



CLARITY 4 SURE

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

July 2026

Every daily post of the month, in full · 24 days · 547 items

For NABARD Grade A · RBI Grade B · SEBI Grade A · IRDAI · SIDBI

Big themes · Facts To Remember 410 · General 70 · Banking and Finance 33

Most mentioned · RBI · NOT · New Delhi · Reserve Bank · Practice MCQs



GIANT KILLERS

NABARD GRADE A 2026

ENROLLED IN CLARITY NABARD MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

 1 188.75 SURAJ RAVINDRA	 2 185 LOKESH CHANDRAN	 3 185 VIVEK	 4 184.50 KAPIL PATLYA	 5 183.75 SIDDHANT KHESARWANI	 6 182 LALIT KUMAR
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6 OF THE
TOP 10

Six of the ten highest scorers in NABARD Grade A 2026 came from this classroom — 32 final selections in one batch. The same mentors compile this book every day.

Contents

Every daily post of July 2026 in full, day by day — 24 days, 547 items. Every line is linked; so is every bookmark in your PDF reader.

July 2026 at a glance — the charts: topics, days, where the items sat, the names and numbers that mattered	3
How to use this book — the four-step method and your revision tracker	5
1 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	7
2 & 3 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	27
4 July 2026 — Facts To Remember	57
5 & 6 July 2026 — Agriculture · Facts To Remember	63
7 July 2026 — National Affairs · Banking and Finance · Facts To Remember	80
8 July 2026 — Facts To Remember	92
9 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	98
10 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Facts To Remember	110
11 July 2026 — Agriculture · Facts To Remember	119
12 & 13 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	127
14 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Facts To Remember	137
15 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	147
16 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	158
17 July 2026 — Agriculture · Facts To Remember	168
18 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	178
19 & 20 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Facts To Remember	187
21 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	195
22 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	206
23 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Facts To Remember	216
24 & 25 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	225
26 & 27 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	236
28 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	245
29 July 2026 — Facts To Remember	251
30 July 2026 — Banking and Finance · Agriculture · Facts To Remember	259

THE MONTH IN NUMBERS

July 2026 at a glance

24 daily compilations, 547 items across 5 topics — Facts To Remember weighed the most. Read the charts first: they tell you where this month's questions will come from.

24

daily compilations

547

items covered

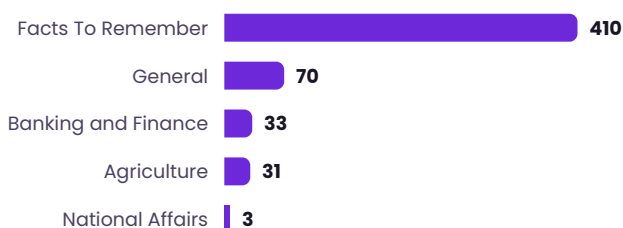
5

topics

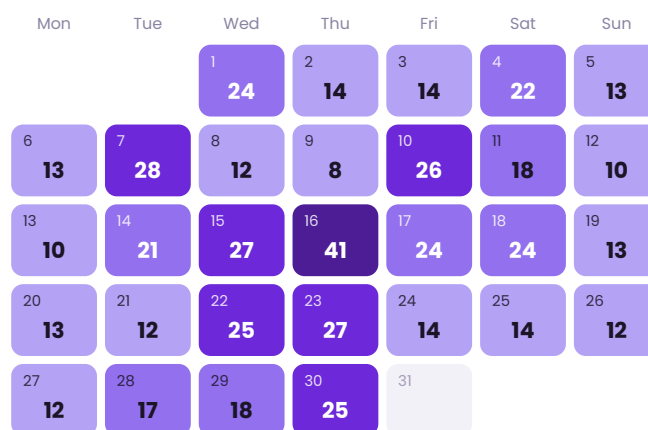
103

data tables

Items by topic



Items per day



Darker = a heavier day. Two-day posts are split across their days.

Where the items sat

● Other exams 547 (100%)

Most mentioned this month

How many items each name appeared in. Know these cold.



"Your only competition is yesterday's version of you."

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FIGURES THE PAPER LOVES

July 2026 by the numbers

The month's biggest figures with the line they came from. Say each one with its scheme or report before you turn the page.

₹75,021 crore

Launched in February 2024 with an outlay of about ₹75,021 crore.

DWEEPTI Yojana — India's First Women-Led Distributed Renewable Energy Policy · 29 July 2026

₹1.41 lakh

Launched on 1 October 2021 for five years, extended, with an outlay of about ₹1.41 lakh crore.

Madanapalle Municipality Waste Management Model · 30 July 2026

₹10,103 crore

NMEO-Oilseeds (Nov 2024): National Mission on Edible Oils — Oilseeds; ₹10,103 crore; 7-year duration (2024–25 to 2030...

ICRISAT + Partners Develop Two High-Oleic Groundnut Varieties — ICGV 201214 & ICGV 181030 · 2 & 3 July 2026

₹6,865 crore

Formation & Promotion of 10,000 FPOs Scheme: Launched February 2020; ₹6,865 crore outlay; implementing agencies inclu...

Balwaan Krishi Expands South India Operations with New Logistics & Distribution Hubs in Chennai and Visakhapatnam · 2 & 3 July 2026

₹20,050 crore

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) — launched September 2020; outlay ₹20,050 crore; 5-year scheme (2020–25)...

India's Fisheries Crisis · 5 & 6 July 2026

₹50,000

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) — launched 2015; provides financial assistance for PGS certification; ₹50,000...

Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)-India · 5 & 6 July 2026

₹1,600 crore

M-CADWM (Modernization of Command Area Development and Water Management) approved in 2025–26 as a sub-scheme of PMKSY...

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) · 22 July 2026

₹30 crore

Branding/traceability initiative; outlay ₹30 crore (₹15 cr industry + ₹15 cr Ministry of Textiles); partners Ministry...

White Gold: India's Cotton Story · 22 July 2026

₹100

Build a ₹100-crore local value-chain economy by 2028–29.

Mission Golden Spice — Lakadong Turmeric Value Chain Project · 24 & 25 July 2026

₹9,266 crore

Agricultural Research & Education Budget (2026–27): ₹9,266 crore (up from ₹4,836 crore in 2014–15).

Research for Resilience — The Case for Agricultural R&D Funding · 30 July 2026

READ IT THE WAY TOPPERS DO

How to use this book

One day a sitting. Read the day, then close the book and say the **Five to remember** out loud before you look. That single habit is the difference between reading current affairs and scoring from them.

1

Read the day

Every item, source and table. Underline the bold facts: they are the exam.

2

Say the five

Close the book. Recite the day's *Five to remember*. Only then check.

3

Take the quiz

Each day ends with its ten-question quiz. Note every wrong answer.

4

Come back

Tick the tracker. Recall the day again on day 3 and day 7, then use the revision sheet.

Your revision tracker

Tick as you go. Day 3 and day 7 recalls are what move a fact from short-term to exam-day memory.

DAY	READ	RECALL +3	RECALL +7	QUIZ	NOTES
1 July 2026 · 24 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
2 & 3 July 2026 · 28 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
4 July 2026 · 22 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
5 & 6 July 2026 · 25 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
7 July 2026 · 28 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
8 July 2026 · 12 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
9 July 2026 · 8 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
10 July 2026 · 26 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
11 July 2026 · 18 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
12 & 13 July 2026 · 19 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
14 July 2026 · 21 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
15 July 2026 · 27 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
16 July 2026 · 41 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
17 July 2026 · 24 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
18 July 2026 · 24 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
19 & 20 July 2026 · 26 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
21 July 2026 · 12 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
22 July 2026 · 25 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
23 July 2026 · 27 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
24 & 25 July 2026 · 27 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
26 & 27 July 2026 · 23 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
28 July 2026 · 17 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	
29 July 2026 · 18 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	

"Your notes should fit on one page a week. Cut until they do."

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DAY	READ	RECALL +3	RECALL +7	QUIZ	NOTES
30 July 2026 · 25 items	☐	☐	☐	☐	

DAY 1 OF 24

1 July 2026

Wednesday · 24 items · 3 topics

General 2 · Banking and Finance 3 · Agriculture 2 · Facts To Remember 17

Context

Union Health Minister **Shri J.P. Nadda** on **Monday, 29 June 2026** in New Delhi launched "**Ayushman Sarathi**" — the **official PM-JAY WhatsApp chatbot** — developed by the **National Health Authority (NHA)** under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)**. It provides citizens with **secure, 24×7, API-based access to Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** services — including **eligibility check, card management (apply/download/lock-unlock), eKYC, Aadhaar linking, Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card for senior citizens 70+ years, wallet balance, treatment history, empanelled hospital locator, grievance registration, and post-discharge feedback**. Beneficiaries access it by **sending "Hi" to +91 72908 23838 on WhatsApp** or **scanning the official NHA QR code**. Nadda simultaneously launched the **Unified Drug Registry, Unified Health Interface (UHI), and Aarogya Setu 2.0** (Personal Health Record platform under **ABDM**).

Key Features

- **Comprehensive Card Management** (apply, download, lock/unlock, eKYC, Aadhaar linking).
- **Dynamic Security Grid** (lock/unlock cards to prevent misuse).
- **Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card** module for **senior citizens 70+ years**.
- **Real-Time Financial + Clinical Lookups** (wallet balance, treatment history, empanelled hospital search).
- **Automated Grievance Redressal** (register/track/withdraw + post-discharge feedback).
- **Instant Activation** 24×7 via WhatsApp.

What is PM-JAY?

- **Full Form: Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana** (under Ayushman Bharat).
- **Launched: 23 September 2018**.
- **Coverage: Up to ₹5 lakh per family per year** for secondary + tertiary care.
- **Implementing Agency: NHA** under MoHFW.

Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card

- Launched **29 October 2024** by PM Modi.
- **All senior citizens 70+ years**, irrespective of income.
- **₹5 lakh top-up cover** under PM-JAY.

Simultaneous Launches

Initiative	Detail
Unified Drug Registry	Standardised digital platform for drug information
Unified Health Interface (UHI)	Interoperability layer for health services under ABDM
Aarogya Setu 2.0	Personal Health Record (PHR) platform under Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

What is ABDM?

- **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission** — launched **27 September 2021**.

"Trust the process, but check the tracker."

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- Builds India's digital health infrastructure — **ABHA ID (14-digit), Healthcare Professionals Registry, Health Facility Registry, PHR.**

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to "Ayushman Sarathi" launched on 29 June 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched by Union Health Minister Shri J.P. Nadda in New Delhi.
2. It is developed by the National Health Authority (NHA) under the MoHFW.
3. It is a WhatsApp-based chatbot providing 24×7 access to AB PM-JAY services.
4. It is a paid application requiring monthly subscription for beneficiaries.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Ayushman Sarathi is FREE for beneficiaries** — no subscription is required.)

Q2. With reference to the features of the Ayushman Sarathi chatbot, consider the following statements:

1. Beneficiaries can check PM-JAY eligibility, apply for and download Ayushman Card, and re-do eKYC.
2. Beneficiaries can lock/unlock their PM-JAY cards to prevent misuse.
3. Beneficiaries can view wallet balance, treatment history, and locate empanelled hospitals.
4. Beneficiaries cannot register or track grievances through the chatbot.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **automated grievance registration, tracking, and withdrawal are among Ayushman Sarathi's key features.**)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Free, not paid.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Grievance features included.

Exam Relevance

Exam	Relevance
RBI Grade B (Phase I + II)	High — ESI on health governance, DPI health
NABARD Grade A	High — Rural health scheme access
SIDBI/SEBI/IRDAI Grade A	Medium — Digital governance
Banking (SBI PO, IBPS)	Very High — Recurring GA: PM-JAY, NHA, ABDM
UPSC Prelims & Mains	Very High — GS-II (Schemes, Governance)
State PCS	High
SSC, Railway, Insurance	Very High

5. Project BRAHMANK of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) Celebrates 16th Raising Day

Source: PIB

Context

Project BRAHMANK of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) celebrated its **16th Raising Day on Monday, 29 June 2026** at **Ranaghat, East Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh** — marking **15 years of service** in developing strategic infrastructure and connectivity along India's north-eastern frontier. Project

BRAHMANK was **raised on 29 June 2011** and became **operational on 3 December 2011**. It develops + maintains strategic road infrastructure across **5 districts of Arunachal Pradesh — Siang, East Siang, West Siang, Upper Siang, and Shi-Yomi** — along with **parts of Dhemaji district in Assam**. Under its charge: **811 km of roads and 86 bridges** (culverts to major steel + arch bridges). Notable engineering: the **100-m steel arch bridge over Siyom Nallah** and the **165-m Pre-Stressed Concrete (PSC) bridge over Simang Nallah on the Along-Yingkiong Road**. In **FY 2025-26**, the project completed **13 bridges (cumulative 390 m span)** and **blacktopped 61 km of roads to National Highway Double Lane (NHDL) standards**. It also develops **tactical helipads for IAF logistics + emergency evacuation** in the LAC-adjacent zone.

What is BRO?

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is a **premier executive force under India's Ministry of Defence**. It builds and maintains critical infrastructure in remote border regions and friendly neighboring countries. Headquartered in New Delhi.

- **Full Form: Border Roads Organisation.**
- **Established: 7 May 1960.**
- **Under: Ministry of Defence** (from 2015; earlier under **MoRTH**).
- **Motto: "Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam"** (Everything is achievable through hard work).
- **Founding Force: General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) + military engineers.**
- **DG-BRO: Lt Gen Raghu Srinivasan** (as of 2025).

What is Project BRAHMANK?

A **BRO road-development project** raised on **29 June 2011** at **Ranaghat, East Siang, AP**; develops strategic roads + bridges across 5 AP districts + Dhemaji (Assam).

BRO Projects Across Border Regions

Region	Projects
Arunachal Pradesh	Vartak, Arunank, Udayak, BRAHMANK
Ladakh	Himank, Beacon, Deepak, Vijayak, Yojak
Sikkim	Swastik
Mizoram	Pushpak
Assam + Meghalaya	Setuk
Nagaland + Manipur	Sewak
J&K	Sampark
Rajasthan	Chetak

Key BRO Iconic Infrastructure

- **Sela Tunnel** (Arunachal, inaugurated 9 March 2024) — longest bi-lane tunnel above 13,000 ft.
- **Nechiphu Tunnel, Sisseri Bridge, Siyom Bridge** (Arunachal).
- **Atal Tunnel** (Rohtang) — 9.02 km long, inaugurated 3 October 2020.
- **Shinku La Tunnel** (Ladakh) — under construction; world's highest tunnel at 15,800 ft.
- **Darbuk-Shyok-DBO Road** (Ladakh).
- **Srinagar-Leh Highway.**

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to Project BRAHMANK, consider the following statements:

1. It functions under the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) of the Ministry of Defence.

2. It was raised on 29 June 2011 at Ranaghat, East Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh, and became operational on 3 December 2011.
3. It celebrated its 16th Raising Day on 29 June 2026.
4. Project BRAHMANK operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **BRO is under the Ministry of Defence** (since 2015) — NOT the Ministry of Home Affairs.)

Q2. With reference to Project BRAHMANK's area of responsibility, consider the following statements:

1. It develops strategic road infrastructure across five Arunachal Pradesh districts — Siang, East Siang, West Siang, Upper Siang, and Shi-Yomi.
2. It also covers parts of Dhemaji district in Assam.
3. It maintains 811 km of roads and 86 bridges under its charge.
4. Project BRAHMANK operates in the Ladakh region.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Project BRAHMANK operates in Arunachal Pradesh + parts of Assam**, NOT Ladakh. BRO projects in Ladakh include **Himank, Beacon, Deepak, Vijayak, Yojak**.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: BRO under MoD, not MHA.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: BRAHMANK in AP/Assam, not Ladakh.

6. Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah Launches "FCRA 2.0 Portal" + "e-OCI Card"

Context

Union Home Minister **Shri Amit Shah** on **Tuesday, 30 June 2026** launched two major digital initiatives of the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** in **New Delhi** — the **FCRA 2.0 Portal** and the **electronic Overseas Citizen of India (e-OCI) Card**. Attending the launch were **Union Home Secretary Shri Govind Mohan**, **Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri**, **Intelligence Bureau (IB) Director Shri Mahesh Dixit**, and other senior officials. The **FCRA 2.0 Portal**, hosted on **MeghRaj (National Government Cloud)**, aims to reduce paperwork, speed up processing of registration applications under the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010**, and enable **real-time monitoring of foreign fund inflows**. Features include **process re-engineering, integrated dashboard, Aadhaar-based authentication, e-Sign, OCR-based document analysis, and API integration with PAN, Aadhaar, NGO Darpan, OCI, and ICAI UDIN**. Currently, **~14,500 active FCRA organisations** operate in India, receiving **15,000–20,000 applications and ~17,000 annual returns** each year. The **e-OCI Card** — designed for the **50+ lakh OCI cardholders globally** — enables a **fully digital application-to-download experience**, ends the need to re-issue the OCI booklet upon issuance of a new passport after 20 years of age, allows **real-time self-verification**, and eliminates risk of loss/damage. The launch aligns with **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2026** and the **Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026**. Future features include an **AI-powered chatbot, FCRA mobile app, and dedicated bank dashboard**.

What is the FCRA 2.0 Portal?

- **A revamped digital platform** for the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010**.
- **End-to-end digital**: Applications, renewals, annual returns, other services.
- **Hosted on: MeghRaj (National Government Cloud)**.

What are the key features of FCRA 2.0?

Feature	Detail
Process re-engineering	Streamlined workflow
Integrated dashboard	Single login-based view
Aadhaar-based authentication	For identity verification
e-Sign facility	Digital signatures
OCR-based document analysis	Auto-extract text from uploaded PDFs
API integration	PAN, Aadhaar, OCI, NGO Darpan, ICAI's UDIN
Future features	AI-powered chatbot, FCRA mobile app, dedicated bank dashboard

What is FCRA?

- **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010** — replaced FCRA 1976.
- **Purpose:** Regulate **acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions** by individuals, associations, companies.
- **Ministry:** MHA.

Key features of FCRA (2010)

- **Prior permission or registration** required to receive foreign contributions.
- **No sub-granting** (Section 7 — foreign funds cannot be transferred to another entity).
- **Bank account:** Must be in **State Bank of India, New Delhi Main Branch** (Sansad Marg).
- **Aadhaar required** for office-bearers.
- **Utilisation cap:** 20% of foreign contribution for administrative expenses.
- **Renewal:** Every 5 years.

What are the FCRA Amendment Rules, 2026?

- **Recently notified** by MHA.
- **Modifies:** FCRA Rules, 2011.
- **Introduces a dedicated schedule** listing **permissible activities under the religious category**.
- **Tightens compliance** requirements.
- Requires **75% utilisation** of previous funds before receiving next installment.
- **Expands accountability** to key functionaries.

What is the e-OCI Card?

- **Electronic Overseas Citizen of India Card** — fully digital OCI.
- **Beneficiaries:** **50+ lakh OCI cardholders globally**.
- **Fully online:** Application → document upload → download digitally generated card.
- **Existing cardholders** can transition to e-OCI **without fresh application or physical verification** in most cases.

Key benefits of e-OCI

Old system	e-OCI system
Physical OCI booklet re-issuance on new passport (after 20 yrs)	Just update passport details online
Fresh application/verification for booklet renewal	Not required for most existing holders
Risk of loss/damage of physical booklet	Digital — no loss/damage risk
Verification requires MHA contact	Real-time self-verification by cardholder

"Trust the process, but check the tracker."

Old system	e-OCI system
Registration number could change	Unique registration number retained

What is the OCI Scheme?

- **Introduced: August 2005** by Gol.
- **Under: Citizenship Act, 1955.**
- **Eligibility:** Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) who were Indian citizens on/after **26 January 1950** or eligible to become so.
- **Excludes:** Citizens of **Pakistan, Bangladesh, or notified countries.**
- **Not a dual citizenship** — OCI is a lifetime multi-entry visa + certain economic/educational rights, NOT full Indian citizenship.

What is NGO Darpan?

- **NITI Aayog's portal** for **registration + reporting** by NGOs receiving Gol funding.
- **Integrated** with FCRA 2.0.

What is ICAI's UDIN?

- **Unique Document Identification Number** system by **ICAI**.
- Generates unique numbers for **CA certifications**.
- Integrated with FCRA 2.0 for **audit compliance verification**.

What is MeghRaj?

- **Government of India Cloud Initiative** launched **February 2014**.
- Under **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)**.
- **Purpose:** Accelerate e-governance service delivery via cloud.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the FCRA 2.0 Portal launched on 30 June 2026, consider the following statements:

1. The FCRA 2.0 Portal was launched by Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah in New Delhi.
2. The portal is hosted on MeghRaj, the National Government Cloud, under MeitY.
3. The portal includes features such as Aadhaar-based authentication, e-Sign facility, and OCR-based document analysis.
4. The FCRA 2.0 Portal is administered by the Ministry of External Affairs.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **FCRA 2.0 Portal is administered by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, NOT the Ministry of External Affairs.)

Q2. With reference to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010, consider the following statements:

1. FCRA 2010 replaced the earlier FCRA 1976.
2. It regulates the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions by individuals, associations, and companies in India.
3. Currently, approximately 14,500 active FCRA-registered organisations operate in India, receiving 15,000-20,000 applications and about 17,000 annual returns each year.
4. Under FCRA 2010, foreign contributions can be freely sub-granted from one recipient entity to another.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; under **Section 7 of FCRA 2010 (amended 2020)**, **NO sub-granting is allowed** – foreign contributions received by an entity cannot be transferred to another entity.)

Answer Key

1. (c) – Statement 4 wrong: FCRA 2.0 administered by MHA, not MEA.
2. (c) – Statement 4 wrong: Sub-granting is prohibited under Section 7 of FCRA.

Banking and Finance

1. EPFO's Centralised IT-Enabled System (CITES 2.01) Migration Undertaken

Source: *The Hindu*

Context

The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** recently sent text messages to subscribers announcing a "**planned database consolidation and upgradation of software applications**" from **26 June to 1 July 2026** as part of the **Centralised IT-Enabled System (CITES) project** – designed by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**. During the migration window, **claim submission, passbook download, and other member services (including EPFO services on the UMANG app until 2 July 2026)** remained temporarily unavailable. CITES **modernises EPFO's service delivery** via **automation and rule-based processing**, replacing the earlier decentralised system of **120+ separate databases** across field/regional offices – which had tied members to a single regional office and made claims **employer-centric**. Under CITES: **any PF office can process any member's service request**, members can access services online with **UAN + password**, KYC updates are online, and all previous Member IDs under one UAN are visible with a single **Aadhaar KYC**. **CITES has been functional since 2023** and already delivered the **Centralised Pension Payment System (CPPS)** – approved by the **EPFO Central Board of Trustees (CBT) in November 2024** and live from **1 January 2025** – benefiting **78+ lakh EPS pensioners** with "**any bank, any branch, anywhere in India**" pension access. The next phase is transition to the **Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS)**.

What is CITES 2.01?

- **Full Form: Centralised IT-Enabled System, version 2.01.**
- **Type:** EPFO's **core IT architecture overhaul**.
- **Purpose:** Replace **legacy office-based platforms** with a **single centralised system**.
- **Designed by:** **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** – under MeitY.
- **Functional Since:** **2023**.
- **Delivery Approach:** **Automation + rule-based processing**.

What are CITES 2.01's 6 Modules?

#	Module	Function
1	Member Accounts	UAN, KYC, service history, balances
2	Employer Filings	ECR, employer registration, contribution filings
3	Claims	Withdrawal, transfer, advance claims
4	Pensions	EPS pensions, CPPS disbursement
5	Finance	Interest crediting, budget, treasury
6	Compliance & Grievance Redressal	Damages, penalties, grievances (<i>under testing as of 2026</i>)

What are CITES's key benefits?

Feature	Detail
Single National Database	Replaces 120+ decentralised databases
Any PF Office Processes	Members can approach any PF office in India
Online Services	KYC, claims, transfers, service history
Unified UAN Access	UAN + password to access all Member IDs
One Aadhaar KYC	Links all previous Member IDs
Automation + Rule-Based Processing	Reduces manual delays
Digital Query Resolution	EPFO can raise queries online; members respond online

What was CPPS (Centralised Pension Payment System)?

Aspect	Detail
Framework	Under CITES 2.01
Approval	EPFO Central Board of Trustees (CBT) on 30 August 2024
Beneficiaries	78+ lakh EPS pensioners
Key Feature	"Any bank, any branch, anywhere in India" access
No PPO Transfers	Pensioners no longer need to transfer Pension Payment Orders (PPOs) when moving/changing banks
Immediate Pension Credit	No verification branch visits needed
Next Phase	Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS)

What is EPFO?

- **Full Form: Employees' Provident Fund Organisation.**
- **Under: Ministry of Labour & Employment, Gov.**
- **Governing Law: Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions (EPF & MP) Act, 1952.**
- **Established: 1952.**
- **HQ: New Delhi.**
- **Managed by: Central Board of Trustees (CBT)** — chaired by **Union Labour Minister.**
- **Union Labour Minister: Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya.**
- **Subscribers: 70+ million (7+ crore)** active members.
- **PF Interest Rate: 8.25%** (approved February 2024 for FY 2023-24).

What are EPFO's key schemes?

Scheme	Detail
Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)	12% + 12% (employee + employer); 3.67% of employer to EPF
Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995	8.33% of employer's share goes to EPS; min pension ₹1,000/month
Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI)	Life cover for members

Eligibility for EPS pension

- **Minimum 10 years of service.**
- Pension age: **58 years** (standard); early pension at **50**.
- Pension calculated on **average salary of last 60 months × years of service.**

Key allied concepts

- **UAN (Universal Account Number)**: 12-digit unique ID for all EPF members, provides single window access.
- **PPO (Pension Payment Order)**: 12-digit unique number issued for pension disbursement.
- **DLC (Digital Life Certificate)**: **Jeevan Pramaan** — biometric-based annual life certification for pensioners.
- **ECR (Electronic Challan-cum-Return)**: Monthly filing by employers.
- **ABPS (Aadhaar-Based Payment System)**: Aadhaar-anchored payment method.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to EPFO's Centralised IT-Enabled System (CITES) migration undertaken from 26 June – 1 July 2026, consider the following statements:

1. CITES is designed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).
2. The project consolidates 120+ decentralised regional databases into a single national database.
3. CITES has been functional since 2023, and its current version is CITES 2.01.
4. CITES is designed exclusively for the Ministry of External Affairs.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **CITES is designed for the EPFO under the Ministry of Labour & Employment**, NOT the Ministry of External Affairs.)

Q2. With reference to the Centralised Pension Payment System (CPPS), consider the following statements:

1. CPPS enables pensioners to receive their pensions from any bank, any branch, anywhere in India.
2. CPPS was launched nationwide on 1 January 2025 as part of the CITES 2.01 framework.
3. CPPS benefits more than 78 lakh EPS pensioners.
4. Under CPPS, pensioners need to transfer their Pension Payment Orders (PPOs) between Regional Offices when they change banks.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **under CPPS, PPOs are NO LONGER transferred between Regional Offices** — this is one of the key reforms.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: CITES for EPFO under MoL&E, not MEA.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: No PPO transfers under CPPS.

2. RBI Revises Certificate of Registration (CoR) Voluntary Surrender Norms for NBFCs + HFCs

Source: *Business Standard*

Context

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** on **Tuesday, 30 June 2026** revised the **application form and indicative checklist for NBFCs (including HFCs)** seeking **voluntary surrender of their Certificate of Registration (CoR)**, following changes to the regulatory framework for **Unregistered Type I NBFCs**. The revised documents are hosted on the **PRAVAAH portal** — RBI's **single-window online application gateway** launched **28 May 2024**. The changes follow **RBI's Amendment Directions dated 29 April 2026** (the **RBI (NBFC – Registration, Exemptions, and Framework for Scale Based Regulation) Amendment**

Directions, 2026), which introduced the **"Unregistered Type I NBFCs" category** — entities that **do not accept public funds, have no customer interface, and have asset size below ₹1,000 crore** — **exempted from mandatory registration under Section 45-IA of the RBI Act, 1934**. The **transition window** for existing NBFCs eligible for deregistration is **1 April – 30 September 2026**.

What is a CoR (Certificate of Registration)?

- **Statutory certification** issued by RBI under **Section 45-IA of RBI Act, 1934**.
- **Mandatory** for any entity carrying on the business of a **Non-Banking Financial Institution (NBFI)**.
- Confers **regulatory recognition + supervision** on the NBFC.

Why do NBFCs surrender CoR?

- **Cease NBFC business** operations.
- **Convert to unregistered Core Investment Company (CIC)**.
- **Amalgamation / merger** with another entity.
- **Now (post-April 2026)**: To become an **Unregistered Type I NBFC** — reducing compliance burden.

What is the new "Unregistered Type I NBFCs" category?

Introduced via the **RBI (NBFC – Registration, Exemptions, and Framework for Scale Based Regulation) Amendment Directions, 2026** (dated **29 April 2026**), following the parent **Directions, 2025** notification of **28 November 2025**.

Criteria for Unregistered Type I NBFCs
No acceptance of public funds (direct or indirect)
No customer interface
Asset size < ₹1,000 crore

- **Effect: Exempt from mandatory RBI registration** under Section 45-IA of RBI Act, 1934.
- **Rationale**: Reduce **"regulatory cholesterol"** for **private family offices, captive treasuries, single-family investment vehicles**.
- Aligns Indian regime with **global proportionate regulation** for non-systemic proprietary structures.

What are the transition requirements for existing NBFCs eligible for deregistration?

Requirement	Detail
Application Mode	PRAVAAH portal only
Original CoR	Must be physically surrendered to RBI
Auditor Certification (SAC)	Confirming no public funds/customer interface for past 3 years
Financials	3 years of audited balance sheets
Board Resolution	Disclosing status + confirming no intent to access public funds/customer interface + agreement to seek Type II NBFC registration if breached

What is the PRAVAAH portal?

- **Full Form: Platform for Regulatory Application, Validation and Authorisation**.
- **Launched: 28 May 2024** by then **RBI Governor Shri Shaktikanta Das**.
- **Purpose: Single-window online application gateway** for **all RBI approvals, licences, and authorisations**.
- **Consolidates ~60+ types of RBI applications** across regulatory departments.
- Reduces **e-mail + paper filings**; auto-tags to concerned regional office.

What are the categories under the revised NBFC regulatory framework (2025/2026)?

"Trust the process, but check the tracker."

Category	Public Funds	Customer Interface	Asset Size	RBI Registration
Unregistered Type I NBFC	No	No	< ₹1,000 crore	NOT required
Registered Type II NBFC	Yes/No	Yes	Various	Required
Systemically Important NBFC (NBFC-UL/ML/BL)	Yes	Yes	Threshold-based	Required + heightened supervision

Statutory basis

- **RBI Act, 1934 — Section 45-IA:** Mandates CoR for NBFCs.
- **RBI (NBFC – Registration, Exemptions, and Framework for Scale Based Regulation) Directions, 2025** (28 November 2025).
- **RBI (NBFC – Registration, Exemptions, and Framework for Scale Based Regulation) Amendment Directions, 2026** (29 April 2026).

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the RBI's revised norms for voluntary surrender of Certificate of Registration (CoR) by NBFCs on 30 June 2026, consider the following statements:

1. NBFCs and HFCs intending to surrender their CoR must submit the revised application form through the PRAVAAH portal.
2. The changes follow the RBI's amendment directions issued on 29 April 2026.
3. PRAVAAH is RBI's single-window online application gateway launched on 28 May 2024.
4. Once an NBFC files a CoR surrender application on PRAVAAH, its NBFC status is automatically cancelled.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **filing the application does NOT amount to automatic cancellation** — the entity continues to be an NBFC/HFC until RBI issues a formal cancellation letter, and must continue complying with all regulations.)

Q2. With reference to the new "Unregistered Type I NBFCs" category, consider the following statements:

1. Unregistered Type I NBFCs are entities that neither accept public funds nor have any customer interface, with asset size below ₹1,000 crore.
2. They are exempted from mandatory registration under Section 45-IA of the RBI Act, 1934.
3. The transition window for existing NBFCs to surrender their CoR and become Unregistered Type I is 1 April 2026 to 30 September 2026.
4. Unregistered Type I NBFCs are permitted to accept unlimited public deposits without any restrictions.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Unregistered Type I NBFCs must NOT accept public funds** — this is a core eligibility criterion.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: No automatic cancellation on filing.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Unregistered Type I cannot accept public funds.

3. Bima Sugam

Source: BL

Context

Insurance Regulatory & Development Authority of India (IRDAI) Chairman Shri **Ajay Seth** announced on **Tuesday, 30 June 2026** at the **National Insurance Awareness Day** event (organised by the **Life Insurance Council** in Mumbai) that the **initial products under Bima Sugam** should be available by **end of September 2026**, adding that the **consultation paper on distribution reforms** is expected by **end of July 2026**. The **three priority products** are **motor, health, and term life insurance**. **Bima Sugam** — India's ambitious "**Amazon-like**" **digital marketplace for insurance** — is part of IRDAI's broader **Bima Trinity** framework, which also includes **Bima Vistaar** (a **rural-focused composite insurance product**) and **Bima Vahaak** (a **women-centric agent network** that will sell Bima Vistaar products through the Sugam platform). The **Bima Sugam website was launched in September 2025**; the implementing entity — **Bima Sugam India Federation** — has an **authorised capital of ₹500 crore + paid-up capital of ~₹310 crore**, with shareholding distributed across **life, general, and health insurers**. On the **Government's 100% FDI in insurance** (approved via the **Insurance Amendment Bill 2025**), IRDAI has already **approved one 100%-foreign-owned general insurance licence**, with another under process, and one in life insurance received. Key recent deals: **KIWI General Insurance** (backed by **Westbridge Capital**) approved; **Australia's QBE** acquiring 51% of Raheja QBE from Prism Johnson (₹324 crore); **Mahindra Group + Canada's Manulife** planning a **50:50 life insurance JV** (₹3,600 crore each); **Prudential plc** acquiring **75% of Bharti Life Insurance** while reducing its ICICI Prudential Life stake; **Angel One** preparing a **digital-first life venture with LivWell**. Seth also said **insurance IPOs** should only be pursued when there is a **genuine need to raise capital**, not merely for transparency.

What is Bima Sugam?

- An "**Amazon-like**" **digital marketplace** for insurance in India.
- Positioned as **market infrastructure** — brings **insurers + intermediaries + customers** onto a **single interface**.
- **Website launched: September 2025**.
- **Value Proposition:** Lower costs (platform doesn't need high commission); may require a **modest fee**.
- **Priority Products: Motor, Health, Term life insurance**.

Who runs Bima Sugam?

Entity	Detail
Implementing Entity	Bima Sugam India Federation
Shareholding	Distributed across life, general, and health insurers

What is the Bima Trinity?

IRDAI's **3-pillar framework** for universalising insurance:

Pillar	Detail
Bima Sugam	Digital marketplace (technology infrastructure)
Bima Vistaar	Rural-focused composite insurance product (bundled life + health + property)
Bima Vahaak	Women-centric agent network — sells Bima Vistaar products through the Sugam platform

What are the recent developments in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in insurance?

- **Insurance Amendment Bill 2025** — approved **100% FDI** in insurance (up from earlier 74%).
- Allows **foreign insurers to enter India without an Indian JV partner**.
- **IRDAI-approved deals under new 100% FDI:**

"Trust the process, but check the tracker."

What is IRDAI?

- **Full Form: Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India.**
- **Established: 1999** under the **IRDAI Act, 1999.**
- **HQ: Hyderabad.**
- **Under: Ministry of Finance.**
- **Mandate: Protect interests of insurance policyholders + regulate and develop the insurance industry.**
- **Chairman: Shri Ajay Seth.**

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to Bima Sugam and the announcement on 30 June 2026, consider the following statements:

1. IRDAI Chairman Shri Ajay Seth announced that Bima Sugam's initial products should be available by end-September 2026.
2. The three priority products under Bima Sugam are motor, health, and term life insurance.
3. Bima Sugam is a digital marketplace bringing insurers, intermediaries, and customers onto a single interface.
4. The Bima Sugam website was launched in December 2023.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **Bima Sugam website was launched in September 2025**, NOT December 2023.)

Q2. With reference to the "Bima Trinity" framework of IRDAI, consider the following statements:

1. Bima Sugam is the digital marketplace pillar.
2. Bima Vistaar is a rural-focused composite insurance product.
3. Bima Vahaak is a women-centric agent network that sells Bima Vistaar products through the Sugam platform.
4. Bima Trinity includes a compulsory public sector monopoly on insurance sales.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Bima Trinity does NOT include any compulsory public sector monopoly** — it is a market infrastructure and product framework open to all licensed insurers.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Bima Sugam website launched September 2025, not December 2023.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: No public sector monopoly.

Exam Relevance

IRDAI Grade A	CRITICAL — Direct subject — Bima Sugam, Bima Trinity, FDI, IRDAI structure, Ajay Seth
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Agriculture

1. NABARD Inaugurates India's FIRST PACS-Based RuTAGE Smart Village Centre (RSVC)

Source: *The Hindu*

Context

Two RuTAGE Smart Village Centres (RSVCs) were **virtually inaugurated** — one at **Beerpur PACS** in **Jagtial district** (India's **first PACS-based RSVC**) and the other at **Nandanam Farmers Service Cooperative Society (FSCS)** in **Hanumakonda district** — both in **Telangana**, to bring **science, innovation, and practical technology solutions** to rural communities. The initiative is **led by the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India, Dr. Ajay Kumar Sood**, in partnership with **NABARD** (Chairman **Shri Shaji K.V.**), aiming to **convert primary cooperative societies into local technology hubs** delivering affordable, need-based solutions for **agriculture, value addition, and rural entrepreneurship**. The **Beerpur RSVC** deploys **agri drones, soil testing device, smart irrigation, poha + puffed rice processing units, happy seeder, and solar sky tubes**; the **Nandanam RSVC** features **agri drones, cold-press oil extraction, smart irrigation, puffed rice machine, soil testing device, and subjee cooler**. Together, the two centres serve **20 villages, 18,000+ hectares, and ~5,000 farmers/cooperative members**, and will generate employment via **drone operations, machinery handling, processing, and service delivery**. The Beerpur RSVC operates under a **NABARD grant of ₹33.52 lakh from the Gramya Vikas Nidhi (GVN)**, is being implemented over a **3-year period (2026-2029)**, with **technical support from Cornell Sathguru Foundation, Hyderabad**.

What is an RSVC?

- **Full Form:** Rural Technology Action Group Smart Village Centre.
- **Also called:** RuTAGE Smart Village Centre (Rural Technology Action Group extension).
- **Type:** Permanent **Panchayat-level rural technology hub**.
- **Aim:** Bridge the gap between **rural needs and technological advancements**.

What is RuTAG?

- **Full Form:** Rural Technology Action Group.
- **Conceptualised by PSA:** 2003-04.
- **Launched:** 2004.
- **Under:** Office of Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India.
- **Objective:** Develop + disseminate **appropriate technologies for rural India**.
- **RuTAG 2.0 flagship:** RSVC model.

Technologies deployed at Beerpur RSVC

Technology	Purpose
Agri Drones	Precision spraying, soil scanning, aerial mapping
Soil Testing Device	Real-time nutrient analysis
Smart Irrigation System	Water conservation, targeted application
Poha Processing Unit	Value addition — flattened rice
Puffed Rice Processing Unit	Value addition — puffed rice
Happy Seeder	No-till seeding to reduce stubble burning
Solar Sky Tubes	Sustainable indoor lighting

Technologies deployed at Nandanam RSVC

Technology	Purpose
Agri Drones	Precision agriculture
Cold-Press Oil Extraction	Value-added oil processing
Smart Irrigation Device	Water efficiency

"Trust the process, but check the tracker."

Technology	Purpose
Puffed Rice Machine	Value addition
Soil Testing Device	Nutrient assessment
Subjee Cooler	Post-harvest cold storage for vegetables

What is Gramya Vikas Nidhi (GVN)?

- **NABARD's dedicated fund for rural development promotional activities.**
- Established under **NABARD Act, 1981.**
- Supports **capacity building, technology dissemination, pilot projects.**
- Beerpur RSVC financed under GVN.

What is a FSCS?

- **Farmers Service Cooperative Society** — village-level cooperative body providing **credit + input supply + technical services** to farmers.
- Similar to PACS but with **wider service focus.**

Key Terms

- **What is RSVC?**
RuTAGe Smart Village Centre — Panchayat-level rural technology hub launched by **PSA + partners**; serves 15–20 villages.
- **What is RuTAG?**
Rural Technology Action Group — conceptualised by **PSA in 2003–04**; develops appropriate rural technology.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the RuTAGe Smart Village Centres (RSVCs) inaugurated on 24 June 2026, consider the following statements:

1. The two RSVCs were established at Beerpur PACS in Jagtial district and Nandanam FSCS in Hanumakonda district, both in Telangana.
2. The Beerpur RSVC is India's first PACS-based RuTAGe Smart Village Centre.
3. The initiative is led by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India, in partnership with NABARD.
4. The two RSVCs were inaugurated by the Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **RSVCs were virtually inaugurated by NABARD Chairman Shri Shaji K.V., PSA Dr. Ajay Kumar Sood, and Telangana Agriculture & Cooperation Secretary Shri K. Surendra Mohan** — NOT by the Union Home Minister.)

Q2. With reference to the RuTAG programme, consider the following statements:

1. The Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG) was conceptualised by the PSA in 2003–04.
2. The first-ever RuTAGe Smart Village Centre (RSVC) was inaugurated at Mandaura village, Sonipat district, Haryana on 14 February 2025.
3. Each RSVC serves 15–20 villages and offers 12 technology tracks including agriculture, waste management, homestays, and village tourism.
4. RuTAG is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **RuTAG is administered by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)**, NOT the Ministry of Agriculture.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: NABARD Chairman + PSA + Telangana Secretary inaugurated, not Amit Shah.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: RuTAG under PSA Office, not Ministry of Agriculture.

Exam Relevance

NABARD Grade A	CRITICAL — Direct subject — RSVC, PACS, Gramya Vikas Nidhi, cooperative tech empowerment; Phase II essay-worthy
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2. World's Largest Grain Storage Plan under the Cooperative Sector (WLGSP-Coops)

Context

The **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** organised a **stakeholders' capacity-building and sensitisation workshop** on the **"World's Largest Grain Storage Plan under the Cooperative Sector (WLGSP-Coops)"** at **Jugijan Samabai Samity Ltd** in **Hojai district, Assam** on **Sunday, 28 June 2026**. The workshop brought together officials from the **Cooperative Department, National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), Food Corporation of India (FCI), Assam State Warehouse Corporation, District Industries & Commerce Centre, Assam Cooperative Apex Bank**, and representatives of **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)**. **NABARD's District Development Manager (DDM) Shri Rajendar Perna** highlighted the scheme objectives, and **Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies Shri Deepak Bathari** announced that **Kapashbari Samabai Samity Ltd** has been **identified for establishing a grain storage godown**, and encouraged other eligible societies to participate. **WLGSP-Coops** — approved by the **Union Cabinet on 31 May 2023** and launched by the **Ministry of Cooperation** under **Union Home + Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah** — aims to create **decentralised agricultural infrastructure** (godowns, custom hiring centres, processing units, Fair Price Shops) at the **PACS level** through **convergence** of existing schemes: **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Scheme (AMI), Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM), and PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME)**.

What is WLGSP-Coops?

- **Full Form: World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector.**
- **Approved by: Union Cabinet on 31 May 2023.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Cooperation, GoI.**
- **Union Minister: Shri Amit Shah** (Home + Cooperation).
- **Ministry of Cooperation Established: 6 July 2021.**
- **Vision: "Sahakar Se Samridhi"** (Prosperity through Cooperatives).
- **Type: Central Sector Initiative / Pilot Project.**
- **Coverage: 24 States/UTs.**

What are the WLGSP-Coops objectives?

- **Reduce food grain wastage** (post-harvest losses).
- **Strengthen food security.**
- **Prevent distress sales** by farmers.
- **Enable farmers to realise better prices.**
- **Save transportation costs** between procurement centres, warehouses, Fair Price Shops.
- **Empower PACS** as multifunctional entities.

What infrastructure is created at PACS level?

Facility	Purpose
Godowns / Warehouses	Decentralised storage
Custom Hiring Centres (CHC)	Machinery access
Processing Units	Sorting, grading, milling
Fair Price Shops (FPS)	PDS retail
Procurement Centres	Direct FCI/state agency link

What are the converging schemes?

Scheme	Ministry
Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)	Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Scheme (AMI)	Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)	Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME)	Food Processing Industries

What are PACS?

- **Full Form: Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.**
- **Grassroots tier** of India's 3-tier cooperative credit structure.
- **India has 100,000+ PACS** with **130 million+ farmer members.**
- **3-Tier Structure: NABARD → StCBs (State Cooperative Banks) → DCCBs (District Central Cooperative Banks) → PACS.**

Why does this matter?

Impact	Detail
Food Security	Decentralised storage strengthens buffer stocks + PDS
Farmer Income	Better prices via delayed sale
Post-Harvest Losses	Reduces India's estimated ~15% food grain losses
Rural Economy	Empowers PACS as multifunctional entities
Logistics Efficiency	Cuts transportation costs; grain stored near production
Cooperative Movement	Realises Sahakar Se Samridhi vision
Second Green Revolution	Shifts focus from output to storage-credit-processing

Key Terms

- **What is WLGP-Coops?**
World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector — Cabinet approved **31 May 2023**; creates decentralised godowns + agri-infrastructure at PACS level.
- **What is a PACS?**
Primary Agricultural Credit Society — village-level cooperative in India's 3-tier cooperative credit structure; ~100,000+ PACS with 130 million+ farmer members.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the "World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector (WLGP-Coops)", consider the following statements:

1. WLGP-Coops was approved by the Union Cabinet on 31 May 2023.

2. It is implemented under the Ministry of Cooperation, headed by Union Home & Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah.
3. The plan aims to create decentralised agri-infrastructure such as godowns, custom hiring centres, processing units, and Fair Price Shops at the PACS level.
4. WLGP-Coops is implemented directly by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **WLGP-Coops is implemented by the Ministry of Cooperation** with support from **NABARD, NDDB, NFDB, NCDC, FCI, and State Governments** — NOT directly by the RBI.)

Q2. With reference to the scheme convergence under WLGP-Coops, consider the following statements:

1. WLGP-Coops converges existing schemes including Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Scheme (AMI), Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM), and PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PMFME).
2. Under AIF, the loan repayment period for PACS has been extended from 2+5 years to 2+8 years.
3. The AMI subsidy for PACS has been raised from 25% to 33.33%.
4. WLGP-Coops has no linkage with the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **PACS godowns built under WLGP-Coops are being hired by FCI + state warehousing corporations** — there IS a strong linkage with FCI.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Ministry of Cooperation implements, not RBI.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: FCI hires PACS godowns; strong linkage.

Exam Relevance

NABARD Grade A	CRITICAL — Direct subject — WLGP-Coops, PACS, cooperative sector, rural infrastructure; Phase II essay-worthy
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Facts To Remember

1. General Dhiraj Seth Takes Charge as 31st Army Chief

General Dhiraj Seth assumed charge as the 31st Chief of the Army Staff, succeeding Upendra Dwivedi. He took over after General Dwivedi retired following over four decades of service. His appointment marks a new leadership phase for the Indian Army.

2. JP Nadda Chairs 16th CCHFW, Launches Key Health Initiatives

Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda chaired the 16th Conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare in New Delhi. He launched SSBSK, revamped Anaemia Mukt Bharat guidelines, and SUMAN Roadmap 2030. These initiatives aim to improve maternal and child healthcare outcomes.

3. MoSPI Releases SDG Publications on India's Progress

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released SDG publications during Statistics Day 2026. The reports assess India's progress under the National Indicator Framework. The framework now

includes 277 indicators covering all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

4. PM Family Care Tracker Pilot Launched in Gujarat

Union Minister Amit Shah launched the PM Family Care Tracker pilot project in Gandhinagar. The digital platform will monitor children's health, nutrition, education, and welfare benefits. It aims to ensure timely delivery of government schemes.

5. Cabinet Approves Rs 30,000 Crore Additional Investment in NIIF

The Union Cabinet approved an additional ₹30,000 crore investment in National Investment and Infrastructure Fund. This doubles the government's total commitment to ₹60,000 crore. The fund will support infrastructure and emerging sectors like e-mobility.

6. OPSA Launches TRL Compass Platform

The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser launched the TRL Compass platform with DSCI. It standardizes technology readiness assessment using a 9-level scale. The platform will support innovation funding and research evaluation.

7. MCA Launches Corporate Mitra Scheme for MSMEs

Ministry of Corporate Affairs signed an MoU with Indian Institute of Technology Madras and partner institutions to launch Corporate Mitra Scheme. The programme will train youth to assist MSMEs in compliance and governance. It includes online learning and practical training.

8. Piyush Goyal Visits UK Ahead of India-UK CETA Rollout

Union Minister Piyush Goyal visited the United Kingdom from June 25–27, 2026. The visit focused on implementation of the India-UK CETA and Double Contribution Convention. He also launched a business utilisation manual for trade.

9. Indian Navy Participates in RIMPAC 2026

The Indian Navy participated in the 30th edition of RIMPAC 2026 in Hawaii, USA. The exercise includes warships, submarines, aircraft, and 30,000 personnel. It strengthens interoperability and Indo-Pacific maritime cooperation.

10. PayGlocal Launches Google Pay Card Payments

PayGlocal introduced Google Pay card payments on its international payment gateway. This enables Indian merchants to access customers in over 90 countries. The integration enhances global e-commerce transactions.

11. Kakinada Cooperative Town Bank Achieves Tier-III Status

Kakinada Cooperative Town Bank attained Tier-III status after deposits crossed ₹2,000 crore. The bank now ranks among Andhra Pradesh's largest urban cooperative banks. It also reported zero net NPAs.

12. Kidambi Srikanth Finishes Runner-Up at US Open 2026

Kidambi Srikanth finished runner-up in the men's singles at the 2026 US Open Badminton. Su Li-yang won the title. The tournament was held in California, USA.

13. George Russell Wins Austrian Grand Prix 2026

George Russell won the 2026 Austrian Grand Prix for Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team. He finished ahead of Max Verstappen. This marked his second win of the 2026 season.

14. India Women Qualify Directly for LA 2028 Olympics

India's women's cricket team secured direct qualification for the 2028 Summer Olympics. The team earned Asia's automatic berth in the qualification pathway. Cricket will return to the Olympics after 128 years.

15. National Statistics Day Observed on June 29

National Statistics Day is observed annually on June 29. It commemorates statistician Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis. The 2026 theme was "Unlocking the Potential of Administrative Data."

16. International Day of the Tropics Observed on June 29

International Day of the Tropics raises awareness about tropical regions. It highlights environmental, economic, and social opportunities and challenges. The observance commemorates the launch of the State of the Tropics Report.

