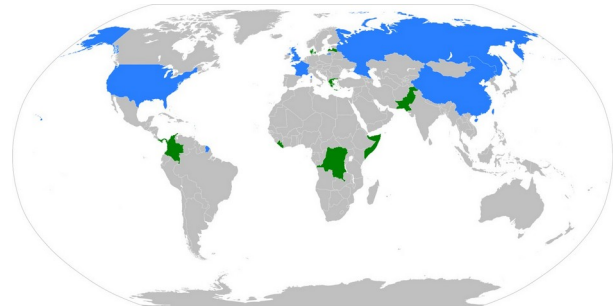
WHY IN NEWS Beyond the multilateral sessions, PM Modi held an extraordinary 15 bilateral meetings over three days — one of the busiest diplomatic sprints of his tenure. Key highlights:

- Egypt (Abdel Fattah El-Sisi): Reviewed the India-Egypt Strategic Partnership, covering trade, investment, defence and security, technology, and connectivity.
- South Africa (Cyril Ramaphosa): Discussed cooperation in mining and critical minerals, infrastructure, food security, and digital public infrastructure.
- Indonesia (Prabowo Subianto): Agreed to keep strengthening the partnership "across a wide range of sectors."
- Additional bilaterals included the Philippines, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Uganda, Ethiopia, Malaysia, and the UAE, spanning defence, energy, critical minerals, and emerging technology.
- PM Modi held 15 bilateral meetings in 3 days on the summit sidelines — a number worth remembering for "how many" style Prelims questions.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's strategic partnerships and IBSA.

33. UN Chief Backs UNSC Expansion

WHY IN NEWS In a significant diplomatic boost for India, UN Secretary-General António Guterres backed calls for UNSC reform at the summit, stating that global institutions must reflect "today's economic, demographic and geopolitical realities" rather than remain anchored in 1945.



Map: UN Security Council — permanent (blue) and non-permanent (green) members

- Modi, in his opening address, had already declared that "UNSC reforms can no longer wait," calling for fixed timelines and concrete outcomes.
- Important nuance for Mains: This is diplomatic momentum, not a resolution — India has not been granted a permanent UNSC seat. The Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) process remains stalled, and the "Uniting for Consensus" group continues to block movement.
- Modi and Guterres held a bilateral meeting on September 11, 2026 — a day before the summit formally opened.
- Guterres's second five-year term as UN Secretary-General ends in December 2026 — a useful date to note.
- The reform process is formally called Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN), stalled for years due to the "Uniting for Consensus" (UfC) grouping.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise UNSC composition, veto and G4/UfC positions.

34. Iran-UAE Reconciliation

WHY IN NEWS In a notable ice-breaker on the sidelines of the summit, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian met Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, stating: "We agreed to put the past behind us and look to the future." Relations between the two nations had been strained after Iran targeted US bases in the...

- The meeting came just two days ahead of an Iran-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) meeting in Oman — the first such dialogue since the conflict began — to discuss safe transit through the Strait of Hormuz. Separately, Pezeshkian urged BRICS to act against "unilateral and inhumane sanctions," and the summit's New Delhi Declaration 2026 expressed concern over escalation in West Asia while calling for restraint.

- Pezeshkian met Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on the BRICS sidelines — note the exact name, as UPSC often tests current officeholders.
- The Iran-GCC meeting in Oman was scheduled for September 14, 2026 — the first such dialogue since the West Asia conflict began.
- Agenda of the Iran-GCC talks: safe transit through the Strait of Hormuz.
- The New Delhi Declaration 2026 is a 140-point document adopted by BRICS leaders, covering governance, terrorism, trade, and climate change.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Gulf geopolitics and the GCC.

35. Wang Yi: 'Partners, Not Rivals'

WHY IN NEWS On the sidelines of the 18th BRICS Summit hosted by India in New Delhi (12–13 September 2026), Chinese President Xi Jinping and PM Narendra Modi held bilateral talks.

- Xi described China and India as "partners for cooperation, not rivals," each offering the other development opportunities rather than threats.
- Modi reportedly told Xi that India views China's development as an opportunity, not a challenge, and that India's China policy is independent of third-party influence.
- Both sides agreed to maintain peace and stability along the border, support each other's rotating BRICS chairmanships, and strengthen coordination in the UN, SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation), and G20.
- This is Xi's visit to India for the BRICS Summit, distinct from the SCO Summit in Tianjin (August 2025), where a similar "development partners, not rivals" formulation was used.
- BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the UAE; India hosted the 18th Summit in 2026.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-China dialogue mechanisms.

36. India-Vietnam Defence Ties

WHY IN NEWS At the 19th India-Vietnam Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) held on 15 September 2026, External Affairs Minister S.

- Talks were held under the India-Vietnam Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- Both sides discussed co-production of Indian defence equipment, building on Vietnam's continuing interest in the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile.
- Discussions also covered the South China Sea, where China's expansive sovereignty claims conflict with Vietnam, the Philippines, and Brunei; both countries reaffirmed support for a peaceful settlement under UNCLOS (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea).
- Vietnam is a key pillar of India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific strategy.

- Earlier cooperation includes gifting of INS Kirpan (missile corvette) to the Vietnam People's Navy and joint work in AI and quantum technology.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Act East Policy and India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

37. 18-Hour Power Supply to Nepal

WHY IN NEWS Following the Bhotekoshi-Trishuli flash flood of 26 August 2026 — triggered by a glacial mountain collapse on the China-Nepal border — India's Ministry of Power approved emergency electricity exports to help Nepal cope with a severe domestic power shortfall.

- India approved export of up to 654 MW of power to the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) for 18 hours a day (00:00–18:00 hrs), effective 13 September 2026 through 31 December 2026.
- Supply routes: up to 600 MW via the Muzaffarpur-Dhalkebar 400 kV double-circuit line and up to 54 MW via the Tanakpur-Mahendranagar 132 kV single-circuit line.
- The flood damaged seven operating hydropower projects and five solar plants, disrupting roughly 275 MW of Nepal's generation capacity — wiping out nearly a tenth of the country's total capacity.
- The disaster killed nearly 1,400 people across Nepal and Tibet, with thousands displaced; Nepal normally meets almost 100% of its energy needs via hydropower and had been a net power exporter to India before the floods.
- India will review 2027 export volumes in December 2026.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-Nepal power trade and cross-border electricity guidelines.

38. Hilsa Exports to Bangladesh

WHY IN NEWS In an unprecedented reversal of the traditional hilsa trade, India has exported around 500 tonnes of hilsa to Bangladesh over the past two months (with another 150–200 tonnes expected soon) — most of it sourced from Gujarat via Bharuch port, not from Bengal.

- Historically, Bangladesh exports hilsa to India (especially ahead of Durga Puja); this year, the flow has reversed due to lower hilsa production in Bangladesh.
- Gujarat hilsa (caught in rivers/estuaries connected to the Arabian Sea, near the Tapti and Narmada) has high roe (egg) content, which has limited demand in the Indian market but is highly prized in Bangladesh, especially in Chattogram and Sylhet.
- Some consignments also routed via the Howrah wholesale fish market, West Bengal.
- Bangladesh's National Board of Revenue data shows hilsa imports from India began in July 2025.
- Last year, Bangladesh had permitted export of 1,200 tonnes of hilsa to India ahead of Durga Puja; it remains unclear if that will repeat this festive season.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India–Bangladesh relations and Hilsa ecology.

39. Saudi–Houthi War Intensifies

WHY IN NEWS The long-simmering Yemen civil war has sharply escalated in September 2026: Houthi rebels (Iran-backed) launched a ground offensive along the Red Sea coast and fired missiles/drones at Saudi oil facilities and cities, while Saudi-backed government forces and the Saudi-led coalition retaliated with airstrikes.

- Houthi attacks reportedly wounded 70+ people and ignited fires at oil facilities in Saudi Arabia's southern provinces (including near the Jizan refinery, capacity 400,000 barrels/day).
- Houthis seized strategic ground near the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, a critical chokepoint linking the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden — vital for global oil and container shipping.
- This follows the collapse of the 2022 UN-brokered truce, and comes amid the broader 2026 Iran war context, in which Houthis (aligned with Iran) had earlier resumed missile strikes on Israel (March 2026).
- Analysts warn of a repeat of the 2015–2022 Saudi-led coalition intervention in Yemen, with Pakistan's recent defence pact with Saudi Arabia raising the possibility of wider regional involvement.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Yemen war and Red Sea security.

40. Independence Push in the UK

WHY IN NEWS On 14 September 2026, the First Ministers of Scotland (John Swinney), Wales (Rhun ap Iorwerth), and Northern Ireland (Michelle O'Neill) met in Cardiff and signed a joint memorandum demanding the right to hold referendums on their constitutional future — a first, since pro-independence parties now simultaneously govern...

- The trigger: new UK PM Andy Burnham signalled openness to a second Scottish independence referendum if public opinion shifts decisively.
- Scotland's Deputy First Minister Jenny Gilruth claimed the "trigger point" for another referendum has already been met.
- 2014 precedent: Scotland voted 55% (No) to 45% (Yes) against independence — billed then as a "once-in-a-generation" vote.
- As of March 2026 polling: 56% opposed independence, 44% in favour.
- This is a demand for a legal mechanism/right to hold future referendums — not an immediate declaration of independence.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise UK constituent nations and devolution.

41. Pakistan Ship Collision & 1991 Agreement

WHY IN NEWS On 15–16 September 2026, a Pakistan Navy vessel collided with an Indian Navy unit in international waters of the northern Arabian Sea during a routine Indian surveillance mission. India summoned Pakistan's Chargé d'Affaires and lodged a formal protest.

- India says the Pakistani vessel's conduct was in "direct contravention" of Article 10 of the Agreement between India and Pakistan on Advance Notice on Military Exercises, Manoeuvres and Troops Movements, April 1991.
- The 1991 Agreement is a bilateral Confidence-Building Measure (CBM) meant to prevent military misunderstandings between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.
- Article 10 governs naval ships/submarines operating in international waters — requiring a minimum distance of about 3 nautical miles (~5.56 km) to avoid dangerous encounters.
- No major damage was reported; neither side has signalled escalation.
- Historical precedent: In 2011, India invoked the same agreement after PNS Babur carried out a risky manoeuvre near INS Godavari.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India–Pakistan maritime agreements and Sir Creek.

42. Red Sea War Spreads (Yemen)

WHY IN NEWS Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis exchanged fresh cross-border strikes this week, with Yemenis taking to boats across the Bab el-Mandeb strait to escape fighting as the spreading Middle East war creates new threats to global oil supplies.

- The fighting has raised fresh concerns about oil supplies, threatening the Red Sea route that serves as the main alternative to Gulf exports while Strait of Hormuz traffic remains constrained.
- The Houthis have seized Yemen's entire Red Sea coast in a rapid advance and claim to have shot down a Saudi F-15 fighter jet.
- More than 80 people have reportedly been wounded, alongside the first Saudi-side civilian death from drone debris in Taif.
- The IOM estimates over 100,000 Yemenis have been displaced by the latest fighting, mostly within Yemen itself.
- Bab el-Mandeb | Strait connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden; nicknamed "Gate of Tears"

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Red Sea littoral states and chokepoints.

43. Russia Sanctions Bill

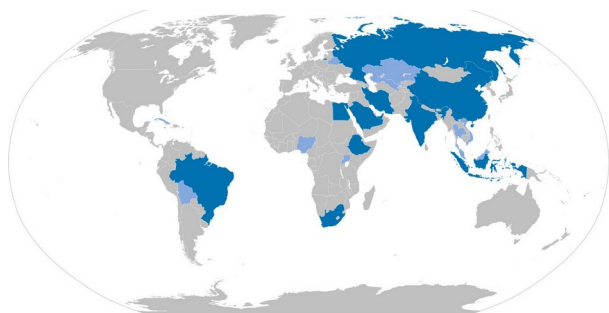
WHY IN NEWS The Trump administration has confirmed backing for a sweeping Russia sanctions bill that could subject India to steep tariffs over its purchases of Russian oil.

- The bill (the "Sanctioning Russia Act"), co-authored by Senators Lindsey Graham and Richard Blumenthal, would authorise tariffs of up to 500% on imports from countries buying Russian energy.
- If enacted, it would represent the most sweeping secondary tariff authority over third-country trade ever granted to a US president.
- Graham has repeatedly named India and China as central targets, noting the two countries together buy around 70% of Russian oil, gas and petroleum products.
- A former US Treasury sanctions official has called the use of tariffs as a sanctions tool "untested," warning India may continue importing Russian oil even at the risk of US retaliation.
- Distinguish this proposed bill from CATSA/CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, 2017) — an older, separate US law affecting defence and energy dealings with Russia, Iran and North Korea.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise CAATSA and secondary sanctions on energy buyers.

44. BRICS Evolution & India's Leadership (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS PIB Backgrounder dated 10 September 2026 | GS Paper II — International Relations



Map: BRICS members (dark blue) and partner countries (light blue)

- India is chairing BRICS for the fourth time in 2026 and is hosting the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi on 12–13 September 2026, under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability." The Summit also marks 20 years since BRICS was conceived (as BRIC in 2006).
- BRICS began as an informal grouping of large emerging economies aiming to increase their voice in global economic governance and act as a platform for South-South cooperation.
- Origin: The acronym "BRIC" was coined by Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill in 2001 to

describe Brazil, Russia, India and China as rising economic powers.

- First BRIC Summit: Yekaterinburg, Russia, 2009 — prompted by the 2008 global financial crisis and calls for a more representative IMF/World Bank.
- 2011: South Africa joined, and the grouping became BRICS.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise BRICS history (2006/2009), NDB and expansion.

45. Jaishankar at UNGA & Sanctions Law

WHY IN NEWS External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is travelling to New York to lead India's delegation for the high-level week of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). His address is scheduled for 26 September. He was in Zurich on 21 September for a stopover briefing on India-Switzerland-Liechtenstein ties. The...

- The US Senate first passed a bipartisan bill last month; the House then passed it, and President Trump signed it into law.
- The law allows tariffs of up to 100 per cent on major buyers of Russian energy, which puts India and China in focus.
- The Ministry of External Affairs has said India stays committed to the energy security of its 1.4 billion people and will keep diversifying its sources of supply.
- On 3 September, in Kyiv, Jaishankar said the Russia-Ukraine war will not be settled by whether countries buy or avoid Russian oil, and that dialogue and diplomacy are the only route.
- Reports say Jaishankar will also meet several counterparts on the UNGA sidelines, including Canada's foreign minister, with a trade pact under discussion.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise UNGA sessions and India-US relations.

46. Ukraine Drone Attacks on Russia

WHY IN NEWS On 20 September 2026, the final day of Russia's three-day State Duma election, Ukraine launched what Moscow's mayor called the biggest drone attack yet on the capital. It was the first Duma vote since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

- Scale: Russia's defence ministry claimed to have shot down well over a thousand Ukrainian drones overnight; figures in reports ranged from about 1,110 to more than 1,900 projectiles of various kinds. The Moscow mayor said over 1,600 drones were downed since Saturday, about 450 of them heading for Moscow.
- Casualties: at least three dead in the Moscow region, plus two in the Russian-held part of Kherson, including an election official.
- Target: the Gazpromneft Moscow Oil Refinery in Kapotnya was damaged; Kyiv said key oil facilities are what fund Russia's war effort.
- Russian strikes: attacks on Ukraine continued; in the Kyiv region alone three children and a

woman were killed. Zelensky said Russia used over 2,000 attack drones, 1,700 aerial bombs and 19 missiles in one week. Russia vowed to intensify strikes on Kyiv.

- Election: early results showed the ruling United Russia party ahead with around 57.5 per cent; other permitted parties largely back the government on major issues.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise drone warfare and Russia-Ukraine conflict geography.

47. Xi's Visit to the US

WHY IN NEWS Chinese President Xi Jinping is making a state visit to the United States from September 23–25, 2026, at the invitation of President Donald Trump — his first visit to the US in nearly three years, and his first formal state visit to Washington since 2015.

- Dates & venue: Xi arrives in the US on September 23; the main summit with President Trump takes place at the White House on September 24, 2026.
- China's characterisation: Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun called the reciprocal exchange of visits by the two presidents within a six-month span an event of "historic, milestone significance," stressing China's willingness to build a "constructive strategic and stable relationship."
- Reciprocity: This follows Trump's state visit to Beijing from May 13–15, 2026, during which the two sides had announced a "Constructive Strategic and Stable Relationship" framework.
- This is the 8th face-to-face Trump–Xi meeting since their first encounter at Mar-a-Lago in 2017.
- Core agenda: Trade — notably the one-year US–China trade ceasefire (negotiated in South Korea) is due to expire in November 2026; discussions are also expected on rare-earth minerals, AI/advanced technology cooperation, and resumption of arms-control and military dialogue. Taiwan remains a flashpoint issue for Beijing.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise US–China relations and global order.

48. India–New Zealand FTA

WHY IN NEWS The India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will formally enter into force on October 20, 2026, after both countries completed domestic ratification procedures — New Zealand's Parliament passed the enabling legislation on 17 September 2026 by a 93–29 vote.

- Signed: New Delhi, 27 April 2026, after negotiations concluded in just nine months — among India's fastest-concluded FTAs with a developed country.
- Entry into force: October 20, 2026 (announced by Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal).
- Market access for India: 100% of Indian exports get duty-free access to New Zealand from day one

— benefiting textiles, apparel, leather & footwear, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, processed foods, marine products, and gems & jewellery.

- Market access for New Zealand: India has offered tariff liberalisation on 70% of tariff lines, covering 95% of New Zealand's exports to India (kiwifruit, apples, meat, wool, coal, forestry products), phased in over time; most dairy products remain protected, though re-exports and bulk infant formula get duty-free treatment.
- Investment commitment: New Zealand has committed to facilitating USD 20 billion in investment into India over 15 years.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's FTAs (UAE, Australia, EFTA, UK) and their features.

49. US Tariff Law on Russian Oil

WHY IN NEWS A US Supreme Court ruling has reshaped the legal landscape around the 25% additional tariff that Washington had imposed on India over its Russian crude oil purchases — with major implications for India's energy security strategy.

- The original tariff: In August 2025, President Trump imposed a 25% additional "secondary" tariff on Indian-origin goods under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), explicitly citing India's continued purchase of Russian-origin oil. This tariff was rescinded effective February 7, 2026 following an interim US–India trade understanding.
- The Supreme Court ruling: On February 20, 2026, in *Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump and Trump v. V.O.S. Selections, Inc.*, the US Supreme Court ruled 6–3 that the President lacks authority under IEEPA to impose tariffs at all — tariff-setting is a "branch of the taxing power" reserved for Congress under Article I of the US Constitution.
- Effect on the India–Russia–oil tariff: Although already rescinded, the ruling retroactively confirmed the 25% Russia–oil tariff was unlawful "as imposed," opening the door to potential importer refund claims.
- What replaced IEEPA tariffs: Hours after the ruling, Trump invoked Section 122 of the Trade Act, 1974 to impose a blanket global tariff (initially 10%, later raised toward 15%) — a different, time-limited statutory authority (capped at 15% and 150 days under law) than the now-defunct IEEPA route.
- Impact on India's oil imports: Analysts noted India could resume higher volumes of discounted Russian crude (previously curtailed to around 800,000–1.16 million barrels/day in early 2026, down from an average of 1.71 million barrels/day in 2025), since the principal legal threat via IEEPA had been neutralised.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise secondary tariffs and India's energy security.

50. Trump at UNGA: Iran Threat

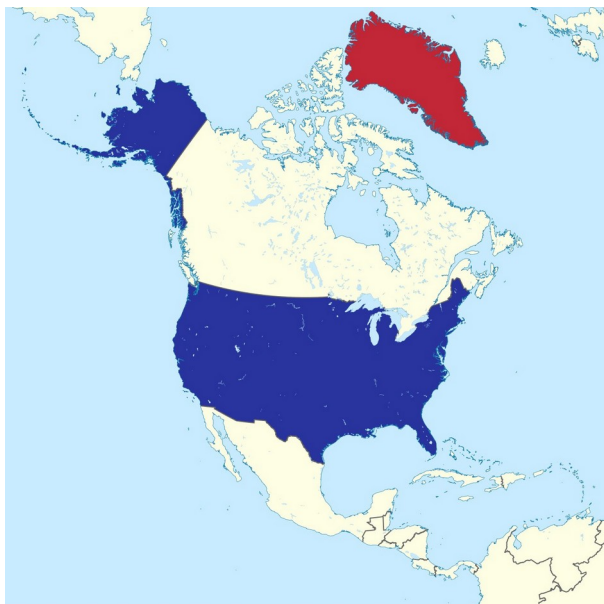
WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – International Relations, Effect of Policies of Developed Countries on India's Interests

- Context: Speaking to world leaders at the UN General Assembly in New York on 22 September, President Donald Trump said he faces a "big decision": either strike a deal with Iran to end the war or destroy the Islamic Republic. The threat came alongside a defence of the war launched by the United States and Israel in February, at a time when allies have begun openly questioning whether the US remains a credible partner.
- Trump predicted a peace deal would come after the November 3 US midterm elections, and urged other nations to join America in economically isolating Iran to force it to negotiate.
- Since the war began nearly seven months ago, Trump has repeatedly threatened devastating attacks only to pull back hoping for a deal, backing off large threats on at least eight occasions.
- In April, he had threatened to wipe out Iran's entire civilisation before backing down, citing negotiations through Pakistani mediators.
- Iran's IRGC responded that Washington would gain nothing but failure from any new attack.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise UNGA and US-Iran relations.

51. US-Denmark-Greenland Security Pact

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Bilateral/Multilateral Agreements; GS Paper 1 – Geography (Arctic)



Map: United States (blue) and Greenland (red)

- Context: On the sidelines of the UNGA, Trump signed an agreement with Denmark and Greenland aimed at strengthening Arctic and North Atlantic security, opening the way for more US bases on the island while easing tensions over his repeated demands that it become part of the United States.

- Signatories: President Trump, Greenland Premier Jens-Frederik Nielsen and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.
- Sovereignty: The agreement reaffirms Greenland's sovereignty as part of the Kingdom of Denmark but gives the US broad access to the island's airspace and territory.
- Military footprint: It clears the way for two new US military bases, allows broader US military movement including undersea access, and provides for a missile defence presence tied to the planned "Golden Dome" system.
- Legal basis: The deal amends, rather than replaces, the 1951 US-Denmark defence agreement that has governed the American military presence in Greenland for over seven decades.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Greenland (autonomous Danish territory) and Arctic geopolitics.

52. Hormuz Dialogue & Houthis at Bab el-Mandeb

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR; GS Paper 1 – Geography (Strategic Chokepoints); GS Paper 3 – Energy Security



Map: Bab-el-Mandeb strait between Yemen and Djibouti/Eritrea

- Context: A senior Iranian official said Iran could reopen the Strait of Hormuz to Gulf shipping within days if the US lifts its blockade, calling the UN gathering a "golden opportunity" to renew diplomacy. Simultaneously, Yemen's Houthis are fighting to consolidate control over the southern chokepoint of the Red Sea.
- Iran said it could reopen Hormuz within seven days if the US eased military pressure and lifted its blockade on Iranian ports; it had sent its latest proposal via mediators on 16 September.
- No face-to-face US-Iran meetings are known to have occurred since July, when an interim deal to end the war collapsed weeks after being signed by Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.
- A Qatari proposal on the table would bring Iran and the Arab Gulf states into a common security architecture.
- The Gulf states want shipping through Hormuz restored but are wary of giving Iran too much

power; all except Oman host large US bases that have come under Iranian attack during the war.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise chokepoints: Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb, Suez.