17. International Asteroid Day Observed on June 30

International Asteroid Day is observed annually on June 30. It promotes awareness about asteroid impact hazards and planetary defense. The day marks the anniversary of the 1908 Tunguska event.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 1 JULY 2026

1. **Established: 1999** under the **IRDAI Act, 1999**. Bima Sugam
2. **Full Form: Centralised IT-Enabled System, version 2.01**. EPFO's Centralised IT-Enabled System (CITES 2.0...
3. (Statement 4 is wrong; **BRO is under the Ministry of Defence** (since 2015) — NOT the Ministry of Home Affairs.) Project BRAHMANK of Border Roads Organisation (...)
4. **Eligibility:** Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) who were Indian citizens on/after **26 January 1950** or eligible to become so. Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah Launches "FC...
5. **Launched: 28 May 2024** by then **RBI Governor Shri Shaktikanta Das**. RBI Revises Certificate of Registration (CoR) V...

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DAY 2 OF 24

2 & 3 July 2026

28 items · 3 topics

General 4 · Banking and Finance 2 · Agriculture 2 · Facts To Remember 20

Context

On 30 June 2026, NITI Aayog Member Dr. R. Balasubramaniam released the **National Study Report on Low Participation in Gram Sabha Across States and UTs** — a two-volume assessment prepared by **NIRD&PR, Hyderabad** for the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**, covering ~7,790 respondents across 400 Gram Panchayats in 26 States/UTs. The Hindu editorial "Yes and No" (2 July 2026) engages critically, arguing that while the state frames the issue as "**vibrancy**", the report's push for more meetings + NIRNAY app minutes-uploading may deepen alienation of rural workers — and that **73rd Amendment-empowered Gram Sabhas** have been reduced to scheme clearinghouses, ignoring their PESA-backed **right to say "no"** (Hasdeo Arand cited).

Key findings

- **18–28% of respondents** cite **lack of outcomes** as reason for low interest.
- **Only 4% of meeting time** on **revenue generation**; **13%** on identifying local issues.
- Low participation is **multi-dimensional** (socio-economic + institutional + governance + behavioural).
- Report claims **PESA areas have "reasonably strong physical infrastructure"**.
- **>50% of barriers** to participation are **livelihood-related**.

Report's recommendations

- Greater use of **NIRNAY app** for real-time meeting minutes.
- More Gram Sabha meetings + oversight.
- **Line departments** to present service updates at Gram Sabhas.
- Targeted interventions for women, youth, marginalised groups.

What is a Gram Sabha?

- **Village assembly of all registered voters** in a Gram Panchayat area.
- **Constitutional basis: Article 243A** (73rd Amendment).
- **Nature: Direct democracy at village level.**
- **Powers:** Approve budget + plans, audit accounts, select beneficiaries, oversee implementation.
- **Quorum:** Usually **10% of voter list** (varies by state).

What is the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992)?

Aspect	Detail
Effective	24 April 1993 (National Panchayati Raj Day)
Added	Part IX + 11th Schedule (29 subjects)
Articles	243 to 243-O
Structure	3-tier PRI (Village/Intermediate/District)
Reservation	1/3 for SC/ST/Women
Term	5 years
Financial Commission	Article 243-I

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Aspect	Detail
Election Commission	Article 243-K

What is PESA Act 1996?

- **Full Form: Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.**
- **Enacted: 24 December 1996.**
- **Extends:** 73rd Amendment to **Fifth Schedule Scheduled Areas.**
- **Applies to 10 States:** AP, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, HP, Jharkhand, MP, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana.
- **Gram Sabha Powers under PESA:**
 - **Prior informed consent** for land acquisition + mining.
 - Manage **minor water bodies + minor forest produce.**
 - Regulate **moneylending + intoxicants.**
 - Preserve **tribal customs + traditions.**

What is the NIRNAY app?

- **Panchayat NIRNAY** — GoI digital platform for Gram Sabha agenda, resolutions, real-time minutes.
- Under **Ministry of Panchayati Raj.**
- Part of **e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project + e-Gram Swaraj.**
- Reach: **2.5+ lakh Gram Panchayats onboarded.**
- Companion: **Vibrant Gram Sabha Portal** (tracks outcomes).

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the National Study Report on Low Participation in Gram Sabha released on 30 June 2026, consider the following statements:

1. The report was released by Dr. R. Balasubramaniam, Member, NITI Aayog.
2. It was prepared by the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad.
3. The two-volume study covered approximately 7,790 respondents across 400 Gram Panchayats in 26 States and UTs.
4. The report was released by the Reserve Bank of India.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **released by NITI Aayog Member with Ministry of Panchayati Raj** — NOT the RBI.)

Q2. With reference to the Gram Sabha and the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, consider the following statements:

1. Article 243A of the Constitution provides the basis for the Gram Sabha.
2. The 73rd Amendment came into effect on 24 April 1993, celebrated as National Panchayati Raj Day.
3. It added Part IX and the 11th Schedule (29 subjects) to the Constitution.
4. The 73rd Amendment abolished the Gram Sabha system.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **73rd Amendment CONSTITUTIONALISED Gram Sabhas** — it did NOT abolish them.)

Q3. With reference to the PESA Act 1996, consider the following statements:

1. It extends 73rd Amendment provisions to Scheduled Areas under the Fifth Schedule.
2. It applies to 10 States including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, HP, Jharkhand, MP, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Telangana.
3. Under PESA, Gram Sabhas have the right to prior informed consent for land acquisition and mining.
4. PESA extends 73rd Amendment provisions to Sixth Schedule tribal areas of the North-East.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **PESA applies to Fifth Schedule areas** — NOT Sixth Schedule areas of the North-East (which have autonomous district councils).)

Q4. With reference to The Hindu editorial "Yes and No" (2 July 2026), consider the following statements:

1. It notes that only 4% of Gram Sabha meeting time is spent on revenue generation, compared to 13% on identifying local issues.
2. It highlights that 18–28% of respondents cite lack of outcomes as the reason for low interest.
3. It argues that tied 14th and 15th Finance Commission grants linked to Central priorities like Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat reduce local discretion.
4. The editorial argues that Gram Sabhas should have no role in decision-making on state schemes.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **editorial argues that Gram Sabhas MUST have genuine decision-making power including the right to say "no"** — NOT no role at all.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Released by MoPR/NIRD&PR, not RBI.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: 73rd Amendment constitutionalised Gram Sabhas.
3. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: PESA for Fifth Schedule, not Sixth.
4. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Editorial argues for MORE role, not none.

Exam Relevance

Exam	Relevance
UPSC Prelims & Mains	Very High — GS-II (Polity, Governance, PRI), Essay
State PCS	Very High — Direct subject — Gram Sabha, PRI, PESA
RBI Grade B (Phase I + II)	Medium-High — ESI on governance, rural sector, fiscal federalism
NABARD Grade A	High — Rural governance, decentralisation, PESA, tribal welfare

2. Delegation of Financial Powers to DRDO (DFP-2026)

Source:

Context

Defence Minister Shri **Rajnath Singh** on 29 June 2026 released the **Delegation of Financial Powers to DRDO (DFP-2026)** in New Delhi — a revised financial-governance framework to grant **DRDO enhanced financial autonomy** for accelerated defence R&D. Alongside, he also released the **Delegation of Financial Powers to Defence Services (DFPDS-2026)** to expedite defence procurement. Key features of DFP-2026: dedicated funding for **trial campaigns, testing, and evaluation**; authority to **sanction pre-project R&D**; and **separate schedules** for **Extra-Mural Research Projects (EMRPs)**, **Defence Innovation**

Accelerator–Centres of Excellence (DIA–CoEs), and Technology Development Fund (TDF) grants. The reform aligns with **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and aims to reduce procedural delays in translating DRDO innovation to Armed Forces induction.

Objectives

- Speed up **research, development, testing, and induction** of indigenous defence technologies.
- Enhance **financial efficiency + accountability + self-reliance**.
- Encourage **industry-academia-startup-MSME collaboration**.
- Support **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** vision.

Key features of DFP–2026

Feature	Detail
Enhanced Financial Autonomy	Higher-level delegation for quicker project approval + execution
Dedicated Funding for Trials	First-time provision for trial campaigns + testing + evaluation
Pre-Project R&D Funding	Authorises grants for early-stage research before formal project approval
Separate Schedules	For EMRPs, DIA–CoEs, TDF — clearer + streamlined grant management
Empowered Project Directors	Reduces administrative bottlenecks; faster decision-making
Retained Safeguards	Subject to fund availability + rule/regulation compliance

What is DRDO?

Aspect	Detail
Full Form	Defence Research and Development Organisation
Established	1958 (merged 3 institutions)
HQ	DRDO Bhawan, New Delhi
Under	Department of Defence Research and Development (DDR&D), Ministry of Defence
Chairman DRDO + Secretary DDR&D	Dr. Samir V. Kamat
Labs	50+ laboratories across India
Vision	Empowering India with cutting-edge defence tech

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the Delegation of Financial Powers to DRDO (DFP–2026) released on 29 June 2026, consider the following statements:

1. DFP–2026 was released by Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh in New Delhi.
2. The framework aims to enhance efficiency, accountability, and timely execution of strategic defence R&D projects.
3. It segregates financial powers for Extra-Mural Research Projects (EMRPs), DIA–CoEs, and TDF under separate schedules.
4. The framework eliminates all internal approval hierarchies and grants unrestricted financial autonomy.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **framework retains internal approval hierarchies + safeguards (subject to availability of funds + compliance)** — it does NOT grant unrestricted financial autonomy.)

Q2. With reference to the key features of DFP-2026, consider the following statements:

1. It introduces, for the first time, dedicated financial provisions for trial campaigns, testing and evaluation.
2. It authorises the sanction of pre-project R&D initiatives before formal project approval.
3. It empowers project directors and reduces administrative bottlenecks.
4. It applies only to defence procurement and not to research and development activities.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **DFP-2026 is specifically for DRDO's R&D activities** — procurement is covered by the SEPARATE **DFPDS-2026** released alongside.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Retains approval hierarchies; not unrestricted autonomy.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: DFP-2026 for R&D; DFPDS-2026 for procurement.

3. Akashvani Marks 90 Years — Launches "Swar Prerna Veethika" Ahead of 2027 Radio Centenary**Context**

Akashvani (All India Radio) on 1 July 2026 inaugurated "**Swar Prerna Veethika**" — a permanent photo gallery honouring India's legendary musicians associated with the broadcaster — as part of its **90-year celebrations** and in the run-up to the **centenary of radio broadcasting in India in 2027**. The gallery was inaugurated by **Padma Vibhushan Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia** at the **Akashvani Rang Bhavan Auditorium, Akashvani Bhavan, New Delhi**, in the presence of **Prasar Bharati CEO Shri Gaurav Dwivedi**. Akashvani, officially launched as **All India Radio on 8 June 1936**, adopted the name "**Akashvani**" in 1956 (from Rabindranath Tagore's 1938 Bengali poem for Kolkata's shortwave inauguration). Today it runs **460+ stations covering 92% of India's area**, broadcasts in **23 official languages + 146 dialects**, and reaches **100+ countries** through External Services.

Swar Prerna Veethika

Aspect	Detail
Inauguration Date	1 July 2026
Venue	Akashvani Rang Bhavan Auditorium, Akashvani Bhavan, New Delhi
Inaugurator	Padma Vibhushan Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia (flute maestro)
Type	Permanent photo gallery
Purpose	Honour legendary musicians associated with Akashvani + civilian-honour recipients
Next Phase	Portraits to be added; similar galleries at Akashvani centres nationwide
Prasar Bharati CEO	Shri Gaurav Dwivedi

What is Akashvani?

- **Official name: All India Radio (AIR).**
- **India's premier national public radio broadcaster.**
- **Parent: Prasar Bharati** — autonomous statutory corporation.
- **Doordarshan** is Prasar Bharati's TV wing.
- **Among world's largest multi-lingual, multi-cultural broadcasting networks.**

What is Prasar Bharati?

- **Autonomous statutory public service broadcaster** of India.
- **Established: 23 November 1997** under **Prasar Bharati Act, 1990**.
- **Two Wings: Akashvani (AIR) + Doordarshan (DD)**.
- **HQ:** New Delhi.
- **CEO:** Shri Gaurav Dwivedi.
- **Recommendations:** Chanda Committee (1966) + P.C. Joshi Committee (1985) + Verghese Committee (1978).

Key Terms

- **What is Akashvani?** Official on-air name for **All India Radio (AIR)** — India's national public radio broadcaster; adopted 1956.
- **What is Swar Prerna Veethika?** Permanent photo gallery at Akashvani Bhavan honouring legendary musicians; inaugurated 1 July 2026.
- **What is Prasar Bharati?** Autonomous public service broadcaster established 23 November 1997 under Prasar Bharati Act 1990; runs Akashvani + Doordarshan.
- **What is Vividh Bharati?** AIR's commercial entertainment service launched 1957; runs FM Gold + FM Rainbow.
- **What is the External Services Division?** AIR's foreign broadcasting arm — reaches 100+ countries in 27 languages; a soft-power diplomacy tool.
- **What is WAVES OTT?** Prasar Bharati's OTT platform for public broadcasting content.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to "Swar Prerna Veethika" inaugurated by Akashvani, consider the following statements:

1. It was inaugurated on 1 July 2026 as part of Akashvani's 90-year celebrations.
2. It was inaugurated by Padma Vibhushan Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia at Akashvani Bhavan, New Delhi.
3. It is a permanent photo gallery celebrating India's legendary musicians associated with Akashvani.
4. Swar Prerna Veethika was inaugurated to mark the 50-year anniversary of Akashvani.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the inauguration marks **90 years of Akashvani + the run-up to the 2027 centenary of radio broadcasting** — NOT the 50-year anniversary.)

Q2. With reference to the history of Akashvani (All India Radio), consider the following statements:

1. Radio broadcasting in India began in June 1923 with the Radio Club of Bombay.
2. The Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS) was established on 1 April 1930 by the British colonial government.
3. All India Radio (AIR) was officially named on 8 June 1936.
4. The name "Akashvani" was formally adopted as the on-air name in 1976.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **name "Akashvani" was adopted in 1956** — NOT 1976.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: 90-year celebration + 2027 centenary, not 50-year.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Name "Akashvani" adopted 1956, not 1976.

4. Himalayan Ray-Finned Fish (Schizothorax pelzami)Source: *The Hindu***Context**

Members of the **Sangno clan** (Nyishi tribe) of **East Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh** launched a **community-led translocation drive** to conserve the endangered **Himalayan Ray-Finned Fish (Schizothorax pelzami)** — locally called "**Ngarsing**" in the Nyishi language. The clan translocated **52 fingerlings** from the **Lapabung stream (Talo village)** to a stretch of the **Richaso stream (Weshi village)** that is **inaccessible to the predatory Mahseer** ("tiger of the water"). A **5-year blanket fishing ban** in the Richaso stream is proposed. The species — commonly known as the **Transcaspian marinka** — belongs to the **Cyprinidae family** (carp + minnow) and is classified as **Endangered** by IUCN. Long-term community goals include **eco-angling + stream-trail trekking tourism**.

Species at a glance

Aspect	Detail
Scientific Name	Schizothorax pelzami
Common Name	Transcaspian marinka
Local Nyishi Name	Ngarsing
Family	Cyprinidae (carp + minnow)
Infraclass	Teleostei (modern bony fishes)
IUCN Status	Endangered
Native Distribution	Sub-Himalayan + Transcaspian zones (Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Iran) + Himalayan streams

What is the Mahseer?

- Called "**tiger of the water**" in Himalayan + sub-Himalayan rivers.
- **Aggressive, fast-swimming predator.**
- **Prized sport fish** across northern India.
- Preys heavily on smaller native fish.
- Genera: **Tor (Golden Mahseer)** — *Tor putitora* is the Himalayan Golden Mahseer.

Nyishi tribe context

- **Largest ethnic group in Arunachal Pradesh.**
- Spread across **Papum Pare, East Kameng, West Kameng, Kra Daadi, Kurung Kumey, and Lower Subansiri districts.**
- Nyishi language belongs to **Sino-Tibetan family.**
- Traditional community fishing is central to livelihoods.

Related conservation frameworks

Framework	Detail
Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972	Central law governing wildlife protection
Biological Diversity Act, 2002	Governs access + benefit-sharing for biological resources
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

Framework	Detail
IUCN Red List	Global inventory of species' conservation status
NBSAP (National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan)	India's biodiversity roadmap
PBRs (People's Biodiversity Registers)	Community-level biodiversity documentation

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the Himalayan Ray-Finned Fish (*Schizothorax pelzami*), consider the following statements:

1. It is commonly known as the Transcaspiian marinka.
2. It is locally called "Ngarsing" in the Nyishi language of Arunachal Pradesh.
3. It belongs to the Cyprinidae family (carp and minnow).
4. It is classified as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Schizothorax pelzami is classified as ENDANGERED on the IUCN Red List** — NOT Least Concern.)

Q2. With reference to the community-led conservation initiative by the Sangno clan, consider the following statements:

1. The Sangno clan belongs to the Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.
2. The initiative is in East Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh.
3. 52 fingerlings were translocated from the Lapabung stream (Talo village) to the Richaso stream (Weshi village).
4. The initiative was launched by the Government of Kerala.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **initiative is a COMMUNITY-LED effort by the Sangno clan of Arunachal Pradesh** — NOT launched by the Government of Kerala.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: IUCN Endangered, not Least Concern.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Community-led in AP, not Kerala government.

Exam Relevance

UPSC Prelims & Mains	Very High — GS-III (Environment, Biodiversity, Species in News, Community Conservation), Essay
State PCS (esp. AP + NE states)	Critical — Direct subject — Sangno clan, Nyishi, AP fauna
Forest Service (IFS/IFoS)	Critical — Direct subject — Schizothorax, IUCN, Mahseer, Cyprinidae

5. Vikram-1: India's First Private Orbital Rocket to Launch

Source: *The Hindu*

Context

Hyderabad-based **Skyroot Aerospace** announced on 2 July 2026 a launch window of **12 July – 4 August 2026** for **Vikram-1** — India's **first privately developed orbital-class rocket** — from **Satish Dhawan Space Centre-SHAR, Sriharikota**. The mission, named **Aagaman** ("the Arrival"), is Skyroot's second flight after

the successful suborbital **Vikram-S (Mission Prarambh, 18 November 2022)** — India's first private rocket to reach space. Vikram-1 will target a **450 km Low Earth Orbit at 60° inclination**, carrying small satellites up to **350 kg**.

Mission Aagaman at a glance

Aspect	Detail
Rocket	Vikram-1 — Test Flight-1
Mission Name	Aagaman (Sanskrit for "Arrival")
Announced by	Skyroot Aerospace (2 July 2026)
Launch Window	12 July – 4 August 2026
Launch Site	Satish Dhawan Space Centre–SHAR, Sriharikota (First Launch Pad)
Target Orbit	450 km altitude, 60° inclination, Low Earth Orbit (LEO)
Type	Partially commercial (domestic + international customer payloads)

Vikram-1 rocket specifications

Feature	Detail
Height	~Seven storeys
Configuration	Multi-stage orbital launch vehicle
Structure	All-carbon composite
Propulsion	In-house developed — 3D-printed engines + high-thrust solid-fuel boosters
Manufacturing	Rapid-fabrication + high launch cadence design

Mission objectives

- Capture **real-time in-flight performance data** across:
 - **Propulsion.**
 - **Stage separation.**
 - **Guidance, Navigation, Control (GNC).**
 - **Overall vehicle performance.**
- **Validate designs** for future variants.
- Build foundation for a **reliable, high-cadence commercial launch programme.**

Vikram-S (Mission Prarambh) — first Skyroot flight

Aspect	Detail
Launch Date	18 November 2022
Mission Name	Prarambh ("Beginning")
Type	Suborbital
Peak Speed	Mach 5+
Significance	India's first privately built rocket to reach space

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to Mission Aagaman and Vikram-1, consider the following statements:

1. Vikram-1 is India's first privately developed orbital-class rocket.
2. It is developed by Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace.
3. The launch window for Mission Aagaman is 12 July to 4 August 2026 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre,

Sriharikota.

4. Mission Aagaman is Skyroot's first-ever rocket launch.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Skyroot's first rocket launch was Vikram-S (Mission Prarambh) on 18 November 2022** — Aagaman is its SECOND mission.)

Q2. With reference to Vikram-I's specifications, consider the following statements:

1. Vikram-I is a seven-storey-tall, multi-stage orbital launch vehicle.
2. It is built with an all-carbon composite structure.
3. It can carry small satellites weighing up to 350 kg to Low Earth Orbit (LEO).
4. Vikram-I's maiden mission targets a geostationary orbit at 36,000 km altitude.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Vikram-I's maiden mission targets a Low Earth Orbit at 450 km altitude with 60° inclination** — NOT geostationary orbit at 36,000 km.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Vikram-S was Skyroot's first launch; Aagaman is the 2nd.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: LEO at 450 km, not geostationary.

Banking and Finance

1. Mission SAKSHAM — RBI's Capacity-Building Push for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs)

Source: News on Air

Context

Mission SAKSHAM (Sahakari Bank Kshamta Nirman) — a sector-wide, mission-mode, all-India capacity-building initiative for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) — was launched by **RBI Governor Shri Sanjay Malhotra on 28 April 2026** (announced in the **MPC of 6 February 2026**). Over **24 months**, it will train **~1.40 lakh (140,000) participants** across UCBs through **in-person + e-learning modules in over a dozen Indian languages + English**. Target groups: **board members, senior executives, and officers in assurance functions (risk, compliance, audit), IT, and cybersecurity**. **SAKSHAM = "capable/competent"**. **Shri Swaminathan Janakiraman, Deputy Governor, RBI**, writing in *Business Standard* on 3 July 2026, positioned it alongside the RBI's **4-tier UCB regulatory framework**, the **NUCFDC (Umbrella Organisation, live since March 2024)**, and the **January 2026 Discussion Paper on Licensing of New UCBs** — collectively aimed at **preserving UCBs' cooperative promise while building governance, prudential + tech capabilities**.

Mission SAKSHAM at a glance

Aspect	Detail
Full Form	Sahakari Bank Kshamta Nirman
Meaning	SAKSHAM = "Capable / Competent"
Launched by	RBI Governor Shri Sanjay Malhotra
Launch Date	28 April 2026 (first announced in MPC 6 Feb 2026)
Duration	24 months

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Aspect	Detail
Delivery Modes	In-person + e-learning
Languages	English + more than a dozen Indian regional languages
Framework Type	Capacity-building + certification
Designed in Consultation with	NUCFDC (Umbrella Organisation) + national + state cooperative federations

Objectives

- Enhance **managerial + operational capabilities**.
- Improve **compliance culture**.
- Strengthen **institutional resilience**.
- Build **continuous learning ecosystem** for **systemic stability + healthy growth of UCB sector**.

What are Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs)?

- **Primary Cooperative Banks** as defined under **Section 5(ccv) read with Section 56 of Banking Regulation Act, 1949**.
- Located in **urban + semi-urban areas**.
- Registered under **State Cooperative Societies Act** OR **Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002**.
- **Dual control: RBI (banking) + Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS/CRCS)** (registration + management).

4-Tier Regulatory Framework (based on N.S. Vishwanathan Committee 2021)

Tier	Deposit Size
Tier 1	≤ ₹100 crore (incl. all unit + salary earners' UCBs)
Tier 2	₹100 crore – ₹1,000 crore
Tier 3	₹1,000 crore – ₹10,000 crore
Tier 4	> ₹10,000 crore

Capital requirements

Aspect	Tier 1	Tier 2-4
Minimum Net Worth	₹2 cr (single district) / ₹5 cr (others)	₹5 crore
CRAR	9%	12%

What is NUCFDC?

Aspect	Detail
Full Form	National Urban Co-operative Finance and Development Corporation Limited
Status	Umbrella Organisation (UO) for UCBs
Set Up	March 2024 (functional since February 2024)
Inaugurated by	Union Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah
RBI Approval	NBFC + Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO) for UCB sector
CEO	Shri Prabhat Chaturvedi
Role	Shared services, capital support, liquidity, technology, capacity building, standards
Products	Sahakar Digipay (PoS/NPCI-compliant), Cyber insurance (with New India Assurance + Aon)

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to Mission SAKSHAM launched by the RBI, consider the following statements:

1. Mission SAKSHAM stands for "Sahakari Bank Kshamta Nirman".
2. It is a sector-wide capacity-building and certification framework for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs).
3. It aims to train approximately 1.40 lakh participants over 24 months through in-person and e-learning modules in Indian regional languages and English.
4. Mission SAKSHAM was launched by the Union Finance Minister.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Mission SAKSHAM was launched by RBI Governor Shri Sanjay Malhotra on 28 April 2026** — NOT the Union Finance Minister.)

Q2. With reference to the target participants and objectives of Mission SAKSHAM, consider the following statements:

1. It targets board members, senior executives, and officers handling risk, compliance, audit, IT, and cybersecurity functions.
2. It seeks to enhance managerial + operational capabilities, improve compliance culture, and strengthen institutional resilience.
3. It has been designed in consultation with the NUCFDC and national and state cooperative federations.
4. Mission SAKSHAM excludes IT and cybersecurity personnel from its training scope.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **IT and cybersecurity personnel are EXPLICITLY INCLUDED** as target groups.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Launched by RBI Governor, not FM.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: IT + cybersecurity explicitly included.

2. The RBI's Financial Stability Report (FSR), June 2026

Source: *Mint* / RBI Financial Stability Report June 2026 / *Business Standard* / *Outlook Business*

Context

The **Reserve Bank of India** released the **June 2026 Financial Stability Report (FSR)** on 30 June 2026 — reflecting the collective assessment of the **Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)** on risks to India's financial stability. Governor **Shri Sanjay Malhotra's foreword** emphasizes that the domestic financial system is "**resilient underpinned by strong bank and non-bank balance sheets**" despite **elevated global risks**. Key highlights: **GNPA at multi-decadal low of 1.8% (March 2026)**; **strong stress-test resilience**; but concerns flagged on **global public debt, bond market fragilities, stretched asset valuations, leveraged NBFIs, stablecoin monetary-sovereignty risk, AI-driven volatility, and structural issues in the insurance sector** (3 PSU general insurers below solvency; rising surrenders + claims + distribution costs).

What is the FSR?

Aspect	Detail
Full Name	Financial Stability Report
Publisher	Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

Aspect	Detail
Frequency	Biannual — June + December
First Edition	March 2010 (post-Lehman crisis)
Reflects	Collective assessment of Sub-Committee of FSDC
Sub-Committee Chair	RBI Governor
Contributors	RBI + SEBI + IRDAI + PFRDA + IBBI + Ministry of Finance
June 2026 Edition Released	30 June 2026
Foreword by	Governor Shri Sanjay Malhotra

What is the FSDC?

- **Full Form: Financial Stability and Development Council.**
- **Established: December 2010** — India's apex macroprudential body.
- **Type: Non-statutory body under Ministry of Finance.**
- **Chaired by: Union Finance Minister.**
- **Members:** RBI Governor, SEBI Chairman, IRDAI Chairman, PFRDA Chairman, IBBI Chairman, Finance Secretary, CEA, Secretaries of DFS/DEA/Revenue/MCA.
- **Sub-Committee of FSDC: Chaired by RBI Governor;** provides operational-level inputs to the FSR.
- **India was one of the earliest EMs** to establish a macroprudential oversight body post-Lehman.

Global assessment (June 2026 FSR)

Risk	Detail
Global Risk Level	Elevated despite West Asia interim peace deal
Rising Geopolitical Conflicts + Fragmentation	Increased risk of adverse external shocks
AI Optimism	May mask underlying vulnerabilities + create job + regulatory uncertainties
Persistent Supply Chain Uncertainties	Could tighten financial conditions, revive inflation
Public Debt	Elevated globally
Bond Market	Fragile — stretched asset valuations
Leveraged NBFIs	Key global vulnerability
Tighter Monetary Policy in AEs	May keep global financial conditions restrictive

Indian domestic assessment

Sector	Status
Banking	Resilient — GNPA at multi-decadal low 1.8% (March 2026)
NBFCs	Healthy — strong capital, asset quality, profitability
Life Insurance	Solvency above threshold; structural concerns on surrenders + mis-selling
General Insurance (PSU)	3 of 4 below solvency 1.5 — "direct financial stability concern"
General Insurance (Private)	Rising claims (health + motor) pressure
Corporate Sector	Improving asset quality; large borrower GNPA 2.4% → 1.2%
Financial Markets	Functioning in an orderly manner

Banking sector — key metrics (March 2026)

Metric	Value
GNPA Ratio (SCBs)	1.8% (multi-decadal low)
Annual Slippage Ratio (FY25-26)	1.2% — declined steadily over 4 years
Agriculture GNPA	5.1% (highest among sectors); 37.2% of total SCB GNPA
Share of Large Borrowers in Credit	44.5%
Large Borrower GNPA	1.2% (March 2026) — from 2.4% (Sept 2024)

Stress test scenarios (macro)

Scenario	GNPA Projection (March 2028)
Baseline	1.9%
Adverse (Medium Stress)	~3.8%
Severe Stress	~4.1%

Even under severe stress, capital ratios projected to remain **comfortably above regulatory thresholds**.

Insurance sector — structural risks flagged

Concern	Detail
Life Insurance Surrenders	Rising — weaker persistency; ALM uncertainty
General Insurance Claims	Rising in health + motor
Distribution Costs	Private life insurers' commission ratio doubled since FY22
PSU General Insurers Solvency	National + Oriental + United India Insurance — below 1.5 — "direct financial stability concern"
New India Assurance	Only PSU non-life at 1.84 solvency
Mis-selling Risk	Elevated due to commission-driven sales
Underwriting Margins	Negative across much of the sector
ICRA Capital Estimate	₹38,900–39,800 crore needed by March 2027 to restore PSU solvency

Fintech sector

- **Fintech lending grew 36.1%.**
- Concern: elevated impairment among borrowers with **unsecured loans from 5+ lenders**.

Emerging risks flagged

Risk	Detail
Stablecoins	Widespread adoption of foreign-currency-denominated stablecoins could undermine monetary sovereignty, weaken policy transmission, facilitate money laundering
AI Concentration	Market optimism on AI may mask underlying vulnerabilities
Fintech Multi-lending	Unsecured loans from 5+ lenders elevate impairment risk
Cyber Risk	Rising due to digital adoption
Climate Risk	Growing systemic concern
Regulatory Supervision Gaps	AI raises regulatory + supervisory uncertainty

Beyond prudential regulation

"Consistency beats intensity. Ask any topper."

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Financial stability is NOT limited to prudential regulation. It also depends on:

- **Fair business conduct.**
- **Better customer experience.**
- **Efficient financial services.**
- **Greater financial inclusion.**
- A **dynamic, resilient financial ecosystem** supporting households, businesses, and long-term growth.

Interpretive significance

- FSR is **RBI's forward-looking systemic risk assessment** — not just entity-level.
- **"FSR is where RBI says what it is worried about before it acts."**
- Sectors flagged in FSR often see **regulatory tightening within 12 months.**
- **Early-warning system** for systemic issues.

Historical evolution

Year	Milestone
2008	Lehman Brothers collapse
December 2010	FSDC established
March 2010	First FSR published
2010 onwards	Biannual publication (June + December)

Related concepts (RBI + FSDC ecosystem)

Framework	Detail
FSDC (2010)	Apex macroprudential body chaired by Union FM
Sub-Committee of FSDC	Chaired by RBI Governor; contributes to FSR
Systemic Risk Survey (SRS)	Semi-annual RBI survey of financial market participants
Macro Stress Tests	Simulate baseline + adverse + severe scenarios
Financial Stability Board (FSB)	Global counterpart body (established 2009) at Basel

Governance snapshot

Position	Incumbent
RBI Governor	Shri Sanjay Malhotra
Deputy Governors	4 (Financial Stability: Shri M. Rajeshwar Rao)
Union Finance Minister (FSDC Chair)	Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman
SEBI Chair	Shri Tuhin Kanta Pandey
IRDAI Chair	Shri Ajay Seth
PFRDA Chair	Shri S. Ramann

Key Terms

- **What is the FSR?** RBI's **biannual (June + December) publication** — assesses risks + resilience of India's financial system.
- **What is FSDC? Financial Stability and Development Council** — India's apex macroprudential body established 2010; chaired by Union FM.
- **What is the Sub-Committee of FSDC?** Sub-body chaired by **RBI Governor**; provides operational inputs to FSR.

- **What is GNPA? Gross Non-Performing Asset** — loan account overdue 90+ days; expressed as % of total loans.
- **What is CRAR? Capital-to-Risk Weighted Assets Ratio** — measure of bank capital adequacy; minimum 9% under Basel III.
- **What is a stress test?** Simulation of adverse economic scenarios to check bank resilience.
- **What is a macroprudential body?** Institution overseeing **system-wide stability**, not just individual institutions.
- **What is a NBFI? Non-Bank Financial Institution** — includes NBFCs, insurance, pension funds, mutual funds.
- **What is Systemic Risk Survey (SRS)?** Semi-annual RBI survey of market participants on perceived risks.
- **What are stablecoins?** Cryptocurrencies pegged to fiat currencies; RBI has flagged them as a monetary sovereignty risk.
- **What is the FSB? Financial Stability Board** — global regulator coordination body established 2009; based in Basel.
- **What is slippage ratio?** Ratio of fresh NPAs to total advances during a period — measure of new credit stress.
- **What is persistency?** Ratio of policies remaining in force to those issued; life insurance metric.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the RBI's Financial Stability Report (FSR), consider the following statements:

1. It is a biannual publication released in June and December.
2. It reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC).
3. The Sub-Committee of the FSDC is chaired by the RBI Governor.
4. The first FSR was published in January 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **the first FSR was published in March 2010** following the **Lehman Brothers crisis of 2008** — NOT in January 2020.)

Q2. With reference to the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), consider the following statements:

1. FSDC was established in December 2010 as India's apex macroprudential body.
2. It is chaired by the Union Finance Minister.
3. Its members include the RBI Governor, SEBI Chairman, IRDAI Chairman, PFRDA Chairman, and IBBI Chairman.
4. FSDC is a statutory body created under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **FSDC is a NON-STATUTORY administrative body** under the Ministry of Finance — NOT created under the RBI Act, 1934.)

Q3. With reference to the FSR June 2026 findings on the banking sector, consider the following statements:

1. The Gross Non-Performing Asset (GNPA) ratio of Scheduled Commercial Banks declined to a multi-

decadal low of 1.8% in March 2026.

2. Under stress test baseline scenario, GNPA may rise marginally from 1.8% (March 2026) to 1.9% (March 2028).
3. Under adverse stress scenarios, GNPA could increase to 3.8–4.1%.
4. The agriculture sector has the LOWEST GNPA ratio at 5.1%.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **agriculture has the HIGHEST GNPA at 5.1%** — accounting for 37.2% of total SCB GNPA — NOT the lowest.)

Q4. With reference to the FSR June 2026 findings on the insurance sector, consider the following statements:

1. Life insurers' solvency ratio remains above the minimum threshold.
2. Three of India's four state-owned general insurers (National, Oriental, United India) have remained below the regulatory solvency ratio of 1.5.
3. Private life insurers' commission ratio has more than doubled since FY22, raising concerns of mis-selling.
4. All four PSU general insurers reported profits in FY26.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **only New India Assurance among the 4 PSU general insurers reported profit in FY26** — the other three reported significant losses.)

Q5. With reference to global and emerging risks flagged in FSR June 2026, consider the following statements:

1. Global financial stability risks remain elevated due to persistent supply chain uncertainties, elevated public debt, and bond market fragilities.
2. The RBI warned that widespread adoption of foreign-currency-denominated stablecoins could undermine monetary sovereignty and weaken policy transmission.
3. Fintech lending grew 36.1%, with concerns about impairment among borrowers with unsecured loans from five or more lenders.
4. The FSR concluded that global markets are completely insulated from any future shocks.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **FSR explicitly warned that global financial stability risks REMAIN ELEVATED** — NOT that markets are completely insulated.)

Q6. With reference to Governor Sanjay Malhotra's foreword and broader themes, consider the following statements:

1. Governor Malhotra said financial stability, like price stability, is a "necessary condition" for boosting growth but not sufficient on its own.
2. He said the outlook for inflation is benign with greater confidence in durable alignment with the RBI's target.
3. Financial stability, according to the RBI, extends beyond prudential regulation and requires fair business conduct, better customer experience, and greater financial inclusion.
4. The FSR is prepared solely by the SEBI without any RBI input.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **FSR is prepared under the Sub-Committee of the FSDC, chaired by the RBI Governor** — NOT by SEBI.)

Answer Key

- (c) — Statement 4 wrong: First FSR in March 2010, not January 2020.
- (c) — Statement 4 wrong: FSDC is non-statutory, not created under RBI Act.
- (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Agriculture has HIGHEST GNPA, not lowest.
- (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Only New India Assurance reported profit; 3 PSU insurers reported losses.
- (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Global risks remain elevated, not insulated.
- (c) — Statement 4 wrong: FSR is by RBI/FSDC-SC, not SEBI.

Exam Relevance

Exam	Relevance
RBI Grade B (Phase I + II)	CRITICAL — Direct subject — FSR, FSDC, stress tests, GNPA, systemic risk; Phase II FM + ESI essay-worthy
SEBI / NABARD / SIDBI / IRDAI Grade A	Very High — FSR is inter-regulatory; direct relevance
Banking (SBI PO, IBPS, RBI Assistant)	Very High — Recurring GA: FSR, GNPA, FSDC, systemic risk
UPSC Prelims & Mains	Very High — GS-II (Governance, Bodies), GS-III (Economy, Financial Sector), Essay
State PCS	High — Economy, financial regulation GA
SSC, Railway, Insurance	Very High — FSR, FSDC, RBI, GNPA

Agriculture

1. ICRISAT + Partners Develop Two High-Oleic Groundnut Varieties — ICGV 201214 & ICGV 181030

Source: *The Hindu Businessline*

Context

The **Variety Identification Committee (VIC) of the All India Coordinated Research Project on Groundnut (AICRP-G)** under ICAR has identified two new high-oleic groundnut varieties — **ICGV 201214** (ICGG 107) and **ICGV 181030** (ICDh 181030) — for **national release**. The decision was taken at the **AICRP-G Annual Group Meeting held at Pune, 21–23 April 2026**. Both are **medium-duration Spanish bunch varieties** developed by ICRISAT — **ICGV 201214** jointly with **Junagadh Agricultural University (JAU)**, and **ICGV 181030** jointly with the **University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad**. **ICGV 181030 is the FIRST high-oleic groundnut variety approved for cultivation in Odisha and the Northeastern States**. The varieties promise **higher yields, premium oil quality (78–81% oleic acid), longer shelf life, and support India's efforts to reduce edible oil import dependence**.

Announcement + approval

- **Approving Body:** Variety Identification Committee (VIC) of AICRP-G under ICAR
- **Venue:** AICRP-G Annual Group Meeting, Pune

The two varieties

- **ICGV 201214** (alternate name **ICGG 107**) — jointly developed by **ICRISAT + Junagadh Agricultural**

University, Gujarat.

- **ICGV 181030** (alternate name **ICDh 181030**) — jointly developed by **ICRISAT + University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad, Karnataka.**

ICGV 201214 — specifications

- **Type: Medium-duration Spanish bunch.**
- **Season: Kharif.**
- **Zone recommended: Zone II (Gujarat + Rajasthan).**
- **Oleic acid: 81%.**
- **Oil content: 53%.**
- **Protein content: 27%.**
- **Kernel:** Bold and attractive — preferred by both farmers and market.
- **Yield performance: +19% kernel yield** over widely grown check variety **JL 501** (across 3 years of multi-location testing).
- **Oil content advantage:** Consistently higher oil content than zonal check varieties.

ICGV 181030 — specifications

- **Type: Medium-duration Spanish bunch.**
- **Season: Kharif.**
- **Zones recommended: Zone II** (Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra) **+ Zone IV** (Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Northeastern States).
- **Oleic acid: ~78%.**
- **Yield vs Girnar 3 (Zone IV): +7% pod yield** over 3 years.
- **Yield advantage (Zone II): +12% yield advantage.**
- **Special significance: FIRST high-oleic variety approved for Odisha + NE States.**

What is High-Oleic groundnut?

- Kernels with **≥78% oleic acid** are classified as **high-oleic**.
- Oleic-to-linoleic (O/L) ratio: **≥10:1**.
- **Shelf life: 5–10× longer** than normal groundnut.
- **Health:** Reduces cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk; improves HDL:LDL ratio; oleic acid is the same monounsaturated fat as in olive oil.
- Superior **oxidative stability** — resists rancidity.
- Highly sought by **food processors, manufacturers, and health-conscious consumers.**
- Commands **premium pricing** across the value chain.
- Benchmark set globally by **SunOleic 95R** (US-bred; ~80% oleic acid).

AICRP-G Groundnut Cultivation Zones (India)

- **Zone I (North):** Punjab, Haryana, HP, J&K, western UP, north Rajasthan.
- **Zone II (Northwest):** Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, MP.
- **Zone III (South):** Karnataka, TN, Kerala, AP, Telangana.
- **Zone IV (East):** Jharkhand, Odisha, WB, Northeastern States, Bihar.

About ICRISAT

- **Full Form: International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics.**
- **Founded: 28 March 1972** (under Memorandum of Agreement between Government of India and CGIAR).

- **HQ:** Patancheru, Hyderabad, India.
- **Type:** CGIAR-affiliated non-profit, apolitical intergovernmental research centre; has status of "International Organisation" under UN (Privileges and Immunities) Act, 1947.
- **Focus Crops:** Chickpea, Pigeonpea, Groundnut, Sorghum, Pearl Millet, Finger Millet, Small Millets.
- **Director General:** Dr. Himanshu Pathak (took charge **6 March 2025**) — **first Indian to hold this position** (2nd Indian-origin CGIAR head after Dr. M.S. Swaminathan at IRRI).
- **Coverage:** Dryland tropics — India, Africa, Asia.

About ICAR

- **Full Form:** Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- **Founded:** 16 July 1929 (as Imperial Council of Agricultural Research).
- **HQ:** New Delhi (Krishi Bhavan).
- **Under:** Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- **Type:** Autonomous body registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- **Institutes:** 102 ICAR institutes + 71 State Agricultural Universities.
- **Director General:** Dr. Mangi Lal (M.L.) Jat — appointed by ACC on 17 April 2025; three-year term; previously **DDG (Research)** at ICRISAT.

Development partners

- **Junagadh Agricultural University (JAU):** Founded 2004; Gujarat; developed Girnar-series high-oleic varieties.
- **UAS Dharwad:** Founded 1986; Karnataka; major crop-improvement institute.

Key persons quoted in the news

- **Dr. Janila Pasupuleti** — Principal Scientist – Groundnut Breeding, ICRISAT.
- **Dr. Raman Babu** — Global Research Program Director – Accelerated Crop Improvement (ACI), ICRISAT.
- **Dr. Himanshu Pathak** — Director General, ICRISAT.

India's edible oil context

- **Edible oil import dependence:** ~56–60% (up from ~15% in 1995–96; ~16 MMT annually).
- **Edible oil import bill (annual):** ~₹1.5 lakh crore.
- **Groundnut rank:** India is **2nd largest producer** globally (after China); **1st in castor, safflower, sesame, niger**; 3rd in rapeseed-mustard; 5th in soybean.
- **Groundnut production:** ~5–8 million tonnes/year.
- **Largest groundnut producer state:** Gujarat.
- **Other major producers:** Rajasthan, AP, TN, Karnataka, MP.
- **Rain-fed cultivation:** ~76% of oilseed area is rain-fed.
- **Oilseeds share of GCA:** 14.3% of Gross Cropped Area.

Related national initiatives

- **NMEO-Oilseeds (Nov 2024):** National Mission on Edible Oils – Oilseeds; ₹10,103 crore; 7-year duration (2024–25 to 2030–31); target = Atmanirbharta in edible oils.
- **NMEO-Oil Palm (2021):** ₹11,040 crore; focus on North-East + island territories.
- **Aatmanirbhar Bharat — Oilseeds:** Reduce edible oil import dependency.
- **PSS (Price Support Scheme):** Government procurement of oilseeds at MSP.
- **PDPS (Price Deficiency Payment Scheme):** Compensates farmers for price deficiency below MSP.

- **Customs duty hike (2024):** Crude edible oils raised from 5.5% → 16.5%; refined edible oils raised from 13.75% → 35.75%.

Previous high-oleic varieties in India (all by ICRISAT + partners)

- **Girnar 4** (ICGV 15083) — with ICAR-DGR (Directorate of Groundnut Research), Junagadh; released 2020.
- **Girnar 5** (ICGV 15090) — with ICAR-DGR, Junagadh; released 2020.
- **GG 40** (ICGV 16668) — with Junagadh Agricultural University.
- **GG 39** (ICGV 16697) — with Junagadh Agricultural University.

Key Terms

- **What is ICRISAT? International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics** — founded 28 March 1972; HQ Patancheru, Hyderabad; CGIAR-affiliated non-profit intergovernmental research centre for dryland crops.
- **What is ICAR? Indian Council of Agricultural Research** — founded 16 July 1929; HQ New Delhi; India's apex agricultural research body under DARE, Ministry of Agriculture.
- **What is AICRP-G? All India Coordinated Research Project on Groundnut** — ICAR's national research coordination network for groundnut.
- **What is a Spanish bunch groundnut?** A type of groundnut with **compact bunch growth habit; medium duration** (100–110 days); popular for uniform maturity and easy mechanised harvest.
- **What is oleic acid? Monounsaturated omega-9 fatty acid** — the main fat in olive oil; high-oleic groundnuts contain $\geq 78\%$ oleic acid.
- **What is a Kharif crop?** Crops sown at **onset of southwest monsoon (June–July)** and harvested Sept–Oct.
- **What is CGIAR?** Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres — global agri-research network; ICRISAT is one of its 15 centres.
- **What is NMEO? National Mission on Edible Oils** — GoI umbrella scheme with two components (Oilseeds + Oil Palm) for edible oil self-reliance.
- **Who is Dr. Janila Pasupuleti? Principal Scientist – Groundnut Breeding, ICRISAT.**
- **Who is Dr. Himanshu Pathak? Director General, ICRISAT** (since 6 March 2025); first Indian to lead ICRISAT.
- **Who is Dr. M.L. Jat? Director General, ICAR + Secretary DARE** (since April 2025); previously DDG (Research) at ICRISAT.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the two high-oleic groundnut varieties identified for national release, consider the following statements:

1. The two varieties are ICGV 201214 and ICGV 181030.
2. They were identified by the Variety Identification Committee (VIC) of the All India Coordinated Research Project on Groundnut (AICRP-G) under ICAR.
3. Both varieties were developed with ICRISAT as one of the partners.
4. Both varieties were identified for release at the AICRP-G Annual Group Meeting held in New Delhi.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; the **AICRP-G Annual Group Meeting was held at PUNE from 21–23 April 2026** — NOT in New Delhi.)

Q2. With reference to ICGV 181030, consider the following statements:

1. It was jointly developed by ICRISAT and the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad.
2. It is a medium-duration Spanish bunch variety recommended for Zone II (Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra) and Zone IV (Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Northeastern States).
3. It is the first high-oleic groundnut variety recommended for cultivation in Odisha and the Northeastern States.
4. Its oleic acid content is only about 40%.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **ICGV 181030 contains approximately 78% oleic acid** – NOT 40%. High-oleic groundnuts are defined as those with $\geq 78\%$ oleic acid.)

Q3. With reference to ICGV 201214, consider the following statements:

1. It was jointly developed by ICRISAT and Junagadh Agricultural University.
2. It contains 81% oleic acid, 53% oil, and 27% protein.
3. It is a medium-duration Spanish bunch variety recommended for Kharif cultivation in Zone II (Gujarat and Rajasthan).
4. It has been recommended for cultivation exclusively in the Northeastern States.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **ICGV 201214 has been recommended for Zone II (Gujarat + Rajasthan)** – NOT the Northeastern States.)

Q4. With reference to the significance of high-oleic groundnut, consider the following statements:

1. Groundnut kernels with $\geq 78\%$ oleic acid are considered high-oleic.
2. High-oleic groundnut oil has 5–10 times the shelf life of normal groundnut oil.
3. Consumption of oleic-rich diets reduces cardiovascular disease risk and improves the HDL:LDL ratio.
4. High-oleic groundnut oil has poorer oxidative stability than conventional groundnut oil.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **high-oleic groundnut oil has SUPERIOR oxidative stability** – NOT poorer stability.)

Q5. With reference to ICRISAT and ICAR, consider the following statements:

1. ICRISAT was founded on 28 March 1972 and is headquartered in Patancheru, Hyderabad.
2. ICRISAT is affiliated with CGIAR and focuses on dryland crops such as chickpea, pigeonpea, groundnut, sorghum, and millets.
3. ICAR was founded on 16 July 1929 as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research and is headquartered in New Delhi.
4. ICRISAT is a Government of India department directly under the Ministry of Agriculture.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **ICRISAT is a non-profit, apolitical intergovernmental research centre affiliated with CGIAR** – NOT a Government of India department under the Ministry of Agriculture. ICAR is the Indian government body.)

Q6. With reference to India's edible oil context and related schemes, consider the following

statements:

1. India imports approximately 56–60% of its edible oil requirement, with an annual import bill of ~₹1.5 lakh crore.
2. Groundnut is a major oilseed in India, with Gujarat as the largest producer.
3. The National Mission on Edible Oils – Oilseeds (NMEO–Oilseeds) was approved by the Union Cabinet in November 2024 with an outlay of ₹10,103 crore.
4. India is a net exporter of edible oils, with no dependence on imports.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **India is a NET IMPORTER of edible oils** with ~56–60% import dependence — NOT a net exporter.)

Q7. With reference to key personalities in Indian agricultural research (2026), consider the following statements:

1. Dr. Himanshu Pathak took charge as Director General of ICRISAT on 6 March 2025 and is the first Indian to hold this position.
2. Dr. M.L. Jat, previously Deputy Director General (Research) at ICRISAT, was appointed as the Director General of ICAR and Secretary DARE in April 2025.
3. Dr. Janila Pasupuleti is the Principal Scientist for Groundnut Breeding at ICRISAT.
4. Dr. Himanshu Pathak is the second Indian-origin scientist to head a CGIAR institute after Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, who led IRRI from 1982–88.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) **All four** (e) None

(All statements are correct.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Pune, not New Delhi.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: 78% oleic acid, not 40%.
3. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: For Zone II only, not NE States.
4. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Superior oxidative stability, not poorer.
5. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: ICRISAT is CGIAR intergovernmental, not GoI department.
6. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: India is a net importer, not exporter.
7. (d) — All statements correct.

Exam Relevance

- **NABARD Grade A: CRITICAL** — Direct subject; oilseeds, ICAR, ICRISAT, edible oil self-reliance, agri research; Phase II descriptive.
- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: Very High** — GS-III (Agriculture, Food Security, S&T); Prelims (species + institutions); Essay.
- **State PCS (esp. Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Odisha, NE states): Very High** — Direct subject; regional oilseed cultivation.

2. Balwaan Krishi Expands South India Operations with New Logistics & Distribution Hubs in Chennai and Visakhapatnam

Source: *The Hindu Businessline*

Context

“Consistency beats intensity. Ask any topper.”

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Balwaan Krishi, a Jaipur-headquartered **farm-equipment startup targeting small and marginal farmers**, has launched two new **logistics and distribution hubs — one in Chennai and another in Visakhapatnam** — to accelerate its **South India expansion** across **Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Kerala**. The **Chennai facility** spans **14,000 sq ft**, involves an investment of **₹50 lakh**, and will anchor supply-chain operations for **all 38 districts of Tamil Nadu through a 34-dealer network**, while simultaneously acting as the **primary distribution gateway into Andhra Pradesh with 59 dealer partners** stretching from **Visakhapatnam in the north to key agri-belts in the south**. Each operational cluster is projected to **generate 5–8 direct + indirect jobs** across warehousing, logistics, and field support. The expansion reflects Balwaan's strategy to build **ground-level physical presence, faster delivery, and localised farmer engagement** in South India's diverse farming landscape.

Product focus — Tamil Nadu

- Focus products: **power weeders, brush cutters, sprayers, water pumps, and harvesting equipment.**
- Growth channels: **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), cooperatives, and agri-input dealer networks** across all districts.

Product focus — Andhra Pradesh

- Focus products: **power tillers, power weeders, battery-operated sprayers, and harvesters.**
- Growth channels: **on-ground dealer demonstrations, localised farmer engagement, and tie-ups with government programmes.**

About Balwaan Krishi

- **Type:** Small farm-machinery / agritech startup.
- **Founded:** 2016.
- **Founders:** Rohit Bajaj + Shubham Bajaj (brothers).
- **Headquarters:** Jaipur, Rajasthan (22 Godam Circle, Industrial Area).
- **Website:** balwaan.com
- **Mission:** Empower small and marginal farmers (who form ~86% of India's farming community) through affordable, mechanised farm equipment.
- **Business model:** Blended B2B + B2C — dealer network + e-commerce.
- **Farmers served:** 10+ lakh (over 1 million).
- **E-commerce presence:** Amazon, Flipkart, Moglix, BigHaat, IndustryBuying, Tractor Junction.
- **Manufacturing hub:** Jaipur (new state-of-the-art hub commissioned September 2025).
- **Existing regional hubs (pre-July 2026):** Maharashtra, Assam, West Bengal; regional warehouses added September 2025 in Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Northeast, and Kashmir.
- **Product range:** Sprayers, seeders, brush cutters, power weeders, water pumps, power tillers, harvesters, battery-operated equipment.
- **Distinction:** Launched **India's first ISI-marked agricultural equipment range** (July 2023).

Key government schemes on farm mechanisation

- **SMAM (Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation):** Launched 2014–15. Provides **40–50% subsidy** on tractors, power tillers, combine harvesters to small and marginal farmers. **Merged with Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) in September 2022.** About **14.2 lakh machines distributed** since inception.
- **Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs):** Rent-based access to modern equipment for small farmers; SMAM 2026 reforms prioritise CHCs and FPOs over individual ownership.
- **Formation & Promotion of 10,000 FPOs Scheme:** Launched February 2020; ₹6,865 crore outlay; implementing agencies include NABARD, SFAC, NCDC.
- **PM-KUSUM:** Solar pumps for irrigation.
- **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF):** ₹1 lakh crore corpus; interest subvention for warehousing, cold

chains, primary processing.

- **e-NAM:** National agri-marketplace.

About FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisations)

- **FPO:** Legal entity formed by farmers (registered as **Producer Company** under Companies Act, 2013 / cooperative society).
- **Aim:** Aggregate small-holder produce, provide bulk input procurement, market access, value addition, credit access.
- **Central scheme: Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs** (launched Feb 2020, PM Modi at Chitrakoot); target = **10,000 new FPOs by 2027-28**; outlay = **₹6,865 crore**.
- **Nodal implementing agencies: NABARD, SFAC (Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium), NCDC (National Cooperative Development Corporation).**

Key Terms

- **Who is Balwaan Krishi?** Jaipur-based farm-machinery startup founded in 2016 by Rohit Bajaj and Shubham Bajaj; India's first company to launch ISI-marked farm equipment (2023).
- **What is a power weeder?** Small motorised machine for removing weeds in row crops; alternative to manual weeding.
- **What is a brush cutter?** Handheld motorised tool for cutting shrubs, weeds, and grasses.
- **What is a power tiller?** Small walking tractor used for ploughing, puddling, and land preparation, especially on small holdings.
- **What is a knapsack sprayer?** Backpack-mounted sprayer for applying pesticides, fungicides, or fertilisers on crops.
- **What is an FPO? Farmer Producer Organisation** – collective of farmers registered as a producer company or cooperative to aggregate produce and improve bargaining power.
- **What is SMAM? Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation** – GoI scheme (since 2014-15) providing 40–50% subsidy on farm machinery to small and marginal farmers; merged with RKVY in September 2022.
- **What is a Custom Hiring Centre (CHC)?** Village-level facility that rents out modern farm machinery to small farmers who can't afford to buy.
- **Who is Rohit Bajaj?** Co-founder of Balwaan Krishi; MBA-turned-agri-entrepreneur.
- **What is ISI mark?** Standardisation mark of the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**; indicates product conformity to Indian Standards.
- **What is JM Financial Private Equity?** PE arm of JM Financial group; lead investor in Balwaan Krishi.
- **What are Krishna delta and Godavari delta?** Fertile alluvial deltas of Andhra Pradesh formed by the Krishna and Godavari rivers; major rice bowls of South India.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to Balwaan Krishi's July 2026 South India expansion, consider the following statements:

1. Balwaan Krishi has launched new logistics and distribution hubs in Chennai and Visakhapatnam.
2. The Chennai facility spans 14,000 sq ft with an investment of ₹50 lakh.
3. The Chennai hub will anchor supply-chain operations for all 38 districts of Tamil Nadu through 34 dealer partners.
4. The Chennai hub will also act as the primary distribution gateway into Andhra Pradesh with 59 dealer partners.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) **All four** (e) None

(All statements are correct as per the news report.)

Q2. With reference to Balwaan Krishi, consider the following statements:

1. It was founded in 2016 by Rohit Bajaj and Shubham Bajaj.
2. It is headquartered in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
3. It has served over 10 lakh farmers and partnered with over 2,000 dealers.
4. It is majority-owned by the Government of India through the Ministry of Agriculture.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Balwaan Krishi is a private-sector agritech startup** backed by **JM Financial Private Equity and other private investors** — NOT a Government of India entity.)

Q3. With reference to India's farm mechanisation landscape, consider the following statements:

1. As of August 2022, approximately 47% of agricultural activities in India were mechanised.
2. India's mechanisation level is lower than that of China (~60%) and Brazil (~75%).
3. Small and marginal farmers account for about 86% of India's operational holdings.
4. India's average land holding size is greater than 5 hectares.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **India's average land holding is LESS THAN 1.1 hectares** — NOT greater than 5 hectares. This is precisely why mechanisation of small holdings is a policy priority.)

Q4. With reference to the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM), consider the following statements:

1. SMAM was launched in 2014-15 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
2. It provides a subsidy of 40–50% of the cost of tractors, power tillers, or combine harvesters to small and marginal farmers.
3. It was merged with the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) in September 2022.
4. Under SMAM, no equipment can be provided through Custom Hiring Centres.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) are a KEY component of SMAM**, enabling small farmers to rent equipment they can't afford to buy. SMAM 2026 reforms explicitly prioritise CHCs and FPOs over individual ownership.)

Q5. With reference to Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), consider the following statements:

1. FPOs are typically registered as producer companies under the Companies Act, 2013.
2. The Central Sector Scheme for Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs was launched in February 2020 with an outlay of ₹6,865 crore.
3. NABARD, SFAC, and NCDC are among the implementing agencies for the FPO scheme.
4. FPOs are prohibited from procuring agricultural inputs in bulk for their member-farmers.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **bulk input procurement (fertilisers, seeds, pesticides) is a CORE function of**

FPOs, giving members significant cost savings and access to better-quality products — NOT prohibited.)

Q6. Regarding Balwaan Krishi's product focus in South India, match the state with the primary product focus:

1. Tamil Nadu — Power weeders, brush cutters, sprayers, water pumps, harvesting equipment.
2. Andhra Pradesh — Power tillers, power weeders, battery-operated sprayers, harvesters.
3. Tamil Nadu — Growth through FPOs, cooperatives, and agri-input dealer networks.
4. Andhra Pradesh — Growth through dealer demonstrations, localised engagement, and government-scheme tie-ups.

How many of the above pairings are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) **All four** (e) None

(All four pairings are correct per the news report.)

Answer Key

1. (d) — All four correct.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Private startup, not GoI entity.
3. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Average holding <1.1 ha, not >5 ha.
4. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: CHCs are core to SMAM.
5. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Bulk input procurement is a core FPO function.
6. (d) — All four pairings correct.

Exam Relevance

- **NABARD Grade A: Very High** — Direct subject: farm mechanisation, small & marginal farmers, FPOs, SMAM, dealer networks; ARD paper (Phase II) + descriptive.
- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: High** — GS-III (Agriculture, Farm Mechanisation, Rural Economy); Essay on rural development.
- **State PCS (esp. Tamil Nadu, AP, Telangana, Karnataka, Rajasthan): High** — Regional agri-industry, state-level implementation.

Facts To Remember

1. RBI-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS) 2026 Comes into Effect

The Reserve Bank of India launched the RBI-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS) 2026 from 1 July 2026, replacing the 2021 framework. It provides a free, faster, and non-adversarial complaint resolution mechanism for banks, NBFCs, PPI issuers, and credit information companies. Compensation limits were raised to ₹30 lakh for financial loss and ₹3 lakh for mental harassment.

2. CCEA Reduces Broken Rice Content in PDS Rice

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved stricter quality norms for rice distributed under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana and other welfare schemes. Broken rice content in raw rice was reduced from 25% to 10%, while parboiled rice was cut from 16% to 5%. The move improves rice quality, supports ethanol production, and reduces logistics costs.

3. Ravi Shankar Appointed RBI Executive Director

Ravi Shankar was appointed Executive Director of the Reserve Bank of India with effect from 1 July 2026. He will head the Department of Statistics and Information Management (DSIM). With over 30 years of RBI experience, he will oversee economic statistics and survey operations.

4. JP Nadda Launches Aarogya Setu 2.0

Jagat Prakash Nadda launched Aarogya Setu 2.0 and multiple digital health initiatives in New Delhi. The initiatives include Ayushman App, NHCX, UHI, Drug Registry, and Bharat Health Terminology Service. These platforms strengthen India's digital public health infrastructure under ABDM.

5. MIB Announces Two Major Film Industry Reforms

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting announced a High-Level Study Group and Model State Cinema Regulations. The study group, chaired by Prasoon Joshi, will examine opportunities and challenges in Indian cinema. The reforms aim to improve global competitiveness and expand cinema infrastructure.

6. Government Retains Small Savings Scheme Rates

The Ministry of Finance kept interest rates unchanged for all Small Savings Schemes for Q2 FY27. This marks the ninth consecutive quarter without revision. Schemes such as PPF, NSC, and Sukanya Samriddhi Account continue at existing rates.

7. Amit Shah Launches FCRA 2.0 Portal and e-OCI System

Amit Shah launched the FCRA 2.0 portal and electronic OCI card ecosystem in New Delhi. The platforms simplify compliance, enable online processing, and improve governance through AI-powered and API-based systems. The initiative promotes faster and paperless citizen services.

8. India Identifies 25 Tiger Reserves for Recovery

The Government of India identified 25 tiger reserves for priority recovery through science-based interventions. The decision was announced during the 18-year celebration of tiger reintroduction at Sariska Tiger Reserve. Key challenges include habitat fragmentation, low prey density, and Left Wing Extremism.

9. Rajnath Singh Releases DFP-2026 for DRDO

Rajnath Singh released Delegation of Financial Powers to DRDO (DFP-2026). The reform enhances financial and functional autonomy for defence R&D projects. It aims to accelerate indigenous defence technology development.

10. Haryana-Rajasthan Yamuna Water Agreement Signed

The Centre signed a water-sharing agreement with Haryana and Rajasthan to implement the Yamuna Water Project. The ₹34,102 crore project aims to resolve the long-pending interstate water dispute. It will provide drinking water and irrigation benefits to multiple districts.

11. India and Saudi Arabia Sign Water Cooperation MoU

India and Saudi Arabia signed an MoU on water resource cooperation during Saudi Water Week. The agreement focuses on sustainable water management, irrigation, and technical knowledge exchange. It strengthens bilateral strategic cooperation.

12. Punjab & Sind Bank Launches New Digital Initiatives

Punjab & Sind Bank launched digital banking initiatives on its 119th Foundation Day. New offerings include the Navjyoti HR app and PSB Bharat Connect Account. These initiatives promote customer convenience and digital transformation.

13. SEBI Forms Expert Group on Debenture Trustees

Securities and Exchange Board of India formed an expert group led by Ananta Barua to review debenture trustee regulations. The panel will recommend reforms to strengthen investor protection. Public feedback is invited until 15 July 2026.

14. SBI Life and IIT Bombay Partner for AI Cyber Defence

SBI Life Insurance partnered with Indian Institute of Technology Bombay to establish the Bharat AI & Cyber Innovation Hub. The centre will develop indigenous AI-driven cybersecurity solutions. It aims to strengthen digital resilience in insurance.

15. Ravi Agrawal Reappointed CBDT Chairman

Ravi Agrawal was reappointed Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes for six months. His term now extends until 31 December 2026. He continues to lead India's direct tax administration.

16. DGCA Conducts India's First Satellite Landing Trial

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation completed India's first SLS approach trial on an Airbus A320 using GAGAN at Udaipur Airport. The test demonstrated satellite-guided precision landing capability. It marks a major aviation technology milestone.

17. Theatre Legend Vijaya Mehta Passes Away

Vijaya Mehta passed away at 92 in Mumbai. She was a pioneering figure in Marathi theatre and cinema. Her contributions earned her the Padma Shri in 1987.

18. International Day of Parliamentarism Observed on June 30

The United Nations observes International Day of Parliamentarism annually on 30 June. The 2026 theme is "The Future of Human Rights is Written in Parliaments." The day highlights the role of legislatures in democracy and governance.

19. National Doctors' Day Observed on July 1

India celebrates National Doctors' Day on 1 July to honor doctors and healthcare workers. The day commemorates the birth and death anniversary of Bidhan Chandra Roy. The 2026 theme is "Behind the Mask: Who Heals the Healers?"

20. National Chartered Accountants Day Observed on July 1

National Chartered Accountants Day marks the foundation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India in 1949. The 2026 celebration marks ICAI's 78th foundation year. The day recognizes the role of chartered accountants in financial governance.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 2 & 3 JULY 2026

1. **Established: 23 November 1997** under **Prasar Bharati Act, 1990**. Akashvani Marks 90 Years — Launches "Swar Pren..."
2. **NMEO-Oilseeds (Nov 2024): National Mission on Edible Oils – Oilseeds; ₹10,103 crore; 7-year duration** (2024–25 to 2030–31); target = Atmanirbharta in edible oils. ICRISAT + Partners Develop Two High-Oleic Groun...
3. **Formation & Promotion of 10,000 FPOs Scheme:** Launched February 2020; ₹6,865 crore outlay; implementing agencies include NABARD, SFAC, NCDC. Balwaan Krishi Expands South India Operations w...
4. (Statement 4 is wrong; **Skyroot's first rocket launch was Vikram-S (Mission Prarambh) on 18 November 2022** — Aagaman is its SECOND mission.) Vikram-I: India's First Private Orbital Rocket ...
5. **Established: December 2010** — India's apex macroprudential body. The RBI's Financial Stability Report (FSR), Jun...

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DAY 3 OF 24

4 July 2026

Saturday · 22 items · 1 topics

Facts To Remember 22

Context

The **Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD)**, under the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying**, on **3 July 2026** successfully concluded **Pashujanya Yudh Abhyas (PYA)** — the **3rd national-level mock drill under the National One Health Mission (NOHM)**. The **5-day exercise (29 June – 3 July 2026)** was held at **Khari village, Vidisha District, Madhya Pradesh** and simulated an outbreak of **Influenza A (H1N1) in animals with spillover potential to humans and wildlife**. Built around the **One Health approach**, the drill tested the full response chain — disease surveillance, early warning, sample collection + transport, laboratory diagnosis, risk assessment, biosecurity, containment, movement control, and public communication — with participation from **DAHD, ICAR, NCDC, ICMR, Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA), ICAR-NIHSAD Bhopal, AIIMS Bhopal, MoEF&CC**, and Madhya Pradesh's state + district departments, under the coordination of the **National Joint Outbreak Response Team (NJORT)**. **DAHD Secretary Shri Naresh Pal Gangwar** described the exercise as "the One Health approach in action."

The exercise at a glance

- **Name:** Pashujanya Yudh Abhyas (PYA).
- **Meaning:** "Zoonotic Warfare Exercise" (Sanskrit-origin: *Pashu* = animal + *Janya* = originated from + *Yudh Abhyas* = war exercise/drill).
- **Edition:** 3rd national-level mock drill under the National One Health Mission.
- **Organiser:** Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.
- **Duration:** 29 June – 3 July 2026 (5 days).
- **Venue:** Khari village, Vidisha District, Madhya Pradesh.
- **Framework:** One Health approach.
- **Simulated outbreak:** Influenza A (H1N1) in animals with potential spillover to humans + wildlife.
- **Concluding debrief:** 3 July 2026 under the Chairmanship of the **Animal Husbandry Commissioner, DAHD**, with the **Director, NCDC** and **Director, Animal Husbandry, MP** in attendance.

What was tested during the drill?

The full "first alert to containment" response chain:

- **Disease surveillance** — active + passive.
- **Early warning + outbreak reporting** — chain-of-communication.
- **Outbreak investigation + field epidemiology** — case tracing.
- **Sample collection + transportation** — cold chain, biosafety.
- **Laboratory diagnosis** — RT-PCR, sequencing.
- **Risk assessment** — public health + wildlife impact.
- **Incident management** — Incident Command System.
- **Biosecurity** — PPE, quarantine, disinfection.
- **Containment operations** — culling, ring vaccination.
- **Movement control** — animal + human movement restrictions.

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- **Public communication** — risk messaging, media briefings.

What is the One Health approach?

- An **integrated, unifying approach** recognising that the health of **people, animals, plants, and the shared environment** are **interconnected**.
- Approximately **75% of emerging infectious diseases** in humans originate in animals (zoonoses).
- Enables **cross-sectoral collaboration** between human health, veterinary health, wildlife, and environment sectors.
- Endorsed globally by the **Quadripartite Alliance — FAO + UNEP + WHO + WOAH**.
- **One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH-JPA) 2022–2026** — global framework by the Quadripartite.

What is the National One Health Mission (NOHM)?

- **Approved by:** The **Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)** at its **21st meeting in July 2022**.
- **Nodal Coordinator:** **Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to the Government of India**.
- **Anchor Institution:** **National Institute of One Health (NIOH), Nagpur** — foundation stone laid by **PM Modi in December 2022**.
- **Vision:** Build an **integrated disease control and pandemic preparedness system** in India by unifying human, animal, and environmental sectors.
- **Ministries involved:** **13+ ministries and departments** — Health, Animal Husbandry, Environment, Defence, DBT, CSIR, AYUSH, ICMR, ICAR, MoHFW, MoEFCC etc.

What is Influenza A (H1N1)?

- Also known as **swine flu** (in its 2009 pandemic strain).
- Caused the **2009–10 global H1N1 pandemic** — first pandemic of the 21st century.
- A **zoonotic virus** — originally emerged in pigs; transmits to humans through respiratory droplets.
- **Structure:** RNA virus of the Orthomyxoviridae family; "H" = hemagglutinin, "N" = neuraminidase surface proteins.
- **Symptoms:** Fever, cough, sore throat, body ache, fatigue (like seasonal flu but potentially severe).
- **Currently:** H1N1 has become part of seasonal flu; monitored via India's Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).

What is DAHD?

- **Full form:** **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.
- **Parent Ministry:** **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.
- **Union Minister:** **Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lalan Singh)** (2024–present).
- **Secretary:** **Shri Naresh Pal Gangwar**.
- **Role:** Overall development of livestock, dairy, and animal husbandry sector.
- **Key programmes:** **National Livestock Mission, Rashtriya Gokul Mission, National Digital Livestock Mission**.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to Pashujanya Yudh Abhyas (PYA), consider the following statements:

1. It was the third national-level mock drill under the National One Health Mission.
2. It was conducted from 29 June to 3 July 2026 at Khari village in Vidisha District, Madhya Pradesh.
3. It simulated an outbreak of Influenza A (H1N1) in animals with spillover potential to humans and wildlife.
4. It was organised by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **PYA was organised by the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD) under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying** — NOT the Ministry of Home Affairs.)

Q2. With reference to the National One Health Mission (NOHM), consider the following statements:

1. It was approved by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) in 2022.
2. It is anchored by the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India.
3. Its anchor institution is the National Institute of One Health, Nagpur.
4. It is a single-ministry initiative led entirely by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **NOHM is a multi-ministerial initiative involving 13+ ministries and departments** — including Health, Animal Husbandry, Environment, Defence, DBT, CSIR, AYUSH, ICMR, ICAR etc. — NOT a single-ministry initiative.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Organised by DAHD, not MHA.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: NOHM is multi-ministerial, not single-ministry.

Exam Relevance

- **NABARD Grade A: Very High** — ESI + ARD papers on livestock, animal health, zoonotic disease impact on rural economy.

Facts To Remember

1. Digital India Programme Completes 11 Years

Digital India completed 11 years on 1 July 2026. Launched by Narendra Modi in 2015, the programme aims to build a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Its focus now includes Artificial Intelligence and semiconductor manufacturing.

2. Tourism Ministry Signs MoU with Google India

The Ministry of Tourism signed an MoU with Google India to boost digital tourism promotion. The partnership will use AI, analytics, and digital platforms to enhance global visibility of Indian tourism. It supports the Incredible India initiative through technology-driven outreach.

3. PM Modi Visits Seychelles

Narendra Modi visited Seychelles from 27–29 June 2026. India and Seychelles signed 9 MoUs covering defence, healthcare, maritime cooperation, and digital payments. PM Modi also received Seychelles' highest honour, "Guardian of the Blue Horizon."

4. Bank of Baroda Partners with Mizuho Bank

Bank of Baroda partnered with Mizuho Bank for M&A financing. The collaboration covers acquisition finance, co-underwriting, syndication, and advisory services. It strengthens cross-border financing capabilities.

5. NPCI Partners with HSBC and JP Morgan for Cross-Border UPI

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) partnered with HSBC India and JP Morgan Payments. The collaboration enables real-time forex settlement for cross-border UPI transactions. It improves speed, transparency, and payment efficiency for global users.

6. Himachal Pradesh Gets 8 New GI Tags

Himachal Pradesh received eight new Geographical Indication tags, taking its total GI products to 17. Newly tagged products include Kinnauri Apple, Seabuckthorn, and Chamba Metal Art. The recognition boosts traditional products and rural livelihoods.

7. HDFC Bank Appoints Rajiv Kumar as Chairman

HDFC Bank appointed Rajiv Kumar as part-time Chairman for three years. He succeeds Keki Mistry. He has also been appointed Additional Independent Director.

8. RBI Appoints Ravi Shankar as Executive Director

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) appointed Ravi Shankar as Executive Director from 1 July 2026. He will head the Department of Statistics and Information Management. He brings over 30 years of central banking experience.

9. CCI Clears Major Acquisition Deals

Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved two major deals. These include DWS Group's stake acquisition in Nippon Life India AIF and Aditya Birla-led acquisition of RCB. The approvals strengthen India's asset management and sports sectors.

10. Kotak Mahindra Bank to Acquire Deutsche Bank India Business

Kotak Mahindra Bank will acquire Deutsche Bank India retail and wealth business for ₹281.7 crore. The acquisition includes loans, deposits, and assets under management. It strengthens Kotak's affluent banking segment.

11. BPCL Acquires Stake in Tiki Tar–Shell India JV

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) signed a deal to acquire 40% stake in Tiki Tar–Shell India JV. The ₹85 crore acquisition boosts BPCL's bitumen and road materials business. It will make BPCL an equal joint venture partner.

12. MoEFCC Launches Animal Taxonomy Summit 4.0

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched ATS 4.0 in Kolkata. The summit marked the 111th Foundation Day of Zoological Survey of India. New biodiversity records and annual discovery reports were released.

13. Former Governor MM Lakhera Passes Away

Madan Mohan Lakhera passed away at 88. He served as Governor of Mizoram and Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry. He was decorated with PVSM, AVSM, and VSM for military service.

14. Tamil Poet Puviyarasu Passes Away

Puviyarasu passed away at 96 in Coimbatore. He authored over 120 books and translated global literary works into Tamil. He was a two-time Sahitya Akademi Award winner.

15. GST Day Observed on July 1

GST Day is observed annually in India on 1 July. The day marks the rollout of Goods and Services Tax in 2017. GST taxpayers increased from 66.5 lakh to 1.65 crore by 2026.

16. World Sports Journalists Day Observed

World Sports Journalists Day is observed on 2 July. It honors sports journalists for promoting fair and quality sports reporting. The day commemorates the founding of International Sports Press Association in 1924.

17. Biswanath Sinha Becomes Kerala Chief Secretary

Biswanath Sinha assumed charge as Chief Secretary of Kerala. He succeeds Dr. A. Jayathilak. His tenure will continue until September 2028.

18. Mylswamy Annadurai Appointed TN Curriculum Chairman

Mylswamy Annadurai was appointed Chairman of Tamil Nadu's Curriculum Design Committee. He will lead curriculum modernization for 1.3 crore students. The initiative focuses on AI, science, and critical thinking.

Here are the news items converted into your preferred format with **serial numbers continuing from 19, one-line headings**, and **3-line concise descriptions**:

19. PM Modi Dedicates Greenfield Refinery Project in Rajasthan

Narendra Modi dedicated India's first greenfield integrated refinery-cum-petrochemical complex at Balotra. He also inaugurated the new terminal building of Jodhpur Airport. Development projects worth ₹1.06 lakh crore across energy, transport, and infrastructure were launched.

20. Jal Shakti Ministry Launches 7th National Water Awards

Ministry of Jal Shakti launched the 7th National Water Awards on the Rashtriya Puraskar portal. The awards aim to encourage water conservation, efficient water management, and public participation. They recognize individuals, institutions, and states for best water practices.

21. India's First Export-Import Shipping Container Unveiled

Sarbananda Sonowal unveiled India's first export-import shipping container manufactured in Dadri. The container was built for A.P. Moller-Maersk. The initiative strengthens India's manufacturing and global shipping capabilities.

22. Third Batch of DAKSH Leadership Programme Inaugurated

Jitendra Singh inaugurated the third batch of the DAKSH leadership programme. The programme focuses on strengthening leadership, governance, and administrative capacity among public officials. It promotes the Whole-of-Government approach through institutional collaboration.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 4 JULY 2026

1. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) appointed Ravi Shankar as Executive Director from 1 July 2026. He will head the Department of Statistics and Information Management. He brings over 30 years of central banking experience. [RBI Appoints Ravi Shankar as Executive Director](#)
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DAY 4 OF 24

5 & 6 July 2026

25 items · 2 topics

Agriculture 3 · Facts To Remember 22

Context

The **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** has sought approval from the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to launch **Quanto Cross-Currency Derivatives** — also called **Quanto Derivatives** — as revealed in the **Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP)** filed by NSE with the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** on **17 June 2026** for its upcoming Initial Public Offering (IPO). Quanto derivatives are **financial contracts that allow investors to take exposure to the exchange rate between two foreign currencies** (e.g., **Euro/USD, GBP/USD, USD/JPY**) **without directly assuming exchange rate risk in the settlement currency**. They track the foreign currency pair, while **profits and losses are settled in a pre-determined currency at a fixed conversion rate**. Hence they are termed "**quantity-adjusted**". The application comes at a time when **currency derivatives turnover has fallen sharply** — from ₹35,000+ crore ADTV to just **~₹5,000 crore in June 2026** — after the **RBI mandated (April 2024) that participants must have underlying contracted foreign-currency exposure** to trade currency derivatives. **BSE's currency derivatives volumes have been zero since January 2025**. NSE is also awaiting SEBI approval for **thermal coal (Platts) futures** and **interest-rate derivatives on the corporate bond index**.

What is a Quanto Cross-Currency Derivative?

- A **financial contract** that lets an investor take exposure to the **exchange rate between two foreign currencies** — e.g., **EUR/USD, GBP/USD, USD/JPY**.
- **Key feature:** The investor **does NOT bear exchange-rate risk in the settlement currency**.
- The contract **tracks the foreign currency pair's movement**.
- **Profits and losses** are settled in a **pre-determined currency under a fixed conversion mechanism**.
- Hence the name "**Quantity Adjusted**" (**Quanto**) — the notional (quantity) is adjusted to eliminate FX risk in the settlement currency.

How does it work

- Suppose an investor in India wants to bet on the **Euro-Dollar (EUR/USD) exchange rate**.
- Normally, they'd need to convert INR to USD or EUR and bear both the target FX move + the INR/USD or INR/EUR movement.
- With a **Quanto contract**, the investor **fixes the settlement currency in advance** (say, INR) at a **pre-determined conversion rate**.
- The **only risk exposure** is the EUR/USD movement itself; **no INR/USD or INR/EUR risk** is assumed.
- **This is why "risk removal" is called the greatest asset** of this product (per expert Uday Tardalkar).

Why does NSE want to launch this?

- **Revive currency-derivatives volumes:** These have **collapsed since April 2024**.
- **Expand product range** beyond rupee-based pairs (USD/INR, EUR/INR, GBP/INR, JPY/INR).
- **Attract foreign investors** who want India-based exchange access to global currency movements without INR risk.
- Formalise trading currently taking place **outside the exchange ecosystem** — bring it under a **regulated domestic platform**.
- Fill a **hedging gap** — Indian investors have limited tools to hedge global currency exposure.

"Do not fear the mistake. Fear repeating it."

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Who is regulating what?

- **SEBI:** Primary regulator for capital markets, equity derivatives, commodity derivatives.
- **RBI:** Regulator for **currency derivatives + interest rate derivatives + government securities** — because these directly affect monetary policy, capital account, and financial stability.
- **Joint regulation:** Currency and interest-rate derivatives are jointly regulated by SEBI (market infrastructure) + RBI (product approval).

Currency derivatives in India — what's currently allowed?

Only **4 rupee-based currency pairs** are currently traded on Indian exchanges:

- **USD/INR** (US Dollar / Indian Rupee).
- **EUR/INR** (Euro / Indian Rupee).
- **GBP/INR** (British Pound / Indian Rupee).
- **JPY/INR** (Japanese Yen / Indian Rupee).

Cross-currency pairs (**not involving INR**) are **NOT yet available on Indian exchanges** — a gap Quanto contracts aim to close.

Who is NSE?

- **Full name:** National Stock Exchange of India Limited.
- **Founded:** 1992 (recognised as a stock exchange in 1994).
- **HQ:** Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai.
- **Type:** Market Infrastructure Institution (MII).
- **MD & CEO:** Ashishkumar Chauhan (since 2022).
- **Regulator:** Primarily **SEBI**; **RBI** for currency + interest rate segments.
- **International arm:** **NSE International Exchange (NSEIX)** — GIFT City subsidiary since 2016.

Key Terms

- **What is a derivative?** A financial contract whose value is derived from an underlying asset — stock, currency, commodity, interest rate, or index.
- **What is a currency derivative?** A derivative whose underlying is a currency pair (e.g., USD/INR); allows hedging or speculation on exchange rate movements.
- **What is a cross-currency derivative?** A derivative involving TWO foreign currencies (e.g., EUR/USD) — neither of which is the trader's home currency.
- **What is a Quanto derivative?** A cross-currency derivative where the notional is denominated in one currency but the payoff is settled in another at a pre-fixed rate — eliminating FX risk in the settlement currency.
- **What is a DRHP? Draft Red Herring Prospectus** — the preliminary document filed by a company with SEBI before its IPO.
- **What is an OFS? Offer for Sale** — an IPO where existing shareholders sell their shares; the company itself does NOT receive fresh capital.
- **What is ADTV? Average Daily Turnover Volume** — a measure of trading activity.
- **What is 'underlying contracted exposure'?** A real business-linked foreign currency requirement (e.g., an importer's dollar payable) — needed to trade currency derivatives per RBI's April 2024 mandate.
- **What is the Nifty 50?** NSE's flagship index of the top 50 large-cap Indian companies.
- **What is a Market Infrastructure Institution (MII)?** A stock exchange, depository, or clearing corporation — critical for market functioning; heavily regulated.
- **What is Bharat Bill Pay?** A separate NPCI subsidiary (unrelated to this note).
- **What is thermal coal (Platts)?** Coal used in power generation; Platts provides its benchmark pricing.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to Quanto Cross-Currency Derivatives, consider the following statements:

1. They allow investors to take exposure to the exchange rate between two foreign currencies, such as EUR/USD or GBP/USD.
2. The profits and losses are settled in a pre-determined currency under a fixed conversion mechanism.
3. Investors bear exchange rate risk in the settlement currency.
4. They are also termed as 'Quantity Adjusted' contracts.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 3 is wrong; **investors do NOT bear exchange rate risk in the settlement currency** — this is the very defining feature of Quanto contracts. The "risk removal" via fixed conversion mechanism is what makes them attractive.)

Q2. With reference to India's currency derivatives segment, consider the following statements:

1. Only 4 currency pairs — USD/INR, EUR/INR, GBP/INR, and JPY/INR — are currently allowed for trading on Indian exchanges.
2. In April 2024, the RBI mandated that participants must have underlying contracted foreign currency exposure to trade currency derivatives.
3. Following the RBI mandate, ADTV in currency derivatives has fallen sharply, with BSE recording zero turnover since January 2025.
4. Currency derivatives in India are regulated solely by the RBI without SEBI involvement.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **currency derivatives are JOINTLY regulated by SEBI and RBI** — SEBI regulates market infrastructure while RBI approves the products themselves. Both regulators have a role.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 3 wrong: Quanto contracts remove settlement currency FX risk.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Currency derivatives jointly regulated by SEBI + RBI.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: Very High** — GS-III (Indian Economy, Financial Markets, Regulatory Framework); Prelims (SEBI, RBI, NSE, derivatives); Mains (market development, financial inclusion).
- **NABARD Grade A: Very High** — ESI on financial markets, RBI's role, market infrastructure.
- **State PCS: Medium** — Not directly regional but relevant for economics papers.
- **RBI Grade B (Phase I + II): CRITICAL** — Direct subject: derivatives, currency, RBI's regulatory role, financial markets architecture; Phase II descriptive.

Agriculture

1. India's Fisheries Crisis

Source: *The Hindu*

Context

An opinion piece by **Prof. Maarten Bavinck**, Emeritus Professor of Coastal Resource Governance at the **University of Amsterdam**, published in *The Hindu* on 4 July 2026, has **challenged the Indian**

government's official claim — released **11 February 2026** — that **91.1% of 135 fish stocks assessed by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) in 2022 are sustainable**. Drawing on 30 years of fieldwork along the **Tamil Nadu coast**, the author argues the **real crisis is the accelerating destruction of India's inshore fishing grounds** — the shallow-water benthic (seabed) ecosystem where commercially valuable species like shrimp feed, breed, and grow. The critique highlights that **CMFRI's methodology relies primarily on landing data (what fishers bring ashore)** rather than **at-sea stock assessments** used globally. Meanwhile, the **FAO's** own India Country Profile describes marine fisheries as **"plateaued and fully exploited."**

The government's official claim (11 February 2026)

- Released by the **Department of Fisheries, GoI** based on CMFRI data.
- **91.1% of 135 fish stocks** evaluated in **2022** were classified as **sustainable**.
- **8.2% overfished; 0.7% rebuilding**.
- Overall message: Indian marine fisheries are **"largely sustainable"** — India has "avoided overfishing."
- Landing value of marine fisheries **2022: ₹58,247 crore**.

What does the FAO say about India's fisheries?

- India's fisheries production has **"reached a plateau"**.
- Most major stocks are **"fully exploited"**.
- **"Unregulated access to these fisheries resulted in significant overcapacity"** — especially of medium and small trawlers.
- Small trawlers **"compete over dwindling fishery resources with mostly impoverished small-scale fishers."**
- FAO recommends: *"Strenuous efforts are needed at federal and state levels to upgrade the country's capacity to manage its marine fisheries."*

What is the "real crisis" the article highlights?

- Overfishing is **NOT the central issue**.
- The **destruction of the inshore benthic (seabed) environment** is the more pressing concern.
- Numerous fisheries scientists + policymakers now describe the inshore fishing environment as **"destroyed"**.

What defines India's inshore fishing zone?

- **India's continental shelf:** Relatively narrow overall.
- **Widest continental shelf:** Gujarat + part of Maharashtra.
- **Narrowest:** Rest of the subcontinent.
- **Territorial Sea: 12 nautical miles (22 km)** from shore — largely overlaps with the continental shelf.
- **Ecological importance:** Best conditions for commercial species like **shrimp** to feed, breed, and grow.
- **India's EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone): 200 nautical miles (371 km)** — covers ~2 million sq km of ocean.

Why is the inshore zone declining?

- **Dams on major rivers:** Prevent land-based nutrients from entering the sea (nutrient-poor coastal waters).
- **Mangrove destruction:** Loss of fish breeding grounds.
- **Marine pollution:** Industrial, agricultural, urbanisation-driven pollution flowing into the sea.
- **Mechanised trawling:** Continuous seabed disturbance destroying benthic life.

How large is India's mechanised trawler fleet?

- **64,414 mechanised fishing vessels** — per the government press release.
- **Growing rapidly** — "practically no restrictions on new entries."
- **Existing vessels continuously fitted with more powerful Chinese engines** — enabling higher catch capacity.
- **Origin:** Semi-industrial trawling was **NOT indigenous to India** — introduced from abroad around **1960**.

What are the existing regulations — and why do they fail?

- **Annual 2-month closure of mechanised fishing** — for stock rejuvenation. ✓ **Exists**.
- **Prohibition on mechanised boats within 5 NM of shore** — meant to protect small-scale fishers. ✗ **Weakly enforced**.

Why does the 5 NM zone protection fail?

- **Insufficient patrolling capacity:** Coastal States lack staff + craft to police inshore waters.
- **Fishers excluded from management:** Governments have **precluded fisher participation** in enforcement.
- **Result:** Continuous degradation of the inshore ecology.

What is the Palk Bay problem?

- **Palk Bay** — narrow strait between **India (Tamil Nadu)** and **Sri Lanka**.
- Indian mechanised trawler fleet routinely **crosses into Sri Lankan waters** — "piracy" of Sri Lankan fisheries.
- **Detriment:** Sri Lankan small-scale fishers on the other side of the international border.
- **Katchatheevu island** — an uninhabited island in Palk Bay ceded to Sri Lanka in **1974** via bilateral agreement; **ownership doesn't resolve the trawling issue**.
- **Ongoing tensions:** Sri Lankan Navy frequently detains Indian fishermen.

What does the government recommend instead?

- **Deep-sea fishing** — encouraged as an alternative growth area.
- **Author's counter:** The FAO estimates "**only a marginal increase**" possible from deep-sea resources — the potential is overhyped.
- Also being tapped by other fishing nations → competition.

What does the article recommend?

- Adjust government perspective on inshore waters.
- **Restore inshore fisheries governance.**
- **Curb, if not reduce, mechanised boat fishing.**
- Address marine pollution seriously.
- **CMFRI should study benthic environment health** — not just catch data.
- Enable **fisher participation in management** — draw on their local knowledge.
- Federal + state coordinated action for capacity upgrade.

What is CMFRI?

- **Full form: Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute.**
- **Established: 3 February 1947** (pre-Independence).
- **Headquarters: Kochi (Ernakulam), Kerala.**
- **Parent: Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).**
- **Role:** Research on marine capture fisheries + mariculture; species diversity; stock assessments;

taxonomy; bio-economic characterization.

- **Regional stations:** Veraval (Gujarat), Mumbai, Mandapam (TN), Vishakhapatnam, Karwar, Chennai.
- **Director (2026):** Dr. A. Gopalakrishnan.
- **Key publication:** *Marine Fish Stock Status of India, 2022* (Booklet Series No. 32/2023).

What is the FAO?

- **Full form:** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- **Established:** 16 October 1945 (World Food Day).
- **Headquarters:** Rome, Italy.
- **Type:** Specialized UN agency.
- **Mandate:** Leads international efforts to defeat hunger + achieve food security + sustainable agriculture.
- **Director-General:** Qu Dongyu (China; since 2019, re-elected 2023).
- **India:** Founding member.

What is India's fisheries scale + significance

- **World rank in fish production:** 3rd largest producer (after China + Indonesia).
- **World rank in aquaculture:** 2nd largest producer.
- **Total fish production (2023-24):** ~17.5 million tonnes.
- **Marine fisheries production:** ~3.5-4.0 million tonnes.
- **Coastline:** 11,098.81 km (updated by MoES, 2023-24).
- **Coastal states:** 9 — Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa.
- **Coastal UTs:** 4 — Puducherry, Daman & Diu, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep.

What are the key Indian fisheries policies / initiatives?

- **Blue Revolution / Neel Kranti Mission (2015-16):** For sustainable fisheries development.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** — launched **September 2020**; outlay **₹20,050 crore**; 5-year scheme (2020-25); focus on aquaculture, marine fisheries, cold chains, exports.
- **PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) Sub-Component MSY:** Assistance for fishing vessels, hatcheries, harbours.
- **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF):** ₹7,522.48 crore corpus (2018-19).
- **Sagar Parikrama (2023-24):** PM's coastal outreach to interact with fishers across 9 coastal states + 4 UTs; launched by **Parshottam Rupala**.
- **KCC for Fisheries:** Kisan Credit Card extended to fishers.
- **Marine Fisheries Regulation Acts (State laws):** In each coastal state.
- **National Policy on Marine Fisheries, 2017.**

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the CMFRI's 'Marine Fish Stock Status of India, 2022' report, consider the following statements:

1. 91.1% of the 135 fish stocks evaluated were classified as sustainable.
2. 8.2% of the stocks were classified as overfished, and 0.7% as rebuilding.
3. The estimated landing value of marine fisheries in 2022 was around ₹58,247 crore.
4. The report was based on at-sea stock assessments rather than fish landing data.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **CMFRI's methodology relies primarily on FISH LANDING DATA** (species brought ashore) — NOT on direct at-sea stock assessments. This is precisely the critique raised by Prof. Maarten Bavinck.)

Q2. With reference to India's coastal maritime zones, consider the following statements:

1. India's Territorial Sea extends up to 12 nautical miles from the coast, where India exercises full sovereignty.
2. India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extends up to 200 nautical miles (~371 km) from the coast.
3. These maritime zones are defined under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982.
4. India's continental shelf is broadest along the Odisha coast.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **India's continental shelf is BROADEST along the GUJARAT COAST + part of Maharashtra** — NOT along Odisha. The shelf is relatively narrow along the eastern coast.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Uses landing data, not at-sea stock assessments.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Shelf broadest along Gujarat, not Odisha.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: CRITICAL** — GS-III (Economy, Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment); GS-II (Bilateral Relations - India-Sri Lanka); Prelims (institutions, maritime zones, schemes); Mains (fisheries governance, coastal ecology, Blue Economy).
- **NABARD Grade A: CRITICAL** — Direct subject: Fisheries, Blue Revolution, PMMSY, aquaculture; ARD paper (Phase II descriptive).

2. Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)-India

Source: *Business Standard*

Context

The **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** has **revamped the certification framework** for both **organic and natural farming** under the **Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)-India** — via an official order issued a few weeks ago — **restricting Regional Councils (RCs) to operate within a single state only**. Under the new rules, RCs — the **primary local facilitation and verification agencies** under India's peer-review, government-run certification system — will **no longer be permitted to take up certification work outside their allotted state area** for any scope of certification. Existing RCs operating across multiple states will get a **transition window (until 30 April 2027)** to transfer local groups to state-based RCs. Existing MoUs signed between state authorities and RCs **before 31 March 2026** will continue, but **new inter-state registrations are barred**. The overhaul aims to **strengthen quality control, improve accountability, and enhance localised support** for organic + natural farming certification. Stakeholders, however, have raised concerns that the changes may **exclude state-run bodies** from the accreditation framework.

What are the new rules for Regional Councils (RCs)?

- RCs restricted to operate **within one state only** for all scopes covered under certification.
- RCs **not allowed** to take up certification work outside their **one allotted state**.
- Any agreement made hereafter will **not be considered for extension**.

- RCs **not allowed to change their allotted state** after allocation.

What is the transition provision for existing RCs?

- RCs currently operating across multiple states get a **transition window**.
- They may **continue certification activities for existing local groups** outside their assigned states.
- But **cannot register any NEW groups** beyond their designated area of operation.
- Transition based on **MoUs / agreements signed between state authorities and RCs BEFORE 31 March 2026**.
- **First-phase implementation deadline:** Transfer of local groups to state-based RCs to be completed by **30 April 2027**.
- All concerned agencies directed to plan the transition to **minimise disruption**.

What is PGS-India?

- **Full form: Participatory Guarantee System-India.**
- **Launched: 7 April 2011.**
- **Under:** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (initially under the National Project on Organic Farming).
- **Type: Decentralised, peer-review, trust-based** organic certification system.
- **Designed for: Small and marginal farmers** — as a **low-cost alternative** to third-party certification.
- **Core idea:** Farmers verify + certify each other's produce through group inspections and peer review.
- **Nationwide network: ~563 Regional Councils** (pre-revamp) across India.
- **Total area certified under PGS-India Organic: ~12.88 lakh hectares.**

What are the two types of PGS certificates?

- **PGS-Green:** Given during the **in-conversion (transition) period** — cannot be labelled organic; uses "Under Conversion to Organic" label.
- **PGS-Organic:** Full organic certificate given **after conversion period is completed** and organic status is achieved.

What are the modes of registration under PGS-India?

- **Local Group Registration:** Minimum 5 farmers; main mode.
- **Individual Producer Registration:** Interim (1-2 years); must join a Local Group by year 2.
- **Large Area Certification (LAC):** Entire villages/taluks/districts declared traditional/default organic (introduced in 2020).

What is Large Area Certification (LAC)?

- Certification of **large contiguous traditional/default organic areas** — no chemical fertilisers/pesticides/GM crops.
- Requirements:
 - **Oath by all farmers** in the village that they do not use agrochemicals or GM crops.
 - **Gram Sabha Resolution** that the village does not use agrochemicals.
 - **Department of Agriculture certifies** no shops sell pesticides/fertilisers in the village.
 - **Verification team** constituted by NCONF + State Agriculture Department + PGS RC.
- **No transition period** required — certificate issued in **6 months**.
- Introduced by MoAFW in **2020**.

What is NPOP — the other Indian organic certification?

- **Full form: National Programme for Organic Production.**

- **Established:** 2001.
- **Managed by:** Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).
- **Under:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Uses:** Third-party certification by accredited agencies.
- **Focus:** Organic **exports** — strict international compliance.
- **Standards:** Based on **National Standards for Organic Production (NSOP)**.
- **Logo:** Both PGS-India and NPOP-certified products carry the common **Jaivik Bharat logo**.

How does PGS-India differ from NPOP?

- **PGS-India:** Peer review; low-cost; **domestic market**; small farmers; under Ministry of Agriculture.
- **NPOP:** Third-party certification; higher cost; **export market**; under Ministry of Commerce (APEDA).
- **Common:** Both draw from NSOP; both carry the Jaivik Bharat logo.
- **Cross-recognition:** PGS-certified farmers can transition to NPOP **without a conversion period**.

What is NCONF?

- **Full form:** National Centre for Organic and Natural Farming.
- Formerly known as **National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF)** — renamed in 2024 to include natural farming.
- **Established:** 2004 as NCOF.
- **Headquarters:** Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Under:** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- **Role:** Nodal agency for **organic + natural farming policy + PGS certification secretariat + data custodian for PGS**.
- **Regional Centres:** 6 across India — Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Hisar, Imphal, Jabalpur, Nagpur.

What are the related schemes?

- **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)** — launched **2015**; provides financial assistance for PGS certification; ₹50,000/ha over 3 years.
- **Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER)** — launched 2015; focus on NE states.
- **National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)** — approved **November 2024** under Krishi Kalyan Yojana; outlay **₹2,481 crore** (₹1,584 cr Centre + ₹897 cr States).
- **Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP)** — 2020; sub-mission under PKVY for natural farming.

What is the difference between organic and natural farming?

- **Organic farming:**
 - Uses **certified organic inputs** — bio-fertilisers, bio-pesticides, compost, vermicompost, green manure.
 - Prohibits synthetic chemicals, GMOs.
 - Certified under **PGS-India** or **NPOP**.
- **Natural farming (e.g., Zero Budget Natural Farming – ZBNF):**
 - Uses **only on-farm resources** — cow dung, cow urine, jaggery, indigenous seeds.
 - Focus on **soil microbiome + biodiversity**.
 - Aims for **zero external input costs**.
 - Championed by **Andhra Pradesh Community-Managed Natural Farming (APCNF)** — largest natural farming programme in the world (~10 lakh farmers).
 - **Subhash Palekar** popularised ZBNF in India.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the recent revamp of the PGS certification framework (2026), consider the following statements:

1. Regional Councils (RCs) have been restricted to operate within a single state for both organic and natural farming certification.
2. RCs are now allowed to take up certification work outside their allotted state area.
3. The transfer of local groups to state-based RCs is expected to be completed by 30 April 2027.
4. The revamp is aimed at strengthening quality control, improving accountability, and enhancing localised support.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 2 is wrong; **RCs are NOT allowed to take up certification work outside their allotted state area** under the new framework — this is precisely the key restriction of the revamp.)

Q2. With reference to the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)-India, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched on 7 April 2011 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
2. It is a peer-review, trust-based decentralised organic certification system.
3. It is designed for small and marginal farmers as a low-cost alternative to third-party certification.
4. It is primarily used for exports of organic products.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **PGS-India is designed for the DOMESTIC market and small farmers** — NOT for exports. Organic exports use the **NPOP** (National Programme for Organic Production) certification managed by APEDA.)

Q3. With reference to the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP), consider the following statements:

1. It is managed by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).
2. It functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
3. It requires third-party certification by accredited agencies.
4. It is the same as PGS-India, using the same peer-review approach.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **NPOP uses THIRD-PARTY certification** by accredited agencies for export markets — while PGS-India uses **peer-review** certification for domestic markets. Both draw from NSOP but are DIFFERENT systems.)