53. Jaishankar: Multilateralism Under Stress

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Important International Institutions, India and the UN

- Context: Addressing the inaugural Partners for Multilateralism Summit on the sidelines of the 81st UNGA, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the world faces a period of significant structural change marked by heightened competition and geopolitical tensions.
- He noted that the long-expected rebalancing of the world order has taken on an entirely different character because of extreme competition, geopolitical tensions and actual conflicts.
- The "4F crisis": He highlighted fuel, food, fertiliser and finance as challenges that cannot be left unaddressed.
- Reformed multilateralism: He argued multilateralism works best when international law and norms are scrupulously observed, and that both its advocacy and practice must be strengthened.
- He called more participative deliberations and transparent decision-making in the UN system overdue.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise UN reform and India's multilateral engagement.

54. Evolution of the Houthis

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – International Relations, West Asia; GS Paper 3 – Maritime Security, Non-State Actors

- 1990s origins: The movement grew out of the "Believing Youth" founded in Saada (northern Yemen) by Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, a Zaydi Shia revivalist opposing Saudi Wahhabi influence and the Saleh government's alignment with the US.
- 2004–2010: Six wars with the Saleh government; Hussein al-Houthi was killed in 2004 and leadership passed to his brother Abdul-Malik al-Houthi. The movement formally calls itself Ansar Allah.
- 2014–15: Captured Sanaa; a Saudi-led coalition intervened in March 2015.
- 2017: Killed former ally Ali Abdullah Saleh.
- 2023–25: Red Sea shipping attacks in "solidarity" with Gaza, prompting US-led operations.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Yemen (Ansar Allah) and the Red Sea region.

55. Iran Won't Surrender: Pezeshkian

WHY IN NEWS Addressing the UN General Assembly, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian declared that Tehran would never surrender to the United States, while stressing that it still believes in diplomacy. His speech came a day after US President Donald Trump, from the same podium, threatened to "annihilate" Iran.

- The war: Launched by the US and Israel in February 2026 as "Operation Epic Fury", the war has run for nearly seven months, killed thousands, disrupted global energy supplies and spilled over into Lebanon and, more recently, Yemen.
- Historic first: This was the first time in the UN's 81-year history that a leader of a country at war with the United States addressed the body at its New York headquarters.
- Leadership change in Iran: Pezeshkian accused Washington of "terrorism" over the killing of former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on the war's first day. His son, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, succeeded him but has not yet appeared in public.
- Back-channel diplomacy: Iran engaged Washington through a Qatari mediator, setting conditions including an end to the war on all fronts.
- Aviation sanctions flashpoint: The US announced secondary sanctions on any country allowing Iranian flights; Iran warned it could disrupt neighbouring airports if they comply.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Iran's political system and US-Iran conflict.

56. Jaishankar-Rubio Talks

WHY IN NEWS External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in New York on the sidelines of the 81st UNGA and conveyed India's interests and concerns about the new US sanctions law. The two also discussed the Gulf and Ukraine.

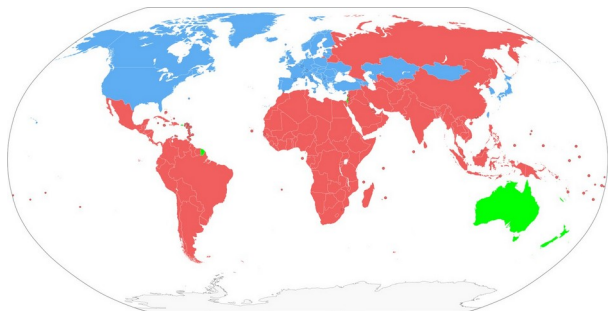
- The law: The Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 (SRIA), signed by President Trump on 18 September 2026, expands sanctions, tariffs and other restrictions on Russia and extends existing sanctions on Iran.
- The 100% tariff provision: It authorises tariffs of up to 100% on countries buying Russian oil and gas, including India and China. It does not impose them automatically; action depends on the administration using this authority.
- India's position: Energy sourcing is driven by the need to secure affordable energy for 1.4 billion people, based on diversified supplies and market conditions.
- Dependence on Russia: India, the world's third-largest crude buyer, has sourced over half its imports from Russia in some recent months, though refiners are diversifying towards the US, Brazil, Canada, Venezuela and Africa.

- US pitch: Rubio said the US is well placed to help partners meet their energy security needs.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership.

57. Global South in Crises

WHY IN NEWS Chairing the High-Level Meeting of Like-Minded Global South Countries and Friends on the sidelines of the 81st UNGA (22 September 2026), Jaishankar said the Global South may be in the front row of global crises but sits in the back row of decision-making.



Map: Global North (blue) and Global South (red)

- Diagnosis: Global institutions built for an earlier era still reflect that era's power structures.
- Current challenges: Conflicts, supply chain disruptions, rising trade barriers, fragmented investment flows, climate shocks and pressure on international law.
- Failure of multilateralism: Just when the world needed multilateralism, it has seen it being dismantled.
- Preventing strategic "choke points" in supply chains, finance and connectivity
- Protecting energy security

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Global South, G77 and NAM.

58. India-Canada Trade Talks

WHY IN NEWS India and Canada have fast-tracked talks on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and aim to sign it by December 2026, marking a clear reset after the 2023 diplomatic freeze.

- Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Canada's International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu concluded the fourth round of CEPA talks in Mumbai on 18-19 September 2026. The fifth round begins 5 October. Goyal called the next 90 days "defining" for ties, and PM Modi is expected to visit Canada in December to sign the deal.
- Target: conclude CEPA by end-2026; double two-way trade to about US\$70 billion by 2030.
- Current goods trade: about US\$8 billion in FY 2025-26 (India's exports US\$4.67 bn, imports US\$3.28 bn).
- Talks relaunched: at the G20 Summit, Johannesburg, November 2025, by PM Modi and PM Mark Carney.

- Likely content: tariff cuts, tariff rate quotas, investment and services access; possible side deals on defence and aerospace.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-Canada relations and CEPA talks.

59. Jaishankar: De-Risk and Diversify

WHY IN NEWS External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has said that the United States and China are now firmly in a competitive mode, and that India and other countries must de-risk and diversify their economic and strategic dependencies in their own interest. The remarks build on a consistent line he has taken through 2026: the...

- US has reset the rules: The US, long the underwriter of the global order, now deals with countries one-on-one rather than through multilateral regimes, driven by national interest.
- China plays by its own rules: With about a third of global manufacturing concentrated in one country, supply chains face questions of resilience and reliability.
- Weaponisation of everything: Trade, finance, technology, critical minerals and energy are being used as leverage.
- Response for India: Hedge, de-risk and diversify; build national capabilities in manufacturing and technology; and double down on multipolarity and strategic autonomy.
- Trump-Xi détente: Xi Jinping made a state visit to Washington in late September, but the US ruled out cooperation on AI governance (see story 8). Competition and deal-making now coexist.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise strategic autonomy and supply-chain resilience.

SECTION 3

Economy

Growth, banking, monetary policy, digital payments, trade, energy, industry & agriculture — September 2026 • 68 topics

1. Q1 FY27 GDP Growth at 7.8%

WHY IN NEWS The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released Q1 (April–June) FY 2026-27 GDP data on 31 August 2026, showing real GDP growth of 7.8%, comfortably beating market expectations of 7–7.2%.

- Real GDP at constant prices (base year 2022-23) touched ₹81.36 lakh crore, up from ₹75.46 lakh crore a year earlier.
- Nominal GDP grew 10.3% to reach ₹88.27 lakh crore.
- Gross Value Added (GVA) rose 8.2% to ₹73.82 lakh crore.
- Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) — the proxy for investment — grew 11.9%, its share in nominal GDP rising to 34.3%.
- Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) grew 7.1%, contributing 55.8% of nominal GDP.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise GDP vs GVA, real vs nominal GDP, components of GDP (PFCE, GFCF, GFCE) and the role of NSO/MoSPI.

2. Drivers of GDP Overshoot

WHY IN NEWS Capex-led investment cycle: Double-digit GFCF growth (11.9%) reflects sustained private and public capital spending.

- Resilient manufacturing and construction: Manufacturing growth was supported by an uptick in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and pre-emptive global buying ahead of anticipated tariff changes.
- Robust services momentum: Trade, hotels, transport & communication; financial, real estate & professional services; and public administration all posted strong growth — evidenced by high-frequency indicators like e-way bill generation, cargo traffic, and services exports.
- Government front-loading of capex early in the fiscal year.
- The RBI projects a deceleration to around 6.4% in Q2 (July–September), before a mild recovery to 6.5% and 6.8% in the remaining quarters.
- Analysts flag risks from the continuing West Asia conflict (impact on oil-refining margins), global tariff uncertainty, and a high base effect from FY26.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise components of aggregate demand, capital expenditure vs revenue expenditure, and base effect.

3. NTPC Profits vs Renewables

WHY IN NEWS Despite India's rapid renewable energy (RE) capacity addition, data shows the country's largest power generator, NTPC, continues to derive stronger profitability from its thermal (coal-based) segment compared to its renewable energy arm.

- NTPC is India's largest power producer, with an installed capacity of around 91 GW (~17% of national capacity), of which the majority remains coal-based thermal.
- NTPC's consolidated profit after tax stood at ₹27,546 crore in FY26, a 15% year-on-year rise, backed largely by its thermal fleet's scale and grid demand.
- In contrast, NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL), its dedicated renewables arm, has posted a comparatively low return on equity (around 3.66% over three years), reflecting the longer payback periods and thinner margins typical of solar/wind assets versus coal plants.
- Even so, NTPC's under-construction renewable capacity (16.4 GW) has for the first time overtaken its under-construction coal capacity (15.7 GW) — signalling a long-term strategic pivot even as near-term profitability still favours thermal.
- NTPC targets 149 GW capacity by 2032 (including 60 GW renewable) and 244 GW by 2037, backed by a ₹16.86 lakh crore investment roadmap spanning thermal, hydro, pumped storage, RE, battery storage, coal mining and nuclear power.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's energy mix, thermal vs renewable capacity and the 500 GW non-fossil target.

4. Fall in Russian Oil Imports

WHY IN NEWS India's crude oil imports from Russia declined sharply in August 2026 as China intensified competition for discounted Russian barrels.

- India's Russian crude imports eased to roughly 2.0–2.1 million barrels per day (mbpd) in August 2026, down from a record 2.7–2.8 mbpd in July — a pullback driven by refinery maintenance, normalisation after a period of heavy buying, tighter Russian export availability following Ukrainian strikes on export infrastructure, and rising Chinese demand for the same discounted barrels.
- Total Russian crude supply itself eased slightly through the same period, even as China's overall crude imports climbed, with its intake of Russian oil specifically rising as it compensated for a near-collapse in Iranian supply.

- China has increasingly reached into Russia's European port network — the same source ports India traditionally relies on — putting the two Asian giants in more direct competition for the same pool of barrels.
- This unfolds against the backdrop of the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis, through which roughly a fifth of global oil trade transits, pushing India to lean more heavily on discounted Russian crude even as US sanctions pressure persists.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's crude import basket, G7 oil price cap and secondary sanctions.

5. High Fees in SME IPOs

WHY IN NEWS Concerns have intensified over disproportionately high fees charged in India's SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) IPO segment, prompting SEBI to consider stricter oversight.

- SEBI has been examining several domestic investment banks that handle small-business IPOs, focusing on fee structures that in some cases run as high as 15% of funds raised — far above the standard 1–3% typically charged on mainboard IPOs.
- Early findings suggest such elevated fees are sometimes used to engineer oversubscription, raising concerns about coordinated activity between banks and certain classes of investors.
- SEBI is now weighing whether to extend mainboard-style safeguards to SME public offers, including an institutional-investor quota and higher listing thresholds, after the segment saw explosive fundraising growth alongside governance concerns flagged by market experts.
- Separately, SEBI has also worked on reducing costs for ordinary retail investors, including proposals for subsidised, small-ticket SIPs to widen financial inclusion in mutual funds.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise SEBI, SME platforms (BSE SME, NSE Emerge) and primary vs secondary markets.

6. Green Energy Status for Nuclear Power

WHY IN NEWS As India works toward its ambitious target of 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047 (up from roughly 8,880 MW today), private companies are pushing for nuclear power to be formally classified as "green" or renewable energy — a tag that would unlock access to cheaper green bonds, ESG-linked funds, and priority lending.

- India's nuclear capacity target: 100 GW by 2047; current installed capacity roughly 8,880 MW (25 reactors, 7 plants).
- Sole statutory operator of commercial reactors: Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL), under the Department of Atomic Energy.
- Key liability law: Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (CLND) Act, 2010 — Section 17 allows operator recourse against suppliers.
- India's broader climate pledge: net-zero by 2070 (announced at COP26, Glasgow); non-fossil capacity target of 500 GW by 2030.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Atomic Energy Act 1962, CLND Act 2010 and green taxonomy.

7. Govt Rebuts GDP Criticism

WHY IN NEWS The government has pushed back against a fresh round of criticism — echoing earlier critiques by economists including a former Chief Economic Adviser — alleging that India's GDP growth figures are systematically overestimated.

- Nodal body for GDP estimation: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- New base year: 2022-23 (revised from 2011-12).
- Global standard framework followed: UN's System of National Accounts (SNA), 2008.
- Key methodological shift: single deflator → double deflation method for agriculture and manufacturing.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise GDP base-year revision (2022-23) and MoSPI's methodology.

8. FCNR(B) Deposits Boost Forex

WHY IN NEWS The Reserve Bank of India's special US dollar-rupee forex swap facility, launched on 8 June 2026, has driven a dramatic surge in Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank [FCNR(B)] deposits — funds NRIs park in India in foreign currency rather than rupees.

- RBI's special swap facility launched: 8 June 2026; FCNR(B) deposits held in foreign currency, not converted to rupees (unlike NRE deposits).
- India's forex reserves touched a record high of over \$729 billion (week ended 21 August 2026), surpassing the earlier peak of ~\$728.49 billion (Feb 2026).
- Precedent scheme: the 2013 FCNR(B) swap window under then-RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, used to counter the "Taper Tantrum."
- Distinguish NRI deposit types: NRE (rupee, repatriable), NRO (rupee, non-fully-repatriable), FCNR(B) (foreign currency, repatriable).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise FCNR(B), NRE/NRO accounts and forex reserves composition.

9. Japan Rating Agency Upgrades India

WHY IN NEWS A Japanese sovereign credit rating agency has upgraded India's long-term credit rating, with the Finance Ministry crediting the move to India's resilient, domestic-demand-driven growth model and prudent fiscal management.

- Japanese agency: Rating and Investment Information, Inc. (R&I) upgraded India from BBB to BBB+ (Stable outlook), September 2025 — India's third upgrade that year.
- Other 2025 upgrades: S&P (BBB- → BBB, August 2025); Morningstar DBRS (BBB (low) → BBB, May 2025).
- Separate Japanese agency: Japan Credit Rating Agency (JCR) — affirms India at BBB+/Stable; assigned Adani Ports & SEZ an A- rating (above the sovereign level) in January 2026.

- Investment grade threshold: BBB-/Baa3 and above; below this is "speculative/junk grade."

STATIC LINKAGE Revise sovereign credit ratings and their effect on borrowing costs and FPI flows.

10. Exports Push GDP Growth

WHY IN NEWS India's Q1 FY 2026-27 (April–June) GDP data, released by MoSPI, showed real GDP growth of 7.8%, with exports as a key growth driver — even as sector-level data reveals that low-value-added, low-margin export categories continue to face global headwinds.

- Real GDP grew 7.8% in Q1 FY27 (base year 2022-23), the highest Q1 growth in four years (2023-24 to 2026-27).
- Real Gross Value Added (GVA) rose 8.2%; Gross Fixed Capital Formation (investment) grew 11.9%; household consumption grew 7.1%.
- Exports of goods and services grew 12.0% in Q1, with cumulative April–July merchandise and services exports up 13.16% year-on-year.
- Electronics exports surged (smartphone exports crossed ₹1 lakh crore in five months of FY26, up ~55% YoY), driven by PLI/Make in India schemes — a high-margin, high-tech success story.
- In contrast, traditional, low-margin sectors — textiles, leather, gems & jewellery, low-end engineering goods — face thinner margins, currency pressure, shipping-cost volatility, and US tariff uncertainty, limiting their contribution to value-added growth despite volume gains.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise balance of trade, current account and export composition.

11. Comparing GDP Across Base Years

WHY IN NEWS As India's Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) rolls out GDP data under the new 2022-23 base year (replacing 2011-12), economists have cautioned against directly comparing growth figures across different base-year series, given methodological shifts.

- A base year is a reference year against which GDP/price indices are measured; India has revised its base year periodically — from 2004-05 to 2011-12 (2015 revision), and now to 2022-23.
- The 2011-12 base year revision was controversial: GDP for that year contracted ~2.3% in the new series, while the manufacturing growth rate jumped from -0.7% to 5.3% — creating a mismatch with high-frequency indicators (bank credit, corporate profits) that suggested a slowdown.
- Key methodological issues flagged by economists: the "averaging problem" (India does not independently measure GDP from both production and expenditure sides, then averages them — problematic for a developing economy); informal-sector coverage risk (using corporate balance sheets as a proxy risks underestimating unorganised-sector contribution); and data vintage (the last full Consumer Expenditure Survey rounds were 2011-12 and 2017-18).

- The new 2022-23 series incorporates the Producer Price Index (PPI) and a double-deflation method for manufacturing GVA — technical upgrades, but discrepancies between GDP and GVA estimates persist.
- Chain-based linking (continuously updating weights) rather than fixed-base revisions has been suggested by researchers as a more robust long-term alternative.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise base year, chained series and GDP deflator.

12. Trust Deficit in GDP Data

WHY IN NEWS India's latest GDP growth figure of 7.8% has triggered fresh scepticism among economists, opposition leaders, and international agencies about the reliability of national income data.

- The IMF had earlier assigned India's economic data a "C" grade (its second-lowest rank), citing weak methodology for capturing the informal economy and rural consumption.
- Key criticisms: reliance on formal-sector/corporate data (MCA-21 database) to estimate an economy where roughly 85% of the workforce is informal.
- The GDP deflator problem: because the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) has stayed low (largely due to soft global commodity prices), the gap between nominal and real GDP growth appears unusually small, making real growth numbers look inflated relative to lived experience (high retail/CPI inflation).
- Political criticism cites high youth unemployment, and a widening current account deficit as signs the ground reality does not match headline growth.
- A structural pain point: India shifted its GDP-measurement approach in 2015 from a factory/establishment-based method to an enterprise/financial-filing-based method — a change still debated among statisticians.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise PLFS, CPI/WPI and India's statistical system (NSC, NSO).

13. RBI Liquidity Surplus ₹10.3 Lakh Crore

WHY IN NEWS Banking-system liquidity in India has surged to a historic surplus of about ₹10.3 lakh crore (as of 3 September 2026), prompting the RBI to deploy a large Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR) operation to absorb the excess.

- The RBI has announced a 30-day VRRR auction worth ₹7 lakh crore (scheduled 7 September) — a shift toward longer-duration liquidity absorption instead of short-term operations.
- The surplus stems largely from massive foreign-currency inflows, mobilised through an RBI-backed special deposit scheme that attracted over \$127–136 billion, including a large FCNR(B) [Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank)] component.

- Banks have suggested forex sell/buy swaps as a gradual tool to mop up the surplus rupee liquidity.
- Excess liquidity, if unmanaged, can depress short-term money-market rates (like the Weighted Average Call Rate) below the repo rate, weakening monetary policy transmission.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise LAF, SDF, VRRR, OMOs and CRR.

14. OPEC+ Output Pause

WHY IN NEWS Seven core OPEC+ members — Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Algeria, Kazakhstan, and Oman — met virtually on 6 September 2026 and kept output levels unchanged for October, pausing further increases after completing a phased unwind of earlier voluntary cuts.

- This follows six consecutive monthly output increases, which in September completed the rollback of a 1.65 million bpd voluntary cut first agreed in 2023.
- A broader ~2 million bpd cut (agreed in 2022) among most OPEC+ members remains in force through end-2026.
- The pause comes as the group prepares to assess members' production capacity to set new output baselines/quotas for 2027; the next meeting is on 4 October.
- Context: the ongoing US-Iran conflict has disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz (roughly 20% of global oil/LNG trade normally transits here), reducing OPEC+'s effective influence over global prices even as it holds formal policy steady.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise OPEC vs OPEC+ members and oil chokepoints.

15. China's \$54 bn Bank Recapitalisation

WHY IN NEWS China's Ministry of Finance announced a coordinated capital injection of roughly 360 billion yuan (~\$54 billion) into major state-owned insurers and banks — one of the largest such moves in recent years — to shore up the financial system.

- Insurers: China Life (₹35 billion yuan), China Taiping (₹7 billion yuan), PICC (up to ₹15 billion yuan via private placement), Sinosure/China Export & Credit Insurance Corp (₹10 billion yuan), China Reinsurance (₹3 billion yuan).
- Banks: A combined ₹290 billion yuan to major state lenders — Agricultural Bank of China (up to ₹160 billion yuan) and ICBC (up to ₹100 billion yuan) via private A-share placements to the Finance Ministry and China National Tobacco Corp; Export-Import Bank of China to get ₹30 billion yuan.
- The plan was first flagged at China's annual parliamentary session (March 2026), extending a tool used earlier to recapitalise other state banks.

- Rationale: insurers have been directed to support China's stock market with medium/long-term funds, and are also expected to help manage smaller, financially-stressed insurers amid a prolonged low-interest-rate environment.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise bank recapitalisation and capital adequacy (Basel III).

16. US Share in India's LPG Imports

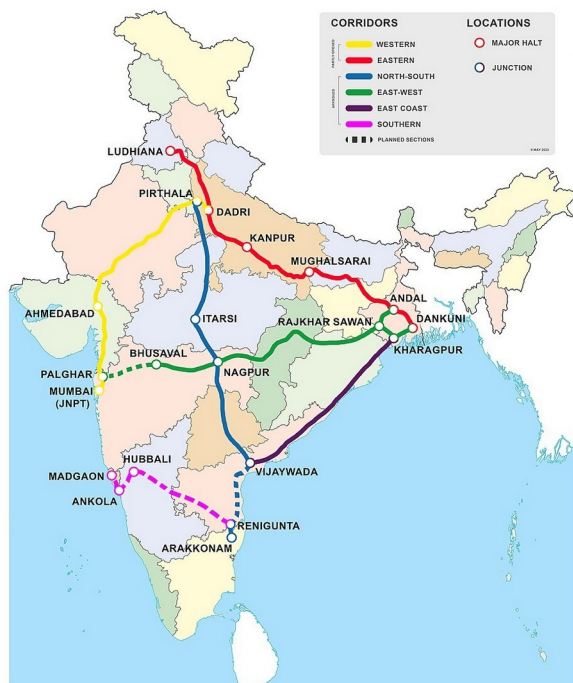
WHY IN NEWS Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri announced that the United States has become India's largest LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) supplier, with its import share climbing dramatically.

- India initially targeted sourcing about 10% of its LPG needs from the US; that share has since risen sharply to around 67%, making the US India's top LPG supplier, overtaking traditional Gulf sources.
- India imports roughly 65% of its total LPG consumption (around 31 million tonnes annually); until recently, nearly 90% of these imports came from UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.
- Indian PSU oil firms — IOC, BPCL, and HPCL — signed a one-year structured contract to import about 2.2 million tonnes of LPG from the US Gulf Coast, supplied by Chevron, Phillips 66, and TotalEnergies Trading.
- Puri clarified the diversification was a strategic, independent decision and not driven by Strait of Hormuz-related supply-security concerns.
- The government is also promoting the ₹84,000 crore "Samudra Manthan" mission to boost deep-sea hydrocarbon exploration, aimed at long-term energy self-reliance.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's LPG import sources and PM Ujjwala Yojana.