Q4. Consider the following statements about the structural components of PGS-India:

1. Local Groups are the main functional unit and require a minimum of 5 farmers.
2. Regional Councils (RCs) serve as local facilitation and verification agencies.
3. The PGS Secretariat is housed at the National Centre for Organic and Natural Farming (NCONF), Ghaziabad.
4. The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), Chennai serves as the apex regulatory body.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) is NOT part of PGS-India's structure** — NBA deals with biodiversity access + benefit sharing. The apex bodies for PGS-India are the **National Advisory Committee, National Executive Committee, and PGS Secretariat (NCONF).**)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 2 wrong: RCs cannot work outside allotted state.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: PGS is for domestic market, not exports.
3. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: NPOP is third-party, not peer-review.
4. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: NBA is not part of PGS-India.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: Very High** — GS-III (Agriculture, Government Schemes, Food Security); Prelims (institutions, schemes, certifications); Mains (organic + natural farming as sustainable agri).
- **NABARD Grade A: CRITICAL** — Direct subject: PGS, NPOP, PKVY, organic farming, APEDA; ARD paper (Phase II descriptive).
- **State PCS (Sikkim, MP, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, MH, Kerala, all NE states): CRITICAL** — Regional relevance for organic/natural farming.

3. Assam's Chota Tingrai Tea Estate Becomes India's First to Commercially Produce Matcha Tea

Source: *The Hindu*

Context

In a milestone for India's tea industry, **Assam's Chota Tingrai Tea Estate** in **Tinsukia district** on **Friday, 3 July 2026** became the **first tea estate in India to commercially produce Matcha tea** — the premium Japanese-style powdered green tea. The **maiden 5-kg batch** was sold at the **Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC)** at **Sale No. 27, Lot No. 7001** for **₹3,000/kg**, auctioned through **J Thomas & Co Pvt Ltd** to **Sheosons Chai Co.** (Guwahati). The achievement follows **nearly a decade of collaboration with Japanese tea manufacturers, agronomists, equipment suppliers, and tea experts**, culminating in a **fully automated Japanese-style tea manufacturing facility** on the estate. Matcha — made from **shade-grown Camellia sinensis leaves** — is traditionally produced only in **Japan, China, and Vietnam** and is currently in **global shortage** due to soaring demand. **Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma** hailed it as a milestone for India-Japan ties + Brand Assam Tea. **Chota Tingrai Director Mrityunjay Jalan** called it "the result of a dedicated partnership with our Japanese counterparts." The move signals Assam's shift **beyond traditional CTC + Orthodox teas into premium-value wellness products**.

What is Matcha?

- **Origin word:** Japanese — "Matcha" = "Powdered tea".
- **Definition:** A **premium, vibrant green, finely ground powder** made from **specially processed, shade-grown leaves of Camellia sinensis** (the tea plant).
- **Key differentiation from regular green tea:**
 - **Regular green tea:** Leaves are steeped in water, then discarded.
 - **Matcha:** Powder is **whisked directly into hot water** and **consumed entirely** — providing a highly concentrated dose of nutrients, antioxidants, and caffeine.
- **Colour:** Vibrant, jade green (due to chlorophyll).
- **Taste:** Umami (savoury), with sweet/vegetal notes.

What is the origin of Matcha?

- **Song Dynasty (China, 960–1279 CE):** Practice of **grinding dried tea leaves into fine powder + whisking**

"Do not fear the mistake. Fear repeating it."

with hot water originated.

- **1191 CE (Japan): Zen Buddhist monk Eisai** brought powdered tea seeds + techniques from China to Japan — the practice was **preserved, refined, and woven into Japanese culture**.
- **Muromachi period (Japan, 14th–16th century):** Japanese tea farmers invented **specialized shading techniques** to cultivate **Tencha** — the specific processed leaves required to grind authentic matcha.
- **Sen no Rikyū (16th century):** Codified the **Japanese Tea Ceremony (Chanoyu/Sado)** — Matcha at its heart.
- **Zen Buddhism connection:** Matcha became deeply associated with Zen practice.

How is Matcha produced? (The 4-Step Process)

- **1. Agricultural Shading:**
 - Tea plants are **shaded for 3–4 weeks before harvest**.
 - **~90% of sunlight is blocked**.
 - **Effect:** Boosts **chlorophyll production** → vibrant green colour.
- **2. L-Theanine Enrichment:**
 - Reduced sunlight **prevents L-theanine** (an amino acid) **from converting into bitter compounds** (catechins).
 - **Effect:** Signature **umami taste + calm, sustained energy**.
- **3. Tencha Processing:**
 - Fresh leaves are **steamed** (to stop oxidation), **de-stemmed, de-veined**, and **dried**.
 - The processed leaves are called **Tencha** — the base material for matcha.
- **4. Stone-Ground Milling:**
 - Tencha leaves are **slowly ground using granite stone mills** or **automated Japanese mills** into a **fine, vibrant green powder**.
 - Preserves flavour + nutrients.
 - Traditional method: **~30g of matcha powder per hour** from a stone mill — hence Matcha's high cost.

Where is Matcha traditionally produced?

- **Primary producers globally: Japan** (dominant), **China, Vietnam**.
- **Japan's Uji region (Kyoto Prefecture):** Historical + premium Matcha origin.
- **Other Japanese matcha regions:** Nishio (Aichi), Kagoshima, Shizuoka.
- **2024–25 context:** Global Matcha shortage due to soaring demand (café culture + wellness trend + Instagram + TikTok "Matcha latte" virality).

What is Camellia sinensis?

- Scientific name of the **tea plant**.
- **Family:** Theaceae.
- **Native to:** East Asia (China, Myanmar, India).
- **Two main varieties:**
 - **Camellia sinensis sinensis:** Chinese variety; smaller leaves; more suited to cooler climates; used for delicate teas like green + white teas.
 - **Camellia sinensis assamica:** Assam variety; larger leaves; suited to warm humid climates; used for robust black teas.
- All teas (black, green, white, oolong, pu-erh, matcha) come from the **same plant** — differences lie in **processing methods**.
- Assam variety was **discovered by Robert Bruce in 1823** in Upper Assam.

About the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC)

- **Established: 25 September 1970.**
- **Location: Guwahati, Assam.**
- **Type:** Statutory tea auction centre.
- **Managed by: Tea Board of India** in association with the **Guwahati Tea Auction Buyers' Association.**
- **Rank:** Among the **world's largest tea auction centres.**
- **Handles: ~50% of Assam's tea auction volume.**
- **Rank in India: 2nd largest tea auction centre** after Kolkata Tea Auction Centre (KTAC, 1861).
- **Other Indian centres:** Kolkata (1861), Cochin (1948), Coimbatore (1963), Coonoor (1963), Siliguri, Amritsar.

What is Assam's role in India's tea industry?

- **Assam is India's largest tea-producing state.**
- **Accounts for ~50% of India's total tea production.**

India's global tea position

- **Rank in production: 2nd largest** (after China).
- **Rank in export: 3rd** — after Kenya (1st) + China (2nd).
- **Rank in consumption: 1st** (India consumes ~80% of what it produces).

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the launch of India's first commercially produced Matcha tea, consider the following statements:

1. Chota Tingrai Tea Estate in Tinsukia district, Assam, is the first tea estate in India to commercially produce Matcha.
2. The maiden batch was sold at the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre on 3 July 2026 for ₹3,000/kg.
3. The estate developed the Matcha through nearly a decade of collaboration with Japanese experts.
4. Matcha production in Chota Tingrai is done using a traditional manual stone-milling process only.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Chota Tingrai has established a FULLY AUTOMATED Japanese-style tea manufacturing facility** for matcha — NOT a traditional manual-only process. Automation was key to enabling commercial scale.)

Q2. With reference to Matcha tea, consider the following statements:

1. It is made from shade-grown leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant.
2. The practice of grinding dried tea leaves originated in China during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE).
3. Zen Buddhist monk Eisai brought Matcha techniques from China to Japan around 1191 CE.
4. Matcha is primarily produced in the United States and Europe.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Matcha is primarily produced in JAPAN, CHINA, and VIETNAM** — NOT in the US or Europe. Japan (especially the Uji region in Kyoto) dominates the premium Matcha market.)

Q3. With reference to the Matcha production process, consider the following statements:

1. Tea plants are shaded for 3-4 weeks before harvest to block nearly 90% of sunlight, boosting chlorophyll.

2. Reduced sunlight prevents L-Theanine from converting into bitter compounds, giving matcha its umami taste.
3. The processed leaves used to make matcha are called Tencha.
4. Matcha production entirely avoids the oxidation step used in black tea manufacturing.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) **All four** (e) None

(All four statements are correct.)

Q4. With reference to India's tea industry, consider the following statements:

1. India is the world's second-largest tea producer after China.
2. Assam is India's largest tea-producing state, accounting for around 50% of national output.
3. The Guwahati Tea Auction Centre was established in 1970 and is India's second-largest tea auction centre after Kolkata.
4. Darjeeling tea was the first Indian product to receive a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) **All four** (e) None

(All four statements are correct.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Fully automated facility, not traditional manual only.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Matcha produced in Japan/China/Vietnam, not US/Europe.
3. (d) — All correct.
4. (d) — All correct.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: Very High** — GS-III (Agriculture, Food Processing, Value Addition); GS-I (History-related Japan/China Buddhist links); GS-II (India-Japan Ties); Prelims (plant species, GI tags, auction centres).
- **NABARD Grade A: CRITICAL** — Direct subject: agri value chain, farm income diversification, Assam tea sector; ARD paper (Phase II descriptive).
- **State PCS (Assam, WB, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, HP): CRITICAL** — Tea-producing states; direct regional relevance.
- **RBI Grade B (Phase I + II): Medium-High** — ESI on export diversification, wellness economy.

Facts To Remember

1. PM Modi Dedicates India's First Greenfield Integrated Refinery-Cum-Petrochemical Complex

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated India's first greenfield integrated refinery-cum-petrochemical complex at Balotra, Rajasthan. He also inaugurated the new terminal building of Jodhpur Airport. Development projects worth around ₹1.06 lakh crore were launched across multiple sectors.

2. Jal Shakti Ministry Launches 7th National Water Awards

The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched the 7th National Water Awards on the Rashtriya Puraskar Portal. The awards recognize excellence in water conservation and management. They encourage sustainable water practices across India.

3. India Unveils First Indigenous Export–Import Shipping Container

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal unveiled India's first export–import shipping container manufactured for global shipping company Maersk. The container was produced in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh. The initiative strengthens India's manufacturing and maritime logistics capabilities.

4. Third Batch of DAKSH Leadership Programme Launched

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated the third batch of the DAKSH leadership programme. The programme promotes a Whole-of-Government approach through institutional collaboration. It aims to strengthen leadership and governance in public administration.

5. Government Releases ₹25,863 Crore under VB–G RAM G Scheme

The Government released the first installment of ₹25,863 crore under the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin). Uttar Pradesh received the highest allocation followed by Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu. The scheme replaced MGNREGA from 1 July 2026.

6. Egypt Inaugurates World's Largest Defence Headquarters

Egypt inaugurated the State Strategic Command Headquarters, popularly known as the "Octagon." Spread over about 22,000 acres, it has become the world's largest defence headquarters. The facility serves as the central command of the Egyptian Armed Forces.

7. NITI Aayog Releases Global Ayurveda Roadmap

NITI Aayog released the report "Strategic Roadmap for Making Ayurveda Global." The roadmap aims to establish Ayurveda as a globally recognized evidence-based healthcare system by 2047. It focuses on research, regulation, education, exports, and international collaboration.

8. Army Chief Launches 'VIJAY' Transformation Roadmap

Chief of Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth unveiled the VIJAY transformation roadmap. The framework emphasizes Vigilance, Innovation, Jointness, Aatmanirbharta, and Yodha First. It aims to build a future-ready, technology-driven Indian Army.

9. Air India Signs MoU with SIA Engineering Company

Air India signed an MoU with Singapore's SIA Engineering Company to strengthen India's MRO ecosystem. The partnership will explore joint ventures and technical collaboration. It supports India's ambition to become a global aviation MRO hub.

10. Japan PM Sanae Takaichi Visits India

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi visited India from 1–3 July 2026 for the 16th India–Japan Annual Summit. Both countries announced 16 key outcomes and signed 129 MoUs worth ₹1 lakh crore. Cooperation expanded in AI, semiconductors, clean energy, and defence.

11. India Ranks 94th in Sustainable Development Report 2026

India secured its highest-ever rank of 94th in the Sustainable Development Report 2026. Finland topped the global rankings followed by Sweden and Denmark. India improved significantly in digital connectivity and electricity access.

12. Three Indian Business Leaders Join ITU AI Global Commission

Mukesh Ambani, Sunil Bharti Mittal, and Lakshmi Mittal became founding members of the ITU AI for Good Global Commission. The commission promotes responsible AI governance and digital inclusion. It

comprises 44 global leaders from business and policy.

13. ADB Approves USD 230 Million Loan for Chennai

The Asian Development Bank approved a USD 230 million loan for Chennai's water and sanitation modernization. The project includes new pipelines, pumping stations, and a ring-main water distribution system. Chennai will become the first Indian city to implement this model.

14. Paytm Europe Receives Luxembourg Payment Licence

Paytm Europe secured a Payment Institution licence from Luxembourg's financial regulator. The approval allows it to offer regulated payment services across the European Economic Area. It marks Paytm's expansion into European financial services.

15. RBI Imposes Penalty on BoB and GIC Housing Finance

The Reserve Bank of India imposed a combined penalty of ₹66.7 lakh on Bank of Baroda and GIC Housing Finance. The action was taken for violations related to KYC norms and lending guidelines. RBI emphasized compliance with regulatory standards.

16. Nita Ambani Receives AAPI Humanitarian Award

Nita Ambani received the AAPI Humanitarian Award and the Key to the City of Tampa. The honours recognize her contributions to healthcare, education, sports, and social development. The awards were presented during the AAPI Convention in Florida.

17. Keiko Fujimori Wins Peru Presidential Election

Keiko Fujimori won Peru's 2026 presidential election after a closely contested runoff. She will assume office on 28 July 2026. She becomes Peru's President after leading the Popular Force Party for over a decade.

18. Rear Admiral C. Raghuram Becomes CMD of HSL

Rear Admiral (Retd.) C. Raghuram assumed charge as Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Shipyard Limited. He brings over 35 years of naval engineering experience. He succeeds Captain Ganti Venkateswarlu.

19. Agnikul Cosmos Partners with ICEYE

Agnikul Cosmos partnered with Finland-based ICEYE to develop India's SAR satellite ecosystem. The collaboration includes satellite manufacturing and indigenous launch services. SAR satellites support defence, disaster management, and environmental monitoring.

20. CMFRI Discovers New Deep-Sea Fish Species

Scientists at ICAR-CMFRI discovered a new deep-sea fish species named *Cyttopsis indica* in the Arabian Sea. The species was identified using DNA analysis. The discovery enriches India's marine biodiversity records.

21. International Day of Cooperatives Observed on July 4

The International Day of Cooperatives was observed on 4 July 2026. The 2026 theme was "**Cooperatives for a Peaceful World.**" The day promotes the role of cooperatives in sustainable development and inclusive growth.

22. Odisha Signs USD 11.5 Billion Aluminium Project

Adani Enterprises and International Resources Holding signed an MoU with the Odisha Government for a USD 11.5 billion aluminium project. The integrated project includes mining, refining, smelting, and downstream manufacturing. It is expected to become India's largest FDI in the metallurgy sector.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 5 & 6 JULY 2026

1. **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** — launched **September 2020**; outlay **₹20,050 crore**; 5-year scheme (2020–25); focus on aquaculture, marine fisheries, cold chains, exports. India's Fisheries Crisis
2. **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)** — launched **2015**; provides financial assistance for PGS certification; ₹50,000/ha over 3 years. Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)-India
3. The maiden batch was sold at the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre on 3 July 2026 for ₹3,000/kg. Assam's Chota Tingrai Tea Estate Becomes India's...
4. Rear Admiral (Retd.) C. Raghuram assumed charge as Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Shipyard Limited. He brings over 35 years of naval engineering experience. He succeeds Captain Ganti Venkateswarlu. Rear Admiral C. Raghuram Becomes CMD of HSL
5. The International Day of Cooperatives was observed on 4 July 2026. The 2026 theme was **"Cooperatives for a Peaceful World."** The day promotes the role of cooperatives in sustainable development and inclusive growth. International Day of Cooperatives Observed on J...

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DAY 5 OF 24

7 July 2026

Tuesday · 28 items · 3 topics

National Affairs 3 · Banking and Finance 1 · Facts To Remember 24

Daily Current Affairs Quiz**07 July, 2026****National Affairs****1. Underwater Fiber Optic Sensing System (UFOSS)**Source: *New Indian Express***Context**

The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has launched a major naval project — **"Deep Ocean Watch"** — to deploy an **indigenous Underwater Fiber Optic Sensing System (UFOSS)** on the **Indian Ocean seabed** to detect submarines and counter rising Chinese and Pakistani underwater activity. Led by the **Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL), Kochi (Kerala)** — a DRDO lab — the project involves a **fixed, non-collapsible network of undersea acoustic + hydrographic sensors** anchored to the ocean floor, connected via **armoured fiber-optic cables to shore-based monitoring stations**. DRDO issued the **Expression of Interest (EoI)** on **20 June 2026**, with a **submission deadline of 1 September 2026** and a **48-month execution target** from final contract award. UFOSS features a **20-year operational lifespan**, **deep seabed burial** using specialised cable-laying ploughs + Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs), and a **consortium-led integration model** where a Lead System Integrator can partner with up to **5 specialised engineering firms**.

What is UFOSS?

- A **fixed, non-collapsible network** of advanced undersea **acoustic + hydrographic sensors** anchored to the ocean floor.
- Serves as **India's strategic underwater surveillance grid**.
- Provides **continuous, long-term tracking** of the undersea battlespace across contested maritime choke points.
- India's answer to the **US IUSS (Integrated Undersea Surveillance System)** — successor to Cold War-era **SOSUS (Sound Surveillance System)**.

What is Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP)?

- Technology allowing **conventional (non-nuclear) submarines** to stay submerged for extended periods **without surfacing for oxygen**.
- Types: **Fuel cell** (German Type 214), **Stirling engine**, **MESMA** (French).
- Enables **2-3 weeks submerged operations** — a massive stealth advantage.
- Makes conventional submarines nearly as stealthy as nuclear submarines for short missions.
- India's **Project 75(I)** also focuses on AIP submarines (6 planned).

About DRDO

- **Full form: Defence Research and Development Organisation.**
- **Established: 1958** (merging Technical Development Establishment + Directorate of Technical Development & Production).

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- **HQ: DRDO Bhawan, New Delhi.**
- **Under: Department of Defence Research and Development (DDR&D), Ministry of Defence.**
- **Chairman + Secretary DDR&D: Dr. Samir V. Kamat** (since 2022).
- **Laboratories: ~50+ labs** across India.
- **Vision: Make India self-reliant in defence technology.**

India's Indian Ocean Region (IOR) doctrines

- **SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region)** — March 2015 (Mauritius).
- **MAHASAGAR (Mutual And Holistic Advancement for Security And Growth Across Regions)** — March 2025 (Mauritius).
- **Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI)** — November 2019 (East Asia Summit, Bangkok).
- **Quad Maritime Security Initiative** — with US, Japan, Australia.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the Underwater Fiber Optic Sensing System (UFOSS), consider the following statements:

1. It is being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) under the "Deep Ocean Watch" project.
2. The Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL) in Kochi is leading the project.
3. It is a fixed, non-collapsible network of undersea acoustic and hydrographic sensors anchored to the ocean floor.
4. It has an operational lifespan of only 5 years.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **UFOSS is engineered for a continuous 20-year service life** — NOT 5 years. This long lifespan is critical for strategic surveillance infrastructure.)

Q2. With reference to the strategic rationale for UFOSS, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to detect Pakistan's Chinese-built Hangor-class submarines equipped with Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP).
2. It targets Chinese nuclear attack submarines (SSNs) operating in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
3. It provides continuous 24/7 monitoring — filling gaps left by periodic ship and aircraft patrols.
4. It is designed only for detection in coastal Indian waters within the 12 nautical mile territorial sea.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **UFOSS is designed for deployment across strategic zones of the wider Indian Ocean Region — including the Ninety East Ridge, Bay of Bengal, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands region** — NOT limited to India's 12 NM territorial sea.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: 20-year lifespan, not 5-year.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Wider IOR coverage, not just territorial sea.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: CRITICAL** — GS-II (India-China, India-Pakistan bilateral); GS-III (Defence Technology, Internal Security, Indo-Pacific); Prelims (institutions, submarine classes, technologies); Mains-Essay on maritime security.

2. United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP)

Source: DD News

Context

India has been appointed to **chair the Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on Consumer Protection Law and Policy** — organised by the **United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** — from **6 to 8 July 2026** at the **Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland**. India will be represented by **Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs**, invited by UNCTAD to preside over deliberations. The IGE, constituted under the **United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP)** — **first adopted in 1985** — is the **principal intergovernmental platform** for global cooperation on consumer protection law. A **major highlight of this session** will be the **formal launch of the UN Principles for Consumer Product Safety**, adopted by the UN General Assembly in **December 2025**.

What is the UNGCP?

- **Full form: United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection.**
- **Nature:** A comprehensive, internationally agreed set of declarations.
- **Coverage:** Core characteristics of effective consumer protection legislation, institutional enforcement, and dispute redress systems.
- **Legal status: Non-binding soft law instrument** — but acts as the **primary global blueprint** for member states to formulate and harmonise domestic consumer safety laws.

When was the UNGCP adopted?

- **First adopted: UN General Assembly Resolution 39/248 on 16 April 1985** — following a long campaign by global consumer associations.
- **Expanded in 1999:** Integrated **sustainable development principles**.
- **Heavily revised in December 2015:** To address **modern digital landscapes + e-commerce**.

Key features of the UNGCP

- **Physical Safety & Product Recalls:** Requires governments to enforce product safety standards + ensure prompt recall of defective products + compensation for consumers.
- **Protection of Economic Interests:** Safeguards against unfair contracts, misleading advertisements, fraudulent services, predatory lending, and food adulteration.
- **Information & Consumer Education:** Promotes clear hazard labels, internationally recognised safety symbols, and consumer awareness programmes.
- **Digital & E-Commerce Provisions (2015):** Extended coverage to online markets — promotes **data privacy, online dispute resolution, secure digital transactions, and cross-border e-commerce safeguards**.
- **Sustainable Consumption:** Encourages energy-efficient, environmentally friendly goods + responsible consumption for sustainable development.

What is UNCTAD?

- **Full form: United Nations Trade and Development** (formerly United Nations Conference on Trade and Development — renamed in 2024).
- **Established: 1964** (as a permanent intergovernmental body).
- **HQ: Geneva, Switzerland.**
- **Members:** 195 states.
- **Secretary-General (2026): Rebeca Grynspan** (Costa Rica; since 2021).
- **Focus:** Trade + investment + development issues for developing countries.
- **Flagship reports:** Trade and Development Report, World Investment Report.

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- **Also produces:** Consumer Protection Toolkit for member states.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to India's chairing of the 9th UNCTAD IGE Session on Consumer Protection (July 2026), consider the following statements:

1. India will chair the session held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland from 6–8 July 2026.
2. India will be represented by Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs.
3. A major highlight will be the launch of the UN Principles for Consumer Product Safety (adopted by UNGA in December 2025).
4. The IGE is constituted under the WTO framework.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **the IGE is constituted under the UNGCP (United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection)** — NOT under the WTO framework. It operates under UNCTAD, not WTO.)

Q2. With reference to the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP), consider the following statements:

1. They were first adopted by the UN General Assembly through Resolution 39/248 on 16 April 1985.
2. They were significantly expanded in 1999 to integrate sustainable development principles.
3. They were heavily revised in December 2015 to address modern digital landscapes and e-commerce.
4. They are a legally binding treaty ratified by all UN Member States.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **UNGCP is a NON-BINDING SOFT LAW instrument** — NOT a legally binding treaty. It acts as a global blueprint but member states are not compelled to ratify or enforce it.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: IGE under UNGCP, not WTO.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: UNGCP is soft law, not binding treaty.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: CRITICAL** — GS-II (International Organisations, UN Bodies, India's Foreign Policy); GS-III (Consumer Protection, E-commerce, Trade); Prelims (UNGCP, UNCTAD, IGE, Consumer Protection Act); Mains-Essay on Digital Consumer Rights.
- **NABARD Grade A: High** — General awareness on consumer + rural markets.
- **State PCS: Very High** — State consumer redressal mechanisms.

3. ICMR-MINDS Wins Gold at National Awards for e-Governance 2026

Source: PIB

Context

The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**'s flagship **National Health Research Priority project, ICMR-MINDS** — an **AI-enabled digital mental healthcare platform** — has been conferred the **Gold Award** under **Category 2 (Innovation by Use of AI and Other New Age Technologies for Providing Citizen-Centric Services)** at the **National Awards for e-Governance 2026**. The awards are instituted by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)**, under the **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions**. The award was presented by **Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions**, at the **29th**

National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) 2026 held in **Jaipur, Rajasthan on 1–2 July 2026** — in the presence of **Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore** (Rajasthan Minister for IT & Communication), **V. Srinivas** (Chief Secretary, Rajasthan), and **Nivedita Shukla Verma** (Secretary, DARPG). ICMR-MINDS is an **implementation research study integrating screening and management of mental + substance use disorders with other Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)**.

The award at a glance

- **Award:** Gold Award.
- **Category:** Category 2 — Innovation by Use of AI and Other New Age Technologies for Providing Citizen-Centric Services.
- **Awards series:** National Awards for e-Governance 2026.
- **Instituting body:** Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).
- **Under:** Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.
- **Recipient:** ICMR-MINDS — flagship digital mental healthcare initiative of ICMR.
- **Ceremony date:** 1–2 July 2026.
- **Venue:** 29th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) 2026, Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- **PIB announcement date:** 5 July 2026, 12:43 PM.

What is ICMR-MINDS?

- A **National Health Research Priority project** of ICMR.
- An **implementation research study** on the **integration of screening and management of mental + substance use disorders with other Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)**.
- Core platform: **AI-enabled Clinical Decision Support System (CDSS)**.
- Enables **task-shifting** — standardised mental health screening, assessment, follow-up, and routine management — from specialists to **trained non-specialist frontline healthcare providers**.
- Backed by **evidence-based digital decision support**.

About National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG)

- **Instituted:** 2003.
- **By:** DARPG.
- **Presented at:** Annual **National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG)**.
- **Purpose:** Recognise + reward outstanding e-Governance initiatives across governments, PSUs, academia, industry.
- **Categories:** Multiple — Digital Transformation, AI/Emerging Technologies, Grassroots Innovation, Public-Private Partnership, Government Startups.
- **Award levels:** Gold, Silver, and Merit/Jury Awards.

About ICMR

- **Full form:** Indian Council of Medical Research.
- **Established:** 1911 (as Indian Research Fund Association – IRFA); renamed **ICMR in 1949**.
- **HQ:** New Delhi.
- **Under:** Department of Health Research (DHR), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- **Director General:** Dr Rajiv Bahl (also Secretary DHR); since **October 2023**.
- **Institutes:** ~30 permanent research institutes/centres.
- **Complementary AI initiative:** Medical Innovations Patent Mitra (also recently in news).

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to ICMR-MINDS winning the Gold Award at National Awards for e-Governance 2026,

consider the following statements:

1. It won under Category 2 – Innovation by Use of AI and Other New Age Technologies for Providing Citizen-Centric Services.
2. The award was presented at the 29th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) 2026 held in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
3. The award was presented by Dr Jitendra Singh, Union MoS for Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.
4. The award is instituted by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **the National Awards for e-Governance are instituted by DARPG (Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances)** under the **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions** – NOT by MeitY.)

Q2. With reference to ICMR-MINDS, consider the following statements:

1. It is a National Health Research Priority project of the Indian Council of Medical Research.
2. It integrates screening and management of mental + substance use disorders with other Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).
3. Its core is a Clinical Decision Support System (CDSS) that enables task-shifting to non-specialist frontline healthcare providers.
4. It is currently implemented across all 28 states of India.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **ICMR-MINDS is currently implemented in 7 STATES (Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, MP, Odisha, Punjab)** through 7 collaborating institutions – NOT across all 28 states.)

Answer Key

1. (c) – Statement 4 wrong: NAeG by DARPG, not MeitY.
2. (c) – Statement 4 wrong: 7 states, not all 28.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: CRITICAL** – GS-II (Government Policies, Health, e-Governance); GS-III (S&T, AI, Digital Health); Prelims (institutions, awards, key persons); Mains-Essay on Digital Health.
- **NABARD Grade A: Very High** – Rural health delivery + task-shifting model.

Banking and Finance**1. RBI Tightens Bank Lending to Capital Markets****Context**

RBI has made bank lending to the stock market safer by limiting exposure, increasing collateral requirements and restricting speculative funding.

Why in News?

- Effective from **1 July 2026** (originally 1 April 2026, deferred)
- First notified: **13 February 2026**
- Issued under: **Banking Regulation Act, 1949**
- New Chapter **XIII A** inserted in RBI Directions

- Trading volumes fell in **MCX, NSE and BSE**
- **Objective:** Reduce systemic risk to banks

Before Understanding the News

Term	Meaning
Capital Market	Market for shares, bonds, REITs, InvITs
CMI	Brokers, Clearing Members, Custodians, Market Makers
Proprietary Trading	Broker/bank trading using its own money
Tier-I Capital	Core capital of a bank (equity + reserves)
LTV	$\text{Loan} \div \text{Asset Value}$
Bank Guarantee	Bank's written promise to pay if borrower defaults

What Has RBI Changed?

Change	New Rule	Why?
Capital Market Exposure	Max 40% of Tier-I Capital	Limits bank risk
Direct Exposure	Max 20% of Tier-I Capital	Avoid concentration
Loans to CMIs	100% collateral compulsory	Protect banks
Proprietary Trading	Bank finance BANNED	Prevent speculation
Loan Against Shares (LTV)	60%	Reduce lending risk
LTV on MF/ETF/REIT/InvIT	75%	Moderate risk assets
LTV on Debt MFs	85%	Safer instruments
Bank Guarantees	Min 50% collateral (25% cash)	Lower default risk
Equity Share Haircut	40%	Cushion for price fall
Acquisition Finance	Up to 75% of deal value	Support genuine M&A
IPO Minimum Margin	25%	Curb speculation

Why Did Trading Volumes Fall?

New RBI Rules ↓ Higher Collateral Needed ↓ Borrowing Cost Increased ↓ Less Trading by Brokers ↓ MCX ↓ 40% | BSE ↓ 7-10% | NSE Prop share 52%→51.3%

Exam Focus — Remember these Numbers

Number	Remember
40%	Total CME cap
20%	Direct CME cap
100%	CMI Collateral
60%	LTV on Listed Shares
75%	LTV on MF/ETF/REIT + Acquisition Finance
85%	LTV on Debt MFs
50%	BG Collateral (25% cash)
40%	Equity Share Haircut
25%	IPO Minimum Margin
₹1 Cr	LAS Limit per individual

"You do not need more hours. You need the same hour, every day."

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Number	Remember
₹25 Lakh	IPO/Secondary Market Loan cap

Prelims Pointer

Loan-to-Value (LTV): If shares worth ₹100 are pledged and the LTV is 60%, the maximum loan is ₹60.

Key Concepts

- **Proprietary Trading:** Institution trading with its **own funds** (not client money) to earn profit. Now banned via bank credit. Exception → **market-making** allowed.
- **Capital Market Intermediary (CMI):** SEBI-regulated entities offering trade execution / market infrastructure.
 - **Included:** Brokers, Clearing Members, Custodians, Market Makers
 - **Excluded:** Standalone Primary Dealers (SPDs), Qualified Central Counterparties (QCCPs)
- **Tier-I Capital:** Best-quality bank capital = Equity + Disclosed Reserves. **Basel III minimum = 6% of RWA.**
- **Bank Guarantee (BG):** Bank's written promise to pay beneficiary if applicant defaults. Widely used in stock/commodity trading for margins.
- **Loan-to-Value (LTV):** Loan Amount ÷ Asset Value. Higher LTV = Higher risk for lender.
- **Haircut:** Discount applied to collateral value. 40% haircut on equity → ₹100 share counted as only ₹60.
- **Acquisition Finance (expanded):** Now covers **mergers + amalgamations**; only for **control of non-financial target**.

Static GK

RBI

- **Established:** 1 April 1935 (under RBI Act, 1934)
- **Nationalised:** 1 January 1949
- **HQ:** Mumbai
- **Governor:** Sanjay Malhotra (**26th** Governor, since Dec 2024)
- **Deputy Governors (4):** M. Rajeshwar Rao, T. Rabi Sankar, M.D. Patra, Poonam Gupta

MCX (Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd.)

- **Established:** 2003
- **HQ:** Mumbai
- **Status:** India's largest **commodity derivatives** exchange
- **MD & CEO:** Praveena Rai
- **Clearing arm:** MCX-CCL
- **Regulator:** SEBI (since 2015, after FMC merger)
- **Key products:** Gold, Silver, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Copper, Zinc, Aluminium

Basel III

- Global banking regulation framework
- Tier-I minimum: **6% of RWA**
- Total Capital minimum: **8% of RWA**

Want me to make the same style notes for another topic, or a quick MCQ practice set on this?

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the RBI's Amendment Directions on Capital Market Exposures, 2026, consider the

following statements:

1. They were first notified on 13 February 2026 and came into force on 1 July 2026.
2. The original effective date was 1 April 2026, but was deferred to 1 July 2026 after industry feedback.
3. They insert a new Chapter XIII A titled "Credit Facilities to Capital Market Intermediaries (CMIIs)".
4. They are issued under the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **the directions are issued under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949** — NOT the IRDAI Act, 1999. IRDAI regulates insurance, not banks.)

Q2. With reference to the new Capital Market Exposure (CME) framework, consider the following statements:

1. A bank's total Capital Market Exposure is capped at 40% of its Tier 1 capital.
2. Direct exposure (including acquisition finance) is capped at 20% of Tier 1 capital.
3. All credit facilities to CMIIs must be provided on a fully secured (100% collateralised) basis.
4. Banks may finance proprietary trading by brokers up to a limit of ₹10 crore.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **the norms EXPLICITLY BAN bank finance for proprietary trading by brokers** — with a limited exception only for market-making activities. There is no ₹10 crore limit — proprietary trading with bank credit is prohibited.)

Answer Key

1. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Under Banking Regulation Act 1949, not IRDAI Act.
2. (c) — Statement 4 wrong: Proprietary trading is banned, not permitted with cap.

Exam Relevance

- **RBI Grade B (Phase I + II): CRITICAL** — Direct subject: RBI notifications, capital market exposure, banking regulations; Phase II descriptive must-know.
- **SIDBI Grade A: Very High** — Banking regulation, capital adequacy, MSME lending overlap.
- **SEBI Grade A: CRITICAL** — Direct subject: CMIIs, brokers, market impact, proprietary trading; Phase I + II descriptive.

Facts To Remember**1. Stealth Frigate Mahendragiri to Join Indian Navy**

The Indian Navy will commission INS Mahendragiri (F38), the sixth indigenous Project 17A stealth frigate, on 11 July 2026 at Visakhapatnam. The warship is part of India's indigenous warship-building programme. It strengthens naval capabilities and maritime security.

2. Chita Andolan Resumes Over Ken–Betwa Project

The Pyre Protest (Chita Andolan) has resumed in Madhya Pradesh. Displaced families allege delays in rehabilitation, compensation, and resettlement under the Ken–Betwa Link Project. The protest symbolizes the loss of land, homes, forests, and livelihoods.

3. Hayabusa2 Performs Close Flyby of Asteroid Torifune

Japan's Hayabusa2 spacecraft successfully flew within 800 metres of asteroid Torifune. Torifune is a primitive near-Earth asteroid and a valuable target for planetary research. It is also studied for future impact mitigation strategies.

4. PM Modi Visits Rajasthan and Gujarat

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid foundation stones for multiple projects in Rajasthan and Gujarat. He dedicated India's first greenfield integrated refinery-cum-petrochemical complex at Pachpadra and inaugurated Jodhpur Airport's new terminal. He also inaugurated a semiconductor OSAT facility in Gujarat.

5. 29th National Conference on e-Governance Held in Jaipur

The 29th National Conference on e-Governance was organized in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The theme was "Viksit Bharat 2047: AI-enabled, Data-driven & Secure Digital Governance." The conference adopted the Jaipur Declaration 2026 to strengthen digital governance.

6. CCRAS Launches Three New Ayurveda Research Initiatives

The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences launched three major initiatives in New Delhi. These include a Research Methodology Textbook, CCRAS PRAYATNA 2026–27, and a Digital Ecosystem Dashboard. The initiatives aim to strengthen evidence-based Ayurveda research and digital governance.

7. DAC Approves ₹52,000 Crore Defence Modernisation Plan

The Defence Acquisition Council approved acquisition proposals worth about ₹52,000 crore. The approvals cover advanced missile systems, anti-drone technologies, naval unmanned systems, and high-altitude pseudo satellites. The move will strengthen the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

8. Sharnbasva University Signs MoU with Vietnam University

Sharnbasva University signed a five-year MoU with the Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The agreement promotes academic collaboration, research, and student-faculty exchange. Initial focus areas include engineering, technology, and management studies.

9. India and Mali Launch First Export Promotion Forum

India and Mali launched the inaugural India–Mali Forum for the Promotion of Exports in Bamako. The forum aims to enhance bilateral trade and investment cooperation. Both countries identified opportunities in textiles, mining, energy, healthcare, and education.

10. Sikkim Mountaineer Tshering Choden Scales Mount Elbrus

Tshering Choden from Sikkim successfully climbed Mount Elbrus, Europe's highest peak. The achievement marks her second successful ascent in the Seven Summits challenge. Earlier, she had climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa.

11. SBI to Acquire NHB's Stake in RDCL

State Bank of India announced the acquisition of National Housing Bank's 10% stake in RMBS Development Company Limited. The move aims to deepen India's residential mortgage-backed securities market. It will help improve liquidity and support housing finance.

12. ISRO Conducts First SOLVE Ground Test

ISRO successfully conducted the first ground test of SOLVE at Sriharikota. The test validated parachute

systems for the Gaganyaan Crew Module. It enhances safety and reliability for India's future human spaceflight missions.

13. Australia Wins Women's T20 World Cup 2026

Australia defeated England in the final to win the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026. The victory secured Australia's record-extending seventh title. Beth Mooney was named Player of the Final and Tournament.

14. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi Becomes India's Youngest International Cricketer

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi made his international debut at the age of 15 years and 99 days. He broke Sachin Tendulkar's long-standing record as India's youngest international debutant. The young batter earned selection after an outstanding IPL 2026 season.

15. Pandavani Artist Teejan Bai Passes Away

Renowned Pandavani singer Teejan Bai passed away at the age of 70. She played a major role in taking the folk art form to global audiences. She was honoured with Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan.

16. World Rural Development Day Observed on July 6

World Rural Development Day is observed annually on 6 July. The day highlights efforts to reduce rural poverty, strengthen food systems, and achieve Sustainable Development Goals. The first observance took place in 2025.

17. World Zoonoses Day Observed on July 6

World Zoonoses Day is observed every year on 6 July. It commemorates Louis Pasteur's successful administration of the first rabies vaccine in 1885. The day raises awareness about diseases transmitted from animals to humans.

18. Delhi Launches ₹8,300 Crore Clean Air Project

The Delhi Government announced the ₹8,300 crore "Clean Air, Healthy Delhi" programme. The project will be implemented with support from the World Bank. It aims to accelerate pollution control efforts under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

19. Pandavani Legend Teejan Bai Passes Away at 70

Padma Vibhushan awardee and renowned Pandavani artist Teejan Bai passed away on 5 July 2026 in Raipur after a prolonged illness. She was the first woman to publicly perform the Kapalik style of Pandavani and helped popularize Chhattisgarh's folk tradition globally. She was honoured with Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan for her outstanding contribution to Indian folk art.

20. Skyroot's Vikram-1 to Launch Six Payloads on Mission Aagaman

Skyroot Aerospace announced that its Vikram-1 rocket will carry six payloads during Mission Aagaman from Sriharikota. The payloads include technology demonstrations, a space-debris robotic arm, a CubeSat, and commemorative items featuring scientists C.V. Raman, Vikram Sarabhai, and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The mission marks another milestone for India's private space sector.

21. Union Ministers Welcome PM Modi's Indonesian Civilian Honour

Union Ministers welcomed the conferment of Indonesia's highest civilian honour, **Bintang Adipurna**, on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar described it as a matter of pride for every Indian. The award recognizes PM Modi's contribution to strengthening India-Indonesia bilateral

relations.

22. World Zoonoses Day Observed on July 6

World Zoonoses Day is observed every year on 6 July to spread awareness about diseases transmitted between animals and humans. The day commemorates Louis Pasteur's successful administration of the first rabies vaccine in 1885. It also promotes the One Health approach for preventing zoonotic diseases.

23. India Hosts BRICS Women Working Group Meeting in Kochi

India is hosting the two-day BRICS Women Working Group Meeting in Kochi under its BRICS Chairship. Senior officials from BRICS countries are discussing women's empowerment, economic participation, and gender-inclusive development. The meeting aims to strengthen cooperation on women-centric policies among member nations.

24. INS Sudarshini Participates in SAIL4TH 250 Celebrations in New York

Indian Naval Sail Training Ship **INS Sudarshini** arrived in New York to participate in the United States International Naval Review 250 and SAIL4TH 250 celebrations. The ship joined the Parade of Sail along the Hudson River, showcasing India's maritime heritage. The visit strengthens maritime diplomacy and international naval cooperation.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 7 JULY 2026

1. **Established:** 1 April 1935 (under RBI Act, 1934) RBI Tightens Bank Lending to Capital Markets
2. **Established: 1958** (merging Technical Development Establishment + Directorate of Technical Development & Production). Underwater Fiber Optic Sensing System (UFOSS)
3. **First adopted: UN General Assembly Resolution 39/248 on 16 April 1985** — following a long campaign by global consumer associations. United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protecti...
4. **Established: 1911** (as Indian Research Fund Association – IRFA); renamed **ICMR in 1949**. ICMR-MINDS Wins Gold at National Awards for e-G...
5. World Rural Development Day is observed annually on 6 July. The day highlights efforts to reduce rural poverty, strengthen food systems, and achieve Sustainable Development Goals. The first observance took place in 2025. World Rural Development Day Observed on July 6

Now test yourself: c4scourses.in/daily-quiz/daily-current-affairs-quiz-07-july-2026/

DAY 6 OF 24

8 July 2026

Wednesday · 12 items · 1 topics

General 2 · Facts To Remember 10

Context

In July 2026, the **5th annual Global Passport Index (GPI) 2026** — released by **Global Citizen Solutions (GCS)**, a **Portugal-based residency and citizenship advisory firm** — ranked **197 countries** on the strength of their passports. **India was ranked 125th** with a composite score of **45.1** — its **highest in 5 years** — but slipped **1 rank from 124th (2025)**; over 5 years, India has moved up just **2 places** (from 127th). **Sweden topped** the list with **96.05**, followed by **Switzerland (2nd)**, **Finland (3rd)**, **Germany (4th)**, **Netherlands (5th)** — Nordic + European nations continue to dominate. The GPI uses **three parameters: Enhanced Mobility (50%), Investment (25%), Quality of Life (25%)**. India's category-wise performance: **136th in Enhanced Mobility (down 1)**, **118th in Quality of Life (up 11)**, and **94th in Investment (up 3)**.

What is India's ranking?

- **Rank 2026: 125th** (of 197).
- **Score: 45.1** (highest in 5 years).
- **Change from 2025: Down 1 rank** (from 124th).
- **Change over 5 years: Up 2 ranks** (from 127th).

Who leads the GPI 2026 (Top 10)?

- **1st: Sweden** — **96.05**.
- **2nd:** Switzerland.
- **3rd:** Finland.
- **4th:** Germany.
- **5th:** Netherlands.
- **6th:** Denmark.
- **7th:** Ireland.
- **8th:** United Kingdom.
- **9th:** Norway.
- **10th:** Singapore.

What are the 3 categories of GPI?

- **Enhanced Mobility** — **50%** weightage.
- **Investment** — **25%** weightage.
- **Quality of Life** — **25%** weightage.

India's Category-wise Performance

- **Enhanced Mobility: 136th** (↓ 1 from 2025).
- **Quality of Life: 118th** (↑ 11 from 2025).
- **Investment: 94th** (↑ 3 from 2025).

Other Major Global Indices Where India is Ranked

#	Index	Publisher	India's Rank	Latest Edition
1	Human Development Index (HDI)	UNDP	130 / 193	HDR 2025 (released May 2025)
2	Global Hunger Index (GHI)	Concern Worldwide + Welthungerhilfe (+ IFHV)	102 / 123	2025
3	Global Innovation Index (GII)	WIPO (with Portulans Institute)	38 / 139	2025
4	Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)	Transparency International	91 / 182	2025 (released Feb 2026)
5	World Press Freedom Index (WPFI)	Reporters Without Borders (RSF)	151 / 180	2025
6	Global Peace Index (GPI)	Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP)	115 / 163	2025
7	Ease of Doing Business (Doing Business Report)	World Bank (<i>discontinued Sept 2021</i>)	63 / 190	2020 (last edition)
8	Sustainable Development Report (SDG Index)	UN SDSN	94 / 167	2026
9	World Happiness Report	University of Oxford's Wellbeing Research Centre (with Gallup and UN SDSN)	116 / 147	2026
10	Environmental Performance Index (EPI)	Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy + Columbia CIESIN	176 / 180	2024 (biennial; next edition 2026)

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the Global Passport Index (GPI) 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It is published by Global Citizen Solutions (GCS), a Portugal-based firm.
2. It ranks 197 countries.
3. Sweden topped the rankings with a score of 96.05.
4. It is published by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **the GPI is published by Global Citizen Solutions (GCS)**, NOT the World Economic Forum. WEF publishes different reports — Global Competitiveness Report, Global Gender Gap Report.)

Q2. With reference to India's rank in GPI 2026, consider the following statements:

1. India was ranked 125th of 197 countries.
2. India's composite score was 45.1 — its highest in 5 years.
3. India dropped 1 rank from 2025 (was 124th).
4. India was ranked 100th in Enhanced Mobility.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **India was ranked 136th in Enhanced Mobility** (down 1 from 2025) — NOT 100th. India performs best in Investment (94th).)

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: Published by GCS, not WEF.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: India ranked 136th in Mobility, not 100th.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: CRITICAL** — GS-II (International Relations, Global Indices); Prelims (indices, publishers, India's rank); Mains-Essay on India's global standing.
- **NABARD Grade A: High** — general awareness on global indices.
- **State PCS: Very High** — indices are recurring GK.
- **RBI Grade B (Phase I + II): CRITICAL** — ESI on economic indices, external sector.

4. INS Mahendragiri (F38)

Context

The **Indian Navy** will formally commission **INS Mahendragiri (F38)** — its **6th of 7 Project 17A (Nilgiri-class) indigenous guided-missile stealth frigates** — on **11 July 2026** at **Visakhapatnam**, in the presence of Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh**. Designed in-house by the **Warship Design Bureau (WDB)** of the Indian Navy and built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Mumbai**, the frigate features **75%+ indigenous content** — showcasing India's push under **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**. Named after the **Mahendragiri mountain range in the Eastern Ghats (Odisha)** — the **2nd-highest peak in Odisha** (~1,501 m) — it joins the **Eastern Fleet under the Eastern Naval Command**. The frigate is powered by a **Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion system**, is **149 metres long**, and was **delivered to the Navy on 30 April 2026** — about 17 months after the lead ship **INS Nilgiri (December 2024)**. Its construction involved **200+ MSMEs**, **~4,000 direct jobs**, and **~10,000 indirect jobs**. The programme cost is **~₹45,000 crore** for all 7 ships.

The commissioning at a glance

- **Ship:** INS Mahendragiri (F38).
- **Class:** Nilgiri-class (Project 17A).
- **Position:** 6th of 7 frigates.
- **Commissioning:** 11 July 2026, Visakhapatnam.
- **Attended by:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- **Fleet:** Eastern Fleet, Eastern Naval Command.
- **Delivered:** 30 April 2026.

What is Project 17A?

- Series of **7 advanced stealth frigates** — successor to Project 17 (Shivalik-class).
- Total cost: **~₹45,000 crore**.
- Builders: **4 by MDL Mumbai + 3 by GRSE Kolkata**.
- Predecessor: **Shivalik-class (Project 17)** — first stealth frigate class.
- Successor: Project 17B (under design).

5. Nepal's 17th-Century Jestha Varna Mahavihar Receives UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award 2025

Source: PIB

Context

In **July 2026**, the **17th-century Jestha Varna Mahavihar** — a historic Buddhist monastery in **Lalitpur, Nepal** — received the **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award of Merit 2025** for its outstanding conservation and restoration following the **2015 Gorkha earthquake (magnitude 7.8)**. The **Indian Embassy in Kathmandu** handed over the Award of Merit at a ceremony where **Jaco Du Toit, UNESCO Representative in Nepal**, presented a metal plaque and official certificate to the **Jestha Varna Mahavihar User Committee**, in the presence of **Chiri Babu Maharjan (Mayor, Lalitpur Metropolitan City)**.

and **Rakesh Pandey (Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Kathmandu)**. Also known as **Jyaba Bahi or Chakrabahil**, the monastery lies **300 metres from the UNESCO-listed Patan Durbar Square**. It was recognised for **exemplary community-centred conservation**, combining **modern seismic retrofitting** with preservation of **Newari woodcarvings + architecture**, while sustaining the living heritage and practices of the **Newar Buddhist community**. The restoration was funded through the **Government of India's post-2015 earthquake cultural heritage reconstruction grant of NPR 13.78 crore**.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Nepal (Total: 4)

- **Kathmandu Valley** (1979).
- **Sagarmatha National Park** (1979) — Everest.
- **Chitwan National Park** (1984).
- **Lumbini** (1997) — Buddha's birthplace.

Who is UNESCO?

- **Full form: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.**
- **Established: 16 November 1945.**
- **HQ: Paris, France.**
- **Members: 194 countries** (India joined **4 November 1946**).
- **Director-General: Audrey Azoulay** (France; since 2017).
- **Motto:** "Building peace in the minds of men and women."
- **Notable programmes:** World Heritage List (1972), Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), Memory of the World (1992), Man and the Biosphere (MAB), Global Geoparks.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to **Jestha Varna Mahavihar**, consider the following statements:

1. It is a 17th-century Buddhist monastery in Lalitpur, Nepal.
2. It received the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award of Merit 2025.
3. Its restoration was funded by India's post-Gorkha earthquake grant of NPR 13.78 crore.
4. It lies within the UNESCO-listed Patan Durbar Square.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **Jestha Varna Mahavihar is located 300 metres AWAY from Patan Durbar Square** — NOT within it.)

Q2. With reference to **UNESCO**, consider the following statements:

1. It was established on 16 November 1945.
2. It is headquartered in Paris, France.
3. Its current Director-General is Audrey Azoulay.
4. India joined UNESCO in 1950.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **India joined UNESCO on 4 November 1946**, NOT 1950.)

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: 300 m from Patan Durbar Square, not within.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: India joined UNESCO in 1946, not 1950.

Facts To Remember

1. New Chiefs Appointed for BPR&D, NCRB & SVPNPA

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet appointed Alok Kumar Mittal as DG of BPR&D, Amit Garg as Director of NCRB, and Sujeet Pandey as Director of SVPNPA. All three are senior IPS officers from the 1993–94 batches. The appointments strengthen leadership in India's key police and law enforcement institutions.

2. NPCI's Dilip Asbe Appointed to SWIFT Supervisory Board

NPCI MD & CEO Dilip Asbe was appointed to the Supervisory Board of SWIFT. The appointment reflects India's growing influence in global digital payment infrastructure. It also highlights the international recognition of India's UPI-led payment ecosystem.

3. TPG-Led Consortium to Acquire Aseem Infrastructure Finance

TPG Rise Climate, along with GIC and ICICI Bank, signed an agreement to acquire 100% stake in Aseem Infrastructure Finance from NIIF. The deal aims to boost climate financing and sustainable infrastructure investment in India. It is among India's largest private climate-focused infrastructure transactions.

4. China Launches HY-2E Marine Observation Satellite

China launched the Haiyang-2E (HY-2E) ocean observation satellite aboard the Long March-4B rocket. The satellite will monitor sea conditions, weather, marine ecosystems, and support disaster management. It marks China's 47th space mission of 2026.

5. India Wins 41 Medals at U15 & U20 Asian Wrestling Championships

India secured 41 medals at the U15 and U20 Asian Wrestling Championships held in Pattaya, Thailand. The tally included 12 gold, 13 silver, and 16 bronze medals. The performance highlights India's growing strength in junior wrestling.

6. 'Bridge Man of India' Girish Bharadwaj Passes Away

Padma Shri awardee Girish Bharadwaj passed away at the age of 76. He was known for constructing over 150 low-cost suspension bridges across five Indian states. His work significantly improved connectivity in remote and rural regions.

7. APEDA Facilitates Export of Jharkhand's Amrapali Mangoes to Dubai

APEDA facilitated the export of 2 metric tonnes of Amrapali mangoes from Gumla and Deoghar districts of Jharkhand to Dubai. The consignment was supplied by women-led Farmer Producer Companies for sale through Lulu stores. The initiative increased farmers' returns by around 180% while promoting exports from tribal regions.

8. Ministry of Panchayati Raj Holds Atmanirbhar Panchayat Workshop

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj organised the third Outreach Workshop on the Atmanirbhar Panchayat Programme in Kochi, Kerala. Over 800 Panchayats participated to discuss financial self-reliance, local resource mobilisation, and sustainable rural governance. The programme encourages Panchayats to strengthen their own revenue and prepare bankable development projects.

9. World Kiswahili Language Day Observed on July 7

World Kiswahili Language Day is observed annually on 7 July under UNESCO. The 2026 theme is "**Kiswahili for Peace, Solidarity and Global Economic Diplomacy.**" The day promotes Kiswahili's role in fostering

unity, cultural exchange, and international cooperation.

10. World Bioproduct Day Observed on July 7

World Bioproduct Day is observed every year on 7 July to promote the use of renewable bio-based products. It highlights the importance of bioproducts in supporting environmental sustainability, climate action, and the circular bioeconomy. The observance was launched in 2021 by the World BioEconomy Forum and the World Bioeconomy Association.

Test yourself on this day's news: c4scourses.in/daily-quiz/daily-current-affairs-quiz-08-july-2026/

DAY 7 OF 24

9 July 2026

Thursday · 8 items · 3 topics

General 4 · Banking and Finance 2 · Agriculture 2

Context

On **Wednesday, 8 July 2026**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, along with **Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto**, visited the **iconic Prambanan Temple complex in Yogyakarta, Java (Indonesia)** — jointly inaugurating a **joint conservation and restoration project** for this **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** will be the **lead agency from the Indian side**.

About Prambanan Temple

- **Location:** ~17 km northeast of **Yogyakarta city**, Central Java, Indonesia.
- **Built:** **9th–10th century** (~1,000+ years old).
- **Built by:** **Sanjaya dynasty** — patrons of Shaivism in ancient Java.
- **Dedication:** Primarily to **Lord Shiva** — also **Brahma + Vishnu (Trimurti)**.
- **Sanctuaries:** Also for the vahanas — **Nandi (Shiva's bull)**, **Garuda (Vishnu's eagle)**, **Hamsa (Brahma's swan)**.
- **Central Shiva temple:** **47 metres (154 feet)** tall — tallest at Prambanan.
- **Reliefs:** Intricate stone reliefs depicting the **Ramayana** — among the finest in Asia.
- **Living heritage:** **Ramayana Ballet** performed near Prambanan — popular with tourists.
- **UNESCO inscription:** 1991.
- **Largest Hindu temple complex in Indonesia.**

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Indonesia (Total: 10)

- **Cultural (5):** Prambanan (1991), Borobudur (1991), Sangiran Early Man Site (1996), Ombilin Coal Mining Heritage (2019), Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta (2023).
- **Natural (5):** Komodo NP (1991), Ujung Kulon NP (1991), Lorentz NP (1999), Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (2004), and Wallace's Line-related.

Who is UNESCO?

- **Full form:** **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.**
- **Established:** **16 November 1945.**
- **HQ:** **Paris, France.**
- **Members:** **194 countries** (India joined **4 November 1946**).
- **Director-General:** **Audrey Azoulay** (France; since 2017).
- **World Heritage List established:** **1972.**
- **India's UNESCO WHS:** **43+ (as of 2025).**

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: CRITICAL** — GS-I (Art & Culture, Ancient History, Hindu-Buddhist civilisation); GS-II (India-Indonesia + India-Australia + Act East Policy); Prelims (Prambanan, Borobudur, ASI, Sanjaya + Sailendra dynasties); Mains-Essay on cultural diplomacy.
- **NABARD Grade A: Low-Medium** — Peripheral.
- **State PCS: Very High** — Cultural + international relations.

2. UDISE+ 2025–26 Report

Source: PIB

Why in News?

The **Union Ministry of Education** released the **UDISE+ Report 2025–26** on **7 July 2026**. It is India's **largest school education database**.

What is UDISE+?

- **Full Form:** Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+)
- **Launched: 2018–19** (successor to UDISE)
- **Under:** Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education
- **Type:** Online Education Management Information System (EMIS)
- **Coverage:** All schools from **Pre-primary to Class 12**
- **Purpose:**
 - Collect school education data
 - Help in policy making
 - Monitor schemes like **Samagra Shiksha** and **PM POSHAN**

Key Highlights of UDISE+ Report 2025–26

Parameter	Key Facts (2025–26)
Schools Covered	14.67 lakh
Teachers	1.03 crore
Students	24.72 crore
Teacher Strength	Increased by 8.3% since 2022–23
Impact	Improved Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) across all school stages

Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR)

Level	PTR
Foundational	10:1
Preparatory	12:1
Middle	17:1
Secondary	21:1

NEP 2020 Benchmark: 30:1

Exam Point: All stages perform **better than the NEP target**.

Key Indicators of UDISE+ Report 2025–26

Indicator	2025–26 Status
Dropout Rate (Preparatory)	1.8% (Declined)
Dropout Rate (Secondary)	7.0% (Declined)
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) – Secondary	71.7% (Up from 68.5%)
Women Teachers	54.9%
Girls' Enrolment	48.4%
Schools with Computer Facility	69.9%
Schools with Internet Connectivity	67.4%

Indicator	2025–26 Status
Basic Facilities Available	Electricity, Drinking Water, Functional Toilets, Handwashing Facilities (available in most schools)
Aadhaar–Seeded Students	90.2%
Student Identification	Every student has a Unique Educational ID (EID)

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the UDISE+ Report 2025–26, consider the following statements:

1. It was released by the Union Ministry of Education on 7 July 2026.
2. It covers 14.67 lakh schools, 1.03 crore teachers, and 24.72 crore students.
3. It is one of the world's largest school management information systems.
4. It is prepared by NITI Aayog.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **UDISE+ is prepared by the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education** — NOT NITI Aayog.)

Q2. With reference to Pupil–Teacher Ratios (PTRs) per UDISE+ 2025–26, consider the following pairs:

1. Foundational — 10.
2. Preparatory — 12.
3. Middle — 17.
4. Secondary — 30.

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Pair 4 is wrong; **PTR at Secondary is 21** — NOT 30. In fact, 30:1 is the NEP 2020 BENCHMARK; India's actual PTR at all 4 stages is BETTER than this benchmark.)

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: UDISE+ by Ministry of Education, not NITI Aayog.
2. **(c)** — Pair 4 wrong: Secondary PTR is 21, not 30 (30 is NEP benchmark).

3. PM–SETU Scheme

Source: *BL*

Context

On **Tuesday, 7 July 2026**, the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** approved the **pan–India nationwide rollout of the ₹60,000–crore Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM–SETU) scheme** across **200 Industrial Training Institute (ITI) clusters** — moving beyond the pilot phase — along with clearance for **Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs) worth ₹1,237.58 crore** for 5 clusters spread across **Odisha, Gujarat, and Telangana**. The decision was taken at the **4th meeting of the National Steering Committee (NSC)** chaired by **Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, MSDE**.

The scheme at a glance

- **Scheme: Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM–SETU).**
- **Type: Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).**

- **Outlay: ₹60,000 crore** over **5 years**.
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).**
- **Announced: Union Budget 2024–25.**
- **Union Cabinet approval: May 2025.**
- **Formal launch by PM Modi: 4 October 2025.**
- **Nationwide rollout approved: 7 July 2026.**
- **Global co-financing: World Bank + Asian Development Bank (ADB).**

Key Objectives

- Modernise India's ITI ecosystem.
- Upgrade **1,000 government ITIs** into industry-aligned training institutions.
- Bridge the **skills-jobs mismatch**.
- Align vocational training with **current + future industry requirements**.
- Prepare a **future-ready workforce**.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the PM-SETU Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with a total outlay of ₹60,000 crore over 5 years.
2. It aims to upgrade 1,000 government ITIs across India.
3. It follows a hub-and-spoke model with 200 hub ITIs and ~800 spoke ITIs.
4. It was announced in the Union Budget 2023–24.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **PM-SETU was announced in the Union Budget 2024–25** — NOT 2023–24. It was approved by the Union Cabinet in May 2025 and formally launched by PM Modi on 4 October 2025.)

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: Announced in Budget 2024–25, not 2023–24.

4. AISHE 2023–24 Report

Source: *The Hindu*

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Education** released the **AISHE Reports 2022–23 and 2023–24** on **8 July 2026**. The report provides the latest data on **higher education in India**.

What is AISHE?

- **Full Form:** All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)
- **Started: 2010–11**
- **Conducted by:** Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education
- **Type:** Annual web-based survey of higher education institutions (HEIs)
- **Coverage:** Universities, colleges and standalone institutions across India

Key Highlights

Parameter	2023–24
Total Enrolment	4.50 crore
Female Enrolment	2.24 crore

Parameter	2023-24
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)	30.0
Female GER	31.2
Gender Parity Index (GPI)	1.08
STEM Enrolment	1.02 crore
Female Share in STEM	44%
Total Faculty	17.32 lakh
Women Faculty	44.9%
Institutional Participation	59,533 institutions (>90%)

Major Trends

- Total enrolment increased by **31.5%** since 2014-15.
- Female enrolment increased by **42.2%** (faster than overall growth).
- GER reached **30** for the first time.
- **Female GER (31.2)** is higher than the national GER.
- **GPI remained above 1.0** for the **7th consecutive year**, showing higher female participation.
- **ST enrolment** recorded the highest growth (**75.7%**) among disadvantaged groups.

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
AISHE	India's annual survey that collects data on higher education.
GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio)	Percentage of people aged 18-23 years enrolled in higher education.
Female GER	GER calculated only for female students.
GPI (Gender Parity Index)	Ratio of female GER to male GER; GPI > 1 means more female participation.
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics courses.
HEI (Higher Education Institution)	Universities, colleges and standalone higher education institutions.
DCF (Data Capture Format)	Online format through which institutions submit AISHE data.
Faculty	Teachers working in higher education institutions.

5. IGU World LNG Report 2026

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

The **International Gas Union (IGU)** released the **World LNG Report 2026** on **8 July 2026**. India became the **4th largest LNG regasification market** in the world, surpassing Spain.

What is the IGU World LNG Report?

- **Published by:** International Gas Union (IGU)
- **Released:** Annually
- **Purpose:** Provides global data on LNG production, trade, imports, exports and regasification infrastructure.

Key Highlights

Parameter	2025 Status
India's LNG Regasification Capacity	52.5 mtpa
Global Rank	4th (surpassed Spain)
Operational LNG Terminals	8
India's LNG Import Rank	4th largest importer
New Capacity Added in 2025	7.1 mtpa
Share in Global Capacity Addition	11.3%

What is LNG?

- **Full form: Liquefied Natural Gas.**
- Natural gas cooled to **−162°C** to convert it into liquid for easy transport and storage.
- **Composition:** ~95% Methane (CH₄) + trace ethane, propane, nitrogen.
- **Uses:** Power generation, city gas, transport fuel, fertilizer feedstock.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: CRITICAL** — GS-III (Energy, Infrastructure, Environment, External Sector); GS-II (International Institutions); Prelims (LNG, IGU, PNGRB, Petronet, Dahej); Mains-Essay on energy transition.
- **NABARD Grade A: Medium** — General awareness on energy sector.
- **State PCS (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha): CRITICAL** — LNG terminals in these states.

Banking and Finance

1. SEBI Amends FPI Rules

Source: The Economic Times

Context

SEBI has amended the **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) Regulations** by replacing the existing **US dollar-denominated registration fee** with an **Indian Rupee (INR)-denominated fee structure**. The new rules will become effective **after six months**.

Key Changes

1. Registration Fee in INR

- Earlier: **USD 2,500** for Category-I FPIs and FVCIs.
- Now: **₹2.3 lakh**.
- Objective: Remove dependence on US dollar-based payments.

2. Mandatory PAN-related Information

- Applicants must provide:
 - Date of Birth (Individuals), or
 - Date of Incorporation (Entities)
- This will facilitate **Permanent Account Number (PAN)** allotment.

3. Fee Remittance by DDPs

- **Designated Depository Participants (DDPs)** must transfer the registration fee collected from FPIs to

SEBI **within 5 working days** of granting registration.

Why has SEBI made this change?

- Simplifies fee collection.
- Eliminates issues arising from foreign currency transactions.
- Improves accounting and reconciliation.
- Enhances operational efficiency and transparency.

Important Terms

Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI)

- A foreign investor investing in Indian financial assets such as shares, bonds and mutual funds.
- Regulated by **SEBI**.

Foreign Venture Capital Investor (FVCI)

- A foreign investor investing in Indian venture capital funds or start-up companies.
- Registered with SEBI.

Designated Depository Participant (DDP)

- SEBI-authorised intermediary responsible for processing FPI registration and compliance.

FPI vs FDI

Basis	FPI (Foreign Portfolio Investment)	FDI (Foreign Direct Investment)
Meaning	Investment in financial assets like shares, bonds, mutual funds	Investment in a company to establish or control business operations
Purpose	Earn returns from financial markets	Long-term business expansion and control
Control	No management control	Significant ownership and management control
Investment Nature	Indirect investment	Direct investment
Investment Horizon	Short-term	Long-term

Agriculture

1. PRAGATI Initiative

Source: *Business Line*

Context

Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** launched the **PRAGATI** initiative on **9 July 2026**. The initiative aims to create a **nationwide ecosystem of 20,000 agri entrepreneurs** to promote regenerative agriculture and rural transformation.

The initiative at a glance

- **Programme:** PRAGATI.
- **Launched by:** Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
- **Date:** 8 July 2026 (event coverage 9 July 2026).
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW)
- **Nature:** Multi-stakeholder + privately-led nationwide initiative.
- **Focus:** Regenerative + climate-resilient agriculture through inclusive agri-entrepreneurship.

What is PRAGATI?

8 States Covered

- **Madhya Pradesh + Bihar + Uttar Pradesh + Assam + West Bengal + Jharkhand + Maharashtra + Rajasthan.**

What Will Agri-Entrepreneurs Do?

Core Services at Village-Level Kiosks:

- **Agronomy advisory** — crop guidance + best practices.
- **Soil health services** — soil testing + nutrient recommendations.
- **Mechanisation solutions** — access to farm equipment + tools.
- **Credit linkages** — connecting farmers to bank + microfinance credit.
- **Market access** — helping farmers sell at better prices.
- **Livelihood opportunities** — beyond primary farming.

Financial + Digital Inclusion Push:

- **Credit** access.
- **Insurance** (linked to PMFBY etc.).
- **Savings** products.
- **Government entitlements** (PM-KISAN, DBTs).

What is Regenerative Agriculture?

- **Definition:** Farming approach that **regenerates soil health**, biodiversity, water cycles, and ecosystem functions.
- **Key practices:**
 - **No-till / minimum-till farming.**
 - **Cover crops.**
 - **Crop rotation.**
 - **Agroforestry.**
 - **Livestock integration.**
- **Benefits:** Improved soil carbon, reduced chemical dependency, better climate resilience.
- **Contrasts with:** Conventional industrial farming (soil-depleting).

What is Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA)?

- **Coined by:** FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization).
- **3 Pillars of CSA:**
 1. **Sustainably increase productivity + incomes.**
 2. **Adapt + build resilience** to climate change.
 3. **Reduce/remove greenhouse gases** where possible.

What is an Agri-Entrepreneur?

- Local rural individual trained to provide **agronomy advisory + input services + market linkages** to smallholder farmers.
- Runs a **village-level kiosk** (Agri Business Centre).
- Serves as the **last-mile delivery mechanism** for climate-smart + technology-driven farming.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the PRAGATI initiative launched on 8 July 2026, consider the following

statements:

1. It was launched by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
2. It aims to create a nationwide ecosystem of 20,000 agri-entrepreneurs.
3. It targets impact on 20 lakh (2 million) smallholder farmers.
4. It is fully funded by the Government of India with no private participation.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **PRAGATI is a PRIVATELY-LED multi-stakeholder initiative** — NOT fully government-funded. It is backed by corporate CSR arms (PepsiCo, SBI Foundation), global philanthropies (Gates Foundation), and NGOs — set to be **India's largest privately-led agri-entrepreneurship programme.**)

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: PRAGATI is privately led, not fully government-funded.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: CRITICAL** — GS-II (Government Policies, Public-Private-Philanthropic Partnership); GS-III (Agriculture, Rural Economy, Climate Change); Prelims (PRAGATI, coalition partners, key persons); Mains-Essay on agri-entrepreneurship + climate-resilient farming.
- **NABARD Grade A: CRITICAL** — Direct subject: rural economy, agri-entrepreneurship, farmer livelihoods, FPOs; ARD paper must-know.

2. Solution for Agriculture Lies in Non-Agriculture

Source: BS

Context

On **8 July 2026**, **Prof. S. Mahendra Dev**, Chairman of the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)**, delivered a keynote address at the **Institute of Economic Growth (IEG)**. He emphasized that **India's agricultural problem can be solved by creating more non-farm employment opportunities in rural areas.**

About EAC-PM

- **Full Form:** Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister
- **Established (Present Form):** 26 September 2017
- **Nature:**
 - Non-Constitutional
 - Non-Statutory
 - Advisory Body
- Advice is **not binding** on the Prime Minister.
- **Current Chairman:** Prof. S. Mahendra Dev (since 5 June 2025)

Key Data (Important for NABARD)

- Agriculture contributes **~17%** to India's GDP.
- Agriculture employs **~43%** of India's workforce.
- Agriculture has grown at **4.5% annually** over the last decade.
- **86%** of Indian farmers are **small and marginal farmers.**

Major Recommendations

1. Structural Transformation

- Shift surplus labour from agriculture to **rural non-farm sectors**.
- Develop rural industries, MSMEs and services to increase farm incomes.

2. Income-Centric Agriculture

- Focus on **farmer income**, not just food production.
- Promote:
 - High-value crops
 - Horticulture
 - Livestock
 - Fisheries
 - Agro-processing
 - Better marketing infrastructure

3. Crop Diversification

- Reduce dependence on rice and wheat.
- Encourage cultivation of:
 - Pulses
 - Oilseeds
 - Millets

4. Strengthen Farmer Institutions

- Promote:
 - Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)
 - Cooperatives
 - Aggregation platforms
- Important because **86% of farmers own small landholdings**.

5. Technology in Agriculture

- Use:
 - [AgriStack](#)
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI)
 - Drones
 - Biotechnology
 - Satellite technology
 - Gene Editing (allowed in India)

6. Export Policy

- Maintain a **stable and predictable export policy**.
- This will improve farmers' income and India's credibility in global markets.

Facts To Remember

Defence & Science

- **DRDO Pinaka Rocket** — successfully test-fired the long-range guided version from **Integrated Test Range, Chandipur (Odisha)**; validated user-defined **minimum strike range of 60 km**; hit designated

target with high precision. (*Pinaka is a Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher system — remember this is the guided variant, not the standard MBRL.*)

- **ISRO CE20 Cryogenic Engine** — Flight Acceptance Hot Test conducted on **6 July 2026** at Main Engine & Stage Test facility (MET), IPRC **Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu**, for the **LVM3-M7 mission**; engine ran at **19.5 tonnes thrust for 45 seconds** and **22 tonnes for 25 seconds**.

National Schemes & Government Initiatives

- **Tribex** — launched by Union Tribal Affairs Minister **Jual Oram** at the National Workshop on Strengthening Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**; India's **first-of-its-kind digital learning platform** for tribal arts, culture and traditional knowledge.

International Affairs

- **UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance 2026** — inaugural session held in **Geneva, Switzerland** on **6-7 July 2026**; Indian delegation led by **Kirti Vardhan Singh**, MoS in **MEA and MoEFCC** (dual portfolio — commonly asked).
- Established under **UNGA Resolution 79/325**, following the **Global Digital Compact** adopted under the **Pact of the Future** (September 2024).
- **Co-chairs: Paul Kagame** (President of Rwanda) and **Marc Benioff** (CEO, Salesforce); **Vice-Chair: Doreen Bogdan-Martin** (Secretary-General, ITU).

Environment & Biodiversity

- **Mizoram's Natural History Museum (NHM), Aizawl** — notified by **MoEFCC** as India's **21st Designated Repository** under **Section 39 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, on recommendation of the **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)**.
- **Himalayan Yak** — scientists from **ICAR's National Research Centre on Yak (NRC-Y)** and **Assam Don Bosco University** developed an **IoT-based smart collar system** for high-altitude yaks.
- The **Domestic Yak (*Bos grunniens*)** — famously called the "**Ship of the Himalayas**" — is adapted to sub-zero alpine conditions and provides milk, meat, fibre, fuel and heavy-load transport.

Banking, Finance & Economy

- **GIFT City-VIFC-DN MoU** — Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (India's IFSC) signed an MoU with **Vietnam International Financial Center-Da Nang** in New Delhi to promote cross-border investment and financial linkages.
- GIFT City also signed MoUs with **Tata Communications Limited** (for Global Capability Centres) and **CEPT University**,

Awards & Recognitions (GI Tag)

- **Sirsa Kinnow** — granted GI tag by the **Geographical Indication Registry (GIR)** under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry; **Haryana's first-ever GI-tagged fruit**.
- Certification granted to **Kharisureran Farmer Producer Company Limited** in Sirsa district.
- **Kinnow origins**: developed in early 20th century in **California, USA** by horticulturist **Howard B. Frost**; a hybrid of **King Mandarin (*Citrus nobilis*)** × **Willow Leaf Mandarin (*Citrus × deliciosa*)**; rich in Vitamin C, calcium and potassium.

Appointments & Resignations

- **Mahesh Muralidhar Pai** — appointed **MD & CEO of South Indian Bank (SIB)** for a **3-year term from 1 October 2026**; succeeds **P.R. Seshadri**.
- **N.S. Vishwanathan** — reappointed as **Non-Executive (Part-time) Chairman of Axis Bank Limited** for three years (**27 October 2026 – 26 October 2029**).
- **Sourav Ganguly** — appointed **brand ambassador of InsuranceDekho**; launched the "**Khul Kar Khelo**"

campaign for insurance advisors.

- **InsuranceDekho** — founded **2016**, headquartered in **Gurugram, Haryana**; legal name **Girnar Insurance Brokers Pvt. Ltd.**

Sports & Miscellaneous

- **Durand Cup 2026** — the **President of India** unveiled and flagged off the **three distinct winner trophies** at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre.
- **Bisleri–Indian Coast Guard partnership** — Bisleri International signed a **Letter of Association (LoA)** with the **ICG (Kerala and Mahe)** through its flagship initiative **"Bottles for Change" (BFC)**.

Obituary

- **Shapoor Zadran** — former **Afghanistan left-arm fast bowler**, passed away at **38** on **7 July 2026** in New Delhi; born **8 July 1987** in **Paktia Province, Afghanistan**.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 9 JULY 2026

1. Total enrolment increased by **31.5%** since 2014–15. AISHE 2023–24 Report
2. **Established (Present Form)**: 26 September 2017 Solution for Agriculture Lies in Non-Agriculture
3. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with a total outlay of ₹60,000 crore over **5 years**. PM-SETU Scheme
4. It was released by the Union Ministry of Education on 7 July 2026. UDISE+ 2025–26 Report
5. **Composition**: ~95% Methane (CH₄) + trace ethane, propane, nitrogen. IGU World LNG Report 2026

Now test yourself: c4scourses.in/daily-quiz/daily-current-affairs-quiz-09-july-2026/

DAY 8 OF 24

10 July 2026

Friday · 26 items · 2 topics

General 1 · Banking and Finance 2 · Facts To Remember 23

Context

The **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** released the **Global Liveability Index 2026** — its annual assessment of **173 cities worldwide** across **30 indicators** grouped into **5 categories: Stability, Healthcare, Culture and Environment, Education, and Infrastructure**.

Five Assessment Categories

Category	Measures
Stability	Crime, terrorism, civil unrest
Healthcare	Quality of public & private healthcare
Culture & Environment	Climate, culture, environment, corruption, censorship
Education	Quality and availability of schools
Infrastructure	Roads, transport, housing, connectivity

Top 10 Most Liveable Cities (2026)

Rank	City	Country
1	Copenhagen	Denmark
2	Vienna	Austria
3	Melbourne	Australia
4	Sydney	Australia
5	Zurich	Switzerland
6	Geneva	Switzerland
7	Osaka	Japan
8	Adelaide	Australia
9	Vancouver	Canada
10	Tokyo	Japan

Indian Cities in the Index

City	Rank (2026)
New Delhi	120
Mumbai	121
Chennai	123
Bengaluru	127

"The best time to revise was yesterday. The next best is now."

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Bottom Ranked City

Rank	City	Country
173	Damascus	Syria

Who is EIU?

- **Full form: Economist Intelligence Unit.**
- **Founded: 1946** — nearly **80 years old**.
- **HQ: London, UK.**
- **Part of: Economist Enterprise** — part of **The Economist Group**.
- **Publications:**
 - **Global Liveability Index** (since 1988).
 - **Democracy Index** (annual).
 - **Cost of Living Survey**.
 - **World Ahead** (macroeconomic forecasts).
 - **Business Environment Rankings**.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the EIU Global Liveability Index 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It is published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
2. It assesses 173 cities worldwide across 30 indicators.
3. The 5 categories are: Stability, Healthcare, Culture and Environment, Education, and Infrastructure.
4. It is published by the World Bank.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four (e) None

(Statement 4 is wrong; **the Global Liveability Index is published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) — part of The Economist Group** — NOT the World Bank.)

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: EIU publishes it, not World Bank.

3. Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0**Why in News?**

The **Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education (MoE)** released the **Performance Grading Index 2.0 for States/UTs (PGI-S)** and **Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D)** reports for **2025-26**. **No State or Union Territory** achieved the **highest performance grade (Utkarsh)**.

What is Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0?

- **Launched: 2018** (covering data for **2017-18**).
- **Developed by:** Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education.
- **Purpose:** Measures the performance of school education across States, UTs and Districts.
- **Approach:** Uses **performance grades instead of rankings** to encourage improvement rather than competition.

Types of PGI

Index	Coverage	Maximum Score
PGI-S	States & Union Territories	1000
PGI-D	Districts	600

PGI-S Framework (States & UTs)

- **Total Indicators: 70**
- **Total Score: 1000**
- **Major Categories: 2**

Category	Covers
Outcomes	Learning, access, infrastructure and equity
Governance & Management	Governance processes and teacher education

Six Domains

- Learning Outcomes & Quality
- Access Outcomes
- Infrastructure & Facilities
- Educational Equity
- Governance Processes
- Teacher Education & Training

PGI-D Framework (Districts)

- **Coverage: 784 districts**
- **Total Indicators: 70**
- **Total Score: 600**

Six Domains

- Outcomes
- Effective Classroom Transaction
- Infrastructure Facilities & Student Entitlements
- School Safety & Child Protection
- Digital Learning
- Governance Process

Performance Grades

Grade	Score Range
Utkarsh	Above 90%
Uttam	61–90%
Prachesta	31–60%
Akanshi	Below 40%

Exam Point: No State/UT secured the Utkarsh grade in 2025–26.

Banking and Finance

1. IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO)

Why in News?

The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** released the **World Economic Outlook (WEO) Update – July 2026**, titled **"Global Economy in Crosscurrents of War and Technology"**. The report projects **India's GDP growth at 6.4% in FY27**.

India-Specific Highlights

Indicator	Details
FY27 GDP Growth Forecast	6.4%
April 2026 Forecast	6.5%
FY28 GDP Growth Forecast	6.7%
India's GDP Growth (FY26)	7.7%

Exam Point: India's FY27 growth forecast was **revised down** from **6.5% to 6.4%**, while the **FY28 forecast was raised to 6.7%**.

Global Economic Outlook

Indicator	2026	2027
Global GDP Growth	3.0%	3.4%
World Trade Growth	3.5%	4.3%
Global Headline Inflation	4.7%	3.9%

Additional Fact: World trade growth is expected to slow from **5.0% (2025)** to **3.5% (2026)** before recovering.

About World Economic Outlook (WEO)

- **Published by:** International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- **Frequency:** Twice a year (April & October), with periodic updates.
- **Purpose:** Provides forecasts for global economic growth, inflation, trade and major macroeconomic indicators.

About IMF

Feature	Details
Full Form	International Monetary Fund
Established	1944 (Bretton Woods Conference)
Headquarters	Washington, D.C., USA
Member Countries	191
Managing Director	Kristalina Georgieva

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
GDP	Total value of goods and services produced in a country during a year.
FY27	Financial Year 2026–27 (1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027).

Term	Meaning
Headline Inflation	Overall inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), including food and fuel.
World Trade Volume	Total volume of international trade in goods and services.

2. ADB India Economic Outlook 2026

Why in News?

In **July 2026**, the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** released the **ADB India Economic Outlook 2026**. ADB **revised India's GDP growth forecast for FY2026–27 (FY27) downward to 6.6%** from **6.9%** (April 2026 forecast), mainly due to **high energy prices** impacting household consumption.

India-Specific Highlights

- **FY27 GDP Growth: 6.6%** (*Earlier: 6.9%*)
- **FY28 GDP Growth: 7.3%** (*Unchanged*)
- **Reason for FY27 downgrade:** Rising energy prices reducing household purchasing power.
- **FY28 outlook:** Supported by policy measures, stronger exports, and improving global economic conditions.

India's Inflation Forecast

Financial Year	Inflation Forecast
FY27	5.2% (<i>Earlier: 4.5%</i>)
FY28	4.0% (<i>Unchanged</i>)

FY28 Forecasts

- **India: 7.3%** (*Unchanged*)
- **Developing Asia-Pacific: 5.1%** (*Unchanged*)

Reasons for India's Growth Downgrade

- Rising energy prices.
- Pressure on household incomes and consumption.
- Higher inflation.
- Global economic uncertainties.

About Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Feature	Details
Established	1966
Headquarters	Manila, Philippines
Members	69 (49 regional, 20 non-regional)
India Joined	1966 (Founding Member)
President	Masato Kanda

Facts To Remember

DEFENCE & SECURITY

1. DRDO Pinaka Long-Range Guided Rocket Test

- DRDO test-fired the **Pinaka Long-Range Guided Rocket (LRGR)** at **ITR Chandipur, Odisha**.
- Validated user-specified **minimum range of 60 km**; hit target with precision.
- Fired from a **Pinaka MBRL launcher** — can fire multiple variants from a single launcher.
- Developed by **ARDE, Pune** with HEMRL, DRDL & RCI (Hyderabad).

2. Drishti-10 Starliner UAV Crash

- Indian Navy's **Drishti-10 UAV** crashed near **Porbandar (Gujarat)** on **8 July 2026**; no casualties; **Board of Inquiry** ordered.
- Operated by **INAS 343 "Frontier Formidables"** (commissioned Jan 2024, Porbandar).
- **Second Hermes-900 platform loss in 18 months** (first: Jan 2025, ditched in Arabian Sea).
- Indian version of Israel's **Hermes-900 MALE UAV** (Elbit Systems); made by **Adani Defence** at **Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- **Specs:** endurance **36 hours**, payload **~450 kg**, cost **~₹140 crore/unit**.

3. Adani Defence Missile Complex in MP

- **₹2,500 crore investment** at **Shivpuri, MP** — **South Asia's largest private missile ecosystem**.
- Foundation stone laid by MP CM **Mohan Yadav** and Union Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia**.
- India's **first private complex** integrating composite propellants, **TNT manufacturing** and missile system integration at one site.

MISCELLANEOUS & MAPPING

4. The Hummus Trail

- Term for Indian tourist enclaves frequented by young Israeli tourists post-military service.
- Came into focus after the **Hind Rajab Foundation** sought action against an Israeli tourist in **Himachal Pradesh**.
- **~80,000 Israelis** visit India annually; extended trip called **"Tiul Gadol"** (6–12 months).
- **Israel allocated 4 million NIS in 2026** for India-Israel tourism cooperation.

5. Kamarajar Port Achieves 18-Metre Draft

- **Kamarajar Port Ltd (KPL)** completed **Capital Dredging Phase VI**.
- India's **2nd major port** (after **Visakhapatnam**) to achieve **18 m draft** — can handle **Cape-size vessels**.
- Formerly **Ennore Port Ltd**; India's **first corporatized Major Port**; operates on **Landlord Port Model**.
- On **Coromandel Coast**, **~24 km north of Chennai (TN)**.
- Declared India's **12th Major Port** under **Indian Ports Act, 1908** in **March 1999**; commercial ops began **1 Feb 2001**.

STATE POLICIES

6. Gujarat Data Centre Policy (2026–29)

- Gujarat's **first-ever Data Centre Policy**, unveiled by CM **Bhupendra Patel** in Gandhinagar.
- Target: **₹6 lakh crore investment** and **7.5 GW data centre capacity**.
- Focus: **hyperscale data centres, cloud computing, AI infrastructure**.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

7. 13th ASEAN-India AITIGA Joint Committee Meeting

- Hosted by India at **Vaniya Bhawan, New Delhi (6-10 July 2026)**, hybrid format).
- Co-chaired by **Nitin Kumar Yadav** (India) & **Mastura Ahmad Mustafa** (Malaysia).
- All **10 ASEAN members** participated.
- **AITIGA**: signed **13 Aug 2009**, in force **1 Jan 2010**; goods pillar of **AIFTA** (services/investment pillars in force July 2015).
- **India-ASEAN trade: US\$128 billion in 2025-26**; ASEAN = **~11% of India's global trade**.
- Trade deficit widened from **US\$7.5 bn (inception)** to **~US\$44 bn (2023)**.

8. PM Modi's Visit to Indonesia (6-8 July 2026)

- 3-day state visit at invitation of President **Prabowo Subianto**.
- Modi became **1st Indian PM to address the Indonesian Parliament (DPR — Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat)**.
- Unveiled the "**Ganga-Mahakam Vision**"; visited the **Prambanan Temple** (UNESCO WHS, Yogyakarta) — restoration led by **ASI**.
- Conferred with "**Bintang Adipurna of the Republic of Indonesia**" — Indonesia's **highest civilian honour**.
- Visit outcomes: **20 total — 14 MoUs + 6 announcements**.

9. CSIR's Manas and Mahabharata Centre in Kyrgyzstan

- **Centre for Studies of International Relations (CSIR)**, New Delhi + **Manas National Academy** established the **International Centre for Civilizational Studies 'Manas and Mahabharata'** in **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**.
- First **Hindi translation of the Kyrgyz epic 'Manas'** released, by **Hem Chandra Pande & Ramakant Dwivedi**.
- Trilateral agreement signed with **7 Kyrgyz universities**.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

10. CSIR-IICT's Indigenous Green Refrigerant Technology

- **CSIR-IICT, Hyderabad** developed India's first indigenous process for **Hydrofluoroolefin-1234yf (HFO-1234yf)**.
- Will replace **HFCs** in refrigeration and AC systems (supports Atmanirbhar Bharat).
- **Bonus: CSIR-CIMFR (Dhanbad)** developed **Smart Algal Liquid Tree (SALT)** — a mobile photobioreactor using **microalgae** to absorb CO₂. Installed at **CSIR-CIMFR** and **NCL, Singrauli (MP)**.

11. ISRO's Gaganyaan IMAT-05 Parachute Test

- ISRO conducted **Integrated Main Parachute Airdrop Test-05 (IMAT-05)** on **7 July 2026** at **ADRDE drop zone, Sheopur, MP**.
- Payload dropped from **2.5 km altitude** via an **IAF IL-76 aircraft**.
- Validated Main Parachute System for **uncrewed Gaganyaan G1 mission**.
- Gaganyaan Crew Module uses **10 parachutes of 4 types** (Apex Cover Separation, Drogue, Pilot, Main).
- **ISRO**: est. **15 Aug 1969**; HQ Bengaluru; Chairman **V. Narayanan**.

ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

12. Aviva Becomes First Foreign Insurer to Fully Own Indian Life Insurance Business

- UK's **Aviva Plc** to acquire remaining **26% stake** in **Aviva Life Insurance India** from **Dabur Invest Corp (DIC)**.
- Becomes **1st foreign insurer to fully own** its Indian life insurance business.
- Follows GoI's decision to allow **100% FDI in insurance (May 2026)**.
- Aviva's stake rises **74% → 100%**; ends Dabur's 20+ year JV (began 2001).

SPORTS

13. Aswath S Becomes India's 98th Chess Grandmaster

- 17-year-old **Aswath S** from **Kanyakumari, TN** became India's **98th GM** at the **Pune International GM Round Robin Tournament**.
- Secured third and final GM norm by finishing runner-up with **7/9 points**.
- Earlier norms: **Grenke Open A, Germany (April 2025)** and **First Saturday GM, Budapest (Dec 2025)**.

14. F1 British Grand Prix 2026

- Won by Monaco's **Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)** at **Silverstone Circuit, Northamptonshire, England** — 9th round of 2026 season.
- Leclerc's **first win of 2026, 9th career F1 win**; Ferrari's **250th F1 GP triumph**.
- **Podium**: Leclerc → George Russell (Mercedes) → Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari).
- **Championship leaders**: Kimi Antonelli (Drivers', 179 pts); **Mercedes** (Constructors', 333 pts).

15. Telangana to Host 8th Khelo India Youth Games

- Announced by Sports Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya**; to be held in **November 2026**.
- **~8,000 athletes** expected.
- **7th KIYG (2025)**: hosted by **Bihar**; **Maharashtra** was overall champion.
- Khelo India Programme launched in **2018** by MYAS.

16. Leander Paes Joins Asian Tennis Federation as Player Ambassador

- Appointed **Player Ambassador of ATF** to promote grassroots tennis in Asia.
- **Career**: bronze at **1996 Atlanta Olympics** (India's only Olympic tennis medal); former World No. 1 in doubles; **18 Grand Slam titles**; **8 Asian Games medals (5 gold)**.
- **Awards**: Arjuna (1990), Khel Ratna (1996–97), Padma Shri (2001), Padma Bhushan (2014).
- Inducted into **International Tennis Hall of Fame in 2024**.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 10 JULY 2026

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2. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** released the **World Economic Outlook (WEO) Update – July 2026**, titled "**Global Economy in Crosscurrents of War and Technology**". The report projects **India's GDP growth at 6.4% in FY27**. IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO)
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5. Follows Govt's decision to allow **100% FDI in insurance (May 2026)**. Aviva Becomes First Foreign Insurer to Fully Own...

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DAY 9 OF 24

11 July 2026

Saturday · 18 items · 2 topics

General 7 · Agriculture 1 · Facts To Remember 10

Why in News?

The **Prime Minister of India** visited **Melbourne, Australia**, to participate in the **Third India–Australia Annual Summit**. Both countries adopted a **Joint Statement** to strengthen their **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)**.

What is the India–Australia Annual Summit?

- **Highest-level bilateral engagement mechanism** between India and Australia.
- Held **annually** to review and expand the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)**.
- **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)** was established in **2020**.

Major Outcomes of the Summit**1. Defence & Maritime Security**

- Joint Declaration on **Defence and Security Cooperation** adopted.
- Annual **Defence Ministers' Dialogue** established.
- **India–Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap** launched.
- **MoU** signed between the **Australian Maritime Border Command** and the **Indian Coast Guard**.

2. Trade & Critical Minerals

- Both countries agreed to accelerate negotiations for the **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)**.
- Reaffirmed implementation of the **Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)**.
- Strengthened partnership on **critical minerals** such as **lithium** and **cobalt**.

3. Climate, Energy & Space

- Administrative Arrangement signed under the **India–Australia Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement**.
- Enables long-term **Australian uranium exports** to India under **IAEA safeguards**.
- Operationalized the **Rooftop Solar Academy** under the Energy Security Partnership.
- Australia to provide tracking support for **Gaganyaan Mission** through a tracking station on the **Cocos (Keeling) Islands**.

4. Education & People-to-People Ties

- **Flinders University** received a **Letter of Intent** to establish a campus in **Bengaluru**.
- **Victoria University** received approval to establish a campus in **Gurugram**.
- Australia announced **US\$10 million** under the **Maitri Grants Programme**.
- India and Western Australia to establish a **National Centre of Excellence for Skilling in Mining** at **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.

About the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)

Feature	Details
Established	2020

"Phone away, notes open. That is the whole trick."

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Feature	Details
Partners	India & Australia
Focus Areas	Defence, Trade, Maritime Security, Critical Minerals, Energy, Technology, Education

2. TribeX Digital Learning Platform

Why in News?

The **Union Minister for Tribal Affairs** launched **TribeX**, India's **first dedicated digital learning platform** for tribal arts, culture, traditional knowledge, and skill development.

What is TribeX?

- **TribeX** is a centralized **digital learning platform and knowledge repository** dedicated to preserving, documenting, and promoting India's tribal heritage.
- Developed by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India**.
- Provides open access to learners, researchers, artisans, and enthusiasts worldwide.

Objectives of TribeX

- Preserve tribal arts, culture, languages, and traditional knowledge.
- Promote skill development and sustainable livelihoods.
- Bridge geographical barriers through digital education.
- Connect learners with master tribal artisans and knowledge holders.
- Digitally document India's indigenous heritage.

3. The ULLAS Initiative

Source: News on Air

Why in News?

Uttarakhand was declared **India's 6th fully literate State** under the **ULLAS Initiative** in **July 2026**.

What is the ULLAS Initiative?

- **Full Form:** Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society (ULLAS)
- **Also Known As:** Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram (New India Literacy Programme)
- **Launched:** FY 2022–27
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Education
- **Nodal Department:** Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSEL)
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- **Purpose:** To provide functional literacy, numeracy, life skills, and vocational education to adult non-literates aged **15 years and above**.

Objectives of ULLAS

- Achieve **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)** for **5 crore adult learners** by 2027.
- Target **1 crore learners every year**.
- Promote **lifelong learning** and community participation.
- Improve digital, financial, and vocational literacy among adults.

What is FLNAT?

- **Full Form:** Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test.
- Conducted **twice every year**.
- Assesses reading, writing, numeracy, digital and financial literacy.

- Successful learners receive a **NIOS–DoSEL certificate**.

States/UTs Achieving 95%+ Literacy under ULLAS

2026	Andaman & Nicobar Islands (UT)
2026	Sikkim
2026	Uttarakhand

4. India–Kyrgyzstan Tie-up to Study Shared Epic Heritage

Source: TOI

Why in News?

India and Kyrgyzstan jointly established the **International Centre for Civilizational Studies "Manas and Mahabharata"** in **Bishkek**. The initiative also marked the release of the **first Hindi translation of the Kyrgyz epic *Manas***, strengthening cultural and academic ties between the two countries.

What is the India–Kyrgyzstan Civilizational Initiative?

- A joint initiative to promote **comparative studies** of the **Mahabharata** and the **Manas Epic**.
- Established to deepen **India–Kyrgyzstan cultural diplomacy** through research, academic collaboration, and preservation of shared civilizational heritage.
- *Manas* is inscribed on the **UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

About the Manas Epic

- National epic of **Kyrgyzstan**.
- One of the **longest epic poems in the world**.
- Narrates the life and heroic deeds of **Manas**, a legendary Kyrgyz warrior.
- Recognized by **UNESCO** as an **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

About Kyrgyzstan

Feature	Details
Capital	Bishkek
Currency	Kyrgyzstani Som
Region	Central Asia
Neighbouring Countries	Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

5. The Astra Mk 1 Missile

Why in News?

India and Indonesia signed a landmark defence agreement for the supply of the **indigenously developed Astra Mk 1 Beyond–Visual–Range Air–to–Air Missile (BVRAAM)** during the bilateral summit held in **Jakarta**.

What is the Astra Mk 1 Missile?

- **Astra Mk 1** is an **indigenous Beyond–Visual–Range Air–to–Air Missile (BVRAAM)**.
- It is designed to engage and destroy enemy aircraft at long distances before they come within visual range.
- **Developed by:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Production Agency:** Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).

- **Objective:** To provide the Indian Air Force with long-range air combat capability and reduce dependence on imported air-to-air missiles.

About DRDO

Feature	Details
Full Form	Defence Research and Development Organisation
Established	1958
Headquarters	New Delhi
Ministry	Ministry of Defence

6. The CE20 Cryogenic Engine

Why in News?

ISRO successfully completed the **flight acceptance hot test** of the indigenous **CE20 cryogenic engine** for the upcoming **LVM3-M7 mission** at the **ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri**.

What is the CE20 Cryogenic Engine?

- The **CE20** is an **indigenously developed high-thrust cryogenic rocket engine**.
- It powers the **upper stage (C25/C32 stage)** of India's **Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3)**.
- It uses **liquid hydrogen (LH₂)** and **liquid oxygen (LOX)** as propellants to launch heavy satellites into space.
- **Developed by:** ISRO's **Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC)**.
- **Testing Facility:** ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri.

Background

- The **CE20** replaced the earlier **CE-7.5 cryogenic engine** with a more powerful indigenous design.
- It has successfully powered **eight consecutive LVM3 missions**, including **Chandrayaan-2** and **Chandrayaan-3**.
- It is the **human-rated cryogenic engine** planned for **Gaganyaan** missions.

About LVM3

Feature	Details
Full Form	Launch Vehicle Mark-3
Type	Heavy-lift launch vehicle
Developed By	ISRO
Uses	Satellite launches, Chandrayaan missions, Gaganyaan mission
Upper Stage Engine	CE20 Cryogenic Engine

7. The PaBV-4 Bird Virus

Why in News?

For the **first time in India**, scientists have identified and genetically characterized **Parrot Bornavirus 4 (PaBV-4)** circulating among captive birds.

What is PaBV-4?

- **Parrot Bornavirus 4 (PaBV-4)** is a **single-stranded RNA virus** belonging to the species **Orthobornavirus alphapsittaciforme**.

- It is the primary cause of **Proventricular Dilatation Disease (PDD)**, a serious neurological and digestive disease affecting parrots and related birds.
- The virus mainly infects **psittacine birds**, including parrots, macaws, parakeets, cockatiels, and lovebirds.

About Proventricular Dilatation Disease (PDD)

Feature	Details
Affected Birds	Parrots and other psittacine birds
Main Symptoms	Weight loss, poor digestion, enlarged stomach, neurological disorders
Cause	Infection with Parrot Bornavirus (mainly PaBV-4)
Outcome	Progressive disease that is often fatal

8. National CAMPA Approves New Wildlife Conservation Projects

Why in News?

The **Governing Body of the National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (National CAMPA)** approved **four new wildlife conservation projects**. The projects will be funded under a **new scheme with an initial corpus of ₹3,000 crore** over **five years**.

What is the New CAMPA Scheme?

- **Approved by:** National CAMPA Governing Body
- **Initial Corpus:** ₹3,000 crore
- **Duration:** 5 years
- **Objective:** Strengthen the conservation and recovery of threatened wildlife species across India.

Four Conservation Projects Approved

Project	Objective
River Dolphin Conservation Project	Conservation and Recovery Action Plan for river dolphins
Project Snow Leopard – Phase II	Conservation and second cycle of population estimation
Indian Rhinoceros Conservation Action Plan	Long-term conservation and habitat protection
Wild Water Buffalo Conservation Project	Pan-India conservation strategy for the species

Species Covered

River Dolphin

- National Aquatic Animal of India.
- Primarily found in the **Ganga-Brahmaputra river system**.
- Protected under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

Snow Leopard

- Found in the **Himalayan region**.
- Phase II includes the **second nationwide population estimation**.
- State animal of **Ladakh**.

Indian Rhinoceros

- Also known as the **Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros**.
- Largest population found in **Assam** (Kaziranga National Park).

Wild Water Buffalo

- Found mainly in **Assam** and **Chhattisgarh**.
- Focus on a **pan-India conservation approach**.

What is National CAMPA?

Feature	Details
Full Form	National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority
Ministry	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)
Purpose	Management and utilization of Compensatory Afforestation Funds
Legal Basis	Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Act, 2016

Objectives of the New Scheme

- Protect threatened wildlife species.
- Restore and improve critical habitats.
- Strengthen scientific monitoring and population assessment.
- Promote long-term conservation planning.
- Support biodiversity conservation across India.

Agriculture

1. Regenerative Mustard Programme

Source: BusinessLine

Why in News?

AWL Agri Business Ltd welcomed the results of the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) Regenerative Mustard Model Farm Programme for the 2025–26 rabi season. Demonstration farms in Rajasthan, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh recorded mustard yield improvements of up to 30%.