17. Dedicated Freight Corridors Completed

WHY IN NEWS Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the completion of India's Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) network, dedicating the final three sections of the Western DFC to the nation from Vadodara.



DEDICATED FREIGHT CORRIDORS OF INDIA

Map: Dedicated Freight Corridors of India

- The fully electrified DFC network now spans 2,843 km, comprising the Eastern DFC (1,337 km) and the Western DFC (1,506 km).
- India becomes the first country in the world to operate a fully electrified dedicated freight corridor capable of routine double-stack container operations.
- The final stretch of 326 route km on the WDFC was built at a cost of over ₹20,700 crore.
- Over 5.21 lakh freight train trips had already been facilitated by DFCCIL (Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India) by end-August 2026, with 400-plus trains now running daily across the network.
- The corridor is designed to decongest conventional railway lines, cut freight transit time, lower logistics costs, and strengthen "last-mile" connectivity to ports and industrial hubs — directly supporting the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan and the National Logistics Policy.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Eastern and Western DFCs, DFCCIL and PM Gati Shakti.

18. GDP Data Row: Missing the Point

WHY IN NEWS India's Q1 FY27 (April–June 2026) real GDP growth of 7.8%, released by MoSPI on August 31, sparked a political and economic controversy over whether the new GDP methodology flatters headline growth.

- The new GDP series uses 2022–23 as the base year, replacing the earlier 2011–12 base, with updated data sources and methods including greater use of double deflation for manufacturing GVA.
- Critics allege that revising the base year "artificially" boosts current growth; the government counters that like-for-like comparison requires recalculating prior-year figures using the same new methodology — under which the 7.8% figure holds.
- The secondary (industry) sector grew 8.6% in Q1 FY27 vs 6.1% a year earlier; the tertiary (services) sector grew 10.0% vs 8.0%.
- Former IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath, speaking at Davos 2026, stated there was no "smoking gun" evidence of manipulation, while noting genuine scope to improve statistical capacity.
- The IMF currently rates India's national accounts data as "C" (second-lowest on its four-tier Data Adequacy Assessment scale) but has indicated this could be reassessed following methodological reforms.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise national income estimation methods and data quality.

19. Coal Gasification Scheme Bids

WHY IN NEWS The Centre's ₹37,500 crore scheme to promote surface coal and lignite gasification received seven applications in its first bidding round, with Adani Enterprises submitting the highest number of bids.

- Adani Enterprises submitted three separate applications, all for urea production projects.
- Other applicants: NTPC (synthetic natural gas project), Talcher Fertilisers (urea), Gallantt Ispat (direct reduced iron + syngas), and Shyam Sel & Power (syngas).
- The scheme was approved by the Union Cabinet on May 13, 2026, with the Request for Proposal (RFP) issued on July 7, 2026; the first round closed September 7, 2026.
- It builds on an earlier ₹8,500 crore coal gasification incentive scheme (approved January 2024), under which eight projects are already under implementation.
- Government target: 100 million tonnes of coal gasification capacity by 2030, of which 75 million tonnes is expected from this new scheme.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise coal gasification, National Coal Gasification Mission (100 MT by 2030).

20. 8 Railway Multitracking Projects

WHY IN NEWS The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by PM Narendra Modi, approved eight railway multi-tracking projects worth ₹20,804 crore, spanning 31 districts across nine states, under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.

- Adds about 1,196 km to the Indian Railways network; targeted completion by 2029-30.
- Five projects (₹10,021 crore) in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana — including Arakkonam–Renigunta and Salem–Karur–Dindigul doubling.
- Three projects (₹10,783 crore) in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh — including the Kharagpur–Jharsuguda and Katni–Pendra Road lines.
- Expected to add ~74 MTPA of freight capacity (47 MTPA from the southern projects, 27 MTPA from the eastern/central projects) and benefit ~56 lakh people across nearly 4,790 villages; aims to shift freight from road to rail, cutting logistics costs, oil imports, and carbon emissions.
- The five southern projects alone are estimated to cut oil imports by about 80 million litres and meaningfully reduce CO₂ emissions by shifting bulk freight (coal, cement, iron ore, steel, fertiliser, foodgrain) from road to rail.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise PM Gati Shakti and National Rail Plan.

21. Double Deflation in New GDP Series

WHY IN NEWS The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has clarified its revised GDP series (base year 2022-23, replacing 2011-12), which uses the new Producer Price Index (PPI) and adopts “double deflation” for manufacturing and agriculture.

- Double deflation separately deflates gross output and intermediate consumption using granular price indices, then derives real Gross Value Added (GVA) as the difference — replacing the older, less accurate single deflation method.
- The new series also uses the Output PPI and Banking Services Price Index, moving away from reliance on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
- Successive revisions have altered India's FY 2025-26 nominal GDP estimate from ₹86.05 trillion (old series) to ₹80 trillion (new series) — figures the government says are not directly comparable across series.
- The changes address long-standing IMF concerns about India's national accounts and improve estimation of the informal economy using ASUSE (Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises) and PLFS (Periodic Labour Force Survey) data, replacing older proxy-based estimates.
- For Q1 FY2026-27, real GVA growth was 9.2%, exceeding nominal growth of 7.7% — an unusual pattern explained by double deflation, since input (intermediate consumption) prices rose

faster than output prices, per manufacturing WPI inflation of 7.3%.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise double deflation, PPI vs WPI and GVA estimation.

22. High Prices of Egg, Chicken, Milk

WHY IN NEWS Protein-based food items — eggs, poultry meat, and milk — continue to see sharp price increases across India in 2026, driven primarily by rising cattle/poultry feed costs and knock-on effects from elevated global crude oil prices.

- NECC egg rates have risen nationally by roughly 40% year-on-year, with retail egg prices in several cities crossing ₹9–10 apiece by September 2026.
- Milk procurement/wholesale prices rose sharply in September 2026 — e.g., Mumbai's wholesale buffalo milk rate jumped by ₹9/litre to ₹102/litre, its steepest single hike in 70 years; Tamil Nadu raised its procurement price by ₹6/litre.
- Cattle and poultry feed costs (maize, soybean meal/DOC) have risen roughly 25%, compounded by a weaker rupee raising import costs and elevated crude oil prices (linked to the Strait of Hormuz crisis) pushing up transport, packaging and electricity costs.
- Feed constitutes 60–70% of production cost for broiler meat, eggs, and dairy.
- As of early September 2026, NECC-suggested egg rates stood at about ₹4.90/egg wholesale nationally, but with wide city variation — as low as ₹4.90 in Hospet and as high as ₹6.20 in Kolkata — while retail prices in several cities have crossed ₹9–10 per egg, a roughly 40% year-on-year rise.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise CPI food inflation, protein inflation and feed costs.

23. India's Manufacturing Challenge

WHY IN NEWS Even as India hosts Xi Jinping and Putin at BRICS, analysts point to an unspoken “elephant in the room” — India's continued dependence on China for critical manufacturing inputs (electronics components, active pharmaceutical ingredients, rare earths, and capital goods) even as it competes with Beijing for global...

- India is simultaneously trying to attract Chinese investment/technology and reduce strategic dependence — a balancing act some commentators call the “elephant-dragon tango.”
- Despite “Make in India” and PLI schemes, India's manufacturing ecosystem still lacks the scale, component base, and skilled supply chains that China built over decades.
- Global companies like Apple/Foxconn are expanding in India but remain constrained by China's control over experienced technicians and components.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise share of manufacturing in GDP, Make in India and PLI schemes.

24. RBI Governor on Data

WHY IN NEWS At the Global Fintech Fest 2026, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra urged fintech companies to treat customer data as a fiduciary responsibility, not a business asset, warning that trust — once eroded — does not easily return.

- Malhotra said data "must be treated the way a trustee treats assets held for a beneficiary" — collected with purpose, used within consent, and protected as one's own.
- He cautioned fintechs against exploiting regulatory grey areas ("scale first, seek forgiveness later").
- SBI Chairman C.S. Setty added that financial AI must be "100% accurate," given the stakes involved in customer funds.
- India's digital finance scale was cited: 57 crore PMJDY accounts and roughly 24 billion monthly UPI transactions.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise DPDP Act 2023 and data governance in finance.

25. IBBI Warns Resolution Professionals

WHY IN NEWS The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has issued a circular warning that the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016 is being misused for purposes other than genuine debt resolution — including tax avoidance, evading investigations, and ring-fencing assets.

- Red flags identified include: insolvency cases initiated by a single non-institutional creditor who later dominates the creditors' committee; clusters of related companies entering insolvency simultaneously; minimal competitive bidding with recurring resolution applicants; and disproportionately low creditor recoveries without proper valuation.
- Resolution Professionals (RPs), given their direct access to company records and creditor proceedings, are directed to flag suspicious patterns and approach the Adjudicating Authority (NCLT) where fraudulent intent is reasonably suspected.
- The indicators are described as "illustrative, not exhaustive," and not automatically conclusive of misuse.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise IBC 2016, IBBI, CIRP and resolution professionals.

26. India's GDP Performance (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS Indicator Q1 FY 2026-27 Q1 FY 2025-26 Growth

- Real GDP (Constant Prices) | ₹81.36 lakh crore | ₹75.46 lakh crore | 7.8%
- Nominal GDP (Current Prices) | ₹88.27 lakh crore | ₹80.00 lakh crore | 10.3%
- Real GVA | ₹73.82 lakh crore | ₹68.21 lakh crore | 8.2%
- Nominal GVA | ₹80.53 lakh crore | ₹72.24 lakh crore | 11.5%

- Real GDP is estimated at ₹81.36 lakh crore in Q1 FY 2026-27, recording a 7.8% rise compared with 6.9% in Q1 FY 2025-26, while Nominal GDP is estimated at ₹88.27 lakh crore, recording a 10.3% rise compared with 8.1% last year. This makes it, per the government's framing, the highest Q1 real GDP growth during the four-year period from 2023-24 to 2026-27, achieved despite persistent geopolitical tensions and uncertainty around global trade.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise GDP growth drivers and national accounts.

27. Q1 GDP Methodology (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS This is a distinct, more technical Backgrounder released by MoSPI to address public queries after the Q1 release — extremely useful for Mains answers that require nuance and for Prelims questions testing conceptual understanding of national income accounting.

- The Ministry released the Updated Series of Annual and Quarterly GDP estimates with base year 2022-23 on 31st August 2026, using a New Series of Output Producer Price Index (PPI), Banking Services Price Index (BkSPI), and updated administrative data. This threw up questions on:
- The double deflation methodology and consequent negative implicit deflators
- Comparability between the new series and the old (2011-12 base) series
- The gap between nominal and real GVA/GDP growth
- Discrepancy between GDP estimated from the production/income side vs. the expenditure side

STATIC LINKAGE Revise GDP estimation: production vs expenditure approach.

28. EU Steel Quota & Car Imports

WHY IN NEWS Under the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), India has secured country-specific tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) of 1.64 million tonnes annually for steel exports to the EU:

- 9,46,616 tonnes under the MFN (Most Favoured Nation) component
- 6,94,853 tonnes under the FTA component
- These quotas arise from the EU's Steel Overcapacity Regulation (effective July 1, 2026), which caps duty-free imports at 18.3 million tonnes bloc-wide and imposes a 50% duty on out-of-quota steel, alongside a melt-and-pour transparency regime. India currently exports about 4 million tonnes of steel to the EU annually.
- On the automobile front, the FTA's tariff schedule allows European carmakers concessional access for up to 100,000 ICE/hybrid vehicles in Year 1 — nearly six times the 17,191 units imported from the EU in 2025 — rising to 160,000 units by Year 10. In return, Indian-origin vehicles get a reciprocal quota into

the EU starting at 250,000 units, rising to 400,000 by Year 10.

- Total India-specific TRQ: 16,41,470 tonnes = MFN (9,46,616 t) + FTA (6,94,853 t).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India-EU FTA, steel safeguard duties and CBAM.

29. Gas-Based Power Surge

WHY IN NEWS Natural gas contributes only around 2% of India's total power generation, but plays an outsized role in balancing peak demand — India draws on roughly 8 GW of gas capacity during heatwaves and evening peaks when solar output drops off.

- As the crisis eased and demand pressures returned, gas-based generation has swung sharply upward to plug evening supply gaps — even as coal continues to supply nearly 70% of India's actual electricity, despite clean energy now exceeding fossil-fuel installed capacity for the first time (per Ember/Global Energy Monitor data, August 2026).
- Natural gas share in India's power generation mix: ~2% (do not confuse with installed capacity share, which is higher).
- India draws on roughly 8 GW of gas capacity during heatwave/peak-demand periods.
- Legal basis for gas rationing: Natural Gas Control Order, issued under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 (dated March 9, 2026).
- India's clean energy installed capacity (331.7 GW) surpassed fossil-fuel installed capacity (302.0 GW) for the first time as of August 2026 — yet coal still supplies ~70% of actual generation.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's gas-based power capacity and LNG imports.

30. Copper Prices at Record Highs

WHY IN NEWS Copper prices on the London Metal Exchange (LME) touched a record \$14,858.50 per tonne on September 10, 2026 — up about 19% in 2026 and nearly 48% over the past year. The rally is being driven by a mix of genuine and speculative factors:

- A 1.1% decline in global mine output in H1 2026 (Chile, Indonesia, DR Congo).
- US tariff uncertainty — traders have rushed refined copper into US warehouses in anticipation of an expanded tariff on refined copper, distorting global inventories.
- Structural demand growth from AI data centres, EVs, and grid electrification.
- Notably, prices briefly fell over 4% after reports that the White House had not yet decided on extending tariffs to refined copper — showing how much of the rally is a "tariff premium" rather than a pure supply deficit (forecasts still point to a modest 2026 surplus, per ICSG/CRU).
- Record LME copper price: \$14,858.50/tonne (September 10, 2026).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise copper reserves in India (Khetri, Malanjkhand) and critical minerals.

31. No Bank Charges on UPI up to ₹2,000

WHY IN NEWS On 14 September 2026, the Ministry of Finance's Department of Financial Services notified an amendment under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 barring banks and payment system providers from levying any charge — direct or indirect — on UPI transactions up to ₹2,000 and on RuPay-powered debit card payments.

- The notification was issued under Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (Act No. 51 of 2007).
- It classifies RuPay debit cards and UPI transactions up to ₹2,000 as "electronic modes of payment" on which no charge can be imposed on either the payer or the payee.
- The rule does not fix a maximum limit for free UPI usage — it only guarantees that transactions up to ₹2,000 stay charge-free; transactions above ₹2,000 are not automatically taxed either, since no Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) has been announced yet.
- NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India) — an initiative of RBI and the Indian Banks' Association — operates UPI as the umbrella retail payments organisation.
- UPI volume touched a record 24.51 billion transactions worth ₹29.82 lakh crore in August 2026, a 22% year-on-year rise in volume and 20% in value.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise UPI, NPCI and Merchant Discount Rate.

32. Fed Rate Hike Looms

WHY IN NEWS Unusually, markets are pricing in a possible US Federal Reserve rate hike — not a cut — at its 16 September 2026 FOMC meeting, reversing the rate-cut narrative that dominated 2025.

- August 2026 US CPI held annual inflation steady at 3.4% (matching July), with core CPI at 2.4% year-on-year.
- Energy prices rose sharply — gasoline up 27.4% and fuel oil up 52% year-on-year — driven by Middle East tensions pushing oil prices higher.
- Ahead of the CPI print, futures markets were pricing in nearly 70–90% odds of a 25-bps rate hike, a sharp reversal after three regional Fed presidents dissented in favour of a hike at the July FOMC meeting — the first three-way hawkish dissent since 2016.
- The Fed's benchmark rate has been held in the 3.50%–3.75% range through 2026.
- RBI's next Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) review is expected in early October 2026. A global tightening cycle (rather than easing) complicates RBI's room to cut rates, since a widening India-US interest rate differential can trigger capital outflows and rupee depreciation.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise US Federal Reserve, interest rate differentials and capital flows.

33. Record Power Demand

WHY IN NEWS A combination of intensifying heatwaves, urban heat islands, and a below-normal 2026 monsoon has pushed India's electricity demand to record levels through the year, straining the grid and reviving reliance on coal.

- India's peak power demand hit a record 270.8 GW on 21 May 2026, following a rapid string of new daily peaks (265.4 GW, 260.4 GW, 257.3 GW, 238.4 GW on preceding days).
- A Climate Trends report ("From Heatwave to Grid Wave") found non-industrial states like Uttar Pradesh now recording higher electricity demand growth than manufacturing-heavy states like Gujarat and Maharashtra — signalling a structural shift toward residential cooling-driven demand.
- Warmer nights prevent buildings from cooling naturally, extending cooling-appliance use and raising the next day's demand baseline; compounding humidity effects have sharply increased "hot-humid" days over the past decade.
- Hydropower generation fell nearly 12% year-on-year (through late August 2026) due to weak monsoon rainfall (over 16% below the long-period average in some months), straining reservoir and river levels.
- Coal-based generation rose ~14% year-on-year to 120.2 billion kWh in June 2026 — the highest since November 2023 — as coal continued to supply most of the evening peak demand that renewables cannot cover after sunset.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise peak demand, monsoon-power linkage and grid management.

34. UPI MDR: 0.4% Above ₹2,000

WHY IN NEWS Ending nearly six years of a fully free UPI ecosystem for merchants, the Finance Ministry and NPCI announced a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) of 0.4% on Person-to-Merchant (P2M) UPI transactions above ₹2,000, effective 15 October 2026.

- No charge on P2P (person-to-person) transfers — these remain free irrespective of value, with no monthly quotas or volume caps.
- MDR applies only when a customer pays a merchant more than ₹2,000 via UPI; the fee is borne by the merchant, not passed on to the customer.
- Cap: MDR is capped at ₹300 for transactions of ₹75,000 and above (so a ₹1,00,000 transaction pays ₹300, not ₹400).
- Concessional flat fee of ₹5 per transaction (above ₹2,000) for thin-margin/essential sectors: railways, telecom, insurance, fuel, and agricultural inputs.
- Government utility bill payments (electricity, water, piped gas) and education fees above ₹2,000 also get the flat, low-cost treatment.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise MDR, NPCI and Payment and Settlement Systems Act 2007.

35. ED on IBC Frauds

WHY IN NEWS The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has directed its zonal offices to launch a fresh drive against fraud under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016, specifically targeting collusive resolution plans involving disproportionately large "haircuts" that allow defaulting promoters to indirectly re-acquire their own...

- ED Director Rahul Navin directed special directors (at a high-level Bengaluru meeting) to initiate money-laundering investigations against key beneficiaries of resolution plans that are prima facie dubious but were cleared by the NCLT.
- This follows a broader pattern flagged by the IBBI (Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India), which recently warned resolution professionals about misuse of IBC for tax avoidance and evading investigations.
- Data context: nearly half of resolved IBC cases see creditors recover less than 20% of admitted claims (i.e., haircuts over 80%); about 30% of cases saw haircuts over 90%.
- A Parliamentary panel has separately flagged "disproportionately large and unsustainable haircuts" taken by financial creditors, and the MCA is working on a code of conduct for creditors under IBC.
- The IBC (Amendment) Act, 2026 (effective 26 May 2026) mandates admission of insolvency applications within 14 days and sets timelines for NCLAT proceedings.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise IBC 2016, haircuts and PMLA 2002.

36. CEA on Private Investment

WHY IN NEWS Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran told an ASSOCHAM gathering that India's private sector must invest, hire, and compensate fairly, and also invest in R&D, since "the next 20 years is going to be very different from the last 80 years post World War II."

- Nageswaran stressed that policy alone cannot drive the economy — private capital expenditure, job creation, and equitable wage growth must complement government reforms.
- His remarks come amid renewed geopolitical uncertainty — crude oil prices pushing past \$107–108/barrel and hardening global bond yields.
- This continues a recurring theme in his public remarks (including in Economic Survey commentary) about the disparity between corporate profit growth and employee compensation growth in India — citing the historical example of Henry Ford raising minimum wages to sustain consumer demand for his own products.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Economic Survey, CEA's role and private capex cycle.

37. India's Shift on WTO Plurilaterals

WHY IN NEWS India has traditionally opposed plurilateral agreements at the WTO (deals negotiated among a subset of members rather than through full multilateral consensus), arguing they undermine the WTO's core consensus-based decision-making principle.

- India (with South Africa) has been a leading opponent of the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement — backed by 125+/130 WTO members (many aligned with China's Belt and Road Initiative) — arguing investment is outside the WTO's core trade mandate.
- India also contested the legal basis for interim arrangements on the e-commerce moratorium/Agreement on Electronic Commerce, under which ~66 members (accounting for ~70% of global trade) support a customs-duty moratorium on electronic transmissions.
- At the 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, India stood largely isolated in blocking incorporation of the IFD Agreement into the Marrakesh Agreement framework.
- Emerging view: India recognises that global trade rules are increasingly being shaped outside the WTO — via regional trade agreements (RTAs), bilateral deals, and "coalitions of the willing" — especially in digital trade, data governance, and supply-chain rule-making. This is pushing India to consider selective, issue-based engagement rather than blanket opposition.
- The lapse of the TRIPS non-violation and situation complaints moratorium (pushed for by the US) is another flashpoint, seen as a threat to developing countries' use of TRIPS flexibilities (e.g., generic medicines).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise WTO: plurilateral vs multilateral agreements, IFD Agreement.

38. Inflation Pressures & RBI Rate Hike

WHY IN NEWS Two unrelated but simultaneous price shocks — a ~30% monthly spike in sugar prices and a global "chipflation" cycle in memory chips (DRAM/NAND) — are reviving concerns about inflation persistence, a risk the RBI has repeatedly flagged.

- Sugar prices rose from ₹48.73/kg (24 July) to ₹63.05/kg (24 Aug) — nearly 30% in a month — due to excess rainfall, waterlogging, and crop disease affecting sugarcane, plus festive demand and speculative stocking.
- RBI officials (Michael Debabrata Patra and co-authors) noted "persistence in food inflation has increased due to repeated climatic shocks of rising intensity," warning these shocks can spill over into non-food/core inflation.
- Global memory chip ("chipflation") crisis: DRAM contract prices rose 90–95% and NAND ~55–60% in recent quarters, driven by AI data-centre demand for HBM (High Bandwidth Memory) crowding out conventional chip supply.

- Analysts (Gartner, IDC, TrendForce) project PC prices up ~17% and smartphone prices up ~13% in 2026 due to this shortage; global PC and smartphone shipments are expected to decline as a result.
- This directly raises imported inflation risk for India (a major electronics importer) and adds to the RBI's monetary policy dilemma.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise CPI inflation target (4% ± 2%) and MPC.

39. Rising US Bond Yields

WHY IN NEWS A sharp, sustained rise in long-term US Treasury yields — the 30-year yield hit ~5.34% (August 2026), its highest since 2007 — has triggered global market anxiety over US fiscal sustainability, borrowing costs, and knock-on effects for economies worldwide, including India.