What is the Programme?

Feature	Details
Programme	SEA Regenerative Mustard Model Farm Programme
Launched	2019
Implemented by	Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA)
Implementation Partner	Solidaridad Network Asia
Coverage	3,000 front-line demonstration plots across 14 districts
States	Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana

Objectives

- Increase mustard productivity.
- Improve soil health through regenerative agriculture.
- Promote balanced nutrient use and sustainable cultivation practices.
- Enhance farmers' incomes and climate resilience.
- Reduce India's dependence on imported edible oils.

About SEA

Feature	Details
Full Form	Solvent Extractors' Association of India
Type	Apex body of the vegetable oil and solvent extraction industry
Role	Promotes oilseed production, processing, trade and policy advocacy

Facts To Remember

1. RBI Absorbs ₹1.10 Lakh Crore Surplus Liquidity

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) absorbed ₹1.10 lakh crore of surplus liquidity from the banking system on 9 July 2026 through money market operations. The move indicates excess cash availability with banks despite ongoing money market activity.

2. SEBI Allows Mutual Funds to Avail Intraday Borrowing

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) permitted mutual funds to use intraday borrowing facilities to address temporary liquidity mismatches caused by differences in market settlement timings. The measure aims to improve operational efficiency without increasing long-term leverage.

3. Hyderabad to Become Major High-Speed Rail Hub

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced plans to develop Hyderabad as a major high-speed rail hub. Proposed bullet train corridors will connect Hyderabad with Pune, Chennai, and Bengaluru, strengthening regional connectivity and economic growth.

4. World Population Day Observed on 11 July

World Population Day was observed on 11 July 2026 to raise awareness about population-related challenges and sustainable development. Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda highlighted the importance of voluntary family planning, informed choices, and healthy families for inclusive growth.

5. India and New Zealand Elevate Ties to Strategic Partnership

India and New Zealand upgraded their bilateral relationship to a Strategic Partnership following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Christopher Luxon. Both countries also set a target to double bilateral trade to ₹35,000 crore by 2030.

6. Indigenous Stealth Frigate INS Mahendragiri Commissioned

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh commissioned the indigenous stealth frigate **INS Mahendragiri**, reaffirming India's commitment to building a strong, self-reliant, and future-ready defence force. The warship will enhance the Indian Navy's maritime capabilities.

7. BRICS Adopts 2026 Transport Ministerial Declaration

BRICS Transport Ministers adopted the **BRICS Ministerial Declaration 2026** to strengthen technological and innovation-driven cooperation in the transport sector. The declaration focuses on sustainable, carbon-neutral transport across road, rail, aviation, and waterways.

8. NITI Aayog Holds Consultation on SHANTI Act 2025

NITI Aayog organised a stakeholder consultation on the implementation of the **SHANTI Act 2025**. Discussions focused on regulatory frameworks, financing, insurance, manufacturing capabilities, public

awareness, and operational preparedness.

9. Operation Amistad Successfully Concludes

India successfully concluded **Operation Amistad**, its humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission to earthquake-hit Venezuela. The Venezuelan government thanked India for its timely support and assistance during the crisis.

10. India and New Zealand Celebrate 100 Years of Sporting Relations

India and New Zealand marked **100 years of sporting ties** in 2026. The relationship began with the Indian Army Hockey Team's tour in 1926, and hockey continues to strengthen the friendship between the two nations.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 11 JULY 2026

1. Achieve **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)** for **5 crore adult learners** by 2027. The ULLAS Initiative
2. Protected under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**. National CAMPA Approves New Wildlife Conservati...
3. It powers the **upper stage (C25/C32 stage)** of India's **Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3)**. The CE20 Cryogenic Engine
4. India and New Zealand marked **100 years of sporting ties** in 2026. The relationship began with the Indian Army Hockey Team's tour in 1926, and hockey continues to strengthen the friendship between the two nations. India and New Zealand Celebrate 100 Years of Sp...
5. Developed by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India**. TribeX Digital Learning Platform

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DAY 10 OF 24

12 & 13 July 2026

19 items · 3 topics

General 3 · Banking and Finance 1 · Agriculture 1 · Facts To Remember 14

Context

On **7 July 2026**, ISRO successfully conducted the **5th Integrated Main Parachute Airdrop Test (IMAT-05)** at the **Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE)** drop zone, Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh — for the **Gaganyaan Mission's uncrewed G1 flight**.

Key Facts

- **Test:** IMAT-05 (5th in series).
- **Venue:** ADRDE drop zone, Sheopur, MP.
- **Airlift:** Indian Air Force IL-76 heavy transport aircraft.
- **Payload:** Dummy mass simulating crew module.
- **Objective:** Qualify Main Parachute for structural integrity + design margins under **maximum expected load conditions**.
- **Joint agencies:** ISRO + DRDO (ADRDE) + Indian Air Force + Indian Army.

About ADRDE

- **Full form:** Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment.
- **Under:** DRDO (Ministry of Defence).
- **Location:** Agra, UP (drop zone in Sheopur, MP).
- **Focus:** Parachutes, aerial delivery systems.

3. Gaganyaan Crew Module Systems

Source: News on Air

Why in News?

ISRO successfully completed three major qualification tests of the Gaganyaan Crew Module (CM) systems. The tests validated key safety systems required for India's first human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan.

What is the Gaganyaan Crew Module?

Feature	Details
Mission	Gaganyaan
Developed By	Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
Purpose	Safely carry astronauts (Gagannauts) to space and return them to Earth
Landing Method	Splashdown in the sea with recovery by the Indian Navy

Three Major Tests Conducted

Test	Purpose
Crew Module Uprighting System (CMUS) Test	Ensures the crew module automatically returns to an upright position after sea splashdown.

"Ten minutes of recall beats an hour of re-reading."

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Test	Purpose
Umbilical Separation Mechanism Test	Validates safe separation of the umbilical connection between the Crew Module and Service Module.
Apex Cover Separation Test	Confirms the structural integrity of the crew module during apex cover separation.

About Gaganyaan Mission

Feature	Details
Mission Type	India's first human spaceflight mission
Agency	ISRO
Objective	Send Indian astronauts into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and safely return them
Mission Duration	About 3 days
Orbit	Approximately 400 km Low Earth Orbit
Recovery	Sea splashdown followed by Indian Navy recovery

4. PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

Why in News?

Tier-II and Tier-III cities have emerged as leaders in rooftop solar adoption under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. Over 36.3 lakh rooftop solar systems have been installed across India, benefiting more than 44 lakh households.

What is PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana?

Feature	Details
Scheme	PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana
Launched	February 2024
Ministry	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)
Duration	Till March 2027
Objective	Promote rooftop solar and provide up to 300 units of free electricity per month to households
Target	1 crore households
Total Outlay	₹75,021 crore

Leading States in Rooftop Solar Adoption

- Gujarat
- Maharashtra
- Uttar Pradesh
- Rajasthan
- Kerala
- Assam

Utility-Led Aggregation (ULA) Model

Feature	Details
Purpose	Enable low-income households to benefit from rooftop solar
Target	30 lakh households

Feature	Details
Beneficiaries	Households unable to install rooftop solar due to financial or structural constraints
Implemented In	Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Bihar, Kerala, Jammu & Kashmir, Tripura, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Delhi

5. Global Liveability Index 2026

Source: TE

Context

The **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** released the **Global Liveability Index 2026**, ranking **173 cities** worldwide based on the quality of living. Among Indian cities, **Delhi** ranked the highest.

About the Global Liveability Index

- An annual index published by the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)**.
- Assesses the **liveability of 173 cities** across the world.
- The **2026 survey** was conducted in **May 2026**.

Assessment Parameters

The index evaluates cities across five categories:

- Stability
- Healthcare
- Culture & Environment
- Education
- Infrastructure

Key Highlights

Global Rankings

Rank	City	Country
1	Copenhagen	Denmark
2	Vienna	Austria
3	Melbourne	Australia
4	Sydney	Australia
5	Zurich	Switzerland
6	Geneva	Switzerland
7	Osaka	Japan
8	Adelaide	Australia
9	Vancouver	Canada
10	Tokyo	Japan

India's Performance

- **Delhi** ranked **120th** globally.
- Overall Score: **48.1**
- Highest-ranked Indian city in the index.

Regional Highlights

- **Western Europe** remained the world's most liveable region.

- Cities such as **Copenhagen, Vienna, Zurich, and Geneva** featured among the global top performers.

Bottom Five Cities

Rank	City	Country
173	Damascus	Syria
172	Tripoli	Libya
171	Dhaka	Bangladesh
170	Karachi	Pakistan
169	Algiers	Algeria

Key Findings

- **Copenhagen** retained the **No. 1 position** for the **second consecutive year**.
- It scored a **perfect 100** in:
 - Stability
 - Education
 - Infrastructure
- The **global average liveability score** remained unchanged at **76.1/100** compared to 2025.

Banking and Finance

1. Govt to Interlink GeM + TReDS

Source: *Business Standard*

Context

On **12 July 2026**, a senior government official told Business Standard that the government plans to **interlink the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) with the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)** so MSMEs can move seamlessly from **procurement → invoice → financing** without switching platforms. The move follows the **MSME Ministry's 30 June 2026 notification** making it **mandatory for all Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to settle MSME invoices through RBI-regulated TReDS platforms** — a deliverable of Union Budget 2026-27's **4-pillar TReDS reform package** announced by FM **Nirmala Sitharaman** in her 9th consecutive Budget.

About GeM (Government e-Marketplace)

- **Launched: 9 August 2016.**
- **Nature:** National public procurement portal for Central + State departments, PSUs, autonomous bodies.
- **Nodal: Ministry of Commerce and Industry** (DGS&D restructured into GeM SPV).
- **CEO:** Ajay Bhadoo (as of 2026).
- **Public Procurement Policy 2012:** Central government + CPSEs must source **at least 25%** of annual procurement from MSMEs (revised from 20% to 25% in 2018); of which:
 - **4% reserved** for MSMEs owned by SC/ST entrepreneurs.
 - **3% reserved** for women-owned MSMEs.

About TReDS (Trade Receivables Discounting System)

- **Launched: 2017** (framework notified by RBI in Dec 2014).
- **Regulator: Reserve Bank of India (RBI).**
- **Nature:** Electronic platform for **discounting of trade receivables** for MSMEs supplying to large buyers.

• How it works:

1. MSME uploads accepted invoice on TReDS.
2. Multiple financiers (banks/NBFCs) competitively bid to discount.
3. MSME accepts best bid; receives payment within **24–48 hours** at a discount.
4. Financier collects full invoice amount from buyer on due date.

• Registration prerequisite: MSME must be on **Udyam portal**.**• Nature of finance: Without recourse** to seller — MSME NOT liable if buyer defaults.**• Discount rate:** Typically **7–11% APR** (competitive market rates).**• No collateral or minimum turnover required.****About the Account Aggregator (AA) Framework****• Regulator:** RBI (2016 Master Direction, launched 2021).**• Type:** Consent-based data-sharing framework.**• Purpose:** Consented sharing of user financial data between FIPs (Financial Information Providers) and FIUs (Financial Information Users).**Practice MCQs****Q1. With reference to the proposed GeM–TReDS integration (July 2026):**

1. GeM is the government's digital procurement marketplace (est. 2016).
2. TReDS is regulated by RBI and facilitates invoice discounting for MSMEs.
3. The integration was announced in Union Budget 2026–27.
4. The integration is being led by SEBI.

How many are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) **Only three** (d) All four

(Statement 4 wrong: **Led by MSME Ministry + Ministry of Commerce & Industry**, NOT SEBI.)

Q2. With reference to TReDS:

1. It is an RBI-regulated electronic platform launched in 2017.
2. Currently 5 platforms are authorised: RXIL, Mlxchange, Invoicemart, C2treds, DTX.
3. TReDS discounting grew from ₹40,000 crore in FY22 to ₹3.47 lakh crore in FY26.
4. MSMEs must be registered on Udyam portal to access TReDS.

How many are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) **All four**

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: Led by MSME + Commerce ministries, not SEBI.
2. **(d)** — All correct.

Exam Relevance

- **RBI Grade B / SIDBI Grade A: CRITICAL** — Direct ESI content on TReDS + Account Aggregator.

Agriculture

1. Review of Crop Statistics System 2025

Source: PIB

Why in News?

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the "Review of Crop Statistics System" report, highlighting major gaps in India's agricultural data collection system. The

report flagged delays in crop surveys, outdated village maps, and shortage of trained personnel for **crop-cutting experiments (CCEs)**.

What is the Review of Crop Statistics System?

Feature	Details
Report	Review of Crop Statistics System
Released By	Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)
Purpose	Assess the quality, accuracy and timeliness of agricultural statistics in India
Importance	Supports crop production estimates and food security decisions

Why is Agricultural Data Important?

- Used by the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** to estimate cultivation costs.
- Forms the basis for **Advance Estimates of Crop Production**.
- Helps the government decide:
 - Export restrictions
 - Import duty changes
 - Release of buffer stocks
 - Food inflation management
 - Procurement planning

Major Findings of the Report

1. Delay in Girdawari

Season	Sample Villages Completed on Time
Early Kharif	43%
Late Kharif	46%
Rabi	48%
Summer	33%

States with alarmingly high delays:

- Andhra Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Gujarat
- Haryana
- Jharkhand
- Karnataka
- Maharashtra
- Punjab
- Telangana
- Uttar Pradesh
- West Bengal

2. Outdated Village Maps

Finding	Details
Village maps older than 20 years	63%
Impact	Difficulty in identifying updated land boundaries and crop areas

States with highest outdated maps

State/UT	Maps Older than 20 Years
West Bengal	100%
Puducherry	100%
Odisha	99%
Uttarakhand	98%
Assam	94%
Tamil Nadu	93%
Jharkhand	93%
Gujarat	5%

Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs)

Feature	Details
Estimated CCEs (2023–24)	Around 1.2 million
Issue	Many CCEs conducted by untrained staff

States with major issues

- **Jharkhand:** Around **40%** CCEs by untrained personnel.
- **Uttar Pradesh:** Around **40%** CCEs by untrained personnel.
- **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal:** More than **10%** CCEs conducted by junior staff.

What is Girdawari?

Feature	Details
Meaning	Official field inspection to record crops grown on agricultural land.
Conducted By	Village Revenue Officer/Patwari
Purpose	Collect crop acreage data for agricultural statistics and production estimates.

What are Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs)?

Feature	Details
Meaning	Scientific field experiments used to estimate crop yield.
Purpose	Determine average yield for calculating total crop production.
Used In	Crop production estimates, crop insurance and policy decisions.

Role of CACP

Feature	Details
Full Form	Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)
Ministry	Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare
Role	Recommends Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) based on production costs and other factors.

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
Advance Estimates	Preliminary estimates of crop production released before harvest completion.
Buffer Stock	Government food grain reserve maintained for food security and price stabilization.
CACP	Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, which recommends MSPs.

Facts To Remember

1. MoEF&CC Launches Centre of Excellence on Human-Wildlife Conflict

Union Minister Bhupender Yadav inaugurated the **Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Human-Wildlife Conflict** at WII-SACON, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The Centre will serve as a national hub for research, policy support, capacity building, and scientific management of human-wildlife conflicts. The **National Human-Wildlife Conflict Portal** and the publication *Current Status of Human-Wildlife Conflict in India* were also launched.

2. QCI and NSIC Sign MoU to Boost MSME Competitiveness

The **Quality Council of India (QCI)** and the **National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)** signed an MoU to improve quality standards, competitiveness, and market access for MSMEs. The partnership will promote ZED Certification, ONDC integration, accreditation, and digital market access while strengthening quality certification and export readiness.

3. ICMR to Establish India's First High-Altitude Medicine Centre

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will establish India's first **Centre for High Altitude Medicine and Public Health Research** at Keylong, Himachal Pradesh. The Centre will focus on high-altitude medicine, tribal health, disaster preparedness, climate-sensitive diseases, and digital healthcare solutions for remote regions.

4. Government Mandates TReDS for All CPSE Payments to MSMEs

The Ministry of MSME made it mandatory for all Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to settle MSME invoices through **Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)** platforms. The move aims to ensure timely payments, improve transparency, and provide MSMEs with easier access to working capital through invoice discounting.

5. PM Narendra Modi Visits Australia; India Launches PACTS Framework

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Australia from **8–10 July 2026** to strengthen bilateral cooperation. India and Australia launched the **Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies, and Supply Chains (PACTS)** to enhance cyber security, resilient supply chains, digital infrastructure, and critical technology collaboration across the Indo-Pacific.

6. RBI Launches Three Surveys Ahead of MPC Meeting

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched three nationwide surveys—the **Inflation Expectations Survey of Households (IESH)**, **Rural Consumer Confidence Survey (RCCS)**, and **Urban Consumer Confidence Survey (UCCS)**. The surveys will gather household feedback on inflation, employment, income, and spending to support monetary policy decisions.

7. World Bank Approves USD 890 Million for India's Rooftop Solar Programme

The World Bank approved **USD 890 million** to support the **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana**. The financing will accelerate rooftop solar installations, strengthen domestic manufacturing, mobilize private investment, and help create around **1.7 million jobs** in the renewable energy sector.

8. AU Small Finance Bank and Zaggie Launch Co-Branded Credit Card

AU Small Finance Bank partnered with Zaggie to launch the **AU Zaggie Co-Branded Retail Credit Card** on Visa and RuPay networks. The card offers customizable rewards, UPI payments, cashback through Zagg Coins, and contactless payment features for enhanced digital banking.

9. Government Approves Dixon-Vivo Joint Venture for Smartphone Manufacturing

The Government of India approved the **Dixon Technologies-Vivo Mobile India Joint Venture** for domestic smartphone manufacturing. Dixon will hold a **51% stake**, while Vivo Mobile India will own **49%**, supporting India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem under the Make in India initiative.

10. DoT's Samridh Gram Wins WSIS Prize 2026

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) won the **WSIS Prize 2026** under **Action Line C6** for its **Samridh Gram** initiative. Powered by BharatNet, the programme delivers healthcare, education, banking, and livelihood services through digital village centres, promoting inclusive rural development.

11. SBI Sells 1.42% Stake in SBI Funds Management Ahead of IPO

State Bank of India (SBI) sold a **1.42% stake** in **SBI Funds Management Ltd.** for **₹1,655 crore** through a pre-IPO placement. The transaction was completed ahead of the company's proposed **₹11,700 crore Initial Public Offering (IPO)**.

12. China Successfully Recovers Reusable Long March-10B Rocket Booster

China achieved its first controlled recovery of the **Long March-10B** reusable rocket booster after successfully launching an orbital mission. The milestone strengthens China's reusable space technology programme and advances its efforts to reduce launch costs.

13. Sourav Ganguly Inducted into ICC Hall of Fame

Former India captain **Sourav Ganguly** was inducted into the **ICC Hall of Fame** during the ICC Annual Conference in Edinburgh. He became the **12th Indian** to receive the honour in recognition of his outstanding contribution to international cricket.

14. National Fish Farmers' Day Observed on 10 July

National Fish Farmers' Day was observed across India on **10 July 2026** to recognise the contributions of fish farmers and aquaculture professionals. The day commemorates the first successful induced breeding of Indian major carps achieved on **10 July 1957**, marking a landmark achievement in India's fisheries sector.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 12 & 13 JULY 2026

1. **Public Procurement Policy 2012:** Central government + CPSEs must source **at least 25%** of annual procurement from MSMEs (revised from 20% to 25% in 2018); of which: Govt to Interlink GeM + TReDS
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4. The **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** released the **Global Liveability Index 2026**, ranking **173 cities** worldwide based on the quality of living. Among Indian cities, **Delhi** ranked the highest. Global Liveability Index 2026
5. **ISRO successfully completed three major qualification tests of the Gaganyaan Crew Module (CM) systems. The tests validated key safety systems required for India's first human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan.** Gaganyaan Crew Module Systems

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DAY 11 OF 24

14 July 2026

Tuesday · 21 items · 2 topics

General 4 · Banking and Finance 2 · Facts To Remember 15

Context

The **U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC)** granted a **two-year experimental operating license** to California-based startup **Reflect Orbital** for its **Eärendil-1** mission, which aims to demonstrate **orbital sunlight reflection technology**.

What is Eärendil-1?

- **Eärendil-1** is an **experimental technology demonstration satellite** designed to test whether **sunlight can be reflected from space to specific locations on Earth** after sunset.
- It is essentially an **orbital mirror** capable of redirecting sunlight.
- **Developed by:** Reflect Orbital (California, USA)
- **Named after:** **Eärendil**, a legendary mariner from **J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*** who carried a shining **Silmaril** across the sky.

Key Technical Features

Deployable Reflector

- Uses an ultra-light **thin-film mirror** folded during launch.
- Automatically unfolds once in orbit.

Precision Sunlight Reflection

- Equipped with **motorized gimbals** to precisely orient the mirror.
- Reflects sunlight toward designated locations on Earth.

Low Earth Orbit (LEO)

- Operates at approximately **625 km altitude**.

About Reflect Orbital

- **Headquarters:** California, USA
- **Type:** Commercial aerospace startup
- **Focus:** Space-based energy and orbital reflection technologies.

About the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

- **Country**
 - United States
- **Established**
 - 1934
- **Functions**
 - Regulates communications by radio, satellite, television, wire, and internet.
 - Licenses satellite communications and commercial space radio operations.

2. The Long March 10B Rocket

Context

"A topic understood is a topic you can teach in one minute."

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China successfully demonstrated the **first reusable landing** of its **Long March 10B** booster at the **Wenchang Commercial Space Launch Site**, marking a significant milestone in its reusable launch vehicle programme.

What is Long March 10B?

- **Long March 10B** is China's **next-generation reusable medium-to-heavy lift launch vehicle**.
- It features a **recoverable first-stage booster**, designed for multiple launches.
- **Developed by:** China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC)

Objective

- Reduce launch costs through rocket reusability.
- Support China's lunar exploration programme.
- Deploy large satellite constellations more economically.

About CASC

- **Full Form**
 - **China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC)**
- **Country**
 - China
- **Nature**
 - State-owned aerospace corporation.

3. Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme

Source: PIB

Context

The Union Minister for Food Processing Industries celebrated the **PMFME Scheme crossing 2 lakh credit-linked beneficiaries**, marking a major milestone in the formalisation of India's micro food processing sector.

About PMFME Scheme

- **Launched:** 29 June 2020
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- **Duration:** 2020–21 to 2025–26 (extended as per government decisions)
- **Objective:** To formalise and strengthen the unorganised micro food processing sector by improving access to credit, technology, branding, and markets.

Objectives

- Formalise unorganised micro food processing enterprises.
- Enhance competitiveness through technology upgradation.
- Improve access to institutional finance.
- Promote value addition and reduce post-harvest losses.
- Generate employment and increase farmers' income.

Key Features

1. Credit-Linked Capital Subsidy

- **35% capital subsidy** on eligible project cost.
- Maximum subsidy of **₹10 lakh per beneficiary**.

2. One District One Product (ODOP)

- Every district identifies a **specialised food product** based on local resources.
- Promotes cluster-based development, branding and exports.

3. Support to SHGs

- **Seed capital of ₹40,000 per SHG member.**
- Helps purchase small equipment and working capital.

4. Common Infrastructure

- Grants to **FPOs, Cooperatives and SHGs** for:
 - Processing units
 - Storage facilities
 - Packaging units
 - Testing laboratories
- Grant up to **35% of project cost** (subject to prescribed limits).

5. Branding & Marketing

- Financial assistance for:
 - Branding
 - Packaging
 - Quality certification
 - Marketing and digital promotion.

6. Capacity Building

- Training for entrepreneurs on:
 - Food safety standards
 - Business management
 - Packaging
 - Digital marketing
 - Financial management

Funding Pattern

- **General States:** 60 : 40 (Centre : State)
- **North Eastern & Himalayan States:** 90 : 10
- **Union Territories (without legislature):** 100% Central funding

4. India's First Hydrogen Train

Source: Indian Express

Context

The Prime Minister will flag off **India's first hydrogen-powered passenger train** from **Jind, Haryana**, on **17 July 2026**, marking a major milestone in India's transition towards green and sustainable rail transport.

About India's First Hydrogen Train

- **Type:** Hydrogen-Electric Multiple Unit (HEMU)
- **Nature:** India's first **hydrogen fuel cell-powered passenger train**
- **Route:** **Jind – Sonipat (Haryana)** (89 km)
- **Project Cost:** ₹136 crore

- **Developed By:** Northern Railway
- **Technology Partner:** Medha Servo Drives (Hyderabad)
- **Fuel Cell Supplier:** Ballard Power Systems (Canada)

Objective

- Promote **zero-emission railway transport**.
- Reduce dependence on diesel-powered trains.
- Develop clean mobility on **non-electrified railway routes**.
- Support India's **Net Zero 2070** and **National Green Hydrogen Mission** goals.

National Green Hydrogen Mission

- **Launched:** 2023
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)
- **Target:** Produce **5 million metric tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030**.
- Aims to make India a global hub for the production, utilisation and export of green hydrogen.

5. UMANG Portal

Source: The Hindu

Context

Security researchers identified multiple vulnerabilities in the **UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance)** portal that exposed sensitive user data across several government services. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has acknowledged the issue and initiated corrective measures.

What is UMANG?

- **UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance)** is a **single digital platform** that provides citizens access to a wide range of Central, State, and local government services through one mobile application and web portal.
- **Launched:** November 2017
- **Developed by:** National e-Governance Division (NeGD) under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
- It is a key component of the **Digital India Programme**.

Objective

- To provide **single-window access** to government services.
- To improve **ease of governance, transparency, and digital service delivery**.
- To reduce the need for multiple government applications and portals.

Key Features

- Provides access to **2,400+ government services** from Central, State and local bodies.
- Available through **Android, iOS and web portal**.
- Supports **multiple Indian languages**.
- Integrates services from departments such as:
 - EPFO
 - Passport
 - DigiLocker
 - PAN services
 - LPG booking

- Aadhaar-enabled services
- Pension services
- Utility bill payments
- Health and education services

About EPFO UAN

- **UAN (Universal Account Number)** is a **12-digit unique number** allotted by the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**.
- It links multiple PF accounts of an employee under one identity.
- Enables online services such as:
 - PF balance check
 - Claims
 - KYC updates
 - Account transfers

About CERT-In

- **Full Form:** Indian Computer Emergency Response Team
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
- **Established:** 2004
- **Legal Basis:** Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000

Banking and Finance

1. India's Retail Inflation Rises to 4.4% in June 2026

Source: The Hindu

Context

The **National Statistics Office (NSO)** released the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** data for **June 2026**, showing that India's retail inflation increased to **4.38% (rounded to 4.4%)** from **3.93% in May 2026**. This is the **first time inflation has crossed the RBI's 4% target under the new CPI series (Base Year 2024)**.

Key Highlights

- **Retail Inflation (CPI): 4.38% (June 2026).**
- **Previous Month:** 3.93% (May 2026).
- **CPI Base Year: 2024** (effective January 2026).
- **Released by:** National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

Major Reasons for Rise in Inflation

1. Increase in Food Prices

- Food inflation rose to **5.32%**, the highest under the new CPI series.
- Prices of **ginger, tomato, raisins (kishmish), and monacca** increased significantly.

2. Higher Fuel Prices

- Rise in global crude oil prices following geopolitical tensions in West Asia.
- Petrol and diesel price hikes pushed transport inflation to **4.31%**.

3. Weak Monsoon

- June 2026 recorded a **42.8% rainfall deficit**.
- Lower rainfall affected agricultural production and food supply.

4. Precious Metals

- Safe-haven demand led to sharp increases in jewellery prices.
- **Silver jewellery inflation: 133.21%**.

About Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- Measures **retail inflation** faced by consumers.
- Published by the **National Statistics Office (NSO)**.
- Used by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** for monetary policy decisions.
- Covers both **rural and urban** consumption.
- The **Food & Beverages** group has the highest weight (about **45.86%**) in CPI.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the new CPI series:

1. Its base year is 2024.
2. It became effective from January 2026.
3. It includes data from online markets for the first time.
4. It replaces the older series with base year 2011-12.

How many are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) **All four**

Answer Key

1. **(d)** — All correct.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims & Mains: CRITICAL** — GS-III (Indian Economy, Monetary Policy, Inflation); Prelims (CPI, RBI target, MPC, base year); Mains-Essay on inflation-growth trade-off.
- **RBI Grade B / SIDBI / SEBI / IRDAI: CRITICAL** — Direct ESI content.
- **NABARD Grade A: HIGH** — Rural inflation + food prices.

2. RBI's FCNR(B) Swap Facility

Source: Mint

Context

Union Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** reviewed the progress of the **RBI's concessional swap facility for Foreign Currency Non-Resident [FCNR(B)] deposits** and urged banks to increase outreach to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to mobilize more foreign currency deposits and strengthen India's foreign exchange reserves.

What is FCNR(B)?

Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) [FCNR(B)] Account is a **term deposit account** that allows **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)** to maintain deposits in designated foreign currencies with banks in India.

Regulated by

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

Eligible Account Holders

- Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)

- Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)

Nature of Account

- Fixed-term deposit
- Maintained in foreign currency
- Both principal and interest are fully repatriable.

Objectives

- Mobilize foreign currency deposits.
- Strengthen India's foreign exchange (Forex) reserves.
- Reduce external sector vulnerabilities.
- Provide NRIs with a safe foreign currency investment option.

Key Features

Foreign Currency Deposits

Accounts can be maintained in major foreign currencies such as:

- US Dollar (USD)
- Pound Sterling (GBP)
- Euro (EUR)
- Japanese Yen (JPY)
- Australian Dollar (AUD)
- Canadian Dollar (CAD)

Tenure

- Minimum: **1 year**
- Maximum: **5 years**

Exchange Rate Protection

- Deposits remain in foreign currency.
- No exchange-rate risk for the depositor.

What is the RBI's Concessional Swap Facility?

The RBI introduced a **special foreign exchange swap window** to encourage banks to attract FCNR(B) deposits and eligible overseas borrowings.

How it Works

1. NRIs deposit foreign currency in Indian banks.
2. Banks receive foreign currency.
3. Banks swap the foreign currency with RBI.
4. RBI provides rupees at a concessional swap cost.
5. At maturity, the transaction is reversed.

This reduces the foreign exchange risk and funding cost for banks.

What is External Commercial Borrowing (ECB)?

External Commercial Borrowings are **commercial loans raised by eligible Indian entities from foreign lenders**.

Regulator

- Reserve Bank of India

Purpose

- Infrastructure financing
- Capital expenditure
- Business expansion
- Long-term investments

What is OFCB?

Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCBs) are foreign currency borrowings undertaken by eligible Indian financial institutions from overseas markets.

Facts To Remember

1. Delhi Launches AI-Powered Dust Portal 2.0

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta launched the AI-powered **Dust Portal 2.0** to monitor construction and demolition sites of 500 square yards or more. The portal uses artificial intelligence to improve pollution monitoring and strengthen dust control through technology-driven governance.

2. Lakhanpur Selected for PM SVANidhi Street Food Hub

Lakhanpur in **Jammu & Kashmir** was selected among the first towns in India to develop a **Street Food Hub** under the **PM SVANidhi** initiative. The project aims to promote **Dogra cuisine, tourism, hygienic street food, and sustainable livelihoods** for street vendors with financial support from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

3. Chitkara University Launches ₹20 Crore Atal Incubation Centre

Chitkara University launched the **Atal Incubation Centre–Chitkara Incubation Foundation (AIC–CIF)** with an investment of **₹20 crore**. The centre will support deep-tech startups in **drone technology, agritech, and renewable energy** while promoting innovation, research commercialisation, and entrepreneurship.

4. DoP and TRAI Sign MoU for India's Largest Telecom Survey

The **Department of Posts (DoP)** and **TRAI** signed an MoU to conduct India's largest village-level telecom network survey across **5.68 lakh villages**. Over **1.40 lakh Gramin Dak Sevaks** will collect field data to identify connectivity gaps and improve rural telecom infrastructure.

5. Gujarat Signs ₹5,629 Crore BharatNet Agreement

Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN), **Gujarat Government**, **GFGNL**, and **BSNL** signed a **₹5,629 crore** agreement under the **Amended BharatNet Programme**. The project will provide broadband connectivity across **14,287 Gram Panchayats**, over **5 lakh rural fibre connections**, and improve last-mile digital connectivity.

6. India and Australia Strengthen Strategic Partnership

During Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's** visit to Australia, both countries finalized the **India–Australia Civil Nuclear Agreement** implementation arrangement, signed a new **Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation (JDDSC)**, expanded education partnerships, and Australia announced the repatriation of three ancient Indian artefacts.

7. WIPO Report Highlights India's Innovation Growth

The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** reported that India recorded the **highest growth in**

intangible investments among the world's major economies. India's intangible investment reached **USD 78.2 billion** in 2023, driven by software, research & development, innovation, and intellectual property.

8. Nita Ambani Receives Fortune India MPW Honour

Nita Ambani, Founder and Chairperson of **Reliance Foundation**, received the **Fortune India Most Powerful Women (MPW) Honour 2026** for her leadership in institution building and inclusive development. The event also released the **Fortune India MPW 2026** list recognizing India's top women leaders.

9. INS Mahendragiri Commissioned into Indian Navy

The Indian Navy commissioned the indigenous stealth frigate **INS Mahendragiri**, the sixth **Project-17A Nilgiri-class** warship, into the **Eastern Fleet**. Designed by the **Warship Design Bureau** and built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited**, the vessel strengthens India's maritime defence capabilities.

10. Wimbledon 2026 Champions Crowned

Jannik Sinner (Italy) won the **men's singles** title, while **Linda Nosková (Czech Republic)** won the **women's singles** title at the **Wimbledon Championships 2026**, held in London.

11. Legendary Playback Singer S. Janaki Passes Away

Legendary playback singer **S. Janaki** passed away at the age of **88**. During her six-decade career, she recorded over **48,000 songs** in nearly **20 Indian languages** and won **four National Film Awards** for Best Female Playback Singer.

12. Former Qatar Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani Passes Away

Former **Emir of Qatar**, **Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani**, passed away at the age of **74**. He ruled Qatar from **1995 to 2013** and transformed the country into a global energy, investment, and diplomatic hub while overseeing the expansion of LNG exports and institutions such as **Al Jazeera**.

13. World Population Day Observed on 11 July

World Population Day 2026 was observed on **11 July** with the theme "**Realizing the hopes and aspirations of young people – today and for the future.**" The day highlights population issues, reproductive health, and sustainable development.

14. UN Observes Srebrenica Genocide Remembrance Day

The **International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica** was observed on **11 July** to honour the victims of the 1995 genocide in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and promote remembrance, justice, and reconciliation.

15. World Horse Day 2026 Observed

The **United Nations** observed **World Horse Day** on **11 July** to recognise the contribution of horses to human society. The observance was established through a **UNGA Resolution adopted in 2025**, making **2026** the **second** annual observance.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 14 JULY 2026

1. **Retail Inflation (CPI): 4.38% (June 2026)**. India's Retail Inflation Rises to 4.4% in June ...
2. Support India's **Net Zero 2070** and **National Green Hydrogen Mission** goals. India's First Hydrogen Train
3. **Legal Basis:** Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000 [UMANG Portal](#)
4. The Union Minister for Food Processing Industries celebrated the **PMFME Scheme crossing 2 lakh credit-linked beneficiaries**, marking a major milestone in the formalisation of India's micro food processing sector. [Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Proc...](#)
5. The **United Nations** observed **World Horse Day** on **11 July** to recognise the contribution of horses to human society. The observance was established through a **UNGA Resolution adopted in 2025**, making **2026** the **second** annual observance. [World Horse Day 2026 Observed](#)

Now test yourself: c4scourses.in/daily-quiz/daily-current-affairs-quiz-14-july-2026/

DAY 12 OF 24

15 July 2026

Wednesday · 27 items · 3 topics

General 4 · Banking and Finance 2 · Agriculture 3 · Facts To Remember 18

Context

The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, in partnership with the **Drone Federation of India (DFI)**, launched the **second edition of the National Innovation Challenge for Drone Application and Research (NIDAR 2.0)** for **2026–27**.

What is NIDAR 2.0?

- A national-level innovation challenge (hackathon) for engineering students to develop **indigenous drone technologies**.
- Focuses on designing advanced **autonomous drone software, hardware and components** rather than assembling ready-made drones.
- Operates under MeitY's **SwaYaan Capacity Building Initiative**.

Objective

- Promote **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** in drone technology.
- Build indigenous capabilities in drone hardware, avionics, flight controllers and autonomous systems.
- Encourage innovation and research in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS).

Key Features

Track 1 – Drone Innovation (System Level)

Focuses on developing autonomous drone solutions for:

- Disaster response and search & rescue using drone swarms.
- Delivery of emergency medical supplies.
- GPS-denied navigation for indoor and industrial inspections.

Track 2 – Component Innovation (Hardware Level)

- Development of indigenous **flight controllers** and **autopilot systems**.
- Hardware to be built using the **VEGA Microprocessor** developed by **C-DAC**.

About SwaYaan Initiative

What is SwaYaan?

- A national capacity-building programme for **Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)** and drone technologies.
- Approved by **MeitY in July 2022**.

Objective

- Develop a skilled workforce in drone technology.
- Promote research, innovation and industry-ready talent.

2. Digital Threat Report 2025–26

Source: PIB

Context The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** released the **2nd Edition of the Digital Threat Report 2025–26** for India's **Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI)** and **payments ecosystem** to strengthen cybersecurity preparedness against evolving digital threats.

About the Digital Threat Report 2025–26

What is it?

- The **Digital Threat Report 2025–26** is a strategic cybersecurity assessment for India's **Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI)** and **payments ecosystem**.
- It provides financial institutions, regulators and cybersecurity leaders with an assessment of emerging cyber threats, attack trends and mitigation strategies.
- The report is based on **Digital Forensics and Incident Response (DFIR)** investigations, CERT-In and CSIRT-Fin observations, and research on **adversarial Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.

Released By

- **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**
- **CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team)**
- **CSIRT-Fin (Computer Security Incident Response Team–Finance)**
- **SISA Information Security**

Objective

- To strengthen cybersecurity resilience across India's digital financial ecosystem.
- To help financial institutions anticipate evolving cyber threats and build proactive defence mechanisms.

Key Highlights of the Report

- **AI Asymmetry:** AI enables cybercriminals to launch advanced attacks with fewer resources, reducing the advantage of defenders.
- **Shrinking Attack Cycle:** Cyber threats now evolve within weeks or months instead of years; 6 of 7 previous predictions have already come true.
- **Evolving Cyberattacks:** Attacks increasingly mimic legitimate user sessions, approved transactions, and normal business activities, making detection difficult.
- **4-Layer Gap Archetype Framework:** Introduces the "Anatomy of Cyber Failure" framework to identify vulnerabilities across four organisational layers.
- **18-Month Roadmap:** Recommends stronger cyber controls, continuous risk monitoring, better information sharing, and resilient security architecture.
- **Major Threats:** Social engineering, credential theft, supply-chain attacks, cloud exploitation, AI-driven attacks, and insider threats.

About CERT-In

- National agency for handling cybersecurity incidents.
- Functions under **MeitY**.
- Established under the **Information Technology Act, 2000** (amended in 2008).
- Functions include:
 - Cyber incident response.
 - Threat alerts and advisories.
 - Vulnerability assessment.
 - Coordination during cyber emergencies.
 - Issuing cybersecurity guidelines and white papers.

About CSIRT-Fin

- Sectoral Computer Security Incident Response Team for India's financial sector.
- Coordinates cybersecurity for:
 - Banks
 - Insurance companies
 - Securities market infrastructure
 - Pension funds

3. Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Act, 1997

Source: Indian Express

Context

The **Ladakh Administration** has announced that the **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Act** will be extended to **all seven districts** of the Union Territory through appropriate legal provisions, following the creation of **17 new tehsils**.

What is the LAHDC Act?

- The **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils Act, 1997** provides for the establishment of **Autonomous Hill Development Councils (AHDCs)** to promote decentralized governance in Ladakh.
- Originally applicable to the **Leh and Kargil districts**.
- Enacted to empower local communities through greater administrative and developmental autonomy.

Objective

- Promote decentralized governance.
- Ensure people's participation in local planning and development.
- Address the unique geographical, cultural and developmental needs of Ladakh.

Powers and Functions

The Council exercises powers over:

- Local development planning.
- Management of government (Khalsa Sarkar) land transferred to it.
- Management of undemarcated forests.
- Local infrastructure and public services.
- Levy and collection of specified local taxes and fees.

4. The SHANTI Vision

Source: TOI

Context

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar launched India's campaign for a **2028–29 non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC)** by unveiling the **SHANTI Vision**, which emphasizes international norms, mutual trust, integrity, and stronger representation for the Global South.

About SHANTI Vision

What is it?

The **SHANTI Vision** stands for **Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity**. It serves as India's diplomatic framework for its 2028–29 UNSC campaign, promoting an inclusive, rules-based international order and strengthening the voice of developing countries in global governance.

Key Features

- **Global South Focus:** Seeks greater representation of developing countries in global decision-making and addresses their developmental and financial concerns.
- **Rules-Based International Order:** Advocates respect for international law, multilateralism, trust, and integrity in global governance.
- **UN Peacekeeping Reforms:** Supports better-equipped, technology-enabled peacekeeping missions and promotes the **Women, Peace and Security (WPS)** agenda.
- **Addressing Global Challenges:** Calls for stronger international cooperation to tackle terrorism, climate change, maritime security, and other transnational threats.
- **Responsible Technology Governance:** Encourages global norms for the safe, transparent, and responsible use of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.
- **Development Partnerships:** Highlights India's role as a trusted development partner through infrastructure and capacity-building projects in **79 countries**, promoting development as a pathway to peace.

India and the UNSC

- The **UN Security Council (UNSC)** consists of **15 members**:
 - **5 Permanent Members (P5):** China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
 - **10 Non-Permanent Members:** Elected by the UN General Assembly for **two-year terms**.
- India has served as a **non-permanent member eight times**:
 - **1950–51**
 - **1967–68**
 - **1972–73**
 - **1977–78**
 - **1984–85**
 - **1991–92**
 - **2011–12**
 - **2021–22**
- India has contributed **nearly 3 lakh personnel** to around **50 UN peacekeeping missions**, making it one of the world's largest contributors.
- India continues to advocate **comprehensive UNSC reforms**, including expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership to better reflect present-day geopolitical realities.

5. Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Source: TOI

Context

Odisha has proposed upgrading **Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary** into **Debrigarh-Gaur National Park** to strengthen conservation of the Indian gaur and other wildlife.

About Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Location

- Situated in **Bargarh district, Odisha**.
- Located along the **Hirakud Reservoir**, formed by the Hirakud Dam on the **Mahanadi River**.
- Covers an area of **353 sq km**, with about **290.65 sq km** proposed as the core National Park area.
- Dominated by **tropical dry deciduous forests**, grasslands, rocky hills, valleys, and seasonal streams.
- The proposed National Park area is **free from human settlements and livestock**, providing an

undisturbed habitat.

- The sanctuary has significant historical importance as **Veer Surendra Sai** used its forests as a base during his resistance against British rule.

Banking and Finance

1. RBI Amends Bank Board Governance Framework

Source: Mint

Context

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued revised directions on bank board governance to enable boards to focus more on strategic decision-making, risk governance and corporate governance by reducing time spent on routine operational matters. The revised framework will come into effect from **1 October 2026**.

About the Revised RBI Bank Board Governance Framework

What is it?

- The RBI has amended its governance framework for banks to strengthen the effectiveness of Boards of Directors.
- The revised norms rationalise the matters placed before bank boards, allowing them to devote greater attention to strategy, risk oversight and governance rather than day-to-day operational issues.

Objective

- Improve corporate governance in banks.
- Strengthen board accountability and strategic oversight.
- Enhance risk management and regulatory compliance.
- Improve the quality of board deliberations and decision-making.

Key Features of RBI's Board Governance Directions

- **Strategic Focus:** Boards should prioritize strategy, risk management, governance, financial stability, and long-term sustainability.
- **Delegation of Routine Work:** Operational matters should be handled by Board/Management Committees, while the Board focuses on policy and strategy.
- **Stronger Chairperson's Role:** The Chairperson is responsible for setting the agenda and ensuring meaningful strategic discussions.
- **Defined Powers:** Clearly distinguish matters reserved for the Board and those delegated to committees or management, with periodic reviews.
- **Better Information Flow:** Boards should receive timely, high-quality information and may seek independent external reports when required.
- **Regular Governance Review:** Boards should periodically evaluate agenda quality, delegated responsibilities, information flow, and time spent on strategic and risk issues.

Key Responsibilities of Bank Boards

- Approve business strategy.
- Oversee enterprise-wide risk management.
- Ensure financial stability.
- Monitor related-party exposures.
- Ensure regulatory compliance.

- Oversee governance standards.
- Approve appointment of key managerial personnel.

2. RBI Proposes One-Time Approval for Mutual Funds & Insurers to Acquire Bank Shareholding

Source: IE

Context

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a draft amendment to simplify the approval process for mutual funds, insurance companies and pension funds acquiring significant shareholding in banks by introducing a **one-time approval mechanism**.

Key Highlights

Current Rule

- Investors such as mutual funds, insurance companies and pension funds must obtain **prior RBI approval** before acquiring **5% or more** shareholding (major shareholding) in a bank.
- If their holding later falls below **5%**, they must again seek RBI approval before crossing the threshold in future.

Proposed Change

- RBI approval will continue to be mandatory for the **first acquisition** of a major shareholding.
- After receiving the initial approval, eligible institutional investors will **not need fresh approval** every time they again acquire a major stake in the same bank.
- RBI may grant a **one-time approval** covering future acquisitions.

One-Time Approval Limit

- Valid for acquisitions of up to **10% of the paid-up share capital or voting rights** in the same bank.
- Subject to conditions specified by the RBI.

Eligible Investors

- Mutual Funds
- Insurance Companies
- Pension Funds

Agriculture

1. Crystal Crop Protection Launches Six New Agri Innovations for Kharif 2026

Source: BusinessLine

Context

Crystal Crop Protection Ltd. launched **six new agricultural technologies** for the **Kharif 2026** season to provide integrated solutions for weed, disease, insect, and crop nutrition management, aiming to improve farmers' productivity and profitability.

About the Launch

What is it?

Crystal Crop Protection has introduced **six new crop protection and nutrition products** designed to tackle major agricultural challenges such as weeds, pests, diseases, and nutrient deficiencies across important Kharif crops.

Objective

- Improve crop productivity and quality.
- Reduce cultivation costs.
- Enhance farmers' income through efficient crop protection and nutrition.
- Address challenges arising from climate change and evolving pest dynamics.

Key Innovations

- **Samorian (Soybean):**
 - Patented herbicide with a **three-way mode of action**.
 - Controls both **grassy and broadleaf weeds** effectively.
- **Takuro (Maize):**
 - Patented combination herbicide.
 - Provides **three-layer weed management**, rapid systemic action, and long-lasting residual control.
- **Xeberia (Paddy):**
 - Multi-site fungicide.
 - Protects against **fungal and bacterial diseases**.
- **MAXentra (Paddy):**
 - Dual-action fungicide.
 - Offers broad-spectrum disease control across different crop growth stages.
- **Valtruva (Cotton):**
 - Advanced insecticide with **smart triple-action technology**.
 - Controls major sucking pests, provides rapid knockdown, and offers extended residual protection.
- **KGR-T (GreenAg):**
 - Patented organic smart nutrition solution.
 - Uses an **effervescent tablet delivery system** with extended nutrient release technology.
 - Improves nutrient-use efficiency, flowering, fruiting, crop resilience, and yield quality.

Key Features

- Integrated solutions covering **weed management, disease control, insect management, and crop nutrition**.
- Developed after **extensive field validation** across different agro-climatic regions.
- Designed to reduce spray frequency and improve operational efficiency.
- Supports sustainable and profitable farming practices.

2. Vriksh Mitra Abhiyan

Source: PIB

Context

Union Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** launched a nationwide initiative to transform the **Vriksh Mitra Abhiyan** into a mass movement for environmental conservation through public participation.

About Vriksh Mitra Abhiyan

What is it?

The **Vriksh Mitra Abhiyan** is a nationwide people-led environmental movement that encourages every citizen to plant, protect, and nurture trees while promoting sustainable lifestyles, water conservation, soil health, and climate action.

Objective

- Transform tree plantation into a nationwide social movement.
- Increase public participation in environmental conservation.
- Promote sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and climate resilience.
- Support the objectives of **Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)**.

Key Features

- **Tree on Every Auspicious Occasion:** Every family is encouraged to plant a tree on birthdays, wedding anniversaries, birth of children, and in memory of parents, making tree planting a lifelong social tradition.
- **"One Tree, Five Companions" Pledge:** Every **Vriksh Mitra** should plant at least one tree every year and motivate five more people to join the campaign.
- **Vriksh Mitra Pariwar:** A structured network will be created from the **national, state, district, block, and village levels** to coordinate plantation and monitoring activities.
- **Hariyali Amavasya Tree Festival:** A nationwide plantation drive will be organised on **Hariyali Amavasya (12 August)** to celebrate tree planting as a national festival.
- **Designated Plantation Sites:** Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies will identify dedicated plantation sites and ensure long-term protection and maintenance of planted trees.
- **Link with Government Schemes:** Plantation will be integrated with schemes such as **PM Gram Sadak Yojana, PM Awas Yojana, Lakhpati Didi Yojana**, and other Agriculture and Rural Development programmes.
- **Focus on Sustainable Agriculture:** Encourages balanced use of water and chemicals, soil conservation, and environmentally sustainable farming practices.
- **Mission LiFE Integration:** Promotes energy conservation, water saving, waste segregation, plastic-free living, and adoption of sustainable lifestyles.

3. Union Government Bans Herbicide Paraquat

Source: The Hindu

Context

The **Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** has **banned Paraquat Dichloride**, a highly toxic herbicide associated with thousands of deaths due to **suicides, accidental poisoning, and homicides** in India.

About Paraquat Dichloride

- **Type:** Non-selective contact herbicide.
- **Use:** Controls weeds by destroying green plant tissue.
- Commonly sprayed **after harvesting** to clear fields before the next crop.
- One of the **most toxic herbicides** used in agriculture.

Reason for the Ban

- **Extremely toxic** to humans.
- **No specific antidote** is available.
- Even small quantities can cause:
 - Multi-organ failure
 - Lung fibrosis
 - Kidney and liver damage
 - Death

- Frequently used in cases of:
 - Suicide
 - Accidental poisoning
 - Homicide

Facts To Remember

1. CPWD Celebrates 172nd Annual Day; MoHUA Unveils SANKALP Framework

The Central Public Works Department (CPWD) celebrated its **172nd Annual Day** at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. During the event, Union Housing & Urban Affairs Minister **Manohar Lal** unveiled the **SANKALP Framework** to strengthen the quality, sustainability, and efficiency of public infrastructure. The occasion also featured the release of two publications highlighting India's urban development journey.

2. MeitY Releases Digital Threat Report 2025–26 for BFSI Sector

The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), along with **CERT-In, CSIRT-Fin, and SISA**, released the **2nd edition of the Digital Threat Report 2025–26** for the Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI) and payments ecosystem. The report introduces the **"Anatomy of Cyber Failure – 4 Layer Gap Archetype Framework"** and provides an 18-month roadmap to strengthen cybersecurity against emerging AI-driven threats.

3. DoT and TSDSI Sign MoU to Boost India's Telecom Standards

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) signed an MoU with the **Telecommunications Standards Development Society, India (TSDSI)** to strengthen India's participation in global telecom standards under the **TDIP Scheme**. The initiative supports startups and MSMEs under the **Bharat 6G Mission** by providing financial assistance for participation in international standard-setting organizations.

4. PM Modi Visits New Zealand; Bilateral Ties Elevated to Strategic Partnership

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** visited **New Zealand** from **10–11 July 2026**, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 40 years. India and New Zealand elevated their relationship to a **Strategic Partnership**, signed **10 MoUs**, adopted a **Roadmap to 2030**, announced plans to double bilateral trade to **NZD 7 billion by 2030**, and strengthened cooperation in defence, maritime security, agriculture, education, and critical technologies.

5. Bank of Maharashtra Launches 'FinSpark'26 Cybersecurity Hackathon

Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) launched **FinSpark'26**, a national-level cybersecurity hackathon under the theme **"Securing the Future of Banking."** The competition aims to encourage students and innovators to develop solutions for banking security, AI-based fraud detection, insider threats, and cyber resilience, with prize money exceeding **₹10 lakh**.

6. FIU-IND Named Runner-up at BECA 2026

The **Financial Intelligence Unit–India (FIU-IND)** was declared **Runner-up** at the **Best Egmont Case Award (BECA) 2026** for uncovering a major cyber fraud and money laundering network involving nearly **₹868 crore**. The investigation led to seizure of cash and cryptocurrency, attachment of assets, and prosecution under the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002**.

7. ISRO Successfully Conducts Three Gaganyaan Crew Module Tests

ISRO successfully completed **three critical tests** of the **Gaganyaan Crew Module** systems, including the

Crew Module Up-Righting System (CMUS), Connect-Disconnect System (CS-CDS), and Apex Cover qualification test. The tests validate splashdown recovery, parachute deployment, and module separation, bringing India closer to its first human spaceflight mission.

8. Japan Successfully Tests Reusable Rocket Prototype

The **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)** successfully carried out the first **lift-off and landing test** of its **RV-X reusable rocket prototype**. The rocket flew about **10 metres**, remained airborne for **40 seconds**, and landed safely, marking an important milestone in Japan's reusable launch vehicle programme.

9. India Women Register Historic Test Victory at Lord's

The **Indian Women's Cricket Team**, led by **Harmanpreet Kaur**, defeated England by **270 runs** in the first-ever Women's Test at **Lord's Cricket Ground**. **Yastika Bhatia** became the first woman to score a Test century at Lord's, while debutant **Kranti Gaud** starred with a five-wicket haul, helping India register one of its biggest Test victories.

10. Anjum Chopra and Kevin Pietersen Inducted into ICC Hall of Fame

Former India captain **Anjum Chopra** and former England captain **Kevin Pietersen** were inducted into the **ICC Hall of Fame 2026**. Anjum Chopra became the **third Indian woman** and **13th Indian overall** to receive the prestigious honour for her outstanding contribution to international cricket.

11. Sahitya Akademi Award-Winning Tamil Writer Poomani Passes Away

Renowned Tamil writer **Poomani** passed away at the age of **79**. He was best known for his acclaimed novel **Aгнаadi**, which won the **Sahitya Akademi Award (2014)**, and for his realistic portrayal of rural Tamil Nadu through works such as **Vekkai**, later adapted into the film **Asuran**.

12. Former Rajya Sabha MP H. Hanumanthappa Passes Away

Veteran **Indian National Congress (INC)** leader and former Rajya Sabha MP **H. Hanumanthappa** passed away at the age of **94**. He served three terms in the Rajya Sabha and also chaired the **Central Silk Board**, contributing significantly to agriculture and regional development in Karnataka.

13. Shubhanshu Shukla Launches Debut Book The Second Orbit

Indian Air Force Group Captain **Shubhanshu Shukla** launched his debut book **"The Second Orbit: Belief of a Man... Dreams of 1.4 Billion Hearts."** The book narrates his journey as an astronaut, his **Axiom-4 mission**, and India's growing ambitions in human spaceflight.

14. International Malala Day Observed on 12 July

International Malala Day was observed on **12 July** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Malala Yousafzai** and promote girls' education worldwide. The day marks her historic **United Nations speech in 2013**, advocating universal access to education.

15. International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms Observed

The **International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms** was observed on **12 July** to raise awareness about the environmental, health, and economic impacts of sand and dust storms. The **2026 theme** was **"From Source to Impact: Protecting Land and Life from Sand and Dust Storms."**

16. Andhra Pradesh Launches 'Pillale Sampada' Initiative

The Andhra Pradesh Government launched the **'Pillale Sampada' (Children are Wealth)** initiative to

encourage balanced population growth and address declining fertility rates. The scheme proposes financial assistance of **₹30,000 for a third child** and **₹40,000 for a fourth child**, along with greater focus on maternal health, childcare, and public awareness.

17. Union Government Launches Seafarer Safety Tracker

Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** launched the **Seafarer Safety Tracker** to enhance the safety of Indian seafarers operating in conflict-prone regions, particularly the **Strait of Hormuz**. Based on a '**Seafarer-First**' approach, the system enables continuous monitoring, timely emergency response, and coordinated assistance for Indian crew members during maritime crises.

18. Brand Finance India 100 Report 2026 Released

Brand Finance released the **India 100 Report 2026**, valuing India's top 100 brands at **US\$252.8 billion**, reflecting a **7% increase** over 2025. **Tata Group** retained its position as India's most valuable brand with a valuation of **US\$33.6 billion**, followed by **Infosys** and **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)**, highlighting the growing global strength and resilience of Indian brands.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 15 JULY 2026

1. The **Digital Threat Report 2025–26** is a strategic cybersecurity assessment for India's **Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI)** and **payments ecosystem**. Digital Threat Report 2025–26
2. Investors such as mutual funds, insurance companies and pension funds must obtain **prior RBI approval** before acquiring **5% or more** shareholding (major shareholding) in a bank. RBI Proposes One-Time Approval for Mutual Funds...
3. The **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils Act, 1997** provides for the establishment of **Autonomous Hill Development Councils (AHDCs)** to promote decentralized governance in Ladakh. Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAH...
4. **Development Partnerships**: Highlights India's role as a trusted development partner through infrastructure and capacity-building projects in **79 countries**, promoting development as a pathway to peace. The SHANTI Vision
5. Covers an area of **353 sq km**, with about **290.65 sq km** proposed as the core National Park area. Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Now test yourself: c4scourses.in/daily-quiz/daily-current-affairs-quiz-15-july-2026/

DAY 13 OF 24

16 July 2026

Thursday · 41 items · 3 topics

General 3 · Banking and Finance 2 · Agriculture 1 · Facts To Remember 35

Context

Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** launched the '**Seafarer-First Initiative**' to protect Indian seafarers operating in the **Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman** amid rising maritime security threats in West Asia.

About the Seafarer-First Initiative

What is it?

- The **Seafarer-First Initiative** is a comprehensive safety and welfare programme launched by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)** to ensure the protection, monitoring, and timely assistance of Indian seafarers working in conflict-prone maritime regions.
- It was introduced following attacks on the merchant vessels **MT Al Bahiyah** and **MT Mombasa** in the **Strait of Hormuz**, which affected **30 Indian seafarers** among a crew of 46.

Aim

- To safeguard the lives, welfare, and rights of Indian seafarers through real-time monitoring, emergency response, and coordinated government support during maritime crises.

Key Features

Real-Time Monitoring

- The **Directorate General of Shipping (DGS)** will establish a **vessel-by-vessel operational dashboard** to monitor every Indian seafarer, irrespective of the vessel's flag.

Dedicated Liaison Officers

- Special liaison officers will coordinate with Indian seafarers, shipping companies, and government agencies during emergencies.

Focus Region

- Covers Indian seafarers operating in:
 - Persian Gulf
 - Strait of Hormuz
 - Gulf of Oman

2. Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

Source: PIB

Context

At the **49th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC49)** held in **Geneva, Switzerland**, India achieved significant success as the Commission adopted **seven international food standards and guidelines** developed under Indian leadership.

About the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

- **Codex Alimentarius** (Latin for "**Food Code**") is a collection of internationally recognized **food**

"Nobody is born a topper. Someone simply did not stop."

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standards, guidelines, codes of practice, and recommendations.

- It serves as the global reference for harmonising national food safety regulations and facilitating international food trade.
- **Established by:**
 - **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** – 1961
 - **World Health Organization (WHO)** – joined in 1962
- **Headquarters:** Hosted jointly by FAO and WHO (Secretariat at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy).

Objectives

- Protect consumer health.
- Ensure fair practices in international food trade.
- Harmonise global food standards and reduce technical trade barriers.

Key Functions

- Establishes standards for:
 - Food additives.
 - Contaminants and toxins.
 - Pesticide residues.
 - Veterinary drug residues.
- Develops international guidelines on:
 - Food hygiene.
 - Food labelling.
 - Food processing and packaging.
- Uses scientific risk assessments from expert bodies such as:
 - **JECFA (Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives)**.
- Acts as the **international food safety reference under the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures**.

India's Achievements at CAC49

- Adoption of India-led international standards for:
 - **Dried Coriander Seeds.**
 - **Fresh Curry Leaves.**
- Adoption of standards developed under India's co-chairmanship for:
 - **Vanilla.**
 - **Large Cardamom.**
- Approval of India's proposal to develop a new **Codex Standard for Cashew Kernels** under the **Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV)**.
- India elected **Co-Chair** of the newly created **Electronic Working Group on New Food Sources and Production Systems (NFPS)**.

3. Abathsahayeswarar (Thukkachi) Temple

Source: The Hindu

Context

The **12th-century Abathsahayeswarar Temple** at **Thukkachi, Tamil Nadu**, received the **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award of Distinction 2024** for excellence in heritage conservation.

About the Thukkachi Temple

- Also known as the **Abathsahayeswarar Temple**.
- A **12th-century Shaivite temple** representing the architectural excellence of the **Later Chola period**.
- It is a **living heritage temple**, continuing to function as an active place of worship.
- **Location:** Thukkachi village, **Thanjavur district**, Tamil Nadu.

Historical Background

- Associated with the **Later Chola dynasty**.
- **Kulottunga I** endowed the temple for the daily recitation of **Thevaram hymns**.
- **Vikrama Chola** expanded and renovated the temple, making it one of the few major temples built during his reign.
- Temple inscriptions refer to the site as:
 - **Thenthirukalathi**
 - **Vikramacholeeswaram**

Architectural Features

- Built in the rare **Kara Kovil** style, where the sanctum resembles a **processional chariot**.
- Houses one of the **oldest known stone idols of Lord Sarabeshwarar**.
- Reflects the mature architectural style of the Later Cholas through intricate sculptures and stone craftsmanship.

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award of Distinction

- Awarded under the **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation**.
- Recognises outstanding conservation projects that preserve cultural heritage while maintaining authenticity.
- The award highlights India's expertise in conserving historic monuments using both traditional and scientific methods.

4. Cabinet Approves Semicon 2.0

Source: PIB

Context The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister, approved **Semicon 2.0**.

About India Semiconductor Mission (Semicon 2.0)

What is it?

- The **second phase of the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)** aims to build a complete semiconductor ecosystem by promoting chip design, manufacturing, packaging, raw materials and supply chains.

Approved Outlay

- **₹1.27 lakh crore**

Objective

- Achieve self-reliance in semiconductor manufacturing.
- Reduce dependence on imported chips.
- Support AI, electronics and strategic industries.

Key Features

- Six-pillar strategy covering:
 - Chip design

- Chip development
- Semiconductor manufacturing
- Raw materials
- Specialty gases and minerals
- Supply chain ecosystem
- Incentives extended to suppliers of semiconductor raw materials and gases.
- Focus on indigenous chip production.

Background

- **Semicon 1.0 (2021):**
 - Outlay: ₹76,000 crore
 - Approved **12 semiconductor projects**
 - Total investment attracted: ₹1.64 lakh crore

Banking and Finance

1. RBI Issues Draft Guidance on Data Governance Framework for Regulated Entities

Source: The Hindu

Context

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a **Draft Guidance on Regulatory Expectations for Data Governance** for banks and other Regulated Entities (REs) to strengthen data governance, improve data quality, and ensure compliance with the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023**.

About the Draft Data Governance Framework (DGF)

What is it?

- The **Data Governance Framework (DGF)** is a comprehensive regulatory framework prescribing the RBI's expectations for effective management, security and governance of data by Regulated Entities (REs).
- It covers the **entire data lifecycle**, from data creation and collection to storage, usage, sharing, archival and deletion.

Issued By

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**

Objective

- Improve data quality, integrity and consistency.
- Strengthen accountability and data ownership.
- Enhance data security and privacy.
- Improve risk management.
- Ensure compliance with the **DPDP Act, 2023** and other applicable laws.

Key Features

Comprehensive Data Governance Framework

- Every Regulated Entity must establish a comprehensive **Data Governance Framework (DGF)** aligned with its overall risk management framework.

Risk-Based and Proportionate Approach

- The framework should be proportionate to:
 - Size of the institution.
 - Business complexity.
 - Business model.
 - Technology infrastructure.
 - Nature of operations.

Annual Review

- Regulated Entities must review the framework:
 - **At least once every year**, or
 - More frequently whenever significant business or technology changes occur.

About the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023

- India's primary law governing the processing of **digital personal data**.
- Seeks to balance individuals' right to privacy with the need for lawful data processing.
- Establishes obligations for data fiduciaries regarding data protection, security and user consent.

2. Index of Services Production (ISP)

Source: Business Standard

Context

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has released the trial **Index of Services Production (ISP)** for April 2026, introducing a high-frequency indicator to measure short-term performance of India's services sector.

What is the Index of Services Production (ISP)?

- A **monthly high-frequency indicator** that measures the real output of the services sector.
- Serves as the **services sector counterpart of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.
- **Developed by:** National Statistical Office (NSO), under MoSPI.
- **Base Year: 2024–25.**
- Covers **19 formal service sub-sectors**, representing about **60% of India's services economy**.
- Released on the **29th of every month**.

Key Features

- Measures **volume of services produced**, rather than only the value of transactions.
- Uses **GST data**, administrative databases, and the **Annual Survey of Incorporated Services Sector Enterprises (ASISSE)**.
- Nominal turnover is adjusted for inflation using:
 - Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for wholesale trade.
 - Consumer Price Index (CPI) or proxy CPIs for other services.
- Future improvements are expected through the use of **Producer Price Indices (PPIs)**.

Agriculture

1. Gramodyam Programme

Source: NABARD

Context

On **13 July 2026**, NABARD Chairman **Dr. Shaji K. V.** launched **Gramodyam**, an Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), on the occasion of NABARD's **45th Foundation Day** to strengthen the rural enterprise ecosystem.

About Gramodyam

What is it?

- A nationwide entrepreneurship development programme launched by **NABARD** to identify, train, mentor, and support rural youth and aspiring entrepreneurs in establishing sustainable enterprises.

Implemented by

- NABARD
- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**
- Institute for Industrial Development (IID)

Aim

- To promote rural entrepreneurship, self-employment, and improve access to formal finance, thereby strengthening the rural enterprise ecosystem.

Key Features

Feature	Details
Digital-first Hybrid Model	Combines online and offline entrepreneurship training across all States and Union Territories.
Entrepreneurship Support	Psychometric assessment of participants, business mentoring and handholding, and support for enterprise establishment.
Credit Linkage Framework	Preparation of bankable Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), linkage with Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and other financial institutions, access to government schemes and incentives, and digital assistance for loan applications.
National Coverage	Implemented across all States and Union Territories.
Pilot Target	Aims to create around 4,000 rural entrepreneurs during the 3-year pilot phase .

Exam Relevance

- NABARD

Facts To Remember

1. Japan Recognises Cryptocurrency as Financial Assets

Japan's Parliament passed a law to classify **cryptocurrencies as financial assets**, moving them from the **Payment Services Act** to the financial regulatory framework. The change brings stricter regulations, including insider trading rules and tougher penalties for unregistered crypto trading, as cryptocurrency adoption continues to grow in the country.

2. RBI Approves Rajiv Kumar as Part-Time Chairman of HDFC Bank

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approved the appointment of former **Finance Secretary** and **Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar** as the **Part-Time Chairman of HDFC Bank** for a **three-year term**, effective **15 July 2026**.

3. India's Exports Reach USD 232.73 Billion in Q1 FY27

The **Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I)** reported that India's **total exports** reached **USD 232.73 billion** during **Q1 FY27 (April–June 2026)**, while **imports** stood at **USD 270.15 billion**. Merchandise exports increased to **USD 129.32 billion**, reflecting continued growth in India's external trade.

4. MeitY Launches NIDAR 2.0 for Indigenous Drone Innovation

The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** and the **Drone Federation India (DFI)** launched **NIDAR 2.0** under the **SwaYaan Initiative** to promote drones powered by **indigenous VEGA processors**. The challenge offers a **prize pool of over ₹65 lakh** and supports innovation in autonomous drones and indigenous drone components.

5. IAF Retains 3rd Position in WDMMA Global Air Power Rankings 2026

According to the **World Defence Military Analysis (WDMMA) Global Air Power Rankings 2026**, the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** retained its position as the **third-most powerful air force** globally, behind only the **United States** and **Russia**, remaining ahead of China's Air Force for the **fifth consecutive year**.

6. Codex Commission Adopts Seven Food Standards Led by India

The **49th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC49)** adopted **seven Codex standards and guidelines** developed under India's leadership. The Commission also approved India's proposal to develop a global **Codex standard for cashew kernels**, strengthening India's role in global food standard-setting.

7. Ukraine and Nine Nations Form Anti-Ballistic Missile Coalition

Ukraine and **nine European countries** announced the formation of an **Anti-Ballistic Missile Coalition** to strengthen Europe's missile defence capabilities. The coalition aims to jointly develop affordable missile defence systems to counter emerging ballistic missile threats.

8. Axis Max Life Launches Smart RISE Retirement Plan

Axis Max Life Insurance launched **Smart RISE**, a retirement plan combining **guaranteed annuity** with a **NIFTY 50-linked variable annuity**. The product is designed to provide stable post-retirement income while offering potential market-linked returns and legacy planning options.

9. Gujarat's Unjha Cumin and Fennel Receive GI Tags

The **Geographical Indications Registry (GIR)** granted **GI tags** to **Unjha Cumin** and **Unjha Fennel** from Gujarat. With this recognition, Gujarat now has **six GI-tagged agricultural products**, highlighting the state's rich agricultural heritage.

10. India Wins Five Gold Medals at International Physics Olympiad 2026

India recorded its **best-ever performance** at the **56th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) 2026** in Colombia, with **all five participants winning gold medals**. India jointly topped the overall medal tally alongside Russia, China, Kazakhstan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

11. Three Indian-Origin Experts Appointed to US Federal Reserve Review Panels

The **US Federal Reserve** appointed **Raghuram Rajan, Raj Chetty, and Asha Sharma** to lead key task forces reviewing the **US monetary policy framework**. Their work will focus on balance sheet policy, economic data, and the impact of artificial intelligence on productivity and employment.

12. Russia Launches Soyuz MS-29 Mission to ISS

Russia successfully launched the **Soyuz MS-29** mission carrying **NASA astronaut Anil Menon** and two **Roscosmos cosmonauts** to the **International Space Station (ISS)**. The crew will undertake scientific research and technology demonstrations during an eight-month mission.

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Delhi Chief Minister **Rekha Gupta** unveiled '**Mayur**', the official mascot of the **22nd Commonwealth Table Tennis Championship 2026**. Inspired by the **Indian Peacock**, the mascot symbolizes unity, pride, energy, and the spirit of the Commonwealth nations.

16. International Day of Hope Observed on 12 July

The **United Nations** observed the **International Day of Hope** on **12 July** to promote hope, peace, resilience, and sustainable development worldwide. **2026** marked the **second observance** of the international day.

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Google India signed an **MoU** with the **Government of Tripura** to strengthen the state's **AI ecosystem**, cloud infrastructure, digital governance, and workforce development. The partnership also supports the establishment of an **AI Centre of Excellence** and the **Tripura IT & Data Ecosystem Zone (TIDEZ)**.

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35. MY Bharat to Launch Nationwide 'Viksit Bharat Yuva Connect Programme'

The **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports**, through **MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat)**, will launch the **Viksit Bharat Yuva Connect Programme (VBYP)** across universities and colleges from **16 July to 15 August 2026** under the theme "**Nasha Mukh Yuva for Viksit Bharat.**" The month-long campaign aims to mobilise youth against substance abuse, with youth icons leading awareness sessions to promote a drug-free society and contribute towards the vision of **Viksit Bharat@2047** and **Nasha Mukh Bharat**.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 16 JULY 2026

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3. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister, approved **Semicon 2.0**. Cabinet Approves Semicon 2.0
4. Covers **19 formal service sub-sectors**, representing about **60% of India's services economy**. Index of Services Production (ISP)
5. On **13 July 2026**, NABARD Chairman **Dr. Shaji K. V.** launched **Gramodyam**, an Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), on the occasion of NABARD's **45th Foundation Day** to strengthen the rural enterprise ecosystem. Gramodyam Programme

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DAY 14 OF 24

17 July 2026

Friday · 24 items · 2 topics

General 5 · Agriculture 4 · Facts To Remember 15

Context

NITI Aayog released the report "**Roadmap for Building India as a Leading Bioeconomy Powerhouse by 2035**", proposing major policy reforms, a **₹50,000–crore BioEconomy Growth Fund**, and six National BioMissions to make India one of the **top three biotechnology nations by 2035**.

What is the Bioeconomy?

The **bioeconomy** refers to economic activities based on the use of **biological resources, biotechnology, and life sciences** to produce products and services in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, food, energy, and the environment.

Vision

- Make India one of the **Top 3 biotechnology powers by 2035**.
- Build globally competitive biotechnology companies.
- Promote innovation, biomanufacturing, and employment.

Major Recommendations

Aspect	Details
Recommendation	Establish a ₹50,000–crore BioEconomy Growth Fund for 2026–2035 .
Primary Objective	Support biotechnology startups and industries by accelerating commercialization of innovations.
Key Purpose	Bridge the " Valley of Death "—the gap between laboratory research and commercial production.
Financial Support Mechanisms	Blended finance, Equity–risk funding, Viability Gap Funding (VGF), and Infrastructure support.
Priority Sectors	Biomanufacturing, Advanced therapeutics, Synthetic biology, Fermentation technologies, and Diagnostics.

Six National BioMissions

National BioMission	Focus Area
1. GeneIndia	Affordable gene therapy and cell therapy for improved healthcare.
2. AgriBio 2.0	Develop climate–resilient gene–edited crops and promote biological inputs for sustainable agriculture.
3. BioX Foundry	Commercialisation of synthetic biology innovations.
4. One Health Grid	Integrated surveillance of infectious diseases and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) .
5. Marine Biotechnology Mission	Promote seaweed cultivation and development of marine bio–products .
6. BioPharmaNext	Promote biologics, biosimilars, and AI–enabled drug discovery .

2. Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) III Norms

Source: Business Standard

"Make notes you will actually read again."

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Context

The Government of India has released the **draft Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) III norms** for passenger vehicles and invited public comments for **21 days**. The new norms will apply from **1 April 2027**.

What are CAFE Norms?

CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency) norms prescribe the **average fuel efficiency (or CO₂ emission limits)** that automobile manufacturers must achieve across all the passenger vehicles they sell.

Objective Reduce fuel consumption, lower carbon emissions, and promote cleaner vehicle technologies.

Applicability

- Applicable from **1 April 2027**
- Covers **M1 category passenger vehicles**
 - Up to **8 passenger seats** (excluding the driver's seat)
- Applicable to both **manufactured and imported** vehicles sold in India.

Objectives of CAFE III

- Improve fuel efficiency
- Reduce CO₂ emissions
- Promote electric and hybrid vehicles
- Encourage renewable fuels (E20, ethanol, CNG, CBG)
- Support India's climate commitments
- Reduce crude oil imports
- Provide long-term policy certainty to automobile manufacturers

3. PARIVARTAN Scheme

Source: BS

Context

The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has approved the **operational guidelines** for the **PARIVARTAN Scheme**, aimed at replacing old, highly polluting trucks and buses in the **National Capital Region (NCR)** with cleaner vehicles.

What is PARIVARTAN?

- **PARIVARTAN** stands for:
 - **Programme for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivization of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air Pollution and Network Emissions**
 - It is a Central Government scheme to accelerate the replacement of old commercial vehicles with **BS-VI compliant** or **electric vehicles (EVs)**.
- Ministry
 - **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**

Objective

- Reduce air pollution in the National Capital Region (NCR).
- Replace old, high-emission trucks and buses.
- Promote cleaner transport technologies.
- Improve urban air quality.
- Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

4. India's Tourism Growth and WTTC Report 2026

Source: Business Standard

Context

The **World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)**, in its **Economic Impact Research (EIR) Report 2026**, stated that India's tourism sector has significant growth potential but requires **visa reforms, better connectivity, and stronger international promotion** to unlock its full potential.

About WTTC

- World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) is a global body representing the travel and tourism sector.
- It publishes the **Economic Impact Research (EIR)** report annually to assess the sector's contribution to GDP and employment.

Key Highlights of the Report

Parameter	2025	2026	2036 (Projected)
Contribution to GDP	—	6.7% of GDP	7.0% of GDP
Tourism Sector CAGR (2026–2036)	—	6.3%	Faster than India's economy (5.7% CAGR)
Employment Supported	46.2 million (10.8%)	48.1 million (11.1%)	63.5 million (13.0%)
Comparison with 2019	—	—	2019: 39.9 million jobs (9.9%)
International Visitor Spending	₹2.9 lakh crore	₹3.3 lakh crore	15.3% increase over 2025

Top Source Countries for Foreign Tourists (2025)

Country	Share
United States	11%
Bangladesh	10%
United Kingdom	7%
Japan	4%
Malaysia	4%
Rest of the World	64%

5. Indian Grey Hornbill

Source: The Hindu

Context

The **Indian Grey Hornbill** has returned to **Gir Forest, Gujarat**, after more than **60 years**, following a successful reintroduction programme by the **Gujarat Forest Department**.

About Indian Grey Hornbill

- Scientific Name:** *Ocyrceros birostris*
- Family:** Bucerotidae (Hornbill family)
- Medium-sized, tree-dwelling (arboreal) bird.
- One of the most common hornbill species found in the Indian subcontinent.

Distribution

- Endemic to the Indian subcontinent.**
- Found in:

- **India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh**
- IUCN Status
 - **Least Concern (LC)**

6. Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS)

Source: PIB

Context

The Union Cabinet, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has approved the **Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS)** with an outlay of **₹62,500 crore** to strengthen India's mobile manufacturing ecosystem and promote indigenous brands.

About MPMS

- **Launched by:** Government of India
- **Approved by:** Union Cabinet
- **Outlay:** ₹62,500 crore
- **Duration:** FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31 (5 years)

Objectives

- Increase mobile phone manufacturing in India.
- Promote domestic value addition.
- Encourage local sourcing of components.
- Develop Indian mobile brands.
- Boost research, design, and innovation.
- Reduce import dependence and strengthen supply chains.

Agriculture

1. Producer-Controlled Cooperatives: Giving Farmers the Reins

Source: Business Standard

Context

Economist **Nitin Desai** says that Indian agriculture should be led by **farmers' cooperatives** instead of government bureaucracy. He cites the success of the **Amul model** and suggests using the same approach for **Agrioltaics (Agri-PV)** under the **PM-KUSUM** scheme.

Why is this issue important?

- India spends huge money on subsidies for **paddy and wheat**, but these crops have grown slowly.
- At the same time, sectors like **milk, fruits, and vegetables**, which are mainly managed by farmers themselves, have grown much faster.

Growth in Agriculture (FY2012–FY2024)

- Paddy & Wheat → **27%**
- Fruits & Vegetables → **52%**
- Milk → **85%**

Lesson:

- Producer-led sectors performed much better than subsidy-driven sectors.
- **Milk is now more valuable than cereals.**

- **Government Support**

- Fertiliser + Food Subsidy → ₹4 trillion
- More than **80 crore people** receive free food grains under **PMGKAY**.

The Amul Model

What is Amul?

- Started in **1946** at **Anand, Gujarat**.
- Full form: **Anand Milk Union Limited (AMUL)**.
- Founded by **Tribhuvandas Patel**.
- Led by **Dr. Verghese Kurien**, known as the **Father of the White Revolution**.

Why is Amul successful?

- Farmers own the cooperative.
- Farmers manage the cooperative.
- Profits go directly to farmers.
- No middlemen.

National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)

- Established in **1965**.
- Founded by **Dr. Verghese Kurien**.
- Supported by **Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri**.

Objective

- Promote dairy cooperatives across India.

Operation Flood

- Started in **1970**.
- Also called the **White Revolution**.
- Helped India become the **world's largest milk producer**.

What is Agrivoltaics (Agri-PV)?

Agrivoltaics means **growing crops and generating solar power on the same land**.

- Solar panels are installed above crops.
- Crops grow below the panels.
- Farmers earn from both farming and electricity.

Benefits of Agri-PV

- Higher farmer income.
- Better use of land.
- Saves irrigation water.
- Produces clean energy.
- Helps fight climate change.

PM-KUSUM Scheme

- **Full Form**
 - Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan
- **Launched: 2019**
- **Ministry:** Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)

Components

- **Component A:** Grid-connected solar plants.
- **Component B:** Standalone solar pumps.
- **Component C:** Solarisation of existing pumps.
- Also supports **Agrivoltaics (Agri-PV)**.

Why are Cooperatives Needed?

- Average farm size in India is only **1.08 hectares**.
- Small farmers cannot afford expensive Agri-PV projects individually.

Cooperatives help by:

- Combining land.
- Sharing investment.
- Getting bank loans easily.
- Sharing profits.
- Managing projects efficiently.

2. ICAR Foundation Day 2026

Source: Business Standard

Context

At the **98th Foundation Day of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**, Union Agriculture Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** urged scientists to develop **non-GM (Genetically Modified)** solutions to improve the productivity of pulses and oilseeds. He also emphasized crop diversification and climate-smart agriculture to achieve India's agricultural goals by **2047**.

Key Highlights

Focus on Non-GM Solutions

- Scientists were asked to develop high-yielding **non-GMO varieties** of pulses and oilseeds.
- The Minister questioned why countries without GM seeds achieve better productivity while India still depends on imports.
- The approval of **GM Mustard (DMH-11)** remains pending due to legal and policy issues.
- The Minister observed that farmers shift from pulses to rice and wheat after getting irrigation because cereals provide higher yields.
- The Minister emphasized reducing dependence on imported fertilizers and developing indigenous solutions.
- ICAR has prepared contingency plans for regions vulnerable to **El Niño** and other climate risks.

About ICAR

- **Established:** 1929
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
- India's apex organization for agricultural education, research, and extension.

3. National Investment Policy for Urea (NIPU) 2026

Source: TH

Context

The Union Cabinet has approved the **National Investment Policy for Urea (NIPU) 2026** to establish **8–9**

new gas-based urea plants with a production capacity of **10 million tonnes (MT)**. The policy aims to reduce India's dependence on imported urea and strengthen fertilizer security.

Why is the Policy Needed?

- India consumes around **40 million tonnes (MT)** of urea annually.
- Domestic production is about **30 MT**, while nearly **10 MT (25%)** is imported.
- Global events such as the **West Asia conflict** and disruption in the **Strait of Hormuz** caused urea prices to rise by **40–50%**, highlighting India's import dependence.

Key Features of NIPU 2026

- Establish **8–9 new gas-based urea plants**.
- Add **10 million tonnes** of annual production capacity.
- Improve transparency by separating **fixed and variable costs**.
- Introduce a **12–16% Return on Equity (RoE)** band.
- Reduce foreign exchange risk by converting fixed costs into **Indian Rupees after four years**.

Why is the Policy Important?

- Reduces dependence on imported urea.
- Improves fertilizer availability during global supply disruptions.
- Supports India's food security.
- Encourages domestic fertilizer manufacturing.
- **Soil Health Concerns**
 - Recommended **N:P:K** nutrient ratio:
 - **4:2:1**
 - Current ratio in India:
 - **9.8:3:1**

4. Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Act, 2026

Source: Indian Express

Context

Maharashtra has become the **first Indian state** to enact the **Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Act, 2026**, providing legal recognition and protection to women farmers. The Act was introduced during the **UN-observed International Year of the Woman Farmer** to promote inclusive and sustainable agriculture.

What is the Act?

- A landmark law that legally recognizes women as farmers.
- Ensures women can access government agricultural benefits even without owning agricultural land.
- Aims to reduce gender inequality in agriculture by improving access to land-related benefits, credit, insurance, training, and welfare schemes.

Why is the Act Needed?

- Most agricultural land is owned by men.
- Many women work in farming but are not legally recognized as farmers.
- Lack of legal recognition limits access to:
 - Government schemes
 - Institutional credit
 - Crop insurance

- Agricultural extension services
- Subsidies and welfare benefits

Key Features

Feature	Details
Broad Definition of Woman Farmer	Recognizes women engaged in crop cultivation, animal husbandry, poultry farming, fisheries, agro-forestry, vermiculture, mushroom cultivation, and primary agricultural processing as farmers.
Eligibility	Recognition is available to land owners, tenants, and agricultural labourers .
Woman Farmer Certificate (WFC)	Eligible women can obtain a Woman Farmer Certificate (WFC) as official proof of farming occupation.
Issuing Authority	Issued through the Gram Sabha or Nagar Panchayat .
Benefit of WFC	Eliminates the requirement of land ownership for accessing government welfare and agricultural schemes.
Digital Registry	Establishes a centralized digital database of certified women farmers for improved scheme delivery.
Women Farmers Empowerment Fund	A State-level dedicated fund to support women farmers' welfare, livelihoods, skill development, and empowerment .

Facts To Remember

1. PM to Flag Off India's First Hydrogen-Powered Train

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will flag off **India's first hydrogen-powered train** from **Jind Railway Station, Haryana**. The train is equipped with advanced multi-layer safety systems capable of detecting hydrogen leaks, heat, flames, and smoke, marking a major milestone in India's clean and sustainable railway transportation.

2. T. Srinivasa Kumar Appointed Secretary of Ministry of Earth Sciences

The Government of India appointed **T. Srinivasa Kumar** as the **Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** for a two-year tenure. An eminent ocean scientist, he played a key role in developing **India's Tsunami Early Warning System** and has extensive expertise in satellite oceanography, coastal hazard mitigation, and disaster management.

3. MoFPI Launches Short-Term Skill Training Programme

The **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)**, in collaboration with **NIFTEM Thanjavur**, launched a pilot **Short-Term Skill Training Programme (STSTP)** for **Assistant Baking Technician (NSQF Level-3)** at ITC-ICML, Trichy. The programme aims to enhance employability in the food processing sector through industry-integrated training and assured employment opportunities.

4. UN Releases First Scientific Report on Artificial Intelligence

The **United Nations (UN)** released its **first scientific assessment report on Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, highlighting that AI development is advancing faster than global governance. The report calls for stronger international regulatory frameworks to ensure safe, responsible, and equitable AI development worldwide.

5. Delhivery Financial Services Receives RBI Approval for Type-II NBFC Licence

Delhivery Financial Services Pvt. Ltd., a subsidiary of **Delhivery Limited**, received the **Reserve Bank of**

India's (RBI) approval for a **Type-II NBFC-Non Deposit Taking (NBFC-ND)** licence. The approval will enable the company to offer financial products such as credit, insurance, payment solutions, and fuel cards to strengthen its logistics ecosystem.

6. TCS Expands AI-Driven Partnership with ABB

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) signed a multi-million, multi-year agreement with **ABB** to modernise its global network operations using **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**. The partnership aims to create a standardised, secure, AI-powered digital infrastructure through an integrated Network-as-a-Service (NaaS) model.

7. Brand Finance India 100 Report 2026 Released

Brand Finance released the **India 100 Report 2026**, valuing India's top 100 brands at **USD 252.8 billion**, a **7% increase** over the previous year. **Tata Group** retained its position as India's most valuable brand, while **Adani Group** emerged as the fastest entrant into the country's top 10 most valuable brands.

8. Serhii Koretskyi Appointed Prime Minister of Ukraine

Ukraine's Parliament appointed **Serhii Koretskyi**, former CEO of **Naftogaz of Ukraine**, as the country's new **Prime Minister**. He was nominated by President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** to strengthen governance, energy security, and critical infrastructure amid the ongoing conflict.

9. Kerala Startup HEX20 Launches Second Satellite 'KOYO'

Kerala-based space startup **HEX20** successfully launched its second satellite, **KOYO (Kinetic Optical Yaw Observer)**, aboard **SpaceX Transporter-17**. The satellite will serve as a multi-payload technology demonstration platform for validating advanced space technologies and international payloads.

10. ATREE Discovers Two New Rare Bee Species in Arunachal Pradesh

Researchers from **ATREE** discovered two new rare solitary bee species—**Elaphropoda triangulata** and **Habropoda adi**—in **Siang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh**. The discovery highlights the exceptional biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayas and underscores the importance of conserving these fragile ecosystems.

11. MYAS Grants Conditional Recognition to Judo Federation of India

The **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS)** granted **conditional recognition** to the **Judo Federation of India (JFI)**, enabling it to resume administration of the sport, conduct national championships, and facilitate India's participation in international competitions.

12. Vice-President Releases Book 'The Voice of Justice: Justice Gavai Speaks'

Vice-President **C. P. Radhakrishnan** released the book **'The Voice of Justice: Justice Gavai Speaks'**, which compiles speeches delivered by **Justice B. R. Gavai**. The publication aims to provide valuable insights into constitutional law, judicial reasoning, and the functioning of India's legal system.

13. World Youth Skills Day Observed on 15 July

The **United Nations** observed **World Youth Skills Day** on **15 July** with the theme **"Skills for a Shared Future."** The day highlights the importance of equipping young people with technical and vocational skills to enhance employment, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development.

14. Tamil Nadu Launches 'Nalam TN' AI-Powered Healthcare Platform

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **C. Joseph Vijay** launched **'Nalam TN'**, an **AI-powered WhatsApp chatbot** that

enables online outpatient (OP) registration and appointment booking at government hospitals. The initiative aims to improve healthcare accessibility and reduce waiting time for patients.

15. Madhya Pradesh Secures USD 2 Billion Semiconductor Investment

Spain-based **Submer Group** announced an investment of **USD 2 billion** in **Madhya Pradesh's semiconductor sector**. The investment will establish wafer fabrication, assembly, testing, and packaging (ATMP) facilities, supporting India's Semiconductor Mission and boosting domestic chip manufacturing.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 17 JULY 2026

1. **Duration:** FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31 (5 years) Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS)
2. More than **80 crore people** receive free food grains under **PMGKAY**. Producer-Controlled Cooperatives: Giving Farmer...
3. Domestic production is about **30 MT**, while nearly **10 MT (25%)** is imported. National Investment Policy for Urea (NIPU) 2026
4. **Ministry:** Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare ICAR Foundation Day 2026
5. The **Indian Grey Hornbill** has returned to **Gir Forest, Gujarat**, after more than **60 years**, following a successful reintroduction programme by the **Gujarat Forest Department**. Indian Grey Hornbill

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DAY 15 OF 24

18 July 2026

Saturday · 24 items · 3 topics

General 4 · Banking and Finance 2 · Agriculture 1 · Facts To Remember 17

Context

NITI Aayog released the **Investment Friendliness Index (IFI)** to assess and compare the investment ecosystem across States and Union Territories. The Index aims to promote **competitive and cooperative federalism** by encouraging reforms that attract domestic and foreign investments.

About Investment Friendliness Index (IFI)

What is it?

- A **data-driven benchmarking framework** developed by **NITI Aayog**.
- Measures how effectively States and UTs create a business-friendly environment for investment.
- Supports the vision of **Viksit Bharat @2047** through **Viksit Rajya @2047**.

Background

- Proposed during the **9th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog (July 2024)**.
- Announced in the **Union Budget 2025–26**.

Objectives

- Improve the investment climate across States and UTs.
- Encourage policy reforms and ease of doing business.
- Attract higher domestic and foreign investment.
- Promote competitive and cooperative federalism.

Coverage

- Covers **28 States and 8 Union Territories**.

Eight Pillars of Assessment

- Infrastructure
- Business Climate
- Resources
- Government Policy
- Regulatory Ease
- Institutional Environment
- Financial Health
- Environmental Resilience

Performance Categories

- **Top Performers:** Score above 50
- **Frontrunners:** Score 45–50
- **Emerging Performers:** Score 40–45
- **Aspiring States:** Score below 40

Top Performers (Overall)

Rank	State
1	Gujarat
2	Maharashtra
3	Tamil Nadu
4	Goa
5	Odisha

Top States by Category

Category	1st	2nd	3rd
Large States	Gujarat	Maharashtra	Tamil Nadu
Hilly & North-Eastern States	Uttarakhand	Assam	Himachal Pradesh
Union Territories / City States	Goa	Delhi	Chandigarh

2. White Rabbit Technology Demonstration Network

Source: PIB

Context

The Union Minister inaugurated India's first **White Rabbit Technology-based Indian Standard Time (IST) Distribution Demonstration Network** at the **Regional Reference Standards Laboratory (RRSL), Jakkur, Bengaluru**.

About White Rabbit Technology Demonstration Network

What is it?

- India's first **high-precision network** for distributing **Indian Standard Time (IST)** through fibre-optic/Ethernet networks.
- Ensures highly accurate and synchronized time across critical sectors.

Developed By

- Legal Metrology Division**, Ministry of Consumer Affairs
- In collaboration with:
 - National Physical Laboratory (NPL)
 - ISRO
 - BSNL
 - SEBI

How It Works

- Atomic Clock:** NPL and ISRO generate the official Indian Standard Time (IST).
- Precision Time Protocol (IEEE 1588):** Transfers time through fibre-optic/Ethernet networks.
- Automatic Synchronization:** Devices continuously correct clock errors for precise timing.

Key Features

- Ultra-high precision:** Synchronization accuracy below **1 nanosecond**.
- Deterministic communication:** Fixed and predictable data transmission delay.
- Highly scalable:** Can connect thousands of devices over **1,000+ km**.
- Open-source technology:** Based on **CERN's White Rabbit Technology**.

Applications

- **Defence & National Security:** Reduces dependence on GPS and protects against spoofing attacks.
- **Financial Sector:** Accurate timestamping for stock exchanges and digital payments.
- **Telecommunications:** Supports **5G/6G** networks.
- **Space & Quantum Technologies:** Enables precise synchronization for advanced scientific applications.
- **Power & Nuclear Infrastructure:** Improves coordination of critical infrastructure.

3. Anti-Submarine Warfare Craft (ASW-SWC) – Malvan

Source: News on Air

Context

The Indian Navy is set to commission **Malvan**, the **second indigenous Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)**.

About Malvan

What is it?

- A **Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)**.
- Designed to detect, track, and destroy enemy submarines and underwater threats in shallow coastal waters.

Built By

- **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi**

Objective

- Strengthen India's coastal security.
- Protect ports, harbours, islands, and coastal infrastructure from underwater threats.

Key Features

- **Over 80% indigenous content.**
- Optimized for **shallow-water operations**.
- Lightweight and highly manoeuvrable.
- Equipped with:
 - Hull-mounted sonar
 - Towed array sonar
 - Lightweight torpedoes
 - Anti-submarine rocket launchers
 - Mine-laying capability

4. Congo Colobus (*Colobus congoensis*)

Context

Scientists have officially identified a **new monkey species, Congo Colobus (*Colobus congoensis*)**, locally known as **Likweli**, in the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**.

About Congo Colobus

What is it?

- A newly discovered species of **Colobus monkey**.
- Scientific name: ***Colobus congoensis***.

- Belongs to the **Colobus** genus, a group of African leaf-eating monkeys.

Habitat

- Found only in **Lomami National Park**, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- Lives in **high-altitude tropical rainforest canopies**.
- Considered **endemic** to this region.

Key Features

- Feeds on **leaves, fruits, and seeds**.
- Produces **deep, loud roaring calls** to communicate over long distances.

Ecological Importance

- Helps in **seed dispersal**, supporting forest regeneration.
- Maintains the health and biodiversity of tropical rainforests.

5. Manasbal Lake

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Context

After several years of ecological decline, **Manasbal Lake** in **Ganderbal district, Jammu & Kashmir** has witnessed the return of migratory birds, indicating improvement in the lake's ecosystem.

About Manasbal Lake

What is it?

- Manasbal Lake is the **deepest freshwater lake in India**.
- Located in **Ganderbal district, Jammu & Kashmir**.
- Managed by the **Wullar-Manasbal Development Authority (WMDA)**.

Why is it in News?

- Migratory birds returned in large numbers during **Winter (December 2025–January 2026)**.
- A **Bird Watching Festival** was organised by WMDA.
- More than **46 bird species** from **23 families** were recorded.

Major Migratory & Resident Birds

- Mallard
- White-headed Duck
- Eurasian Hoopoe
- Eurasian Collared Dove
- Lesser Pied Kingfisher
- Golden Eagle
- Grey-backed Shrike
- Tickell's Thrush
- Horned Grebe
- Long-eared Owl

Banking and Finance

1. Vishwas 2026 Scheme

Source: News on Air

Context

The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** has launched **Vishwas 2026**, a one-time dispute resolution scheme to settle pending provident fund penalty and damages cases.

About Vishwas 2026

What is it?

- A **one-time dispute resolution scheme** for employers.
- Helps settle disputes related to **damages and penalties** under EPF laws.
- Effective from **29 June 2026**.
- Operational for **6 months**.

Objectives

- Promote voluntary compliance by employers.
- Reduce long-pending litigation.
- Ensure faster resolution of EPF disputes.
- Protect employees' provident fund interests.

Implemented By

- **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**
- **Ministry of Labour & Employment**

Legal Basis

- **Section 14B** of the **Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952**.
- **Section 128** of the **Code on Social Security, 2020**.
- Notified under the **EPF Scheme, 2026**.

Key Features

- Fully **online (digital)** application process.
- Transparent and time-bound settlement.
- Applicable to eligible pending disputes.
- Covers **defaults made before 14 June 2024**.

Revised Penalty Rates

- **Up to 2 months default: 0.25% per month**
- **2 to less than 4 months: 0.50% per month**
- **More than 4 months: 1% per month**

2. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Monthly Bulletin – June 2026

Source: PIB

Context

The **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** released the **PLFS Monthly Bulletin – June 2026**, the **15th monthly bulletin** covering both rural and urban India.

About PLFS

What is it?

- The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** measures employment and unemployment trends in India.
- Conducted by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**.

Objectives

- Estimate labour force participation.
- Measure employment and unemployment.
- Provide timely labour market data for policy formulation.

Key Findings (June 2026)

Unemployment Rate (UR)

- **Overall India: 5.5%** (unchanged from May 2026)
- **Rural: 5.0%** (down from 5.1%)
- **Urban: 6.6%** (up from 6.4%)

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

- **All India (15 years & above): 54.4%**

Worker Population Ratio (WPR)

- **All India: 51.4%**
- **Rural: 53.8%**
- **Urban: 46.8%**

Important Terms

- **Unemployment Rate (UR)**
 - Percentage of people in the labour force who are unemployed but actively seeking work.
- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)**
 - Percentage of the population that is either working or actively looking for work.
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR)**
 - Percentage of the total population that is employed.
- **Current Weekly Status (CWS)**
 - A person is considered employed if they worked for at least **one hour during the last seven days**.

Agriculture

1. Lakhpati Didis at Bharat Tex 2026

Source: PIB

Context

The **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**, through **DAY-NRLM**, showcased products made by **Lakhpati Didis** and **Self Help Groups (SHGs)** at **Bharat Tex 2026**, highlighting rural entrepreneurship, traditional crafts, and market opportunities.

About Lakhpati Didi Initiative

What is it?

- A flagship initiative to help **rural women earn an annual income of at least ₹1 lakh** through sustainable livelihood activities.
- Implemented under **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**.

- **Launch Date:** August 15, 2023

Implemented By

- **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**

Objectives

- Increase the income of rural women.
- Promote women-led enterprises.
- Strengthen Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- Improve access to finance, skills, and markets.

About Bharat Tex 2026

- India's **largest global textile exhibition and trade event**.
- Brings together the **entire textile value chain** from raw materials to finished products.
- Organised by the **Bharat Tex Trade Federation (BTTF)** with support from the **Ministry of Textiles**.

Facts To Remember

1. India Launches Phase III of Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP)

The **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)**, under the **Ministry of Science & Technology**, launched **Phase III of the Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP)** with a total outlay of **₹1,500 crore**, including **₹1,000 crore from DBT** and **₹500 crore from the Wellcome Trust (UK)**. The programme aims to strengthen India's biomedical research ecosystem by nurturing globally competitive scientists and researchers.

2. India Hosts 12th BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting in Hyderabad

India hosted the **12th BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting** in **Hyderabad, Telangana**, under its **BRICS Chairship 2026** themed "**Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability**." The meeting concluded with the adoption of the **BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Declaration** and the launch of **BRICS CONNECT**, an Indian initiative to promote technical cooperation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building among BRICS nations.

3. MoPSW Approves Greenfield Shipbuilding Cluster and Ship Repair Facility in Gujarat

The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)** granted in-principle approval for a **Greenfield Shipbuilding Cluster in Porbandar** and a **Ship Repair Facility at Vadinar, Gujarat**, under the **Shipbuilding Development Scheme (SbDS)**. These projects support the **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047** to strengthen India's indigenous shipbuilding and ship repair capabilities.

4. President Murmu Inaugurates 'Saushrutam 2026' at AIIA

President **Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated '**Saushrutam 2026**', a three-day international seminar on **Ayurvedic Surgery**, at the **All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi**, on the occasion of **Sushruta Jayanti**. During the event, she also inaugurated an **AI-enabled 3 Tesla High Field MRI** and released an **NCISM study on women Ayurveda graduates**.

5. Union Government Launches e-VSP Portal for Digital Legal Publications

Union Minister **Arjun Ram Meghwal** launched the **electronic Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan (e-VSP) Portal**, providing digital access to legal books, journals, and publications. Developed in collaboration with the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, the portal aims to support law students, researchers, advocates,

judges, and legal professionals with easy access to legal resources.