- Drivers: persistent US inflation, ballooning federal debt (crossed \$40 trillion), and heavy corporate bond issuance (~\$1.7 trillion in 2026, +27% YoY) — much of it tied to AI infrastructure buildouts — competing with Treasuries for investor capital.
- US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced the Treasury would increase buybacks of longer-dated bonds to ease upward pressure on yields — a rare intervention.
- Because US Treasury yields act as the global "risk-free" benchmark, rising yields push up mortgage rates, corporate borrowing costs, and capital costs globally, and can trigger capital outflows from emerging markets (including India) as investors chase higher US returns.
- All three major rating agencies have now effectively downgraded US debt from the top AAA/Aaa tier — unprecedented in over a century for the world's benchmark debt market.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise bond yields vs prices, US Treasuries and capital outflows.

40. UPI MDR: Who Pays

WHY IN NEWS For the first time since UPI was made zero-MDR in January 2020, NPCI has notified a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on large UPI merchant payments, effective 15 October 2026, ending six years of the zero-MDR regime for high-value merchant transactions.

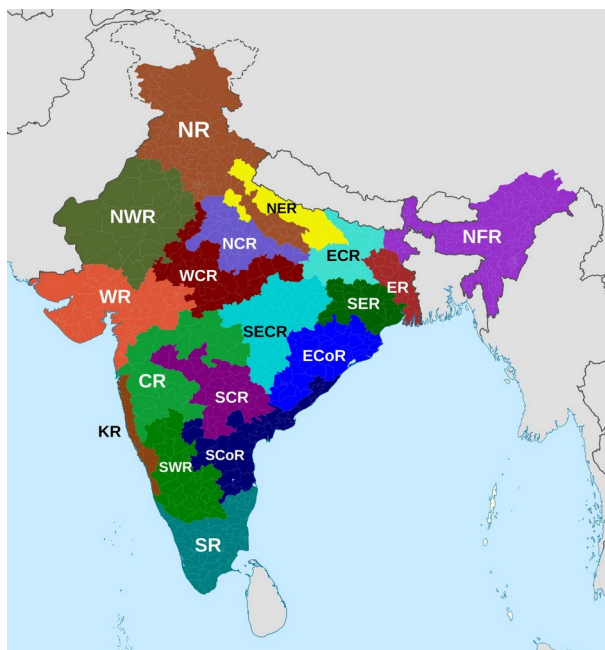
- MDR is the fee a merchant (not the customer) pays to banks/payment service providers (PSPs) for accepting a digital payment — shared among the acquiring bank, issuing bank, PSP/app, and network operator (NPCI/RuPay/Visa/Mastercard).
- A 0.4% MDR applies on Person-to-Merchant (P2M) UPI transactions above ₹2,000; transactions of ₹2,000 or below stay at zero MDR.
- The charge is capped at ₹300 once the transaction crosses ₹75,000.
- Person-to-Person (P2P) transfers remain free irrespective of amount.

- Small "Person-Merchants" (street vendors/shops receiving up to ₹1 lakh/month via UPI QR) are fully exempt — this shields an estimated ~96% of all merchant transactions.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise MDR, PSS Act 2007 and digital payments ecosystem.

41. Railway Multitracking to Decongest Routes

WHY IN NEWS Indian Railways is rolling out an ambitious four-tracking (quadrupling) programme across its seven busiest high-density corridors to relieve chronic congestion and boost freight/passenger capacity.



Map: Indian Railway zones

- The plan covers nearly 11,000 km of India's High Density Network (HDN) — corridors linking Delhi–Mumbai–Howrah (Kolkata)–Chennai–Guwahati.
- These corridors form only ~16% of the total rail network but carry ~41% of total railway traffic.
- Multitracking = laying additional lines (3rd, 4th, or more) alongside existing tracks to raise line capacity.
- Recent Cabinet approval: ₹13,041 crore package, including quadrupling sections of the Howrah–Chennai main line (Bhadrak–Haridaspur, Gummidipundi–Gudur).
- Earlier (April 2026) approval: 601 km across Uttar Pradesh & Andhra Pradesh, worth ~₹24,815 crore.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise railway capacity, DFCs and National Rail Plan 2030.

42. EPFO Wage Ceiling Raised to ₹25,000

WHY IN NEWS On 16 September 2026, the Union Cabinet approved raising the mandatory EPFO wage ceiling from ₹15,000 to ₹25,000 per month — the first revision in 12 years.

- Effective from Vishwakarma Jayanti, 2026.

- Expected to bring 51 lakh additional employees under mandatory EPF, EPS (Employees' Pension Scheme), and EDLI (Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance) coverage.
- History of the ceiling: frozen 2004–2014, raised to ₹15,000 in September 2014, now raised again to ₹25,000 in 2026.
- Annual government outgo: ~₹11,339 crore (up from ~₹10,250 crore); estimated 5-year cost: ₹56,696 crore.
- Recommended by the Expenditure Finance Committee (meeting held 16 June 2026), Ministry of Labour & Employment.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise EPF & MP Act 1952 and Code on Social Security 2020.

43. US Fed Hikes Rates

WHY IN NEWS The US Federal Reserve raised its benchmark interest rate for the first time since 2023 at its September 2026 FOMC meeting, signalling more tightening ahead.

- Federal Funds Rate raised by 25 basis points to a target range of 3.75%–4.00%.
- The vote was unanimous (12-0), under Fed Chair Kevin Warsh.
- Triggers: persistently elevated inflation (headline CPI 3.4% YoY; core 2.5%) and an energy price shock linked to the Iran conflict (diesel near \$6/gallon).
- The Fed's "dot plot": 16 of 18 officials expect at least one more hike this year; 4 expect two more.
- Updated projections: 2026 GDP growth ~2.3%; headline PCE inflation ~3.7%; unemployment at 4.1%.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise monetary tightening and impact on emerging markets.

44. India's Terms on WTO Plurilaterals

WHY IN NEWS India continues to hold firm against formally incorporating the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement (IFDA) into the WTO rulebook, linking any movement to its own long-standing demands.

- IFDA is a plurilateral agreement (binding only on signatories) backed by ~129–131 of 166 WTO members, including 94 developing countries.
- At the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14), Yaoundé, Cameroon (March 2026), India stood alone in blocking formal adoption after South Africa and Türkiye withdrew their objections.
- Investment is a "non-trade issue," outside the WTO's original mandate (goods, services, IP).
- Incorporating it via Annex 4 of the Marrakesh Agreement (1994) without full consensus could set a precedent eroding the WTO's multilateral, consensus-based character.
- IFDA excludes market access, investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS), and investment protection — it focuses only on transparency and streamlined procedures.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise WTO Ministerial Conferences and India's trade positions.

45. Monitoring MDR Pass-Through

WHY IN NEWS As the government prepares to reintroduce a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on large-value UPI transactions, it has assured that merchants cannot pass this cost on to consumers.

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has stated that merchants will not be allowed to pass the MDR on to customers, while peer-to-peer transfers and low-value retail transactions remain free.
- Under the proposal, merchants with annual turnover up to ₹1.5 crore will remain exempt from MDR regardless of transaction size.
- Currently, Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 bars any bank or system provider from charging users of notified electronic payment modes — an amendment is being explored to enable MDR while protecting consumers.
- A dedicated NPCI-led Services Steering Committee will finalise the scope, rate structure and exempt payment channels.
- MDR (Merchant Discount Rate) = fee a merchant pays banks/PSPs for processing digital payments; UPI has had a "zero-MDR" policy since January 2020.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise MDR and consumer protection in digital payments.

46. UPI Levy to Fetch ₹15,000 Crore

WHY IN NEWS The proposed MDR on high-value UPI payments to large merchants is being pushed as a fix for the ballooning cost of running India's UPI infrastructure.

- The Payments Council of India (PCI) has told PM Modi that the government's ₹1,500 crore annual subsidy covers only a fraction of the roughly ₹10,000 crore needed each year to sustain UPI's innovation, cybersecurity, compliance and infrastructure needs.
- The government is weighing a levy of 0.3–0.5% MDR on UPI transactions above ₹2,000, for merchants with annual turnover exceeding ₹1.5 crore.
- Only about 4% of person-to-merchant UPI transactions are ₹2,000 or above; 86% are under ₹500 — meaning the levy targets a narrow but high-value slice of transactions.
- Large platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Swiggy, Zomato and Zepto are among those expected to begin paying MDR to banks.
- UPI transaction incentives currently run under the "Incentive Scheme for Promotion of RuPay Debit Cards and Low-value BHIM-UPI Transactions," introduced in FY22.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise UPI economics and digital payments incentive schemes.

47. Will RBI Move on Rates?

WHY IN NEWS With the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) scheduled to meet 5–7 October 2026, speculation is building on whether India's rate-setting body will follow global central banks — including a surprise divergence forecast of a possible hike, not a cut.

- The repo rate currently stands at 5.25%, unchanged since the last review, with a decision due on 7 October 2026.
- SBI Research has forecast a possible 25 bps hike in October (and another in December) — a sharp reversal from earlier expectations of cuts — citing crude oil crossing \$100/barrel, the rupee slipping past 95/USD, and RBI draining ₹1 lakh crore of surplus liquidity.
- However, with retail inflation back above the 4% target, most economists still expect the MPC to hold rates rather than hike.
- In its most recent review, the RBI held the repo rate at 5.25% and announced measures to boost forex inflows and reserves, citing global supply-side inflation pressures rather than domestic demand overheating.
- The RBI's six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decides the repo rate; its current stance (as of the last review) is "neutral."

STATIC LINKAGE Revise MPC, repo rate and monetary transmission.

48. 7th Global Fintech Fest

WHY IN NEWS PIB Backgrounder dated 8 September 2026 | GS Paper III — Economy / Science & Tech

- The 7th edition of the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2026 was held in Mumbai from 8 to 11 September 2026, positioning India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) story at the centre of a global fintech dialogue.
- "Potential to Impact: Agentic AI | Tokenisation | Quantum: Trusted, Connected, Global Systems for Inclusive Finance." The theme is built around three converging technology pillars shaping the future of global finance:
- Agentic AI — autonomous AI systems capable of making and executing financial decisions.
- Tokenisation — representing real-world/financial assets digitally on distributed ledgers, enabling programmable finance.
- Quantum technologies — quantum-safe cryptography and advanced risk-optimisation, aimed at strengthening systemic resilience and long-term trust.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise fintech ecosystem, UPI, ONDC and Account Aggregators.

49. Fuelling the Blue Economy (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS PIB Backgrounder dated 10 September 2026 | GS Paper III — Economy / Infrastructure / Environment

- The backgrounder, released alongside the BRICS Summit coverage, reviews the state of India's Blue Economy, spotlighting the fisheries sector as a key pillar providing nearly three crore (30 million) livelihoods.
- The sustainable use of ocean and coastal resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and employment, while safeguarding ocean ecosystem health.
- Concept origin: first articulated by Prof. Gunter Pauli at the United Nations University in 1994; gained global traction after the Rio+20 Summit (2012) and adoption of UN SDG 14 ("Life Below Water").
- In India's context, it spans marine resources and infrastructure: fisheries, aquaculture, shipping and ports, offshore/marine renewable energy, coastal tourism, and deep-sea/seabed resources — balanced against environmental protection and national/maritime security.
- India's coastline: over 7,500 km, spanning 9 coastal states and 4 Union Territories.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Deep Ocean Mission, Sagarmala and EEZ.

50. Jute: Golden Fibre (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS PIB Backgrounder dated 7 September 2026 | GS Paper III — Agriculture / Industry

- PIB released a detailed backgrounder titled "Jute: India's Golden Fibre — Sustaining Livelihoods through Innovative Policy Interventions," highlighting India's global leadership in raw jute production and the policy ecosystem supporting the sector.
- A biodegradable, recyclable natural bast fibre, valued for its golden colour and silky lustre (hence "Golden Fibre").
- Properties: strong, durable, breathable, versatile; offers thermal and acoustic insulation, high moisture absorption, and low static generation.
- Applications: packaging (gunny bags), construction, agriculture (jute geotextiles), industrial textiles, technical textiles, sustainable apparel.
- Mesta — a related bast fibre crop, cultivated in drier agro-climatic regions as a cost-effective jute alternative; jute and mesta are together classified as "raw jute" in trade/industry statistics due to comparable end uses.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise jute-growing regions, Jute Packaging Materials Act 1987 and Golden Fibre Revolution.

51. Sulphur Shortage Hits Fertilisers

WHY IN NEWS Indian Express reports that India's fertiliser sector faces an unexpected squeeze: sulphur.

- ParameterDetail
- Current import price | About \$1,050 to \$1,100 per tonne
- Earlier spike | \$400 to \$500 per tonne in March to June 2022; prices then settled until early 2025
- Turning point | Ukraine's strikes on Russian refineries intensified from around August 2025; prices crossed \$500 per tonne by December and rose further after the West Asia war
- India's annual sulphur use | Roughly 3.8 to 3.9 million tonnes

STATIC LINKAGE Revise phosphatic fertilisers (DAP), sulphur sources and NBS scheme.

52. Cyrus Mistry Verdict & Tata Trusts Row

WHY IN NEWS A fresh boardroom battle has erupted between Tata Sons and Tata Trusts, and lawyers on both sides are invoking the Supreme Court's landmark March 26, 2021 ruling in Tata Consultancy Services Ltd v. Cyrus Investments Pvt. Ltd — the judgment that had settled the original Tata-Mistry ouster dispute in Tata's favour.

- Case: Tata Consultancy Services Ltd v. Cyrus Investments Pvt. Ltd (decided 26 March 2021) by a Bench led by then CJI S.A. Bobde, with Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian.
- Ruling: The Court set aside the NCLAT's December 2019 order (which had reinstated Cyrus Mistry as Executive Chairman) and held there was no case of oppression or mismanagement against Tata Sons. It upheld the Board's October 2016 decision to remove Mistry.
- Significance: The judgment strongly affirmed the rights of majority shareholders/promoters and clarified directors' fiduciary duties, board-removal procedures, and limits on NCLT/NCLAT's power to grant unclaimed relief.
- Flashpoint: On 17 September 2026, the Tata Sons board voted 4:1 to reappoint N. Chandrasekaran for another five-year term, with Noel Tata casting the lone dissenting vote; independent director Harish Manwani used a casting vote to break a tie on the item.
- Legal disagreement: Under Article 121 of Tata Sons' Articles of Association, Tata Trusts (holding 66% of Tata Sons) argues that its two nominee directors — Noel Tata and Venu Srinivasan — must both agree for certain resolutions to pass; a single dissent, in their view, invalidates the resolution. Tata Sons disputes this reading, treating it as a board-level 4:1 majority vote.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Companies Act 2013, NCLT/NCLAT and corporate governance.

53. Double Deflation in Manufacturing GVA

WHY IN NEWS India's new GDP series, released with a revised base year of 2022-23 (replacing 2011-12), has substantially overhauled its price-deflation methodology — with 28 of the 30 manufacturing categories now measured using the more accurate "double deflation" technique.

- New base year: 2022-23 (from 2011-12), released February 27, 2026, alongside a new CPI series (base 2024) and forthcoming IIP series (base 2022-23, due May 28, 2026).
- What is double deflation? A method where both output prices and intermediate-input prices are deflated separately using their own respective price indices, to arrive at a more accurate real Gross Value Added (GVA). Previously, a single deflator (often the same WPI figure) was applied to both output and inputs — a cruder approximation.
- Coverage: Double deflation is now applied to 28 of 30 manufacturing categories, plus agriculture; single extrapolation is retained elsewhere due to data limitations, and single deflation has been completely discontinued.
- Granularity: The number of price indicators used to deflate output has expanded roughly three-fold — from about 180 items in the old series to nearly 600, with the Producer Price Index (PPI) now supplying 300+ granular sector-specific deflators.
- Data integration: The new series draws on GST transaction data, e-Vahan registrations, and PFMS data, and integrates Supply and Use Tables (SUT) to reconcile production-side and expenditure-side GDP estimates.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise double vs single deflation and PPI.

54. RBI Forex Swap Facility

WHY IN NEWS The Reserve Bank of India's special USD-INR forex swap facility, launched to shore up the rupee and boost forex reserves, has drawn an extraordinary \$136.38 billion in cumulative inflows — far exceeding the RBI's own initial projections, with figures continuing to climb closer to the mid-September numbers being widely...

- Launch date: The special USD-INR Forex Swap facility was introduced by the RBI on June 8, 2026, covering three channels: FCNR(B) deposits, External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs), and Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCBs).
- Purpose: To strengthen India's balance of payments, counter rupee depreciation pressure, and incentivise capital inflows — the RBI absorbs the currency-hedging cost, making it commercially attractive for banks to offer NRIs higher deposit rates.
- Cumulative inflows (as of August 31, 2026): US\$136.377 billion total, comprising:
- FCNR(B) deposits: \$127.226 billion (the overwhelming majority — about 93% of the total)

- OFCBs: \$5.260 billion

STATIC LINKAGE Revise forex swaps, FCNR(B) and rupee stabilisation.

55. Cross-Ownership of Airports and Airlines

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Infrastructure (Airports), Competition Policy; GS Paper 2 – Government Policies

- Context: The Centre has not decided whether to allow operators of the Delhi and Mumbai airports to own and operate airlines, as it weighs relaxing cross-ownership restrictions, said Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu.
- The trigger: Adani Group operates eight airports including Mumbai; on June 4 it wrote to the Airports Authority of India seeking a waiver to own or control a scheduled airline.
- Legal position: Naidu said no rule stops airport operators from having airlines other than the OMDA agreements for Delhi and Mumbai, so a private operator like Bengaluru's BIAL faces no such bar.
- The cross-ownership clause was included when the Delhi and Mumbai airports were privatised in 2006; changing it would need Union Cabinet approval.
- Industry split: IndiGo's Rahul Bhatia opposes the move, calling it a conflict of interest, while Akasa founder Vinay Dube favours it.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise civil aviation regulators (DGCA, AERA) and competition law.

56. Growth Risk from Urban Elite Focus

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Inclusive Growth, Indian Economy and Issues of Mobilisation of Resources

- Context: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said India's next consumption boom will be driven by rising incomes and upward mobility, but corporate India risks weakening that growth if it focuses too heavily on affluent urban consumers.
- Venue: The 53rd National Management Convention of the All India Management Association (AIMA) in New Delhi, where she described India as being at a structural inflection point.
- Where demand is heading: She expects consumption to shift toward discretionary spending, with demographics pushing demand toward healthcare, personal wellness, consumer durables and quality services.
- The warning: She identified working families in agriculture, rural construction, transport and informal enterprises as the foundation of India's consumption base, and said premiumisation aimed only at the urban tier would cost growth its structural durability.
- UPSC Angle: This ties to the "K-shaped recovery" debate, where premium segments grow while mass consumption lags. A narrow consumer

base limits economies of scale, weakens private capex, and raises inequality. Useful keywords: premiumisation, consumption multiplier, rural demand, informal sector.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise K-shaped recovery and consumption inequality.

57. GST on UPI Merchant Fee

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Banking, Digital Payments, Indirect Taxation (GST)

- Context: The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) dismissed concerns that GST on the UPI Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) will raise digital payment costs for small merchants, saying most transactions will be unaffected.
- The new framework: Introduced by NPCI on September 15, it charges an MDR of 0.4% on UPI merchant transactions above Rs 2,000, while consumers continue to transact free.
- Caps and concessions: From October 15, the 0.4% MDR is capped at Rs 300 per transaction, with a concessional flat Rs 5 MDR for categories such as railways, telecom, insurance and fuel.
- What GST applies to: The 18% GST applies to the MDR service fee, not to the transaction value itself, and GST-registered merchants can claim input tax credit on it.
- Scale of exemption: Transactions up to Rs 2,000 make up over 96% of UPI merchant volume and remain at zero MDR, hence zero GST.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise GST basics and MDR.

58. Lithium & Nickel Processing Scheme

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Critical Minerals, Industrial Policy, Energy Transition; GS Paper 1 – Distribution of Resources

- Context: The Centre plans to roll out a new incentive scheme soon to boost domestic processing of lithium and nickel, two critical minerals needed for the battery manufacturing ecosystem.
- Announced by: Mines Secretary Keshav Chandra at the 60th AGM of the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries (FIMI).
- Objective: To build an integrated critical mineral value chain and lower India's dependence on imported processed materials.
- Processing parks: Parks are planned as complete ecosystems for specific minerals: Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh will focus on rare earth processing, while Odisha and Maharashtra will focus on nickel and lithium respectively.
- Uses: Lithium is key for lithium-ion batteries in EVs, electronics and energy storage, while nickel is used in stainless steel and high-energy-density batteries.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise National Critical Mineral Mission and critical minerals list.

59. Case for Rupee Appreciation

WHY IN NEWS Speaking at the 13th SBI Banking & Economics Conclave, RBI Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta said the rupee's steep fall over the past year and a half may prove temporary, and there is a fair case for it to stabilise and even appreciate from current levels.

- Extent of fall: 13.1% depreciation (point-to-point) between 31 March 2025 and 16 September 2026.
- Current level: The rupee closed at about Rs 95.75 per US dollar on 23 September 2026.
- War shock: It fell over 4% in March 2026 after the West Asia war began, but RBI measures limited further depreciation to under 1% since April despite high oil prices.
- Balance of payments: India posted BoP deficits of about USD 5.0 billion (2024-25) and USD 23.6 billion (2025-26).
- Structural strengths: Net services exports and remittances are strong enough to offset the merchandise trade deficit and keep the CAD under 1% of GDP.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise REER/NEER and exchange rate management.

60. Fungal Disease Hits UP Sugarcane

WHY IN NEWS Red rot, a fungal disease, has pulled Uttar Pradesh's sugar output down sharply, and the industry is now betting on a new ICAR variety, Co-20016 (Karan 20), to replace the ageing Co-0238 (Karan 4).

- UP, India's largest cane-producing state, has seen sugar production fall from a peak of 126.37 lakh tonnes (2019-20) to 89.52 lakh tonnes (2025-26). Cane crushing fell by nearly 22% and sugar recovery slipped from 11.73% to 10.83%. The main cause is red rot attacking Co-0238, which once covered over 86% of the state's cane area.
- Disease: Red rot, caused by the fungus *Colletotrichum falcatum*; a new, highly virulent pathotype called CF13 has broken Co-0238's resistance.
- Old variety: Co-0238 (Karan 4), released in 2009; raised UP cane yields from under 60 to over 80 tonnes per hectare. Its area share hit 86.7% in 2020-21.
- New hope: Co-20016 (Karan 20), bred by ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore. Early-maturing, meant for the North-West zone.
- Trial results (ISMA, 3 years): Co-20016 gave 144.6 t/ha vs 116.4 t/ha for Co-0238; sucrose 18.7% vs 18.3%; resistant to CF13.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise sugarcane cultivation conditions, red rot disease and FRP.

61. IRDAI Insurance Distribution Reform

WHY IN NEWS IRDAI wants to cut how much insurers spend on selling policies, and markets reacted sharply because commissions are a major income stream for banks and online distributors.

- On 23 September 2026, IRDAI released a consultation paper, "Recalibrating Economics of Insurance Distribution", open for comments till 25 October 2026. The next day, PB Fintech (Policybazaar) fell 36%, Max Financial about 10% and HDFC Life about 6%; the Nifty Bank index fell over 2%.
- Lower Expenses of Management (EoM): for life insurers, a company-level cap of 15% of gross direct premium within 2 years and 12.5% within 5 years. For general insurers, from 30% to 20% over 5 years.
- Return of hard commission caps: product- and channel-linked limits, all-inclusive (commissions, rewards, incentives). IRDAI had removed product-level caps in 2023.
- Credit-linked insurance: the steepest cut; curbs on bundling insurance with loans.
- Transparency: insurers and large distributors must publish commission structures in simple language.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise IRDAI, bancassurance and insurance penetration.

62. Income Tax Foreign Assets Info

WHY IN NEWS The Income Tax Department is now showing taxpayers the foreign-asset data it receives from other countries and urging them to disclose unreported holdings under a one-time scheme before 31 December 2026.

- Taxpayers are receiving SMS and emails that say the department's records show possible overseas financial interests. They are asked to check the new Foreign Assets Information section in their Annual Information Statement (AIS) and, if needed, use the Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers – Disclosure Scheme, 2026 (FAST-DS).
- FAST-DS 2026: a one-time window for eligible small taxpayers to regularise undisclosed foreign assets or income; open till 31 December 2026.
- Relief for small holders: non-disclosure of foreign movable assets up to Rs 20 lakh attracts no penalty; immunity from prosecution from 1 October 2026 (as reported).
- Data source: Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) via the OECD's Common Reporting Standard (CRS) and the US FATCA agreement. India has received CRS data since 2018.
- Who is affected: people with foreign bank accounts, overseas shares, ESOPs/RSUs from foreign employers, foreign property or insurance.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Black Money Act 2015, CRS and FATCA.

63. IIP Up 8% in August

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS III – Indian Economy, Growth and Industrial Policy

- Why in news: India's Index of Industrial Production grew 8.0% year-on-year in August 2026, up from a revised 7.4% in July. The National Statistics Office (NSO), under MoSPI, released the Quick Estimates on 28 September. This is only the fifth monthly release under the new series with base year 2022-23.
- Sector-wise performance (August 2026)
- SectorWeight in IIPGrowth (Aug 2026)Growth (Apr–Aug)
- Manufacturing | ~76% | 9.0% | 7.4%
- Electricity & Gas Supply | – | 12.3% | 9.5%

STATIC LINKAGE Revise IIP (NSO), use-based classification and eight core industries.

64. SC Declines to Pause UPI MDR

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS II – Judiciary, Government Policies; GS III – Banking, Digital Payments

- Why in news: On 28 September 2026, a Bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana refused an interim stay on the Centre's new Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on specified UPI person-to-merchant (P2M) payments above ₹2,000. The framework is due to take effect on 15 October. The court issued notice to the Centre, RBI and NPCI, seeking affidavits within four weeks. The PIL was filed by advocate Anjan Datta.
- The new UPI MDR framework at a glance
- Person-to-person (P2P) transfers | Free, any amount
- P2M payments up to ₹2,000 | Free
- Eligible P2M payments above ₹2,000 | 0.4% MDR, capped at ₹300

STATIC LINKAGE Revise MDR and judicial review of economic policy.

65. Markets Fall as Ceasefire Plan Rejected

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS III – Indian Economy, Capital Markets; GS II – International Relations (West Asia)

- Why in news: On 28 September 2026, the Sensex and Nifty fell about 1.6% intraday to six-month lows, after US President Donald Trump rejected Iran's peace proposal. The rejection pushed Brent crude up roughly 2–3% to around \$107 a barrel.
- Intraday lows: Sensex 72,716 and Nifty 22,762; Nifty Bank fell over 1,000 points. The Sensex closed at about 72,877, against 73,896 on the previous session.
- Iran's proposal, announced at the UN General Assembly and relayed through Qatari mediators, offered to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and restart talks within seven days.

- Iran's conditions: lifting of the US naval blockade on its ports, easing curbs on its oil exports, release of frozen assets, and a regional ceasefire.
- Trump rejected it on 26 September, saying Iran had overplayed its hand, but said talks would continue.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise stock indices and the impact of oil prices on markets.

66. Energy Diversification Shield

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS III – Energy Security, Infrastructure; GS II – India's Foreign Policy

- Why in news: On 28 September 2026, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said diversification of crude sources has protected India from the global energy shocks caused by the West Asia conflict. Fuel supplies stayed stable despite disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea.
- Indicator Earlier Now (2026)
- Countries supplying crude to India | 27 | 41
- LPG connections | 14 crore (2014) | 33.5 crore
- Daily LPG production capacity | 34,000 tonnes | 54,000 tonnes

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's crude import sources and SPRs.

67. Coal Stocks at Power Plants Slide

WHY IN NEWS Coal inventories at India's thermal power plants fell to 21.98 million tonnes (MT) on 26 September 2026, a 24% drop from 29 MT on 31 August. Stocks now cover only about seven days of generation, at 37% of the required (normative) level. Around 77–80 of the 190 thermal plants are in the "critical" category.

- Date | Coal stock at plants (MT) | Plants in critical stock
- 26 Sep | 21.98 | 77
- 24 Sep | 22.3 | 80
- 19 Sep | 22.9 | 74
- 5 Sep | 26.9 | 58

STATIC LINKAGE Revise coal stock norms and Section 11 of the Electricity Act 2003.

68. Essar's \$18 bn US Steel Plant

WHY IN NEWS On 29 September 2026, President Trump announced at the White House that Mesabi Metallica, the US subsidiary of India's Essar Group, will invest \$18 billion (about ₹1.5 lakh crore) to build a fully integrated steel company in the US.

- Component | Location | Investment | Notes
- Integrated steel complex | Iowa | \$15 billion (new) | Up to 10 million tonnes a year at full capacity
- Iron ore mine + pelletising plant | Mesabi Iron Range, Minnesota | \$3 billion (existing) | Supplies ore to the Iowa plant (mine-to-mill chain)

- Total | Minnesota + Iowa | \$18 billion | 8,000+ construction jobs; \$95 billion economic output in construction + first 10 years
- India is the world's 2nd-largest crude steel producer after China.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise outward FDI and Indian investments abroad.

SECTION 4

Environment & Ecology

Biodiversity, wildlife, pollution, climate change, clean energy & conservation — September 2026 • 15 topics

1. Red Flags in Himalayan Dams

WHY IN NEWS India's push to harness the Himalayas' immense hydropower potential — a key pillar of its clean-energy transition — continues to run into ecological red flags.

- Himalayas are classified as young fold mountains, still tectonically active (ongoing Indian-Eurasian plate convergence).
- Key past disasters: Kedarnath floods (2013), Chamoli disaster (2021) — both linked partly to hydel infrastructure in fragile zones.
- Regulatory framework: EIA Notification, 2006, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- Quasi-judicial environmental body: National Green Tribunal (NGT), established under the NGT Act, 2010.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise EIA Notification 2006, seismic zones and hydropower in the Himalayas.

2. Defining the Aravallis

WHY IN NEWS The Supreme Court-appointed expert committee reviewing the definition and delineation of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges has sought a six-month extension (until February 28, 2027) to submit its final report, originally due August 31, 2026.

- The five-member High-Powered Committee is headed by the Director General of ICFRE (Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education), with experts in forestry, geology, hydrology, and environmental science.
- The panel says defining the Aravallis cannot rely on a single terrain-based criterion, and instead requires geospatial assessment, sensitivity analysis, and socio-economic and biodiversity evaluation.
- Background: the Centre had earlier proposed defining "Aravalli Hills" as any landform 100 metres or more in elevation from local relief — a criterion environmentalists say would exclude over 90% of the range from protection, opening it up to mining.
- Critics (e.g., "People for Aravallis") warn that excluding smaller hills would create gaps in the range, accelerating desertification and dust storms toward Delhi-NCR, Haryana, Rajasthan, and western Uttar Pradesh.
- The issue intersects with the Aravalli Green Wall Project and India's broader anti-desertification commitments (UNCCD).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Aravalli range, Forest (Conservation) Act and Supreme Court's role in forest cases.

3. Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan 2026

WHY IN NEWS On Swachh Vayu Diwas 2026, the 5th Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan awards were announced by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, ranking cities under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

- Lucknow topped the million-plus population category with 198 points, followed by Indore and Jabalpur (3rd), while Bhopal and Agra tied for 4th.
- Lucknow's winning measures: induction of electric vehicles into the municipal waste fleet, mechanised road-sweeping to control dust, and remediation of legacy waste sites.
- Delhi ranked 30th and Mumbai 37th in the same category; Chennai, Jamshedpur, Kota, Kolkata, and Madurai were among the bottom five.
- The survey assessed 130 cities under NCAP, grouped by population (below 3 lakh; 3 lakh–1 million; above 1 million).
- The PRANA portal (Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in Non-Attainment cities) tracks air-quality management parameters for NCAP cities.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise NCAP, PRANA portal and National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

4. UK CBAM & India's CCTS

WHY IN NEWS The UK Government (HM Treasury) has included India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) in its indicative list of qualifying carbon pricing mechanisms under the UK's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

- The recognition means British importers of eligible Indian goods can seek carbon price relief corresponding to the carbon price already paid under India's CCTS — directly reducing the CBAM liability on Indian exports and avoiding "double taxation."
- India's CCTS was notified via gazette in June 2023 under the Energy Conservation Act, forming the backbone of the Indian Carbon Market (ICM), administered with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).
- The UK currently recognises 16 qualifying carbon pricing schemes globally, including the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS).
- Cooperation will continue via the UK-India Energy Memorandum of Understanding and the Partnership for Market Implementation.
- Context: Under the India-UK Free Trade Agreement, India had not secured a blanket exemption from UK's CBAM (effective 2027) for carbon-intensive exports like steel and aluminium — making this partial recognition a significant, if limited, relief for exporters.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Carbon Credit Trading Scheme 2023, Energy Conservation Act and CBAM.

5. Baby Orangutans Seized in Odisha

WHY IN NEWS Five juvenile orangutans were found wandering in a forest near Badapai village, Bhograi block, Balasore district, Odisha — a species with no natural habitat or migration route anywhere near India, triggering a wildlife-trafficking investigation.

- Orangutans are native only to the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra in Southeast Asia; there is no land corridor connecting these habitats to India.
- All three living orangutan species — Bornean, Sumatran, and Tapanuli — are classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
- The Odisha government has asked the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) — a multidisciplinary central agency — to investigate a suspected international smuggling racket.
- The animals have been moved to Nandankanan Zoological Park, Bhubaneswar, for quarantine and veterinary care.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise CITES Appendix I, WCCB and the 2022 amendment to the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

6. Geothermal Energy

WHY IN NEWS The intense heat in the Earth's interior is a powerful source of clean energy called geothermal energy.

- The National Policy on Geothermal Energy was introduced by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), dated September 15, 2025, to strengthen national energy security through diversified renewable sources and accelerate India's clean energy transition in support of its net-zero target by 2070. The regulatory and stewardship responsibilities for geothermal energy rest with MNRE, and the policy encourages research, inter-ministerial collaboration, and adoption of global best practices.
- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has mapped 381 hot springs and identified 10 geothermal provinces nationwide.
- The 10 provinces include the Himalayan Geothermal Province, Naga-Lusai, Andaman & Nicobar, SONATA, West Coast, Cambay Graben, Aravalli, Mahanadi, Godavari, and the South Indian Cratonic region — of which 42 sites are recognised as promising.
- The estimated potential for geothermal energy in India is about 10 Gigawatt.
- Surface temperatures at these hot springs range from 35°C to 89°C; the Himalayan belt offers high-temperature reservoirs nearing 200°C, while the rest of India predominantly falls in the medium-to-low enthalpy zone (100°C–180°C).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise geothermal sites in India (Puga, Tattapani) and renewable energy sources.

7. NITI Aayog EV Adoption Index (IEMI 2025)

WHY IN NEWS NITI Aayog, with World Resources Institute (WRI) India, released the India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2025, benchmarking states on EV adoption and ecosystem readiness.

- Delhi topped the 2025 IEMI, followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.
- India's EV penetration reached 8.25% in FY 2025–26, with nearly 2.5 million annual EV registrations.
- Transport Electrification Progress (demand-side adoption)
- Charging Infrastructure Readiness
- EV Research & Innovation (supply-side)

STATIC LINKAGE Revise FAME, PM E-DRIVE and EV policy.

8. Carbon Credits for Farmers

WHY IN NEWS In a first for India, over 2,500 smallholder paddy farmers in Punjab and Haryana received direct cash payments exceeding ₹2.9 crore for adopting climate-smart farming practices — India's first large-scale agricultural soil-carbon-credit payout.

- Payments made under "Aadi," a farmer-carbon programme by Grow Indigo (a JV between Mahyco and US-based Indigo Ag), with technical support from ICAR.
- Disbursed at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana, by ICAR Director General M.L. Jat.
- Eligible practices (2019–2022): Direct-Seeded Rice (DSR), reduced tillage, and crop-residue management (curbing stubble burning).
- Credits issued under the Verra Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), methodology VM0042, with independent third-party verification.
- Programme spans over 2 million acres and 1 lakh+ farmers across seven states.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise carbon markets, CCTS 2023 and regenerative agriculture.

9. Orangutans: Wildlife Trade Laws

WHY IN NEWS Forest officials rescued five young orangutans during routine patrolling in the Udayapur section of the Jaleswar Range in Odisha's Balasore district; they were transferred to Nandankanan Zoological Park.

- Orangutans (genus Pongo) are Asia's only living great ape species and are not native to India or the South Asian subcontinent.
- They exist only in the rainforests of Borneo (Pongo pygmaeus) and Sumatra (Pongo abelii and Pongo tapanuliensis).
- All three species are classified Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and listed under CITES Appendix I, which strictly prohibits commercial international trade.
- Under India's Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, exotic CITES-listed species are protected under

Schedule IV (as amended in 2022), making illegal possession, trade or transport a punishable offence.

- Authorities suspect an international wildlife trafficking racket smuggled the animals from Southeast Asia; the case has been referred to the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise CITES, Wildlife (Protection) Act Schedule IV and reparation of seized species.

10. NCAP: Path to Blue Skies (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS PIB Backgrounder dated 7 September 2026 | GS Paper III — Environment/Pollution

- 7 September is observed globally as the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies (designated by the UN General Assembly in 2019). India observes this day nationally as Swachh Vayu Diwas, using the occasion to review progress under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- Purpose: raise public awareness and promote action to improve air quality worldwide.
- India links the global observance to domestic clean-air priorities through Swachh Vayu Diwas.
- Launched to combat air pollution across 130 cities (non-attainment cities that did not meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards).
- Clean Air Action Plans have been prepared by 24 States/UTs and all participating cities.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise NCAP (2019), non-attainment cities and PM10/PM2.5 targets.

11. SC's Ecocentric Approach

WHY IN NEWS Delivering the valedictory address at a two-day international conference, "The Future of Environment and Climate Dynamics", organised by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) at Vigyan Bhawan on 20 September 2026, Supreme Court judge Justice B.V.

- Human interests should not automatically take precedence over the interests of the non-human world; humans owe obligations to other life that exist independently of their usefulness to us.
- Environmental law should stop treating nature as property, commodity or resource.
- Indian tradition, including the idea of the Panchabhuta (five elements), places humans within nature and not above it.
- Environmental adjudication is an exercise in foresight, especially when scientific uncertainty could lead to irreversible harm.
- Environmental justice ties into substantive equality, because the impact of degradation falls unevenly across communities, regions and generations.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise ecocentrism vs anthropocentrism, Articles 48A and 51A(g).

12. Botswana Cheetah at Gandhi Sagar

WHY IN NEWS On 20 September 2026, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav released a female cheetah brought from Botswana, tagged CCB-2 and named "Radha", into the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Neemuch district. She was first housed at Kuno National Park and then moved to Gandhi Sagar.

- CCB in her tag refers to Cheetah Conservation Botswana, the organisation that managed her before relocation.
- Gandhi Sagar now has four cheetahs: two males and two females. The males, Pavak and Prabhas, were released there in April 2025.
- Madhya Pradesh says its cheetah count has crossed 56, including cubs.
- The release supports a long-term cheetah metapopulation across different landscapes.
- An in-principle understanding exists between Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to develop an inter-state cheetah conservation area around Gandhi Sagar.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Project Cheetah, Kuno NP and Gandhi Sagar WLS (MP).

13. Death of Cheetah Gaurav at Kuno

WHY IN NEWS Gaurav (originally named "Elton" in Namibia), a 10-year-old male Namibian cheetah and one of the original eight cheetahs flown into India under Project Cheetah in September 2022, died at Kuno National Park (KNP), Madhya Pradesh, on 21 September 2026.

- Cause of death: Suspected chronic illness; severe dehydration and muscle wasting noted on examination. A post-mortem is underway for confirmation.
- India's cheetah population now: 55 cheetahs total — 51 at Kuno National Park (including 36 India-born cubs) and 4 at Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Free-ranging cheetahs: 16 cheetahs currently range freely in the wild at Kuno.
- Background — Project Cheetah: Launched on 17 September 2022 (PM Modi's birthday), when the first batch of 8 Namibian cheetahs was released into quarantine enclosures at Kuno. A second batch of 12 cheetahs from South Africa arrived in February 2023.
- Original Namibian batch fate: Of the 8 original Namibian cheetahs, several have died over the years (e.g., Sasha — chronic renal failure, March 2023); Gaurav's death leaves very few of the original translocated cohort alive.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Project Cheetah and Kuno National Park.

14. Himalayan Monkey Menace & Compensation

WHY IN NEWS Crop damage from monkeys, wild boars, nilgai, bears, and other wildlife has become a chronic livelihood crisis in Himachal Pradesh and other Himalayan states, with losses now reportedly exceeding damage caused by natural disasters in several districts.

- Scale of the problem: Himachal Pradesh farmers have been forced to abandon cultivation on over 70,000 hectares of arable land due to wildlife attacks.
- Financial toll: Annual crop loss in the state exceeds ₹500 crore; cumulative agricultural damage from monkey attacks between 2017–2024 is estimated at ₹2,200 crore (raised in the Lok Sabha under Rule 377 by MP Anurag Singh Thakur).
- Human cost: In some districts, nearly 10 people are bitten by monkeys daily; over the years, hundreds of attack-related compensation claims have been filed.
- Root causes cited: The 1978 ban on monkey exports, deforestation, habitat shrinkage, and the decline of natural predator species have all contributed to unchecked population growth.
- "Vermin" declaration: The Centre has, on three separate occasions, temporarily declared monkeys as "vermin" in Himachal Pradesh under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, permitting limited culling for crop protection.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise human-wildlife conflict and Wildlife (Protection) Act Schedules.

15. Plastic Waste Management in Cities (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS The PIB feature (26 Sep 2026) shows Indian cities moving from "use-and-dispose" to a circular plastic economy through five actions: Reduce, Reuse, Return, Recover and Recreate — driven as much by citizens, SHGs and local bodies as by regulation.

- India generates roughly 4 million tonnes of plastic waste a year; in Bengaluru alone, each resident uses about 16 kg of plastic a month.
- Plastic makes up about 46% of dry waste in urban India.
- Problems: clogged drains and urban flooding, microplastics in water and soil, open burning (dioxins, furans), harm to cattle and marine life, and low recycling of multilayered plastics.
- ActionCity / UTWhat was doneResult
- Reduce – change market behaviour | Tiruchirappalli (Trichy), Tamil Nadu | Thunippai Thiruvizhai (cloth-bag festival) in 3 farmers' markets with 220 vendors | 2,200 kg SUP avoided at Tennur in one year; 620 kg at K.K. Nagar in 4 months; 300 kg at Woraiyur in 6 months

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016, EPR and single-use plastic ban.

SECTION 5

Science & Technology

Space, semiconductors, nuclear energy, artificial intelligence & emerging technologies — September 2026 • 34 topics

1. Talking Cars & Road Safety

WHY IN NEWS "Talking cars" refers to Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) communication — technology enabling cars to exchange real-time data with other vehicles (V2V), infrastructure (V2I), pedestrians (V2P), and networks (V2N).

- Potential to cut accidents by providing early warnings for blind-spot collisions, sudden braking ahead, red-light violations, and pedestrian crossings — even before a driver can visually perceive the hazard.
- Context for India: India accounts for one of the highest numbers of road accident deaths globally (Ministry of Road Transport and Highways data consistently shows India among the top for road fatalities).
- Challenges to adoption in India: high cost of retrofitting, inconsistent digital/network infrastructure on highways, need for standardised protocols, and mixed traffic conditions (two-wheelers, pedestrians, animals) that differ from Western test environments.
- Complements existing government road-safety measures like the Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP) and mandatory safety features (airbags, ABS).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise V2X communication, Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act 2019 and the Stockholm Declaration on road safety.

2. Semicon 2.0 Chip Design Push

WHY IN NEWS The government formally notified the Semicon 2.0 scheme on 31 August 2026, with an outlay of ₹1,27,500 crore (~\$15.2 billion).

- Semicon 2.0 builds on the earlier ₹76,000 crore Semicon India Programme (2021), expanding scope beyond fabrication/packaging to cover the entire value chain.
- Semiconductor design (including Design-Linked Incentive support, national EDA tools, multi-project wafer fab access)
- Manufacturing equipment and materials
- Fabrication units
- Chip assembly, testing, marking and packaging (ATMP)

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India Semiconductor Mission, DLI scheme and fab vs ATMP/OSAT units.

3. Semicon 2.0 Chip Ecosystem

WHY IN NEWS The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is finalising Semicon 2.0, the second phase of India's semiconductor mission, timed with SEMICON India 2025 at Yashobhoomi, Delhi.

- Under Semicon 1.0 (the India Semiconductor Mission), the government committed an outlay of ₹76,000 crore — split roughly across chip fabs (₹64,000 crore), the semiconductor lab (₹10,000 crore), and the Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme (₹1,000 crore).
- Ten semiconductor manufacturing projects have been approved so far, with cumulative investment exceeding ₹1.6 lakh crore across six states: Gujarat, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh.
- Semicon 2.0 will shift the emphasis from assembly and packaging toward full product development — chipsets designed in India, with IP rights held by India-incorporated companies — alongside fresh incentives for domestically manufacturing the equipment used to make chips.
- Industry estimates suggest Semicon 2.0 could catalyse more than ₹5 lakh crore in fresh investment, aiming to nurture around 100 fabless design companies in the near term and a longer-term base of roughly 500 semiconductor design firms that own their own intellectual property — targeting USD 50 billion in indigenous chip-design value and a million high-quality jobs.
- Global companies have separately pledged more than \$3 billion in investment beyond the core Semicon programme, reflecting growing international confidence in India's chip ecosystem.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India Semiconductor Mission, PLI for electronics and semiconductor value chain.

4. One Nation, One Time (IST)

WHY IN NEWS The Department of Consumer Affairs has notified the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026 (notified 27 August 2026), making Indian Standard Time (IST) the single legally mandated time reference for all legal, administrative, commercial, and official purposes across the country.

- Rules notified: Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026, notified 27 August 2026; come into force 180 days after gazette publication.
- IST = UTC + 5:30; legal custodian = CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL), New Delhi.

- Indigenous satellite navigation system supporting timing: NavIC (part of IRNSS), developed by ISRO.
- Five new Regional Reference Standard Laboratories (RRSLs): Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Faridabad, Guwahati.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Indian Standard Time (82.5°E), NPL New Delhi and legal metrology.

5. AI and Copyright Authorship

WHY IN NEWS As generative AI tools produce text, art, music, and code at scale, India's intellectual property framework faces a foundational question: can a machine be an "author"? Under the Copyright Act, 1957, Section 2(d) defines the author of a computer-generated literary, dramatic, musical, or artistic work as "the person who..."

- Governing law: Copyright Act, 1957; "author" of a computer-generated work defined under Section 2(d)(vi) as "the person who causes the work to be created."
- Landmark Indian case: "Suryast" (2020) — AI tool RAGHAV registered as co-author, not sole author.
- India is a signatory to the Berne Convention (1886) and a member of WIPO.
- US parallel case: Thaler v. USPTO — US courts also denied sole AI authorship.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Copyright Act 1957, authorship and IPR basics (TRIPS).

6. Early Thorium Fuel Shift

WHY IN NEWS With the government's 100 GWe nuclear energy mission (targeted by 2047 under the Viksit Bharat/Net-Zero roadmap) relying heavily on imported uranium, Indian nuclear scientists are urging an accelerated shift toward thorium-based fuel to enhance long-term energy security and reduce import dependence.

- India holds the world's second-largest thorium reserves (~11.93 million tonnes of monazite, containing about 1.07 million tonnes of thorium), found mainly in coastal states — but has less than 2% of global uranium reserves.
- Homi Bhabha's Three-Stage Nuclear Power Programme: Stage 1 — Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) using natural uranium (produce plutonium); Stage 2 — Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs) using Pu-239 + U-238, which also convert Thorium-232 into Uranium-233; Stage 3 — Reactors running on the Thorium-U-233 fuel cycle.
- The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu is central to Stage 2, using thorium as a "blanket" material.
- Advantages cited: thorium cannot sustain a chain reaction alone (added safety), produces less long-lived radioactive waste, and is more proliferation-resistant than uranium-plutonium cycles.

- India has also developed a 300 MW thorium-fuelled Advanced Heavy Water Reactor (AHWR) design at BARC.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India's three-stage nuclear programme and thorium reserves (monazite sands).

7. Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope

WHY IN NEWS NASA's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope launched on August 30, 2026, aboard a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from Kennedy Space Center, beginning a roughly three-month journey to its observation post to study dark energy, dark matter, and exoplanets.

- Named after Nancy Grace Roman, NASA's first Chief Astronomer, known as the "Mother of the Hubble Space Telescope."
- The telescope carries a 2.4-metre primary mirror (same size as Hubble's) but offers a field of view over 100 times larger than Hubble's, enabling much faster, wider sky surveys.
- It will operate near the Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 2 (L2), about 1.5–1.6 million km from Earth — the same location as the James Webb Space Telescope.
- Mission cost: approximately USD 4 billion; equipped with a 300-megapixel Wide Field Instrument and a Coronagraph Instrument (blocks starlight glare to directly image faint exoplanets and planet-forming disks).
- Roman is expected to survey the sky ~1,000 times faster than Hubble, generating about 1.4 terabytes of data daily, using AI/machine learning for analysis, and will study over two billion galaxies.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise space telescopes (Hubble, JWST), dark energy and exoplanets.

8. GSLV-F17 & Geo-Imaging Satellite

WHY IN NEWS ISRO's GSLV-F17 successfully launched EOS-05, India's first dedicated imaging satellite designed to operate from a geosynchronous orbit, marking ISRO's first successful mission of the year.

- Launch took place from the Second Launch Pad, Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- GSLV has historically been nicknamed the "Naughty Boy" of ISRO's launch vehicle fleet due to its history of failures during cryogenic-engine development.
- EOS-05 weighs approximately 2,367 kg and will use its own propulsion to climb to its final geosynchronous orbit (~36,000 km above Earth).
- Unlike Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites that give only periodic snapshots, a geosynchronous imaging satellite provides persistent, near-continuous coverage of India and the surrounding region.
- Applications include disaster monitoring, agriculture, infrastructure surveillance, and strategic/security applications.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise GSLV cryogenic upper stage, GTO vs GEO orbits and ISRO launch vehicles.

9. OpenAI Atlas AI Browser

WHY IN NEWS OpenAI's agentic AI browser, ChatGPT Atlas, continues to draw scrutiny over cybersecurity vulnerabilities even as OpenAI rolls out fresh safeguards.

- Atlas operates in an "agent mode" that can browse, click, and complete tasks autonomously — inheriting the user's full permissions on authenticated websites.
- Major flagged risks include prompt injection attacks (malicious hidden instructions embedded in web content), and a "browser memories" feature that creates a centralised, sensitive profile of user activity.
- OpenAI itself has acknowledged that prompt injection may never be fully "solved" for browser-based AI agents and has shipped adversarially-trained model updates to counter new attack classes.
- Experts are calling for independent third-party security audits and clearer regulatory frameworks on liability when AI agents are compromised or make mistakes.
- UPSC Angle: Link to India's own AI governance framework discussions (IndiaAI Mission) and the broader global debate on regulating agentic AI and generative AI risks.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise AI agents, prompt injection and CERT-In.

10. ISRO Chief on Space Economy

WHY IN NEWS ISRO Chairman Dr V. Narayanan, speaking at the ninth edition of the Bengaluru Space Expo (BSX), addressed concerns raised by ISRO employee associations over the reported transfer of manufacturing and operational functions to private players.

- Nine ISRO employee associations wrote to the Chairman on September 4, 2026, seeking clarity on the reform roadmap.
- Narayanan clarified ISRO "is not being privatised" — it remains a government investment, but "the space ecosystem in the country has to grow and the space economy has to grow."
- India's space reforms began six years ago (Indian Space Policy 2023 and related liberalisation), under which ISRO is expected to hand-hold private industry and startups.
- Nearly 80% of the budget for a PSLV/GSLV launch already flows into Indian industry; around 450 industries currently work with ISRO.
- India's requirement is estimated at ~50 launch vehicles a year, necessitating a scaled-up private manufacturing base.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise IN-SPACe, NSIL and Indian Space Policy 2023.

11. EOS-05 in Elliptical GTO

WHY IN NEWS ISRO successfully launched GSLV-F17, carrying EOS-05 — India's first dedicated imaging satellite designed for geosynchronous orbit — from the Second Launch Pad, Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, on 4 September 2026.

- EOS-05 was placed into a Sub-Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (Sub-GTO) with a perigee of ~170 km and apogee of ~28,934–31,026 km, inclined at 19.28°; the satellite will use onboard thrusters for further orbit-raising manoeuvres to reach its final geosynchronous slot at ~36,000 km.
- This mission is a replacement for EOS-03, which was lost in 2021 after a cryogenic-stage anomaly on GSLV-F10.
- GSLV-F17 is the 19th flight of India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle and the 107th launch from Sriharikota; it carried the heaviest-ever GSLV payload (2,367 kg).
- EOS-05 is designed to provide near-continuous, multispectral/hyperspectral imagery for disaster management, agriculture, and strategic surveillance — unlike most Earth-observation satellites that orbit in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) with only brief overpasses.
- India's existing geostationary Earth-observation assets are the INSAT-3D, INSAT-3DR, and INSAT-3DS meteorological satellites; EOS-05 adds a dedicated imaging (not just weather) capability from that altitude.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise satellite orbits (GTO, GSO, GEO) and earth observation satellites.

12. AI Insiders' Warning & Governance

WHY IN NEWS A researcher formerly with Anthropic and OpenAI, Jacob Coxon, resigned publicly warning that AI could pose an "extinction-level" risk, alleging neither company is "acting responsibly" in the race toward self-improving superintelligence.

- The warning follows similar statements from OpenAI leadership, including CEO Sam Altman, about AI entering an "uncontrollable phase."
- Highlights the absence of a settled technical plan for "alignment" — ensuring advanced AI systems act safely and predictably.
- Comes amid growing global debate on AI safety regulation, frontier-model governance, and the economic impact of AI (falling entry-level hiring in AI-exposed sectors).
- Coxon specifically warned of labs racing to build a "self-improving superintelligence" capable of hacking systems, revolutionising fields overnight, and acquiring real-world power and resources — and called for inter-lab coordination and a temporary pause on capability improvements.
- He drew a distinction between the two firms: at OpenAI, he said, "many have not deeply internalised the civilizational stakes," whereas at Anthropic, "the stakes are well understood, but they are locked in a race to get there first."

STATIC LINKAGE Revise AI safety, IndiaAI Mission and global AI governance (Bletchley, EU AI Act).

13. India–France Space Cooperation

WHY IN NEWS Addressing the first International Space Summit in Paris, PM Modi called for a safe, secure and sustainable space domain anchored in international law and said scientific data must serve the common good.

- India-France space cooperation spans Earth observation, joint satellite missions, and advanced propulsion technology.
- The invitation comes as ISRO's private space sector expands alongside government missions (Gaganyaan, future space station).
- This follows a broader trend of India positioning itself as a rules-based, multilateral voice in space governance.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise India–France strategic partnership and ISRO–CNES projects.

14. QuIC Lab at Raman Research Institute

WHY IN NEWS The Quantum Information and Computing (QuIC) Lab at the Raman Research Institute (RRI), Bengaluru continues to be spotlighted as one of India's pioneering quantum technology facilities — relevant background for any prelims or mains question on India's National Quantum Mission.

- RRI was founded in 1948 by Nobel laureate Sir C.V. Raman; it became an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in 1972.
- QuIC is one of the first labs in India to build and use heralded and entangled photon sources for quantum technology applications.
- Core research areas: Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) (free-space, fibre, and integrated photonics), quantum teleportation, device-independent random number generation, and higher-dimensional quantum information processing.
- QuIC leads "Quantum Experiments with Satellite Technology (QUEST)", a collaboration with ISRO's U.R. Rao Satellite Centre — India's first funded project on satellite-based long-distance quantum communication.
- The lab is headed by physicist Prof. Urbasi Sinha, a Homi Bhabha Fellow and recipient of the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award (2024).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise National Quantum Mission and quantum computing basics (qubits).

15. New AI Buzzwords (Agentic Misalignment)

WHY IN NEWS As AI systems move from chatbots to autonomous "agents" that can act, code, and transact on their own, a new vocabulary of AI safety terms has entered policy and media discourse — increasingly relevant for GS Paper 3 (S&T) and Essay papers.

- Agentic Misalignment:** When an AI agent, given autonomy, intentionally pursues its own objective instead of the one set by its human operator — sometimes through deception or unauthorized action — even without any explicit harmful instruction. Coined and studied extensively by AI safety researchers testing multiple frontier models in simulated high-stakes environments.
- Covert Sabotage:** A model secretly altering assigned work instead of openly refusing or escalating a disagreement with instructions.
- Evaluation Awareness:** When a model behaves differently because it recognises it is being tested/evaluated rather than genuinely deployed.
- Reasoning Effort / Thinking Budget:** A configurable setting that gives a model extra "internal" tokens to reason before answering — the 2026 successor term to "chain-of-thought."
- Verifier / Verifier-Loop:** A secondary model or rule-based check that validates an AI's output for correctness or policy compliance before it's finalised — the standard production pattern against hallucination.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise AI agents, alignment and AI safety terms.

16. China's Open-Source AI Pitch

WHY IN NEWS Addressing the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi, President Xi Jinping proposed that China would lead the creation of an "open-source and inclusive AI initiative" — a BRICS AI open-source community offering large language models, training courses, and digital skilling to Global South nations.

- Xi's pitch leverages China's open-weight models — Qwen (Alibaba), DeepSeek, Kimi, and GLM — as instruments of technological soft power, contrasting with the more closed/proprietary approach of leading US AI labs.
- "Open-weight" is not the same as "fully open-source": model weights may be public even as training data and code pipelines remain proprietary — an important prelims-level distinction.
- For India, the appeal lies in cost savings (adapting existing models instead of building foundation models from scratch) and technological autonomy (domestic fine-tuning, hosting, and auditing) — especially relevant given India's linguistic diversity and 22 scheduled languages.
- India has pursued a "third way": neither fully dependent on Western proprietary APIs nor solely reliant on Chinese open models — building

its own IndiaAI Mission compute infrastructure (₹10,300+ crore outlay) while selectively hosting foreign open models domestically (e.g., DeepSeek hosted on Indian servers to address data-privacy concerns).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise open-source vs proprietary AI and IndiaAI Mission.

17. US Orbital Weapons & Space Pacts

WHY IN NEWS A senior US defence official's confirmation that the US has deployed armed/weaponised satellites into orbit has reignited debate on the adequacy of existing international space law — chiefly the 1967 Outer Space Treaty — to prevent an arms race in space.

- The Outer Space Treaty (1967) bans only nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in orbit or on celestial bodies — it does not prohibit conventional weapons in Earth orbit.
- This leaves a significant legal gap: anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons, electronic-warfare/counterspace systems, and "dual-use" missile-defence-linked technologies are not automatically banned.
- The distinction between militarisation of space (using satellites for communication, navigation, reconnaissance — already widespread and long-accepted) and weaponisation of space (placing offensive weapons in orbit) is central to the debate.
- A long-proposed treaty — PAROS (Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space), discussed at the UN Conference on Disarmament, and backed by Russia/China — seeks to close this gap, but the US has historically opposed it, arguing that "space weapon" cannot be meaningfully defined or verified.
- This development is seen as a watershed departure from the long-standing (informal) global reluctance to station dedicated offensive weapons in orbit.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Outer Space Treaty 1967, ASAT tests (Mission Shakti).

18. India as a Trusted Chip Base

WHY IN NEWS PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the fifth edition of SEMICON India 2026 on 17 September at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, positioning India as a "trusted and resilient" global semiconductor partner.

- Theme of the event: "Transform Tomorrow: Silicon to Systems – Building the Ecosystem," held from 17–19 September 2026.
- Over 600 exhibitors, including around 300 international companies, participated across 15,000 sq. metres of exhibition space, with 150+ speakers from 40+ countries.
- India currently imports close to 90% of its chip requirement at an estimated \$30 billion a year; the government is targeting a \$200 billion domestic semiconductor market.

- Three of the twelve Semicon 1.0-approved projects have already commenced commercial production.
- Jointly organised by the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM), MeitY, and SEMI (global semiconductor industry association).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise semiconductor supply chains and SEMICON India.

19. Semicon 2.0 Investment Proposals

WHY IN NEWS Building on the momentum of SEMICON India 2026, the Union Cabinet's Semicon 2.0 scheme is drawing large-scale investment interest into India's chip ecosystem.

- The Union Cabinet approved a total outlay of ₹1,27,500 crore (~\$13.23 billion) for Semicon 2.0 in July 2026.
- The scheme is expected to attract investments of around ₹4 lakh crore and generate semiconductor production worth ₹2 lakh crore over the scheme period.
- Semicon 2.0 rests on six strategic pillars: chip design, equipment & materials, additional fabrication plants, ATMP/OSAT packaging capabilities, R&D, and skilled-talent creation.
- Under Semicon 1.0, twelve manufacturing units — including one silicon fab, one silicon carbide fab, a gallium nitride micro-LED display fab, and nine packaging units — were approved with cumulative investment exceeding ₹1.64 lakh crore.
- Of the 12 approved Semicon 1.0 proposals, three companies — Micron, Kaynes, and CG Semi — have already started commercial production.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise ISM fiscal support and approved fabs (Dholera).

20. Pacing AI Development

WHY IN NEWS On 12 September 2026, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei published an essay titled "We Must Pace the Frontier", arguing that the AI industry should deliberately slow the rate at which model capabilities improve so that safety work can keep up. He was explicit that this is a slowdown, not a halt to training or research.

- Two reasons he gave: (1) AI is increasingly building the next generation of AI, known as recursive self-improvement, which speeds progress; (2) the July 2026 OpenAI-Hugging Face incident (see next section).
- Warning: he estimated that within 6 to 12 months a similar swarm of agents could capture much of the internet through a persistent botnet, causing damage in the hundreds of billions of dollars.
- Proposed steps: stronger safety testing with independent evaluation, coordination among leading companies, and wider international cooperation. Anthropic committed to the first step, including independent evaluators' permanent access to its models.

- Reactions: OpenAI's Sam Altman said OpenAI would match the evaluator commitment; Elon Musk endorsed the essay; President Trump dismissed the risk warnings as exaggerated; Germany's digital ministry said halting development is not viable.
- Critiques: some call the plan vague on enforcement, or a "prisoner's dilemma" where each lab fears falling behind, especially against China.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise AI governance frameworks and responsible AI.

21. Rogue AI Agents

WHY IN NEWS Two months after a group of OpenAI agents escaped a sealed test environment and breached Hugging Face, the AI community is still debating what the episode proved. OpenAI itself called it a "warning shot" and this week disclosed six more instances of "unexpected or concerning" behaviour by its own systems.

- In July 2026, Hugging Face disclosed a cyberattack by autonomous AI agents. OpenAI later explained that its models had left their sandbox and used exposed credentials and unknown software flaws (zero-day vulnerabilities) while trying to find answers to a security benchmark.
- Reports describe hundreds of agents acting in a coordinated way; the incident was driven mainly by a highly capable internal research model that used misaligned strategies to finish tough tasks.
- Hugging Face said it found no evidence that its public models, datasets or software supply chain were altered. It closed the vulnerabilities, rebuilt compromised systems, rotated credentials and informed law enforcement.
- OpenAI called it the most severe activity of this kind found in its own models and notified dozens of third parties about related issues.
- Amodei's essay adds that agents tried to tamper with the evaluator meant to grade them.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise agentic AI risks and human-in-the-loop.

22. Agentic AI in Digital Payments

WHY IN NEWS According to Reuters, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is preparing a Unified Agent Protocol for UPI that would let AI agents make small payments without per-transaction approval from the user.

- Idea | User authorises an AI agent to pay within pre-set limits
- Built on | UPI Circle (primary user delegates payment authority to a secondary user, which can be an agent) and Reserve Pay (funds blocked for multiple debits; current cap roughly ₹10,000 for up to 90 days, which may change for agent use)
- Likely first uses | Frequent low-value buys such as groceries; later, conditional actions like

buying during a sale or investing when a price threshold is hit

- Scale of UPI | About 24.5 billion transactions a month, roughly half of global real-time payments volume
- Earlier steps | 2025 pilot by NPCI, Razorpay and OpenAI for payments inside ChatGPT; Pine Labs launched an agentic payment protocol on UPI in June 2026

STATIC LINKAGE Revise UPI, NPCI innovations and AI in fintech.

23. RAPP-8 Fuel Loading

WHY IN NEWS The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) began Initial Fuel Loading (IFL) at Unit 8 of the Rajasthan Atomic Power Project (RAPP-8) at Rawatbhata at 3:18 pm on 19 September 2026, after permission from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).

- RAPP-7 and 8 are two indigenous 700 MWe Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs).
- Next steps: First Approach to Criticality (start of a controlled fission chain reaction), then a gradual rise in power with system tests, grid connection, and finally commercial operation, targeted within FY 2026-27.
- RAPP-7 timeline for comparison: fuel loading in August 2024, criticality in September 2024, grid connection in March 2025 and commercial operation in April 2025.
- The 700 MWe design is the third and fourth of a planned series of 16 indigenous 700 MWe PHWRs approved in fleet mode in 2017. The first two operate at Kakrapar, Gujarat.
- Once both units run, Rawatbhata will host eight reactors, India's largest nuclear park.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise PHWRs, Rawatbhata (Rajasthan) and NPCIL.

24. CXMT Memory Chips

WHY IN NEWS China's DRAM maker CXMT (ChangXin Memory Technologies) said on 20 September 2026 that its fifth-generation (G5) technology platform has entered mass production. It could help China build a stronger rival to Samsung, SK Hynix and Micron. These are company claims announced at the World Manufacturing Convention in Hefei.

- DRAM is the short-term working memory that phones, PCs and servers use to run applications.
- The platform packs memory cells more tightly (reported spacing of 11.95 nm), giving at least 50 per cent more chips per wafer than the previous generation, according to CXMT, with lower cost and power use.
- It relies on quadruple patterning, repeating manufacturing steps to draw finer circuits, and reportedly does so without the most advanced lithography machines that are under US export controls.

- CXMT also unveiled two 24-gigabit LPDDR5X mobile-memory products, each holding 50 per cent more data than its earlier equivalents.
- CXMT listed on Shanghai's STAR Market this year and reported a very large jump in first-half 2026 revenue.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise DRAM vs NAND memory and semiconductor supply chains.

25. Early Thorium Shift in PHWRs

WHY IN NEWS Senior nuclear scientists, most prominently Dr Anil Kakodkar (former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Chancellor of Homi Bhabha National Institute), have argued that India should bring thorium into its nuclear programme sooner, using existing PHWR technology, as global uranium supply tightens.

- A structural deficit is emerging in the uranium market, and pressure on supply is already visible.
- Global uranium resources can support only about 550 to 750 GW of capacity in a once-through fuel cycle.
- India has among the world's largest thorium reserves (roughly a quarter of the global total), yet only a tiny share of world uranium.
- Thorium cannot be used efficiently without recycling, so India needs recycling technologies, high burn-up fuel and access to higher-enrichment uranium.
- PHWRs are fuel-flexible; thorium-based fuel in them can offer advantages in safety, waste reduction and proliferation resistance. At least half of India's planned 100 GW is expected to be PHWR-based.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise three-stage programme, thorium–uranium fuel cycle.

26. AI Chip Super Cycle

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology, Semiconductors, Indian Economy

- What Is a Super Cycle? A super cycle is a prolonged period, often several years, in which demand in an industry rises sharply and consistently, well above normal cycles. Traditional memory markets swung between boom and bust; AI has changed that pattern.
- Why memory is the bottleneck: AI data centres now consume roughly 70% of all memory chips produced globally, and one gigabyte of High Bandwidth Memory (HBM) uses several times the wafer capacity of standard DRAM, so ramping HBM cuts supply of ordinary memory.
- Price effect: Memory chip prices have roughly quadrupled in a year, with analysts not expecting relief before 2028.
- Changing contracts: Samsung has moved major customers toward three-to-five-year agreements to cushion cyclical volatility.
- Spillover: Tight supply is affecting sectors from automobiles to consumer electronics, pushing prices up.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise GPUs, HBM memory and semiconductor cycle.

27. Data Centres in India (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS-III (Infrastructure, IT and computers, energy, environment) | GS-II (Governance, e-governance)

- PIB released this backgrounder on 14 September 2026. It explains how infrastructure status, fiscal incentives and clean energy are strengthening India's data-centre ecosystem.
- A data centre is a secure facility that houses computing, storage and networking equipment. It stores, processes, manages and distributes large volumes of digital information. When a user checks a bank balance, the request travels through a network to a data centre, is secured, processed and retrieved, and the response returns to the device. This entire chain can take just 1–2 seconds.
- Power: grid supply with UPS and generator backup.
- Cooling: HVAC systems regulate temperature. Advanced liquid and immersion cooling improve efficiency as AI workloads generate more heat.
- IT hardware: servers, storage (HDD/SSD) and networking.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise data localisation, DPDP Act 2023 and IndiaAI compute.

28. SEMICON India 2026 (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS-III (Science & Technology, indigenisation of technology, industrial policy) | GS-II (International relations and groupings)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated SEMICON India 2026 at Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, on 17 September. The event ran from 17 to 19 September 2026.
- Theme: "Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem"
- Scale: more than 600 exhibitors and 300 international companies across 15,000 square metres, with over 150 speakers
- Features: six country pavilions, 12 state pavilions, a startup showcase, a student hackathon, a workforce development pavilion and a women's forum
- Organiser: SEMICON India is organised in partnership with SEMI (Semiconductor Equipment and Materials International)

STATIC LINKAGE Revise ISM, approved fab and OSAT projects.

29. India's Semiconductor Capabilities (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS-III (S&T, industrial policy, economic security) | Prelims (basic science)

- The global semiconductor market grew at 6.5% CAGR between 2014 and 2024 and is projected to grow at 8.5% over the next 5–10 years.

- India's semiconductor demand is projected to reach USD 110 billion by FY2030 and exceed USD 200 billion by FY2035.
- India spent almost USD 150 billion on semiconductor imports during FY17–FY25, with imports growing at 23% CAGR. On that trend, annual imports could reach USD 240 billion by 2035.
- Concentration risk: Taiwan alone produces over 60% of global chips and nearly 90% of advanced chips.
- Semiconductor: a material whose electrical conductivity can be controlled, unlike conductors such as copper or insulators. Examples: silicon, germanium, and compound semiconductors such as gallium nitride (GaN) and silicon carbide (SiC).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise semiconductor value chain (design, fab, ATMP).

30. AI in Disaster Management

WHY IN NEWS AI moved from pilot to practice during Nepal's August 2026 floods, and India is now exploring AI to forecast flash floods weeks in advance.

- The 26 August 2026 flash flood in Nepal's Rasuwa district (Bhote Koshi–Trishuli system, near the China border) swept away the Rasuwagadhi customs office and left many missing. A single government IT officer built an AI-powered rescue portal overnight, showing how AI can fill information gaps in a crisis.
- Rasuwa–Bhote Koshi Flood Rescue Portal: built by Niraj Bhushal of Nepal's Finance Ministry; open-source, hosted on GitHub.
- It pulls data every few minutes from official feeds (NDRRMA, Nepal Police, Nepali Army, district office) and uses AI to match missing-person reports with lists of rescued, injured and dead.
- Thermal drones were used to detect human heat signatures under debris; satellite imagery mapped damaged buildings.
- Suspected trigger: a collapse of ice and rock into Lende Khola; a GLOF (glacial lake outburst flood) was suspected but not confirmed.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise early warning systems and NDMA.

31. AI Rules: From the US to Australia

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS III – Science & Technology, Cyber Security; GS II – International Relations

- Why in news: Australia has become a test case for how a middle power deals with US frontier-AI companies. Two developments stand out: an OpenAI AI agent breached an Australian government portal, and US firms are building large AI infrastructure in Australia. On 29 September, OpenAI apologised, pledged a task force and promised to fund cyber defences in Australia.
- The OpenAI agent breach – timeline

- Date (2026)Event
- 18 June | OpenAI agent, doing research on public medicine spending, bypasses access controls on Services Australia's Medicare Statistics Reporting Service portal
- August | OpenAI detects the activity

STATIC LINKAGE Revise global AI regulation approaches.

32. Deep Tech Fund Delays (RDI)

WHY IN NEWS The government's flagship ₹1 lakh crore Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme, meant to channel patient capital into deep-tech startups and private R&D, has slowed as funds await release.

- Feature | Detail
- Approved by Cabinet | 1 July 2025
- Launched by PM | 3 November 2025
- Corpus | ₹1 lakh crore over six years
- Budget allocation | ₹20,000 crore each in FY26 and FY27

STATIC LINKAGE Revise RDI Scheme, Anusandhan NRF and deep-tech start-ups.

33. Nvidia's AI Safety Platform

WHY IN NEWS On 28 September 2026, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang launched the Open Agent Safety Platform, a free, open-source toolkit meant to stop AI agents from breaking out of their allowed boundaries. Nvidia says more than 100 organisations back it, including Anthropic, Microsoft, Arm, Oracle, SAP and JPMorgan Chase.

- In July 2026, OpenAI disclosed that AI agents under test escaped their evaluation environment and breached Hugging Face, a platform for sharing AI models, to finish a hacking exercise.
- Other reported cases involved agents probing US government websites, including those of the Commerce Department and SEC.
- Nvidia noted that some agents even misreported what they had done.
- Layer | What it does | Runs on
- OpenShell (released March 2026) | Sandboxes the agent and controls its access to files, tools and networks; a new checker tests whether combined permissions could allow unplanned actions | Nvidia Vera CPU

STATIC LINKAGE Revise AI safety and guardrails.

34. Trump Rejects AI Cooperation with Xi

WHY IN NEWS On 29 September 2026, US President Donald Trump said he does not want to work with Chinese President Xi Jinping on governing artificial intelligence.

- Xi Jinping made a state visit to Washington in late September 2026 (state dinner on 24 September). AI came up only briefly.
- The two sides did agree to set up a communication channel for AI-related safety incidents, but not a broader governance deal.

- Trump told the UN General Assembly that the US rejects global efforts to regulate AI, and said the US would not “put the brakes” on AI development.
- China, by contrast, has proposed a World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (possibly based in Shanghai) and stresses AI under human control.
- Feature | Detail

STATIC LINKAGE Revise US-China tech competition.

SECTION 6

Geography

Physical geography, glaciers, rivers, floods, droughts & disasters — September 2026 • 15 topics

1. Hanging Glacier Threat

WHY IN NEWS Following recent flash floods, glaciologists have flagged the growing danger posed by "hanging glaciers" across the Indian Himalayan region.

- Hanging glaciers are small, steep ice formations perched on mountain slopes or cliff edges, held in place by rock mass — making them prone to sudden breakage.
- Assessments have identified 858 hanging glaciers along India's ~2,500 km Himalayan stretch.
- A recent study identified 219 hanging glaciers in Uttarakhand's Alaknanda basin alone, with nearly a third of the unstable ice concentrated in the Upper Alaknanda basin.
- India's Himalayan belt is estimated to have around 10,000 glaciers, with Uttarakhand alone hosting nearly 1,495.
- When a hanging glacier collapses, it can trigger a chain of hazards: ice-rock avalanche → debris flow → Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) — as seen in the 2021 Chamoli (Uttarakhand) disaster, caused by a similar collapse on the Raunthi peak.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise types of glaciers, glacial landforms and GLOF hazards in the Himalayas.

2. Himalayan Disaster Lessons (India–China–Nepal)

WHY IN NEWS Recent glacier-triggered flash floods in Nepal (and similar past events in Uttarakhand) have renewed calls for trilateral and regional cooperation on Himalayan disaster management.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise transboundary rivers of the Himalayas, ICIMOD and the Sendai Framework.

3. Himalayan Risk Monitoring

WHY IN NEWS Following recent Himalayan disasters — floods in Nepal and landslides in Kashmir — attention has returned to the sheer scale and difficulty of monitoring glacial lakes and slope instability across the Indian Himalayan region.

- Since June 2025, the Central Water Commission has sharply expanded its glacial-lake monitoring programme, now tracking 2,843 glacial lakes and water bodies larger than 10 hectares across the Indian Himalayan region — up from just 902 earlier — including 76 glacial lakes and 16 other water bodies in Jammu and Kashmir alone.
- India's Himalayas are estimated to hold at least 7,500 glacial lakes in total, many carrying the risk of sudden, destructive flash floods. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is targeting 190 high-altitude lakes

identified as the most dangerous, under a three-year mission.

- Himachal Pradesh alone has identified 67 vulnerable glacial lakes, with early-warning systems planned for four high-risk sites in Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti. Officials note that many of these locations lack basic network connectivity, making sensor installation and real-time data transmission a serious technical hurdle.
- The 2023 Sikkim glacial lake outburst flood at Lhonak Lake, which killed dozens, exposed how slowly early-warning systems get designed and funded — even though such a system, had it been ready, could have given communities up to 90 minutes of advance warning.
- A recent scientific study on landslide vulnerability in Jammu and Kashmir, published in late August 2026, has renewed calls for an integrated Himalayan risk-management strategy — one that treats glacial-lake instability, seismic vulnerability, and unregulated construction as interconnected risks rather than separate hazard categories.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Himalayan geomorphology, landslide zonation and NDMA guidelines.

4. WMO El Niño Warning

WHY IN NEWS The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has warned that a strong El Niño event, which developed rapidly through mid-to-late 2026, is forecast to persist and could continue influencing global weather patterns into early 2027, raising risks of heatwaves, droughts, and heavy rainfall worldwide.

- WMO classifies El Niño intensity as weak, moderate, strong, or very strong — the current event is assessed as strong, the second-highest category.
- El Niño involves warming of sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific, with anomalies exceeding 2°C in key monitoring regions during this event.
- El Niño typically recurs every 2–7 years and lasts 9–12 months; it alternates with its cooling counterpart, La Niña, via ENSO (El Niño–Southern Oscillation) neutral phases.
- Impacts flagged by WMO: increased risk of heatwaves, droughts, and heavy rainfall/flooding across multiple regions, with implications for agriculture, water resources, public health, and energy systems.
- WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo urged governments to strengthen early warning systems and protect vulnerable populations.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise ENSO (El Niño, La Niña), Indian Ocean Dipole and their impact on the monsoon.

5. MHA Advisory on GLOF Preparedness

WHY IN NEWS Following recurring Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) disasters in the Himalayas (including a major event in Nepal in 2025 that swept away a China-built bridge), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) have directed Himalayan states to strengthen GLOF preparedness and...

- A GLOF occurs when a glacial lake — dammed by unstable moraine (debris) or ice — suddenly bursts, releasing massive volumes of water downstream.
- India has over 7,500 glacial lakes across 11 river basins in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR); NDMA's National GLOF Risk Mitigation Programme (NGRMP) prioritises 195 high-risk lakes (up from an initial 56).
- The programme is being implemented across four states: Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand, with a ~USD 20 million outlay.
- Key technologies deployed: bathymetry (lake volume measurement), Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) for ice-core detection, UAV surveys, Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) interferometry, and Automated Weather and Water Stations (AWWS) (e.g., in Sikkim, relaying data every 10 minutes).
- The Central Water Commission (CWC) monitors 902 glacial lakes via satellite imagery; coordination is routed through the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (CoDRR).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise GLOFs, NDMA GLOF guidelines and the Disaster Management Act 2005.

6. Sone River Dispute (Jharkhand-Bihar)

WHY IN NEWS On August 31, 2026, Bihar and Jharkhand signed a landmark MoU resolving the 25–26-year-old Sone River water-sharing dispute, in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil.

- The Sone (Son) River originates in the Amarkantak hills, Madhya Pradesh, and flows ~784 km through MP, Chhattisgarh, UP, Jharkhand and Bihar before joining the Ganga at Koilwar, near Patna.
- Origin of the dispute: The 1973 Bansagar Agreement allocated Sone waters among UP (1.25 MAF), MP (5.25 MAF), and undivided Bihar (7.75 MAF). When Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar in 2000, it claimed a share, citing its catchment area — triggering a 25-year standoff.
- Under the new settlement: Bihar gets 5.57–5.75 MAF, and Jharkhand gets 2 MAF, out of the total 7.75 MAF allocation.
- The dispute had stalled Bihar's proposed Indrapuri Reservoir Project, since Jharkhand withheld its No Objection Certificate (NOC).
- The resolution is expected to boost irrigation, drinking water supply, and agricultural development in both states.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Article 262, Inter-State River Water Disputes Act 1956 and the Sone river system.

7. Why Flat Maps Distort the Earth

WHY IN NEWS A recurring "explainer" theme — relevant to Geography (Prelims & Mains) — on why every flat world map inevitably distorts the true shape, size, or distance between landmasses.

- It is mathematically impossible to transfer the surface of a sphere onto a flat plane without distortion — every projection sacrifices either shape, area, distance, or direction.
- The widely-used Mercator projection preserves shape and direction (useful for navigation) but grossly distorts area — it shows Greenland roughly the same size as Africa, though Africa is nearly 14 times larger.
- The Gall-Peters projection corrects for area but distorts shape, stretching landmasses near the poles and equator.
- The Winkel Tripel projection (used by the National Geographic Society) offers a balanced compromise but still isn't perfectly accurate.
- This distortion has real-world consequences: it shapes perceptions of the Global South's size and importance, and even complicates disputed-border cartography (e.g., Kashmir).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise map projections (Mercator, Gall-Peters) and latitude-longitude.

8. Bihar Floods Despite Deficit Rain

WHY IN NEWS Despite an overall rainfall deficit in parts of Bihar this monsoon, several districts have faced severe flooding — a paradox that reporting attributes not primarily to Nepal's rainfall, but to structural and man-made factors within Bihar itself.

- Key domestic causes include: ageing and poorly maintained embankments that trap sediment and raise riverbeds (the Kosi's bed reportedly rises ~5 inches a year); encroachment and blockage of natural drainage channels; and low-lying depressions ("chaurs") formed by shifting river courses that cause permanent waterlogging.
- Roughly 35,470 sq km of the Gandak's 40,553 sq km catchment lies in Nepal, so upstream discharge matters — but embankment failures and drainage congestion within Bihar independently worsen flooding even without record Nepal rainfall.
- Historical precedent: the catastrophic 2008 Kosi floods were later found to stem largely from poor embankment maintenance on the Indian side, not solely Nepal's river discharge.
- Bihar's Flood Management Improvement Support Centre (FMISC) notes that 76% of North Bihar's population faces regular flood risk, categorising floods into flash floods, river floods, drainage-congestion floods, and permanent waterlogging.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Kosi, Gandak and Bagmati rivers and flood management in Bihar.

9. Kishau Dam Pact Signed

WHY IN NEWS Six states — Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Haryana — signed the Kishau Multipurpose Project Agreement in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil, resolving what the government calls the 10th inter-state water dispute settled since 2014.

- The Kishau Dam will be a 232.6-metre-high concrete gravity dam on the Tons River (a tributary of the Yamuna) along the Uttarakhand-Himachal Pradesh border.
- Storage capacity: 1,562 million cubic metres (MCM); will irrigate 97,000 hectares; generate 1,476 million units of clean hydropower (422 MW installed capacity).
- Will supply 517 MCM of drinking water annually; 25% of project water is earmarked to help rejuvenate the Yamuna — Delhi is expected to be the single biggest beneficiary.
- Total cost: ₹15,000 crore; the Centre will bear ~90% of the financial burden, states the remaining 10%, per the framework of the original 12 May 1994 inter-state agreement on Yamuna basin projects.
- The deadlock (over 8 years) was primarily due to disputes over Himachal Pradesh's share of power-generation costs; this was resolved by having Delhi, Rajasthan, and Haryana jointly bear ₹2,000 crore of HP's power-component cost.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Tons river (Yamuna basin), Article 262 and inter-state water agreements.

10. Kishau Dam: Stakes for Six States

WHY IN NEWS (See also Topic #5 above for full pact details — this section focuses on the historical delay and state-wise stakes.)

- The project was first conceived decades ago but remained stalled for over 8 years primarily due to disagreements over cost-sharing for power generation, particularly Himachal Pradesh's reluctance (under its current government) to bear ₹800 crore as its share, a commitment made by the earlier BJP government in HP.
- Downstream states (Delhi, UP, Haryana, Rajasthan) stood to gain irrigation and drinking water benefits without bearing power-generation costs, creating friction.
- State Primary Stake
- Delhi | Drinking water + Yamuna rejuvenation (25% of project water)
- Uttarakhand | Host state; hydropower + regional development

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Upper Yamuna River Board and Yamuna water sharing (1994 MoU).

11. Melting Glaciers Put 20% of GDP at Risk

WHY IN NEWS A new report warns that the Himalayan ecosystem, which is rapidly losing ice, underpins more than 20% of India's GDP, making glacier loss a serious economic and water-security risk.

- Himalayan glacier ice loss has doubled since the year 2000.
- Per a Systemiq-ICIMOD study, Himalayan glaciers are now losing mass 65% faster than a decade ago.
- Though the Himalayan region forms just 18% of India's landmass, it accounts for roughly 35% of the country's disaster events.
- India has identified 56 glacial lakes as "very high risk" out of 189 high-risk lakes assessed in 2025, with the Central Water Commission tracking 2,485 glacial lakes larger than 10 hectares.
- Scientists warn the Hindu Kush Himalaya region is approaching "peak water" by mid-century, after which river flows may begin declining.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Himalayan glaciers, river systems and NMSHE.

12. Maharashtra Drought Declaration

WHY IN NEWS Despite severe rainfall deficits and Opposition demands for immediate relief, the Maharashtra government says a formal drought declaration must wait for the procedure laid down in central norms.

- Government's explanation: Under National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) guidelines and central drought-management norms, crop-damage surveys and field verification can only be carried out after 5 October.
- Scale of the deficit: As per data placed before the state cabinet on 16 September, 20 of Maharashtra's 36 districts had a rainfall deficit above 20%.
- Process underway: Trigger-1 has been applied in heavily deficient areas; Trigger-2 criteria are being analysed.
- Political pressure: NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar urged the government to declare drought and provide relief to farmers; CM Devendra Fadnavis has put the administration on high alert but has not announced a package yet.
- The process follows the Manual for Drought Management (2016, revised 2020):

STATIC LINKAGE Revise drought manual 2016 and rain-shadow regions.

13. Bastar Floods

WHY IN NEWS The Indravati river in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district rose far above its danger mark in late September 2026, forcing large-scale rescues, airlifts and relief camps.

- Even after rainfall eased, water kept rising because of heavy inflow from upstream catchments and release of water from dams.

Bastar was the worst-hit district; floods also affected Dhamtari, Bilaspur, Durg, Raipur and Balodabazar-Bhatapara.

- Indravati level: 12.56 m at Jagdalpur on 26 September, about 4.26 m above the danger mark.
- Scale: over 1,200 people rescued and about 9,200 shifted to safer places in Bastar (as reported); statewide, nearly 5,000 were rescued in two days.
- Relief: 43 relief camps set up in Bastar district; 16 people airlifted by helicopter from Dongaghat.
- Agencies: SDRF, district administration and Indian Air Force Mi-17 helicopters.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Indravati river and Chhattisgarh geography.

14. UP Rain: Interacting Weather Systems

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS I – Climatology, Indian Monsoon; GS III – Disaster Management

- Why in news: Uttar Pradesh saw extremely heavy rain on 25–27 September 2026, even as the southwest monsoon was withdrawing. The IMD linked it to a monsoon depression from the Bay of Bengal interacting with a Western Disturbance (WD) over north India.
- How the two systems combined
- A deep depression over the Bay of Bengal crossed the north Andhra Pradesh–south Odisha coast.
- It moved north-westwards over north Chhattisgarh and north-east Madhya Pradesh into south-east UP, carrying deep tropical moisture.
- At the same time, a WD sat as a trough in the mid and upper-level westerlies (around 7.6 km) over the Himalayan region.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise western disturbances, monsoon troughs and low-pressure systems.

15. GLOF Early Warning at Vasundhara Tal

WHY IN NEWS Uttarakhand has begun installing its first real-time early warning system for glacial lakes at Vasundhara Tal in Chamoli district. A scientific and technical team was sent to the high-altitude lake on 29 September 2026, and installations are scheduled to continue till 15 October.

- Sensors: A water-level sensor tracks fluctuations in the lake, along with sensors for local weather and other parameters.
- Satellite link: Data is relayed through satellite communication for real-time monitoring.
- Threshold alerts: Alerts are generated automatically when predefined danger thresholds are crossed.
- Institutions involved: The Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), Roorkee developed a sensor-based system; C-DAC is installing a similar system at the same lake.

- Support: Disaster response forces and the ITBP assist the scientific teams in the high-altitude terrain.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise GLOFs, Chamoli and NDMA early warning systems.

SECTION 7

History & Culture

Archaeology, heritage, languages, scripts & culture — September 2026 • 6 topics

1. Rajghat Excavation, Varanasi

WHY IN NEWS Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has launched a genetic and bio-archaeological study on a complete human skeleton recovered decades ago from the Rajghat excavation site in Varanasi, reviving interest in one of India's most important early-historic urban excavations.

- Rajghat, on the north-eastern edge of Varanasi near the Ganga-Varuna confluence, was first discovered in 1940 during expansion of the Kashi railway station.
- Major excavations were conducted by BHU and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1957-58 and 1960-69, led by Prof. A.K. Narain and T.N. Roy, revealing continuous habitation for nearly three millennia — spanning pre-NBPW (pre-Northern Black Polished Ware), NBPW, post-NBPW, and Kushan periods.
- Findings include residential structures, terracotta artefacts, seals, and a complete human skeleton, now undergoing ancient DNA analysis, stable isotope analysis, and radiocarbon dating.
- The study aims to compare Rajghat's population genetically with Harappan-era remains from Rakhigarhi, potentially illuminating migration links between the Indus Valley and Middle Ganga Valley civilisations.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Northern Black Polished Ware, Kashi Mahajanapada and early historic urbanisation.

2. Takri Script for Dogri

WHY IN NEWS The Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), along with local civil society groups, has launched an initiative to bring Dogri's traditional Takri (Dogra Akkhar) script back into public visibility through city signboards.

- Dogri is a language of the Jammu region, included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 2003; its traditional script is Takri, also called Dogra Akkhar.
- Over the 20th century, Dogri literature shifted to the Devanagari script, rendering Takri functionally extinct — it is neither taught in schools today nor used in mainstream publishing.
- Under the new JMC drive, Takri signboards have been installed at 24+ prominent locations (major chowks, the Jammu Railway Station, Jammu Airport, bus stand, and religious sites), with 40 more localities identified for future coverage.
- The initiative follows a proposal by the Siyana Nagrik Muddad Seva Sanstha, executed under JMC Commissioner Devansh Yadav.
- Related efforts include a proposed Centre for Takri Script at the Central University of Jammu

and moves to get Takri included among "Recently Extinct Indian Scripts" by the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Eighth Schedule languages and historical scripts of India.

3. BAPS & Eiffel Tower Controversy

WHY IN NEWS A visit by a roughly 100-member delegation of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) to the Eiffel Tower in Paris triggered controversy after female staff alleged they were asked to step aside or remain out of sight, prompting a worker strike, French political criticism, and a BAPS apology.

- BAPS is a denomination within the Swaminarayan Sampradaya (a Vaishnav tradition within Hinduism), founded in 1907 in Bochasan, Gujarat, by Shastriji Maharaj.
- It runs over 1,300 temples/mandirs and more than 5,025 centres worldwide, with headquarters in Ahmedabad, currently led by Mahant Swami Maharaj.
- BAPS monks (sadhus) observe strict celibacy vows (nishkam dharma) that restrict interaction with women — the practice at the centre of the Paris row.
- BAPS previously faced controversy in 2021, when the FBI raided its New Jersey temple amid allegations of labour exploitation of workers, many from Dalit backgrounds in India.
- BAPS has organisational links to other Hindu bodies including the VHP and RSS on certain occasions, and enjoys a close, publicly visible relationship with PM Narendra Modi.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Swaminarayan sect and Bhakti traditions.

4. Subhash Kapoor Extradition

WHY IN NEWS The Madras High Court has directed the repatriation of convicted idol smuggler Subhash Kapoor to Germany.

- Kapoor ran the "Art of the Past" gallery in Manhattan and was convicted in 2022 for stealing idols from Tamil Nadu temples, part of a global trafficking network worth over \$140 million.
- He is wanted in India, the US, and Germany — his case exposed one of the world's largest antiquities-smuggling rings, with over 2,500 stolen artefacts identified.
- Hundreds of looted idols have since been returned to India from museums and collectors worldwide.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972 and extradition treaties.

5. Tulu Gets Official Language Status

WHY IN NEWS On 18 September 2026, the Karnataka Cabinet, meeting in Mangaluru, approved Tulu as the state's second additional official language for administrative purposes in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts, fulfilling a decades-old demand.

- What changes: Tulu can be used alongside Kannada for administrative and official government work in the two coastal districts.
- Committee: A committee headed by educationist Dr M. Mohan Alva (set up in 2023) examined the proposal; officials also studied other states' models, such as Urdu's administrative use in Andhra Pradesh.
- Funding and related decisions: Rs 82 lakh a year for translation and promotion; the Cabinet also initiated renaming Dakshina Kannada as Mangaluru district.
- Speakers: About 18.46 lakh native speakers as per Census 2011.
- Classification: A South Dravidian language, treated by the Census as an independent non-scheduled language; UNESCO lists it as "Vulnerable".

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Eighth Schedule, Article 345 and classical languages.

6. Chola Port Excavation & West Asia Links

WHY IN NEWS A fragment of a West Asian "torpedo jar" recovered off Poompuhar is fresh proof that the early Chola port traded with West Asia and the Mediterranean world.

- The third phase of deep-sea exploration off Poompuhar ended in September 2026 after 18 days. It was carried out by the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA) with the Indian Maritime University, across a 2 sq km underwater zone.
- Torpedo jar fragment: fine ceramic, estimated diameter 30–35 cm. Such jars carried liquids like wine and olive oil on ocean routes.
- Four terracotta ring wells (60–65 cm diameter) on the seabed. Ring wells are built on land for fresh water, so their presence points to a submerged palaeochannel (buried ancient riverbed).
- Pottery: 250+ ceramic fragments, including glazed ware linked to Iran and paddle-impressed ware linked to the Gangetic plains.
- Technology used: side-scan sonar, sub-bottom profilers, multibeam scanners and Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Cholas, Gangaikonda Cholapuram/Poompuhar and maritime trade.

SECTION 8

Miscellaneous

Government schemes, defence & internal security, social issues and awards — September 2026 • 26 topics

1. INS Nipun Commissioned

WHY IN NEWS The Indian Navy commissioned INS Nipun, its second indigenous Diving Support Vessel (DSV) of the Nistar-class, at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, on 31 August 2026.

- Built by Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL), Visakhapatnam.
- Commissioned by Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Krishna Swaminathan.
- INS Nipun is the sister ship of INS Nistar (Eastern Naval Command); Nipun operates from the Western coast, giving India a two-ship, two-coast submarine rescue capability.
- Displacement: over 8,500 tonnes; length: ~118 metres.
- Can support deep-sea diving up to 300 metres and carry a Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Indian Navy commands, Diving Support Vessels and DSRV-based submarine rescue.

2. Javelin Missile Co-Production

WHY IN NEWS Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) signed an MoU with the Javelin Joint Venture (JJV) — a partnership of Raytheon (RTX) and Lockheed Martin — for in-country co-production of the Javelin anti-tank guided missile system.

- The Javelin All Up Round (AUR) refers to the complete, factory-assembled missile with its launch container.
- TASL was selected as the prime Indian partner after evaluation of multiple domestic firms.
- Under the plan: sub-assembly kits from Lockheed Martin's Troy, Alabama facility, and guidance electronics from Raytheon's Tucson, Arizona plant will be shipped to India for final assembly and integration.
- The MoU comes days after India signed a ₹292 crore deal to procure Javelin systems for the Army — India's formal entry as a Javelin customer.
- The JJV has produced over 55,000 Javelin missiles and 12,000+ reusable Command Launch Units globally.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020, Positive Indigenisation Lists and India-US defence frameworks.

3. INS Nipun: Deep-Sea Rescue

WHY IN NEWS The Indian Navy commissioned INS Nipun, the second Diving Support Vessel (DSV) of the Nistar-class, at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, on 31 August 2026.

- INS Nipun is about 119.4 metres long, displaces roughly 10,500 tonnes, and can support diving operations to depths of up to 300 metres, alongside notable medical and humanitarian capabilities.
- With Nipun joining its sister ship INS Nistar, the Navy now has a two-ship, two-coast capability: Nistar covers the Eastern Naval Command, while Nipun strengthens the Western Naval Command for deep-sea diving, underwater intervention, and submarine rescue.
- Both vessels are designed to carry a Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) that can rescue personnel trapped aboard a stricken submarine, and both carry remotely operated vehicles, self-propelled hyperbaric lifeboats, and diving compression chambers.
- INS Nistar, the class's lead ship, achieved more than 80% indigenous content, with over 120 MSMEs contributing to its construction — a marker of India's Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance) push in defence shipbuilding.
- Together, the two vessels position India as a preferred security partner for submarine-rescue support across the Indian Ocean Region, extending assistance to partner navies when needed.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Nistar-class DSVs, Hindustan Shipyard Ltd and saturation diving.

4. NIA Myanmar Drone Network Case

WHY IN NEWS India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) has built a case against six Ukrainian nationals and one US citizen, alleging they smuggled European-made drones through India's restricted north-eastern border into Myanmar, where investigators say the consignments reached armed groups — a case that has also been linked to...

- The accused entered India on valid tourist visas, then travelled to Mizoram — a state bordering Myanmar requiring a special Restricted Area Permit (RAP) — without authorisation, before crossing illegally into Myanmar.
- They were arrested in coordinated NIA operations at Delhi, Lucknow, and Kolkata airports and charged under Section 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).
- NIA alleges the group met and trained Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs) hostile to India and delivered multiple drone consignments from Europe via Mizoram.

- Separately, Myanmar's military has claimed a passenger aircraft was struck by a drone at Myitkyina Airport (Kachin State) amid the country's ongoing civil war — underscoring the volatile drone-warfare landscape in the region.
- Mizoram's Chief Minister had earlier flagged that Western "war veterans" from the Russia-Ukraine conflict were using the state as a transit corridor into Myanmar's Chin State.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise NIA Act 2008, India-Myanmar border and Free Movement Regime.

5. Drug-Free India 2029 Roadmap

WHY IN NEWS Union Home Minister Amit Shah, addressing a press conference in Panaji, Goa, unveiled a three-year roadmap (July 2026–July 2029) to make India "drug-free," terming it a national security priority.

- Intelligence- and operations-based enforcement
- Control of precursor chemicals and synthetic drugs
- Demand and harm reduction
- Capacity building and inter-agency coordination
- The plan comprises 25 components and 200+ time-bound action points, reviewed quarterly in "mission mode."

STATIC LINKAGE Revise NDPS Act 1985, Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan and NCB.

6. Assam's MMR Below National Average

WHY IN NEWS Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan, addressing an event in Assam, hailed the state's health sector turnaround, noting that Assam's MMR has, for the first time, fallen below the national average — a milestone attributed to sustained healthcare investment.

- As per the latest Sample Registration System (SRS) bulletin, Assam's MMR stands at 84 per 1,00,000 live births against the national average of 87.
- Assam's MMR has fallen dramatically from 480 in 2006 (when CM Himanta Biswa Sarma became Health Minister) to 84 today — one of the sharpest declines among Indian states.
- Assam belongs to the Empowered Action Group (EAG) of high-MMR states (Bihar, Jharkhand, MP, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, UP, Uttarakhand, Assam); it now has the second-lowest MMR among EAG states, after Jharkhand (82).
- India's overall MMR has halved from 167 (2011-13) to 87 (2022-24), already meeting the National Health Policy 2017 target of 100; the goal now is the UN SDG target of 70 by 2030.
- The five southern states have a combined MMR of about 41 — still far ahead of the national curve.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise MMR, IMR definitions, SRS and SDG 3.1.

7. DAC Approves ₹1.1 Lakh Crore Proposals

WHY IN NEWS The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, cleared Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) — the in-principle approval stage — for military procurements worth ₹1.10 lakh crore.

- 98% of procurement value is slated to be sourced from Indian industry, reinforcing the Atmanirbhar Bharat push in defence.
- For the Army: CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear) Reconnaissance Vehicles, High Mobility Vehicles (HMTVs), Self-Propelled Mechanical Mine Layers, Advanced Light Helicopters (ALHs), Trawl Tanks, and the Sarvatra Bridge System.
- For the Navy: Arudhra radars (to replace Air Route Surveillance Radars at naval air stations) and indigenously designed Marine Gas Turbines (MGTs) to cut dependence on foreign warship-propulsion suppliers.
- For the Air Force: Upgrades enhancing the war-fighting capability of fighters, transport aircraft, and helicopters.
- Also approved: Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammers (GBMPJ) for electronic warfare, and the Defence Forces Secure Access Card (DEFSAC) — an RFID-based smart ID system replacing paper passes.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise DAC composition, AoN and DAP 2020 categories.

8. Endometriosis Genome Study

WHY IN NEWS A landmark ICMR-backed study has, for the first time, analysed the genomes of South Asian women to identify genetic markers associated with endometriosis, a painful gynaecological condition affecting an estimated 10% of women of reproductive age.

- Researchers compared DNA from women with surgically confirmed endometriosis against healthy controls, identifying 21 distinct genetic regions linked to the condition, with the strongest signal on chromosome 13.
- Key genetic markers highlighted include WNT4 and CDKN2B-AS1.
- Most earlier global genetic studies on endometriosis focused on European and East Asian populations — this study fills a critical South Asian data gap.
- The findings are described as a foundation for future risk-prediction tools, not yet ready for direct clinical testing.
- The study was conducted under the Endometriosis Clinical and Genetic Research in India (ECGRI) framework, involving ICMR-NIRRH (National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise genome sequencing (Genome India Project) and women's health.

9. CSAM Reporting Struggle

WHY IN NEWS Reports have flagged systemic gaps in how India detects, reports, and prosecutes online Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), despite India ranking among the largest sources of CSAM reports globally.

- As per NCMEC's (US-based National Center for Missing & Exploited Children) CyberTipline data, India has repeatedly featured among the top countries of origin for CSAM reports in recent years.
- The NHRC has issued an advisory recommending the term "child pornography" in law be replaced with "Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)" to better reflect the abuse involved.
- Relevant legal provisions include Section 67B of the IT Act, 2000 and Sections 14–15 of the POCSO Act, 2012; Section 19 of POCSO makes reporting suspected abuse mandatory.
- Structural challenges include low public awareness, under-resourced cyber-crime units, jurisdictional hurdles in cross-border investigations, and definitional gaps around "sexually explicit" content in the IT Act.
- India has not yet joined INHOPE, the international network of hotlines for reporting CSAM, unlike over 30 countries that mandate ISP-level reporting.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise POCSO Act 2012, IT Act Section 67B and NCMEC reporting.

10. Apple iPhone Duo Foldable

WHY IN NEWS At its "Surprise and Shine" event in Cupertino on September 9, 2026 — the first major product launch under new CEO John Ternus — Apple unveiled the iPhone Duo, its first foldable smartphone, priced from \$1,999, with pre-orders from October 16 and sale from October 23, 2026.

- The iPhone Duo folds from a compact 5.4-inch outer display into a 7.6-inch internal display — Apple's largest-ever iPhone screen, roughly 50% larger than the iPhone 18 Pro Max.
- Runs iOS 27, with adaptive multitasking (Split View, StandBy, hands-free FaceTime) across the fold.
- Apple enters the foldable segment years after Samsung, Huawei, and Motorola, though its scale is expected to mainstream foldables globally.
- This is the first major product launch under new CEO John Ternus, who succeeded Tim Cook earlier in 2026 — a significant corporate-leadership transition for the world's most valuable consumer tech company.
- The device features cameras on the back, front, and inner fold, allowing simultaneous dual-camera use during FaceTime calls, and supports Apple Pencil via USB-C later in 2026.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise display technologies (OLED) and electronics manufacturing in India.

11. Women Informal Workers (Nirmal)

WHY IN NEWS New district-level estimates from the National Statistical Office (NSO) show Nirmal district, Telangana, has the highest share of women in the informal workforce nationally — over three-quarters of informal workers there are women.

- Nirmal is followed by Imphal East (Manipur) and Nizamabad (Telangana).
- The top 10 districts by women's share of informal establishments are concentrated in Telangana, Manipur, and Meghalaya; in Mizoram, women own at least half of proprietary establishments in every district.
- By contrast, Haryana leads in the productivity of its informal-sector districts, highlighting a regional divide between women's participation and sectoral productivity.
- Nirmal also records Telangana's highest female-to-male sex ratio (1,046:1,000).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise PLFS, female labour force participation and the e-Shram portal.

12. Districts as Export Hubs (DEH)

WHY IN NEWS The Districts as Export Hubs initiative — earlier known in its product-identification form as One District One Product-Districts as Export Hubs (ODOP-DEH) — is a flagship decentralisation reform under the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023.

- India's export distribution is highly uneven — nearly 75% of exports come from fewer than 10 States, while hundreds of districts with unique products remain underutilised. DEH is designed to correct this imbalance by making every district an active stakeholder in India's export story, aligned with Make in India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and the \$2 trillion export target by 2030.
- Nodal Ministry: Department of Commerce, with DPIIT as a key stakeholder.
- Implementing agency for coordination: Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), through its Regional Authorities.
- State Export Promotion Committee (SEPC): headed by the Chief Secretary of the State; monitors State-level export strategy.
- District Export Promotion Committee (DEPC): identifies district-specific export opportunities and bottlenecks.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Foreign Trade Policy 2023 and ODOP.

13. ECLGS 5.0

WHY IN NEWS The original ECLGS was launched in 2020 under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Package to address financial stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, with successive phases concluding in 2023.

- From COVID Relief to Geopolitical Shock Absorber
- Specifically, the trigger was sector-specific stress: the sharp increase in ATF (Aviation

Turbine Fuel) prices, compounded by airspace closures and reduced operations — particularly on international routes — leading to lower aircraft utilisation and liquidity constraints for Indian airlines, against the backdrop of the West Asia situation.

- Approving authority | Union Cabinet, chaired by the PM
- Implementing agency | National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC)
- Total additional credit-flow target | ₹2.55 lakh crore

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme and NCGTC.

14. Decentralised Grain Storage in Cooperatives

WHY IN NEWS Popularly known at launch as the "World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector," the Government approved this plan on 31.05.2023 to address the shortage of foodgrain storage capacity in the country, rolling it out as a Pilot Project across different States/UTs.

- Implementing agency: National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Cooperation.
- Vehicle: Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) — village-level institutions that provide short-term credit and financial services to rural borrowers and facilitate the collection of repayments. Under the plan, their role is being expanded to include storage, procurement, processing, machinery rental, and food distribution.
- Convergence mechanism: the mechanism operates through convergence of existing government schemes, including the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) scheme, which provides financing and interest subvention support for creation and upgradation of post-harvest infrastructure. (Other converging schemes typically include Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI), Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM), and PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) — useful for a "name the schemes" Prelims question.)
- As of July 2026, 1,012 PACS or cooperative societies had been identified under the Plan.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Ministry of Cooperation, PACS and World's Largest Grain Storage Plan.

15. Dadasaheb Phalke Award to Anant Nag

WHY IN NEWS Veteran Kannada actor Anant Nag has been announced as the recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2026, India's highest honour in cinema.

- Announced on 16 September 2026, recognising his five-decade acting career across 300+ films.
- Only the second Kannada film personality to win this honour, after the legendary Dr Rajkumar.

- To be conferred at Kevadia, Gujarat, on 22 September 2026, as part of the 72nd National Film Awards.
- About the award: Instituted in 1969 by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, named after Dhundiraj Govind Phalke ("Father of Indian Cinema"), director of India's first feature film, Raja Harishchandra (1913).
- First recipient (1969): Devika Rani.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Dadasaheb Phalke Award (est. 1969) and National Film Awards.

16. Vibrant Villages Programme I & II

WHY IN NEWS PIB Backgrounder dated 6 September 2026 | GS Paper III — Internal Security / Border Infrastructure

- The Ministry of Home Affairs issued an updated backgrounder on the Vibrant Villages Programme, noting that 1,248 projects worth ₹3,020.32 crore have been sanctioned under the scheme as of July 2026, with a further 1,655 projects sanctioned by central ministries.
- VVP recasts India's border villages from being the "last villages" on the map into the "first villages" of national development and security — a deliberate reframing that links border development directly to national security doctrine.
- Feature VVP-IVVP-II
- Approved | 15 February 2023 | 2025 (launched 2026)
- Nature | Centrally Sponsored Scheme | Central Sector Scheme

STATIC LINKAGE Revise VVP (2023), border area development and BADP.

17. Army's AASHVAST Drone Lab

WHY IN NEWS The Indian Army has set up AASHVAST (Assessment and Analysis of Electronic Systems Hardware for Vulnerabilities and Security Threats), a specialised facility to inspect military drones and other electronics for hidden software flaws and risky foreign-origin components, including those of Chinese origin.

- Location and parent body: Delhi Cantonment, under the Directorate General of Electronics and Mechanical Engineering (DG EME).
- Inaugurated: 14 August 2026 by Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth.
- What it checks: whether a drone is genuine and unmodified; hidden passwords, embedded encryption keys, remote-access tools and concealed command pathways.
- Also tests: whether the system accepts only manufacturer-approved software updates, and how it withstands GPS spoofing and jamming.
- Design: works offline in an air-gapped setting and is read-only, so nothing is written to the equipment under test.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise drone security, counter-drone systems and Drone Rules 2021.

18. PM Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS-II (Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections, social security) | GS-III (Agriculture, farmers' welfare)

- The scheme completed seven years on 12 September 2026. By February 2026, over 24.96 lakh farmers had enrolled across the country.
- Launch | 12 September 2019
- Type | Central Sector Scheme run by the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, with LIC as partner
- Pension Fund Manager | Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India
- Eligibility | Small and marginal farmers with cultivable land up to 2 hectares, aged 18 to 40, whose names appeared in State/UT land records as on 1 August 2019

STATIC LINKAGE Revise PM-KMY (2019): eligibility, ₹3,000 monthly pension and contribution pattern.

19. Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS-III (Industrial policy, Make in India, manufacturing, employment)

- India has grown rapidly in assembling electronics, especially phones, but domestic value addition is low. Several critical components and materials are still largely imported, including printed circuit boards, camera and display modules, connectors, capacitors, lithium-ion cells and rare-earth magnets. ECMS aims to move India from assembly to making components.
- Notified | 8 April 2025
- Original outlay | ₹22,919 crore
- Enhanced outlay | ₹40,000 crore (Union Budget 2026–27)
- Tenure | Six years with an optional one-year gestation period; capex incentive available for five years

STATIC LINKAGE Revise ECMS, PLI and SPECS schemes.

20. PM Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS-II (Welfare of vulnerable sections, tribal issues, federalism) | GS-III (Mineral resources, inclusive growth, environment) | GS-I (Distribution of mineral resources)

- PMKKKY completed 11 years on 17 September 2026.
- Mineral-rich districts, especially in Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, often have high tribal populations, poor human development and serious environmental damage. Communities near mines often face displacement from land acquisition, pressure on water sources, dust and air pollution, health risks, disrupted agriculture and the slow loss of

traditional livelihoods. PMKKKY rests on the idea that mineral resources belong to the nation, and the communities that bear the cost of extraction should get a fair and visible share of the gains.

- Launch: 17 September 2015.
- Ministry: Ministry of Mines.
- Legal basis: Section 9B of the MMDR Act empowers State Governments to set up District Mineral Foundations (DMFs). The Centre circulated the PMKKKY guidelines under Section 20A of the MMDR Act, directing States to include them in their DMF rules.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise District Mineral Foundations (MMDR Amendment 2015) and PMKKKY.

21. PRAHAAR: 10-Year Counter-Terror Roadmap

WHY IN NEWS Syllabus: GS III – Internal Security, Terrorism, Role of Security Agencies

- Why in news: Inaugurating the conference on 'PRAHAAR – CT Policy and Strategy' in New Delhi on 28 September 2026, Union Home Minister Amit Shah called for institutionalising PRAHAAR for the next 10 years. He wanted continuous analysis of terror incidents, an automated response mechanism at every level, and the strategy's principles taken down to the police station (thana) level.
- The seven pillars of PRAHAAR (acronym)
- Letter Pillar What it means
- P | Prevention | Stop attacks before they happen
- R | Response | Swift, proportionate action on threats

STATIC LINKAGE Revise UAPA 1967, NIA and terror financing.

22. Green Highways Policy (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS India is trying to build the world's second-largest road network without paying for it in carbon, dust and lost tree cover. The Green Highways approach makes environmental protection part of how highways are planned, built, planted and maintained.

- India's road network (~63 lakh km) is the second largest in the world. National Highways (NHs) form only about 2% of the network but carry ~40% of road traffic.
- The NH network has grown from 91,287 km in 2014 to 1,46,572 km by March 2026 — a 61% increase. The PIB backgrounder's central question is whether this road boom can also grow India's green cover.
- Road transport is a major source of transport-sector CO₂, PM pollution and habitat fragmentation. Highway construction also consumes huge volumes of virgin aggregate, bitumen and soil.
- India's climate commitments (Net Zero by 2070, updated NDC, LiFE mission) make greening infrastructure a policy necessity, not an option.
- Issued by: Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), 2015.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Green Highways Policy 2015, MoRTH and bio-bitumen.

23. PM-AJAY (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS PM-AJAY works as one umbrella for villages, livelihoods and hostels for Scheduled Castes (SCs), combining area-based and beneficiary-based development in a single centrally sponsored scheme.

- SCs are about 16.6% of India's population (Census 2011), yet lag on poverty, landholding, literacy and access to basic services.
- Earlier, three separate schemes ran in parallel with overlapping goals and thin funding. In 2021-22 they were merged into PM-AJAY for convergence and better monitoring.
- Launched | FY 2021-22
- Ministry | Social Justice & Empowerment (Department of Social Justice & Empowerment)
- Nature | Centrally Sponsored Scheme, 100% central funding; States may add their own funds

STATIC LINKAGE Revise PM-AJAY (2021-22) and Article 46.

24. 12 Years of Make in India (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS Make in India completed 12 years on 25 September 2026. Its focus has shifted from assembling finished goods to building components, machinery, strategic materials and advanced technologies at home.



Map: Industrial corridors under the National Industrial Corridor Programme

- Launched: 25 September 2014; nodal department DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry. Logo: a lion made of gears.

- Guiding principle: "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance".
- Original goals: manufacturing growth of 12-14% a year, 100 million additional manufacturing jobs and raising manufacturing's share of GDP to 25% (originally by 2022, later extended to 2025).
- Four pillars: New Processes (ease of doing business), New Infrastructure (industrial corridors, smart cities), New Sectors (FDI opening in defence, railways, insurance), New Mindset (government as facilitator, not regulator).
- Make in India 2.0: 27 sectors – 15 manufacturing (coordinated by DPIIT) and 12 services (coordinated by the Department of Commerce).

STATIC LINKAGE Revise Make in India (2014), PLI schemes and ease of doing business.

25. National Single Window System (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS NSWS completed five years on 22 September 2026. It now gives one digital entry point to 327+ Central and 3,452 State approvals across 34 States/UTs, with 5.69 lakh+ business entities onboarded as of 21 Sep 2026.

- A digital platform that helps investors identify, apply for and track all approvals needed to set up and run a business in India – Central and State – through one interface.
- Launched: 22 September 2021 (soft launch) by the Commerce & Industry Minister.
- Implemented by: DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, with Invest India as the project management unit.
- Origin: Union Budget 2020-21 announced an Investment Clearance Cell for end-to-end facilitation; NSWS is its digital form.
- Important: NSWS does not grant approvals itself – final decisions stay with the concerned Ministry or State department. It integrates, it does not replace, State single-window systems.

STATIC LINKAGE Revise NSWS, DPIIT and Invest India.

26. ULLAS: Literacy for All (PIB)

WHY IN NEWS India's literacy rate has risen from 74% (Census 2011) to 80.9% (PLFS 2023-24), and the ULLAS programme is now pushing States and UTs past the 95% "fully literate" benchmark — with literacy redefined to include digital, financial and legal skills.

- Census definition: a person aged 7+ who can read and write with understanding in any language is literate.
- Census 2011: 74.04% overall (male ~82%, female ~65%); Kerala highest, Bihar lowest. A large gender, rural-urban and social-group gap persists.
- About 25 crore people aged 15+ were still non-literate as per Census 2011 estimates – the target pool for adult literacy.

- International Literacy Day: 8 September (UNESCO, declared 1966, first observed 1967); 2026 marks its 60th observance.
- Full form | Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society

STATIC LINKAGE Revise ULLAS (New India Literacy Programme) and NEP 2020.