6. India's First AI-Integrated Vertical University Campus Opens in Chennai

The **VELS Institute of Science, Technology & Advanced Studies (VISTAS)** inaugurated **India's first AI-integrated vertical university campus** in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**. The campus features **Industry-Academia Centres of Excellence** with partners including **Intel Unnati, Microsoft, Oracle Academy, and TCS iON**, promoting AI, cloud computing, and emerging technology education.

7. Pi-labs Partners with Google Cloud for Mission-Ready AI Solutions

Indian AI company **pi-labs** partnered with **Google Cloud** to develop secure and scalable **mission-ready AI solutions** for public sector organisations, digital governance, and critical infrastructure. The collaboration combines Google's cloud infrastructure with pi-labs' indigenous AI models to enhance cybersecurity, regional language processing, and security analytics.

8. DIBD and PNB Sign MoU for Multilingual AI-Based Banking

The **Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD)** and **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** signed an **MoU** to integrate **BHASHINI's multilingual AI platform** into PNB's digital banking services. The initiative aims to improve financial inclusion by enabling customers to access banking services in multiple Indian languages.

9. Dr. Nandini Azad Receives Bharat Samman 2026

Social activist **Dr. Nandini Azad**, President of the **Working Women's Forum (India)** and **Indian Cooperative Network for Women**, received the **Bharat Samman 2026** for her outstanding contribution to **women's empowerment, financial inclusion, and grassroots development** through cooperative movements.

10. Mindaugas Sinkevičius Becomes Lithuania's New Prime Minister

Mindaugas Sinkevičius, leader of the **Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP)**, was sworn in as the **20th Prime Minister of Lithuania** after receiving parliamentary approval. He succeeds **Inga Ruginienė** and will lead a centre-left coalition government.

11. Amitabh Bachchan Becomes Brand Ambassador of Policybazaar

Policybazaar appointed veteran actor **Amitabh Bachchan** as its **Brand Ambassador** for its nationwide insurance awareness campaign "**Parivaar Sabse Pehle**", aimed at promoting health and term insurance while supporting **IRDAI's Insurance for All by 2047** vision.

12. Fairfax to Acquire 60.72% Stake in IDBI Bank

Canada-based **Fairfax Financial Holdings** emerged as the preferred bidder to acquire a **60.72% stake in IDBI Bank** from the **Government of India** and **LIC** in a **₹52,932 crore** deal. The acquisition, subject to regulatory approvals, is expected to become the **largest foreign investment in an Indian bank**.

13. India Finishes Third at Asian U-19 & U-23 Boxing Championships 2026

India secured **29 medals**, including **5 gold, 13 silver, and 11 bronze**, to finish **third** at the **Asian U-19 & U-23 Boxing Championships 2026** held in **Jakarta, Indonesia**. **Uzbekistan** topped the medal table, followed by **Kazakhstan**.

14. ICC Approves New Formats for ODI and T20 World Cups

The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** approved new competition formats for future **Men's ODI and T20 World Cups**. The ODI World Cup will feature a **Super 7 stage**, while the T20 World Cup will introduce a

Super 10 stage with Eliminators, increasing competitiveness and reducing dead-rubber matches.

15. Padma Shri Awardee Moozhikkal Pankajakshi Passes Away

Renowned **Nokkuvidya Pavakkali** artist and **Padma Shri awardee Moozhikkal Pankajakshi** passed away at the age of **90** in **Kerala**. She was internationally recognised for preserving and promoting Kerala's unique traditional puppetry art.

16. AI Appreciation Day Observed on 16 July

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Appreciation Day was observed globally on **16 July** to recognise AI's transformative role in innovation, governance, healthcare, education, and economic development. The day also highlights the evolution and ethical development of AI technologies.

17. World Snake Day Observed on 16 July

World Snake Day was observed on **16 July** to raise awareness about the ecological importance of snakes, their conservation, and the need to reduce myths and fear surrounding them. India is home to around **300 snake species**, protected under the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972**.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 18 JULY 2026

1. Migratory birds returned in large numbers during **Winter (December 2025–January 2026)**. Manasbal Lake
2. Covers **defaults made before 14 June 2024**. Vishwas 2026 Scheme
3. **Overall India: 5.5%** (unchanged from May 2026) Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Monthly Bul...
4. **Precision Time Protocol (IEEE 1588)**: Transfers time through fibre-optic/Ethernet networks. White Rabbit Technology Demonstration Network
5. A flagship initiative to help **rural women earn an annual income of at least ₹1 lakh** through sustainable livelihood activities. Lakhpati Didis at Bharat Tex 2026

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DAY 16 OF 24

19 & 20 July 2026

26 items · 2 topics

General 4 · Banking and Finance 1 · Facts To Remember 21

Context

An Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent — **four Rafale fighter jets, two C-17 Globemaster III transport aircraft, and over 120 Air Warriors** — has arrived in Australia to participate in **Exercise Pitch Black 2026**, the Royal Australian Air Force's premier multinational air combat exercise. This is the **first time India's Rafale jets** are taking part in the exercise.

About Exercise Pitch Black 2026

What It Is

- A large-scale, **premier biennial** multinational **air combat exercise** — one of the Indo-Pacific's largest collective air defence and strike simulation drills.
- Name derives from its **emphasis on night-time ("pitch black") flying over large, unpopulated areas**.
- **Host:** Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF); **first held in Darwin in 1983**.

Key Details

- **Duration:** 20 July – 7 August 2026 (three weeks).
- **Venue:** RAAF Bases **Darwin, Tindal** (and **Amberley**), in northern Australia (Northern Territory).
- **Participants:** Reported as **19–20 nations** (sources vary). Confirmed list includes Australia (host), USA, Japan, India, Indonesia, Singapore, France, Germany, South Korea, Thailand, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Canada, Brunei, Fiji, Finland, Malaysia, Sweden.

2. Operation Southern Readiness 26–2

Source: TH

Context

The Ministry of Defence announced that the **Indian Navy** will host **Operation Southern Readiness 26–2**, a four-day multinational maritime security training engagement, at the **Southern Naval Command, Kochi** — reinforcing India's growing role as a hub for maritime capacity building.

About Operation Southern Readiness 26–2

What It Is

- A **multi-domain international maritime security training engagement** — not a standard combat manoeuvre. It blends **classroom instruction, simulator-based scenarios, and hands-on sea deployment** to build tactical skills across partner navies.

Key Details

- **Host:** Indian Navy, at the **Southern Naval Command (SNC), Kochi, Kerala**.
- **Duration:** **20–23 July 2026** (four days).
- **Conducted under:** the Indian Navy-led **Combined Task Force 154 (CTF 154)** — the dedicated **Training Task Force** of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).
- **Partnership:** Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) — a multinational partnership of **40+ nations** (some reports say 47).

3. India Commissions First Geothermal Wells at Puga Valley

Source: News on Air

Context

Ladakh Lieutenant Governor **V.K. Saxena** officially commissioned India's first and deepest twin **geothermal wells** at **Puga Valley, eastern Ladakh**. Executed by the **ONGC Energy Centre**, these 1,000-metre-deep wells will serve as the technical backbone for India's first **1 MW demonstration-scale geothermal power plant**.

About the Puga Valley Geothermal Project

What It Is

- India's pioneer breakthrough into **geothermal energy** — tapping clean, round-the-clock power from natural heat reservoirs beneath the Earth's crust.

Key Details

- Location:** Puga Valley, eastern Ladakh, at over **14,000 feet** altitude.
- Executing agency: ONGC Energy Centre;** drilling by SEROS Drilling Pvt Ltd, with Iceland geothermal experts (ÍSOR) as consultants.
- Two wells, each 1,000 m deep:** First reached target depth on **22 May 2026**; second spudded **3 June**, completed **8 July 2026** (in just over a month).
- Temperature: 135°C recorded at 400 m** depth; thermal output expected to exceed **200–240°C** in the deepest reservoir sections.
- Feeds steam into India's first **1 MWe demonstration pilot plant**, foundation for future multi-megawatt commercial deployment.

How Geothermal Wells Form?

- Tectonic/volcanic heat source:** The Indian plate's collision with the Eurasian plate creates fractures, faults and deep magmatic activity along the **Indus Suture Zone** — bringing mantle heat close to the crust.
- Deep fluid circulation:** Meteoric water (melted snow/glaciers) seeps into rock fractures and is superheated by hot rocks.
- High-pressure ascent:** Hot, less-dense water rises under pressure — trapped in permeable reservoirs or erupting as **hot springs and sulphur fumaroles** at the surface.

Exam Relevance

- UPSC Prelims:** Puga Valley = Ladakh (first geothermal wells); executing agency ONGC Energy Centre; Indus Suture Zone; India's ~10 GW geothermal potential; other geothermal sites (Tattapani, Manikaran).
- UPSC Mains (GS-1 Geography / GS-3 Energy & Environment):** Renewable energy transition; baseload vs intermittent sources; energy security for remote/border regions; Himalayan ecological fragility.
- RBI Grade B (ESI):** Energy/infrastructure current affairs — clean energy transition, net-zero context.
- NABARD Grade A/B:** Highly relevant — rural/remote energy access, renewable energy, environment & climate (core ARD/ESI syllabus); geothermal as clean rural power.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the Puga Valley geothermal project, consider the following statements:

- It is located in eastern Ladakh at an altitude of over 14,000 feet.
- The project is being executed by the ONGC Energy Centre.
- It will support India's first 1 MW demonstration-scale geothermal power plant.
- The geothermal heat here is associated with the Indus Suture Zone, formed by the Indian–Eurasian

plate collision.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to geothermal energy, consider the following statements:

1. Geothermal energy can provide 24×7 baseload power, unlike intermittent solar and wind.
2. Fumaroles are surface vents that emit steam and volcanic gases such as sulphur.
3. The Geological Survey of India estimates India's geothermal power potential at around 10 GW.
4. Puga Valley is India's only site with geothermal potential.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(d)** — All four statements are correct.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: India has multiple geothermal sites, not just Puga Valley.

4. Vikram-1: India's First Privately Developed Orbital Rocket

Source: The Hindu

Context

Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 rocket successfully lifted off on its inaugural flight on July 18, becoming the first commercial Indian rocket to reach orbit. With this, India became the third nation with a private orbital launch capability (after the USA and China).

About Mission Aagaman

What is it?

- Maiden orbital flight of **Vikram-1**, named '**Mission Aagaman**' (Sanskrit: *Arrival*).
- Lifted off from **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota** at **12:05 p.m. IST** on **18 July 2026** — delayed by 35 minutes due to a technical issue found at the T-minus 5-minute point.
- The upper stage reached its planned 450-kilometre low Earth orbit about 15 minutes after liftoff; target inclination was **60°**.
- Mission declared a "**grand success**" — all milestones (propulsion, avionics, GNC) validated.

About Vikram-1

- A four-stage, expendable orbital small-lift launch vehicle developed by Skyroot Aerospace. Its first three stages are solid stages, while the fourth stage is a liquid stage (called the **Orbit Adjustment Module** — fired ~6 minutes for orbital insertion).
- Around 20 metres tall, 1.7 metres in diameter, with an all-carbon composite structure, 3D-printed engines and high-thrust solid-fuel boosters. Built to carry small satellites up to 350 kg to Low Earth Orbit.
- Named after **Dr. Vikram Sarabhai**, father of India's space programme.
- Engines named after **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam** (Kalam-100, Kalam-250 stages).

About Skyroot Aerospace

- Hyderabad-based space startup (HQ: MAX-Q / Infinity Campus), founded by **ex-ISRO engineers Pawan Kumar Chandana & Naga Bharath Daka**.
- Earlier launched **Vikram-S** (suborbital, *Mission Prarambh*, **18 November 2022**) — making Skyroot the first Indian private company to launch a rocket from ISRO's launch facilities.

Banking and Finance

1. RBI Imposes Penalties on Muthoot Finance & Five Other NBFCs

Source: Business Standard

Context

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed monetary penalties on **six companies**, including non-bank lender **Muthoot Finance**, for non-compliance with various regulatory norms — with fines ranging from **₹2.70 lakh to ₹6.20 lakh**.

About the Penalties

Penalty Breakdown

Company	Penalty	Violation
Avail Financial Services	₹6.20 lakh	MD held directorship in two other NBFCs-Middle Layer; breached single-party exposure limit
Muthoot Finance	₹5.80 lakh	No periodic review of risk categorisation of accounts; no robust software for identifying/reporting suspicious transactions
Satya MicroCapital	₹3.10 lakh	Failed to classify certain accounts as NPAs upon restructuring
PAN Emami Cosmed	₹3.10 lakh	Breached credit exposure limit to a single group of parties
Dhani Loans and Services	₹2.70 lakh	Failed to classify certain loan accounts as NPAs
Muthoot Vehicle & Asset Finance	₹2.70 lakh	Failed to review risk categorisation of customer accounts (KYC norms)

- RBI clarified the penalties are based on **deficiencies in regulatory compliance** and are **not** intended to question the validity of any transaction/agreement with customers.

Legal Provisions / Sections Violated

- Muthoot Finance & Muthoot Vehicle & Asset Finance:** Breached the **RBI's Master Direction – Know Your Customer (KYC) Directions, 2016** (requirement to periodically review risk categorisation of accounts at least once every six months; and, for Muthoot Finance, deploy robust AML software for suspicious-transaction monitoring).
- Satya MicroCapital & Dhani Loans and Services:** Violated RBI's **Income Recognition, Asset Classification and Provisioning (IRAC) norms** / Master Direction on NPA classification (failure to classify accounts as NPAs, including upon restructuring).
- Avail Financial Services & PAN Emami Cosmed:** Breached **credit concentration / single-party & single-group exposure norms** under the **Scale-Based Regulation (SBR) Master Direction for NBFCs, 2023**; Avail also breached rules on the MD holding directorships in other NBFCs-Middle Layer.
- Penalty imposed under:** the statutory powers of the RBI — for NBFCs, under **Section 58G(1)(b) read with Section 58B(5) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934** (the provision empowering RBI to levy monetary penalties on NBFCs for non-compliance).

Key Concepts

- NBFC (Non-Banking Financial Company):** A company engaged in lending/investment but which cannot accept demand deposits or issue cheques on itself; regulated by RBI.
- Scale-Based Regulation (SBR) — NBFC Layers:** RBI's 2022 framework classifying NBFCs into **Base, Middle, Upper and Top Layer** by size, activity and risk — stricter norms for higher layers.
- KYC (Know Your Customer):** RBI-mandated customer due-diligence norms requiring identity verification and **periodic risk-categorisation review** to prevent money laundering.

- **NPA (Non-Performing Asset):** A loan on which interest/principal is overdue for **90+ days**; classified and provisioned under RBI's IRAC norms.
- **Single-Party / Group Exposure Limit:** RBI caps on lending to one borrower or connected group, to limit concentration risk.
- **Section 58G, RBI Act, 1934:** The provision empowering RBI to impose monetary penalties on NBFCs for contravening its directions.

Exam Relevance

- **RBI Grade B (F&M + ESI):** Very high relevance — NBFC regulation, SBR layers, exposure norms, IRAC/NPA classification, **Section 58G penal provision**; likely concept + current-affairs questions.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) in India, consider the following statements:

1. NBFCs are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India.
2. NBFCs cannot accept demand deposits.
3. Under RBI's Scale-Based Regulation, NBFCs are classified into Base, Middle, Upper and Top layers.
4. NBFCs are permitted to issue cheques drawn on themselves.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to the recent RBI penalties, consider the following statements:

1. The penalties were imposed for deficiencies in regulatory compliance and do not question the validity of customer transactions.
2. Muthoot Finance was penalised partly for not having robust software to identify and report suspicious transactions under KYC norms.
3. Some entities were penalised for failing to classify certain accounts as non-performing assets.
4. The monetary penalties on NBFCs were imposed under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: NBFCs cannot issue cheques on themselves / accept demand deposits.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: penalties on NBFCs are under the RBI Act, 1934, not the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

Facts To Remember

1. Article 370 Wins Best Feature Film at 72nd National Film Awards

The **Hindi film Article 370** won the **Best Feature Film** award at the **72nd National Film Awards 2024**. **Yami Gautam** received the **Best Actress** award for her performance in the film, while **Mammootty** (*Bramayugam*) and **Kartik Aaryan** (*Chandu Champion*) jointly won the **Best Actor** award. This marks **Mammootty's fourth National Film Award** for Best Actor.

2. Study Finds Invasive Plants Support Butterfly Diversity in Assam

A study conducted in **Raimona National Park, Assam**, revealed that several **invasive plant species** play a crucial ecological role by serving as **major nectar and larval host plants** for butterflies. The research

documented **220 butterfly species, 56 larval host plants, and 41 nectar plants**, highlighting the importance of balancing invasive species management with biodiversity conservation.

3. India Wins Four Gold Medals at 58th International Chemistry Olympiad

India recorded its **best-ever performance** at the **58th International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO) 2026** by winning **four gold medals**. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** congratulated the team, describing the achievement as a proud moment for the nation and a testament to India's growing excellence in science education.

4. India Wins Four Medals at 37th International Biology Olympiad 2026

India secured **one gold and three silver medals** at the **37th International Biology Olympiad (IBO) 2026** held in **Vilnius, Lithuania**. **Bhavyaa Gunwal (Haryana)** won the **gold medal**, while **Soumil Maity (West Bengal)**, **Nishit Kalani (Rajasthan)**, and **Anmol Kumar (Punjab)** won **silver medals**.

5. PV Sindhu Reaches Japan Open 2026 Final

Indian badminton star **P. V. Sindhu** advanced to the **Women's Singles final** of the **Japan Open 2026** in **Tokyo**. She reached the final after **China's Chen Yu Fei** retired during the semifinal, with Sindhu leading **21–19, 15–10**. Earlier, she entered the semifinals after receiving a walkover from Japan's **Nozomi Okuhara**.

6. Department of Posts Launches India Post Mascot Design Contest

The **Department of Posts**, under the **Ministry of Communications**, launched the **India Post Mascot Design Contest** on the **Innovate India MyGov Platform**. The nationwide competition invites citizens to design the **official mascot of India Post**, promoting creativity and public participation.

7. International Seminar 'Saushrutam 2026' Concludes Successfully

The **three-day international seminar 'Saushrutam 2026'**, organised by the **All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)** in **New Delhi**, concluded successfully. The seminar focused on **Ayurvedic surgery, integrative healthcare, and medical research**, bringing together experts, researchers, and academicians from India and abroad.

8. MoSPI Releases Quarterly Update of PAIMANA Dashboard

The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** released the latest quarterly update of the **Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring & Analytics for Nation-building (PAIMANA)** dashboard to track the performance of India's infrastructure sector. The updated dashboard now covers **165 indicators**, including **44 new indicators**, providing a comprehensive framework for monitoring key infrastructure sectors.

9. Cabinet Approves NIPU-2026, Railway Multitracking and Varanasi Elevated Corridor Projects

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** approved the **National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 (NIPU-2026)** to boost domestic gas-based urea production with an additional capacity of **1 crore metric tonnes**. The Cabinet also approved **two railway multitracking projects** in Odisha and Jharkhand and **two elevated corridor projects** in Varanasi worth over **₹25,000 crore** to improve connectivity and reduce congestion.

10. Chhattisgarh Becomes First State to Introduce Risk-Based Business Approval System

The **Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly** passed the **Chhattisgarh Ease of Doing Business Act, 2026**, making the state the **first in India** to implement a comprehensive **risk-based and trust-based business**

approval framework. The new system provides self-certification for low-risk businesses, deemed approvals, simplified compliance, and is expected to benefit over **15 lakh MSMEs**.

11. India Launches White Rabbit Technology-Based IST Distribution Network

Union Minister **Pralhad Joshi** inaugurated the **White Rabbit Technology-based Indian Standard Time (IST) Distribution Demonstration Network** at Bengaluru. The initiative aims to establish a highly precise indigenous time distribution system under the vision of "**One Nation, One Time**", reducing dependence on foreign GPS-based timing systems for sectors such as banking, telecom, defence, power grids and stock exchanges.

12. Akasa Air and BPCL Sign MoU to Promote Sustainable Aviation Fuel

Akasa Air and **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to accelerate the adoption of **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** in India. The partnership will support long-term SAF supply, encourage higher blending levels, strengthen India's aviation decarbonisation efforts, and align with **ICAO's CORSIA** framework.

13. Gujarat Receives Agriculture Leadership Award 2026

Gujarat received the **Agriculture Leadership Award 2026** for its outstanding achievements in the **horticulture sector** during the **17th Agriculture Leadership Conclave** held in New Delhi. The award recognises the state's success in horticulture expansion through improved irrigation, modern farming practices, and farmer-centric initiatives.

14. Skyroot Aerospace Successfully Launches India's First Private Orbital Rocket

Hyderabad-based **Skyroot Aerospace** successfully launched **Vikram-1** under **Mission Aagaman**, becoming India's **first privately developed orbital-class launch vehicle**. The mission successfully placed multiple payloads into **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**, making India the **third country** after the **United States** and **China** to achieve private orbital launch capability.

15. Captain Aman Johri Conducts India's Microgravity Crop Research Mission

Indian Analog Astronaut **Captain Aman Johri** completed a **microgravity research mission** under **Project Astra Farm** to study the behaviour of **Maharashtra-grown onions and potatoes** in reduced-gravity conditions. The project aims to advance India's space agriculture research and develop sustainable food systems for future space missions.

16. Reliance Jio Receives IN-SPACe Approval for 1,600-Satellite LEO Constellation

Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited received technical approval from **IN-SPACe** to deploy a **Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellation** comprising around **1,600 satellites**. The project aims to provide satellite broadband, direct-to-device connectivity, and enterprise communication services through India's first indigenous satellite internet network.

17. Sir Garfield Sobers Passes Away at 89

Legendary **West Indies** cricketer **Sir Garfield Sobers**, widely regarded as one of cricket's greatest all-rounders, passed away at the age of **89**. He played **93 Test matches**, scored **8,032 runs**, claimed **235 wickets**, and was honoured with numerous accolades, including induction into the **ICC Hall of Fame**.

18. Day of International Criminal Justice Observed on 17 July

The **Day of International Criminal Justice** was observed on **17 July** to commemorate the adoption of the **Rome Statute** in **1998**, which established the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**. The day promotes

accountability for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression.

19. Nelson Mandela International Day Observed on 18 July

The **United Nations** observed **Nelson Mandela International Day** on **18 July** to honour the birth anniversary of **Nelson Mandela**, the first democratically elected President of South Africa. The **2026 theme** is "**It's in our hands**", encouraging individuals to contribute towards building a better society.

20. Arunachal Pradesh Signs MoU for India's First River Kinetic Energy Project

The **Government of Arunachal Pradesh** signed an **MoU** with Norway's **Tidal Sail AS** to establish **India's first River Kinetic Energy Demonstration Project**. The **500-kilowatt** project will generate clean electricity from river currents without dams, promoting renewable energy and strengthening India-Norway green cooperation.

21. Telangana Partners with Microsoft to Establish Green Skills Centre of Excellence

The **Government of Telangana** signed an **MoU** with **Microsoft** to establish a **Green Skills Centre of Excellence (CoE)** in Hyderabad. The centre will provide training in **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, sustainable manufacturing, and green technologies, supporting Telangana's **Green Pharma City** and next-generation life sciences strategy.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 19 & 20 JULY 2026

1. Earlier launched **Vikram-S** (suborbital, Mission Prarambh, **18 November 2022**) — making Skyroot the first Indian private company to launch a rocket from ISRO's launch facilities. **Vikram-I: India's First Privately Developed Orb...**
2. **Two wells, each 1,000 m deep**: First reached target depth on **22 May 2026**; second spudded **3 June**, completed **8 July 2026** (in just over a month). **Context**
3. **Scale-Based Regulation (SBR) — NBFC Layers**: RBI's 2022 framework classifying NBFCs into **Base, Middle, Upper and Top Layer** by size, activity and risk — stricter norms for higher layers. **RBI Imposes Penalties on Muthoot Finance & Five...**
4. **Partnership**: Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) — a multinational partnership of **40+ nations** (some reports say 47). **Operation Southern Readiness 26-2**

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DAY 17 OF 24

21 July 2026

Tuesday · 12 items · 3 topics

General 7 · Banking and Finance 4 · Agriculture 1

Context

The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** published its global study "**Lives, Choices and Futures — Demographic Futures Survey 2026**" (released around **World Population Day, 11 July**), examining the aspirations, relationships and family decisions of young adults aged **18–39** across the world.

About the Survey

What It Is

- A cross-national global study of **108,926 internet-connected young adults (18–39)** across **73 countries and territories**.
- Builds on preliminary findings in the **2025 State of World Population (SOWP)** report.

Key Global Findings

- **Marriage ideals persist:** Over two-thirds of young adults prefer an arrangement including marriage (36% marriage before cohabitation, 34% after).
- **Aspiration–reality gap:** Among 25–39s wanting to marry/partner, 25% are single and not dating (men 30% vs women 19%).
- **Economic preconditions:** Financial security is the top consideration for partnership (81%); financial stability (88%), stable employment (87%) and emotional readiness (85%) are the top thresholds before having children.
- **Joy over policy:** 80% cite the joy children bring as their top motivation — state incentives/workforce contribution rank lowest.
- **Biggest barrier:** Economic and housing constraints are the single highest barrier to parenthood globally (72%).
- **Declining achieved fertility:** Across all regions, actual children among older respondents (35–39) is consistently below the ideal reported by younger cohorts. **Two children is the most common ideal** in 5 of 7 regional groupings.
- **Optimism:** ~66% globally feel positive about their future.

India-Specific Trends

- **Ideal vs actual family size:** Women (18–39) want **2.1 children** vs actual **1.0** among 35–39s; men want **2.2** vs actual **1.1**.
- **India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** has fallen to **~1.9–2.0** — below the **replacement level of 2.1** (down from ~3.3 in the early 2000s).

UNFPA Policy Recommendations

Enhance economic security & affordable housing; expand accessible childcare & gender-equitable parental leave; promote gender equality in unpaid care work; and adopt a **rights-based demographic framework** — shifting from rigid birth targets toward reproductive agency and individual choice.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to fertility and demographic concepts, consider the following statements:

"Confidence comes from revision, not from hope."

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1. The replacement-level Total Fertility Rate is generally taken as 2.1.
2. India's Total Fertility Rate has fallen below the replacement level.
3. The demographic dividend refers to growth potential from a rising share of the working-age population.
4. The Total Fertility Rate measures the number of children born in a country in a single year.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to the UNFPA Demographic Futures Survey 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It surveyed over 108,000 internet-connected young adults aged 18–39 across 73 countries.
2. It found that economic and housing constraints are among the biggest barriers to parenthood.
3. In India, the ideal family size reported by young women (2.1) exceeds the actual number of children among older women.
4. UNFPA stated that the survey is a nationally representative, population-level estimate for each country.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: TFR is a per-woman lifetime average, not an annual count.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: UNFPA said the survey is not nationally representative.

2. E-Commerce Council of India (ECCI)

Source: The Hindu

Context

The **Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)** launched the **E-Commerce Council of India (ECCI)** — a first-of-its-kind national platform to represent, unify and advance India's **\$120-billion digital commerce ecosystem** through collaboration between industry, government and other stakeholders.

About the ECCI

What It Is

- A dedicated, **first-of-its-kind national industry council** for India's digital commerce landscape.
- Acts as an **umbrella body** bridging private digital platforms, logistics firms, payment providers and government regulators.
- Founded **under the aegis of IMAI**.
- Core objective: present a **single, common voice** for the digital trade ecosystem in policy conversations with government.

Founding Members

- **~70–80 members** onboarded, including **Amazon, Flipkart, Swiggy, Eternal (Zomato), IndiaMART, MakeMyTrip, ixigo, Uber, Rapido, Shiprocket, eBay, Urban Company, Meesho, Tata Img**.
- IMAI President: **Dr. Subho Ray**; keynote by economist **Dr. Laveesh Bhandari**.

Key Functions

- **Policy advocacy:** structured interface with policymakers, offering research/data on digital payments, consumer protection and online commerce.
- **Cross-border trade & logistics:** simplify cross-border e-commerce; help Indian brands, exporters and MSMEs reach international markets.

- **MSME enablement:** frameworks to digitally onboard MSMEs, giving access to national/global supply chains.
- **AI & tech integration:** best practices for AI-powered commerce, quick-commerce logistics, digital payments.
- **Indian E-Commerce Summit (IECS):** plans an annual national summit for government, founders, academics and international partners.

3. Manasbal Lake

Source: The Hindu

Context

Following large-scale **de-weeding and channel dredging over ~70,000 sq ft**, **Manasbal Lake** in Jammu & Kashmir is showing clear signs of **ecological recovery**, marked by the return of migratory birds (many from Siberia, winter 2025–26).

About Manasbal Lake

What It Is

- Often called the **"Supreme Gem of all Kashmir Lakes."** Named after the sacred **Manasarovar Lake**.
- The **deepest natural freshwater lake in Jammu & Kashmir / the Kashmir Valley**, with a maximum depth of **~43 ft (13 m)**.

Location

- **Safapora area, Ganderbal district**, central J&K, **~30 km north of Srinagar**.
- Encircled by four villages: **Jarokbal, Kondabal, Nesbal, Gratbal**.
- Bounded by the **Baladar mountains** (east), the **Karewa plateau** (north — lacustrine/loessic deposits), and the limestone-rich **Ahtung hills** (south).
- Managed by the **Wular-Manasbal Development Authority (WMDA)**.
- **Lotus (Nelumbo nucifera)** blooms densely along the periphery every **July–August**.
- **Jharokha/Jaroka Bagh:** ruins of a 17th-century fort & terraced Mughal garden built by Empress **Nur Jahan** (also an ancient temple, ~8th–10th c.).
- One of Kashmir's largest **natural aquatic-bird spawning grounds**; supports mallards, grebes, teals, and (per the article) white-headed ducks.
- A wintering habitat on the **Central Asian Flyway**.

4. FIFA World Cup 2026

Source: The Hindu

Context

Spain are the new **FIFA World Cup 2026 champions**, beating **Argentina 1-0 in extra time** in the final at MetLife Stadium (New Jersey) on **19 July 2026** — ending Lionel Messi's bid for back-to-back titles. It is Spain's **second World Cup crown** (first since 2010).

About FIFA World Cup 2026

What It Is

- The **23rd edition** of the quadrennial FIFA men's football World Cup.
- Crowned **Spain** as champions for the **second time** (previously 2010).

Host Nations & Landmarks

- **Co-hosted by three North American nations — USA, Canada, Mexico — across 16 cities** (first-ever 3-

nation co-host).

- **Mexico** became the first country to host World Cup matches in **three different tournaments** (1970, 1986, 2026).

Final

- **Spain 1-0 Argentina** (after extra time), at **MetLife Stadium (New York/New Jersey Stadium), East Rutherford**.
- Winning goal: **Ferran Torres** (~106th minute) — Spain dominated, Emiliano Martínez made a final-record 11 saves.
- No team has won back-to-back World Cups since Brazil (1958 & 1962).

Individual Awards (Verified)

Award	Winner	Nation
Golden Ball (Best Player)	Rodri	Spain
Golden Boot (Top Scorer)	Kylian Mbappé	France
Golden Glove (Best GK)	Unai Simón	Spain
Best Young Player	Pau Cubarsí	Spain
Fair Play Award	—	Netherlands

5. Lestes paloti (New Damselfly Species)

Source: The Hindu

Context

A team of **odonatologists** discovered a new species of **spreadwing damselfly**, **Lestes paloti**, in the **Western Ghats of Kerala** — published in the *International Journal of Odonatology*. It is the **first new Lestes species from the Western Ghats in nearly 96 years**.

About Lestes paloti

What It Is

- A newly described **spreadwing damselfly** of family **Lestidae**, order **Odonata**.
- Named after **Dr. Muhamed Jafer Palot**, a scientist at the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)**, Kozhikode, for his contributions to Indian odonatology and Western Ghats fauna.
- **Significance:** first new *Lestes* species from the Western Ghats since **Lestes malabaricus (1929)** — a ~96-year gap; and the first new Indian *Lestes* since **Lestes garoensis (1987)**.

Found In

- Six Kerala districts: **Kannur, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Malappuram, Palakkad, Ernakulam**.

Habitat (Unusual)

- Unlike most damselflies that stay near open water, it inhabits **scrub vegetation around homesteads and laterite hillocks**, often away from visible open water.

6. Bill to Raise Supreme Court Judges' Strength to 38

Source: The Hindu

Context

The Union government introduced the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026** in the **Lok Sabha on 20 July 2026** (Monsoon Session), to replace an ordinance and raise the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court from **34 to 38 judges (including the CJI)** — amid concerns over mounting

case backlog. Introduced by Law Minister **Arjun Ram Meghwal**.

About the Bill

What It Does

- Amends **Section 2 of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956** — substituting "thirty-three" with "thirty-seven" (judges **excluding** the CJI).
- Total sanctioned strength thus rises from **34 → 38** (including CJI); an increase of **four judges**.
- Replaces the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026**, promulgated by President Droupadi Murmu in **May 2026** (while Parliament was not in session); four judges were already appointed against the enhanced strength.
- **Retains the existing collegium-based appointment system** — no change to how judges are appointed.
- Does **not** require a constitutional amendment (passed by simple majority).

Constitutional & Historical Background

- **Article 124(1)**: The Supreme Court originally comprised a **CJI + 7 judges**; empowers **Parliament to increase the number by law**.
- Growth of strength: **8 (1950) → 11 (1956) → 14 (1960) → 18 (1977/78) → 26 (1986) → 31 (2009) → 34 (2019) → 38 (2026)**.
- Last increase: **2019** (30→33 excluding CJI), following a request by then-CJI **Ranjan Gogoi**.
- **Contrast — High Courts**: Under **Article 216**, the **President** can vary HC judge strength by executive order; the SC's strength needs an **Act of Parliament**.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the number of judges in the Supreme Court of India, consider the following statements:

1. Article 124 empowers Parliament to increase the number of Supreme Court judges by law.
2. The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 raises the sanctioned strength to 38, including the Chief Justice of India.
3. The strength of the Supreme Court can be increased by the President through an executive order, similar to High Courts.
4. The Bill retains the existing collegium system for appointment of judges.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It replaces an ordinance promulgated in May 2026.
2. It amends the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956.
3. The last increase in the Supreme Court's strength before this was carried out in 2019.
4. The Bill requires a constitutional amendment to be passed.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 3 wrong: SC strength needs an Act of Parliament, not a presidential order.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: no constitutional amendment required; it amends the 1956 Act.

Banking and Finance

1. Why Inflation Is Rising in India

Source: The Hindu

Context

India's **Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation** hit a fresh high of **9.87% in June 2026** (from 9.68% in May). The authors argue this surge is driven mainly by **higher fuel costs and food supply shocks** — i.e. **cost-push and supply-side** factors — rather than excess demand (overheating).

Verified Latest Data

- **WPI inflation: 9.87%** (June) vs 9.68% (May) — a record under the new **2022–23 base year series**.
- **Group-wise:** Primary Articles **7.0%** | Fuel & Power **27.41%** (eased from 30.33% in May) | Manufactured Products **7.48%**.
- **WPI Food Index: 6.14%** (up from 4.49%).
- Retail inflation (**CPI**) was much lower at **4.38%** in June — note the wide **CPI-WPI divergence**.
- Key drivers: mineral oils/petroleum products, food articles, basic metals, chemicals.

The Core Argument

Two Kinds of Prices (Michal Kalecki)

- **Primary commodity prices = demand-determined:** Supply is virtually fixed (vertical supply curve). A supply shock (e.g. bad monsoon) shifts supply left → prices rise. This is **demand-pull** in effect.
- **Industrial/manufactured prices = cost-determined:** Factories run below capacity, so higher demand raises *output*, not price (flat supply curve). Prices instead reflect **cost of production + profit markup**. This is **cost-push**.

What Happened in India

- **Manufactured inflation:** Not from demand. Wage costs don't push prices up (Indian workers are largely **price-takers** with weak bargaining power). Instead, **material costs — especially oil** — drive it. Fuel & power prices track manufactured inflation almost one-to-one.
- **Food inflation:** Driven by supply shock — an inadequate monsoon linked to the **El Niño effect**. Droughts have historically coincided with food-inflation spikes (drought is a *sufficient* but not *necessary* condition).

Key Concepts

- **WPI vs CPI:** WPI measures wholesale/producer-level price change (no services); CPI measures retail prices paid by consumers (includes services) — RBI targets **CPI**.
- **Cost-Push Inflation:** Inflation from rising input costs (oil, raw materials, wages) rather than excess demand.
- **Demand-Pull Inflation:** Inflation when aggregate demand outstrips supply.
- **Countercyclical Fiscal Policy:** Adjusting taxes/spending against the economic cycle — e.g. cutting fuel duties when prices spike.
- **PPI (Producer Price Index):** Measures price change from the producer's perspective; India released it alongside WPI (9.57% in June).

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) in India, consider the following statements:

1. The WPI is released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
2. Unlike the CPI, the WPI does not include services.

3. The Reserve Bank of India's inflation-targeting framework is based on the WPI.
4. The current WPI series uses 2022-23 as the base year.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to the Kaleckian analysis of inflation described in the article, consider the following statements:

1. Primary commodity prices are treated as demand-determined, with a virtually fixed (vertical) supply.
2. Manufactured goods prices are treated as cost-determined, reflecting a markup over production costs.
3. A key driver of India's recent manufactured-goods inflation is the rise in oil/fuel and power costs.
4. The authors attribute the manufactured inflation mainly to rising wage costs of Indian workers.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 3 wrong: RBI targets CPI, not WPI.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: material/oil costs drive manufactured inflation, not wages.

2. RBI's Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index)

Source: Business Standard

Context

The RBI released the composite **Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index)** for FY26, which rose to **70.0 in March 2026** from **67.0 in March 2025** (a **4.48% increase**). Separately, the RBI issued final **Prudential Norms on Specified Non-Financial Assets (SNFA)** acquired by Regulated Entities, tightening the resolution of distressed loans (effective **1 October 2026**).

Part A — Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index)

Key Data (Verified)

- **FY26: 70.0** vs FY25: 67.0 vs FY24: 64.2 — steady rise; growth across **all three sub-indices**.
- Improvement mainly driven by the **Usage** parameter — reflecting deepening (not just widening) of financial inclusion.

About the FI-Index

- Introduced by the RBI in **August 2021** (first published for FY ending March 2021), in consultation with the government and sectoral regulators.
- **Scale: 0 to 100** (0 = complete exclusion, 100 = full inclusion).
- Composite of **97 indicators** across **banking, investments, insurance, postal, and pension** sectors.
- **Three parameters with weights: Access (35%), Usage (45%), Quality (20%).**
- **No base year** — a cumulative index built on the previous year's value.

Part B — Prudential Norms on SNFA

What It Is

- Final prudential norms issued under the **Resolution of Stressed Assets Directions, 2025**, effective **1 October 2026**.
- **SNFA (Specified Non-Financial Asset):** a non-financial asset (e.g. property/collateral) acquired by a

Regulated Entity (RE) in settlement of a defaulted loan.

Key Restriction

- REs are **prohibited from selling/transferring an SNFA back to the defaulting borrower**, its promoters, related parties, or any entity acting on the borrower's behalf.
- **Aim:** prevent defaulters from **reacquiring their own assets at a discount** after willful default — closing a moral-hazard loophole and strengthening credit discipline.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the RBI's Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index), consider the following statements:

1. It was introduced by the RBI in August 2021.
2. It is measured on a scale of 0 to 100 and has no base year.
3. Its three parameters are Access, Usage and Quality, with Usage carrying the highest weight.
4. For FY26 (March 2026), the index stood at 70.0.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to the RBI's prudential norms on Specified Non-Financial Assets (SNFA), consider the following statements:

1. The norms were issued under the Resolution of Stressed Assets Directions, 2025.
2. Regulated Entities are barred from selling an SNFA back to the defaulting borrower or its related parties.
3. The framework comes into effect from 1 October 2026.
4. The FI-Index and the SNFA norms are both released by SEBI.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(d)** — All four statements are correct.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: both are issued by the RBI, not SEBI.

Agriculture

1. India Joins WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS)

Source: TH

Context

India announced on **20 July 2026** that it has joined the **WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS)** after depositing its **Instrument of Acceptance** — becoming the **123rd WTO member** to do so. The move balances India's commitment to sustainable fisheries with protection of its traditional and small-scale fishers.

About the Development

India's Accession

- **Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal** formally handed over India's Instrument of Acceptance to WTO Director-General **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** on 20 July 2026.
- India = **123rd member** to accept the agreement.

About the Agreement (AFS)

- Adopted **by consensus** at the **12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), Geneva, June 2022** (part of the "Geneva Package").
- The **first multilateral WTO agreement with an environmental sustainability objective**, and only the **second** new multilateral agreement since WTO's founding in 1995 (after the **Trade Facilitation Agreement**).
- **Entered into force on 15 September 2025**, after two-thirds of members (111) ratified.
- Mandated by **SDG Target 14.6** (eliminate subsidies contributing to overfishing/IUU fishing).

What It Covers / Prohibits

- Prohibits subsidies to: **Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing**; fishing of **overfished stocks**; and fishing on the **unregulated high seas**.
- **Scope**: marine **wild capture fishing** and fishing-related activities at sea.
- **Excluded**: **aquaculture and inland fisheries** remain outside the agreement's scope — significant for India, whose sector is largely small-scale/inland.

Key Concepts

- **WTO (World Trade Organization)**: Geneva-based body (est. 1995, replaced GATT) that sets and enforces global trade rules; DG is Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. **Ministerial Conference**: The WTO's top decision-making body, meeting roughly every two years (MC12 = Geneva 2022; MC13 = Abu Dhabi 2024).
- **Blue Economy**: Sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth while preserving ocean health.
- **PMMSY (Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana)**: India's flagship scheme (2020) for sustainable, inclusive fisheries development.

Exam Relevance

- **NABARD Grade A/B**: Highly relevant — fisheries (allied ARD sector), PMMSY, blue economy, sustainable fisheries, small-fisher livelihoods; strong core-syllabus overlap.

Facts To Remember

1. EPFO Launches VISHWAS 2026 for Settlement of Penalty-Related Disputes

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) launched **VISHWAS 2026**, a one-time dispute resolution scheme for the amicable settlement of damages and penalty-related disputes under the EPF Act, 1952, and the Code on Social Security, 2020. The scheme will remain operational for six months and covers pending judicial cases, recovery proceedings, and cases where penalty notices are pending or yet to be issued.

2. CGPDTM Joins National Knowledge Resource Consortium (NKRC)

The Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDTM) signed an MoU with **CSIR-NIScPR** to join the **National Knowledge Resource Consortium (NKRC)**. The partnership will provide access to international journals, patent databases, e-books, and scientific resources, strengthening research, innovation, and intellectual property administration in India.

3. NIELIT to Establish Two Semiconductor Centres of Excellence

The National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) announced the establishment of two **Centres of Excellence (CoEs)** in **Ahmedabad** and **Guwahati** to strengthen India's semiconductor ecosystem. The initiative, aligned with the **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) 2.0**, will provide specialised training in semiconductor manufacturing, packaging technologies, and advanced electronics.

4. Telangana Launches Indiramma Housing Scheme for Hyderabad

The Government of Telangana launched the **Indiramma Housing Scheme** for the Hyderabad Core Urban Region (CURE) to provide affordable housing through high-rise residential buildings. Applications will be accepted from **21 July to 10 August 2026** through MeeSeva Centres, the MeeSeva portal, and WhatsApp services. Under the scheme, the government will provide a **₹5 lakh subsidy**, while beneficiaries will contribute approximately **₹6 lakh**.

5. Article 370 Wins Best Feature Film at 72nd National Film Awards

The Hindi film **Article 370** was named **Best Feature Film** at the **72nd National Film Awards (2024)**. **Mammootty** and **Kartik Aaryan** jointly won the **Best Actor** award for *Bramayugam* and *Chandu Champion*, respectively, while **Yami Gautam** received her first National Film Award as **Best Actress** for *Article 370*.

6. Rahul Himalian Appointed Additional CMD of IRCTC

The Ministry of Railways appointed **Rahul Himalian**, Director (Tourism & Marketing) of IRCTC, as the **Additional Chairman & Managing Director (CMD)** of the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), following the resignation of Sanjay Kumar Jain.

7. New Damselfly Species 'Lestes paloti' Discovered in Kerala

Indian researchers discovered a new spreadwing damselfly species, **Lestes paloti**, in Kerala's Western Ghats. Named after Dr. Muhamed Jafer Palot, the discovery marks the **first new Lestes species identified in the Western Ghats in 97 years**, highlighting the region's rich biodiversity.

8. PV Sindhu Wins Japan Open 2026 Women's Singles Title

Indian badminton star **PV Sindhu** won her maiden **Japan Open Women's Singles** title by defeating **Akane Yamaguchi** of Japan in the final. France's **Christo Popov** won the men's singles title.

9. Spain Wins FIFA World Cup 2026

Spain won its **second FIFA World Cup** title by defeating defending champions **Argentina 1–0 after extra time** in the final. Ferran Torres scored the winning goal, while **Rodri** won the Golden Ball and **Kylian Mbappé** claimed the Golden Boot.

10. 'Peacko' Unveiled as Mascot of BWF World Championships 2026

Union Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** unveiled '**Peacko**', inspired by the Indian peafowl, as the official mascot of the **BWF World Championships 2026**, scheduled to be held in **New Delhi** from **17–23 August 2026**.

11. World Chess Day Observed on 20 July

The United Nations observed **World Chess Day** on **20 July 2026** to celebrate chess as a tool for education, inclusion, and peace. The **2026 theme** was "**Celebrate, create and make a difference.**"

12. Andhra Pradesh Signs MoU with UN-Habitat

The Government of **Andhra Pradesh** signed an MoU with **UN-Habitat** to promote sustainable and climate-resilient urban development. The partnership includes establishing a **Centre of Excellence for Urban Affairs** in Amaravati.

13. Uttar Pradesh Launches Kaushal Setu and Kaushal Sarathi Portals

The Uttar Pradesh Government launched the **Kaushal Setu** and **Kaushal Sarathi** portals to strengthen the state's skill development ecosystem by improving access to training centres, courses, digital registration, and employment opportunities.

14. Transition VC Launches ₹1,500 Crore Fund II

Energy-transition-focused venture capital firm **Transition VC** launched **Fund II** with a target corpus of **₹1,500 crore** to invest in engineering-led startups working in clean energy, advanced manufacturing,

industrial engineering, and deep technology, supporting India's energy transition ecosystem.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 21 JULY 2026

1. **Mexico** became the first country to host World Cup matches in **three different tournaments** (1970, 1986, 2026). FIFA World Cup 2026
2. **Significance:** first new Lestes species from the Western Ghats since **Lestes malabaricus (1929)** — a ~96-year gap; and the first new Indian Lestes since **Lestes garoensis (1987)**. Lestes paloti (New Damselfly Species)
3. **WPI inflation: 9.87%** (June) vs 9.68% (May) — a record under the new **2022-23 base year series**. Why Inflation Is Rising in India
4. Introduced by the RBI in **August 2021** (first published for FY ending March 2021), in consultation with the government and sectoral regulators. Part A — Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index)
5. The **first multilateral WTO agreement with an environmental sustainability objective**, and only the **second** new multilateral agreement since WTO's founding in 1995 (after the **Trade Facilitation Agreement**). India Joins WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidie...

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DAY 18 OF 24

22 July 2026

Wednesday · 25 items · 3 topics

General 1 · Banking and Finance 1 · Agriculture 3 · Facts To Remember 20

Context

Chennai-headquartered deep-tech startup **The ePlane Company** (incubated at **IIT Madras**) unveiled the **e200X (PT-01)** — India's first **full-scale prototype** of an **electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL)** aircraft, or "electric air taxi."

About the e200X

What It Is

- An **eVTOL** is a **zero-emission, battery-powered aircraft** that lifts off and lands vertically like a helicopter, then transitions to forward winged flight like a conventional aeroplane.
- **PT-01** is the first prototype on the e200X platform, integrating all major subsystems **airframe, battery pack, landing gear, propulsion and avionics** — into a single operational structure for the first time.
- Marks the shift from **design/simulation into physical ground testing**, ahead of flight trials and certification.

Developed By

- **The ePlane Company**, founded in **2019** by **Prof. Satya Chakravarthy** (IIT Madras aerospace professor; also linked to Agnikul, GalaxEye, TuTr Hyperloop).

Key Concepts

- **eVTOL**: Electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing aircraft — battery-powered, multi-rotor, zero-emission, designed for short urban hops.
- **Urban Air Mobility (UAM) / Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)**: The concept of using small aircraft for passenger/cargo transport within and between cities, above road traffic.
- **Distributed Electric Propulsion (DEP)**: Using many small electric motors instead of one large engine — improves redundancy, safety and efficiency.
- **Tilt-Rotor**: A design where rotors physically rotate between vertical and horizontal orientation (e.g. Joby, Archer) — mechanically complex.
- **Digital Twin**: A virtual replica of a physical system used to simulate, test and optimise before physical build.
- **LiDAR**: Light Detection and Ranging — laser-based sensing for 3D mapping and obstacle detection.

2. The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026

Source: TH

Context

Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** introduced the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Rajya Sabha on 20 July 2026** — the first day of the **Monsoon Session** — to extend to **Vande Mataram** the same statutory protection currently given to the National Anthem.

About the Bill

"The syllabus is finite. Your effort decides how soon it ends."

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What It Is

- An amendment to the parent **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971** (Act No. 69 of 1971), which criminalises disrespect toward national symbols — **National Flag, National Emblem, Constitution, National Anthem, National Motto, and the map of India.**
- The 2026 Bill explicitly **expands the scope to include the National Song (Vande Mataram).**
- **Cabinet approval:** May 2026.

Aim

- To plug a long-standing **statutory gap** — the 1971 Act had **no specific penal provision protecting the National Song.**
- Fulfills the vision articulated by Constituent Assembly President **Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 24 January 1950**, that Vande Mataram "*shall be honoured equally with Jana Gana Mana and shall have equal status with it.*"
- Introduced during the **150th anniversary year** of Vande Mataram's composition.

Key Features

- **Substitution of Section 3:** Replaces Section 3 of the 1971 Act to place the **National Song and National Anthem under the same protective legal umbrella.**
- **Criminalisation of interference:** Makes it a criminal offence to intentionally —
 1. **Prevent the singing** of the National Anthem or National Song, or
 2. **Cause disturbance** to any assembly engaged in such singing.
- **Penalty:** Imprisonment up to **three years**, or fine, or both — the same as for the National Anthem/Flag.
- **Historical reference:** Cites **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's** composition (**1875/1876**, published in **Anandamath, 1882**) and its role in inspiring the freedom struggle.

Banking and Finance

1. RBI Moots Easier FDI Compliance Regime

Source: Business Standard

Context

The **RBI released the draft Foreign Exchange Management (Foreign Investment) Rules, 2026** for public consultation, proposing a **principle-based regulatory framework** to rationalise provisions, harmonise definitions and simplify the regulatory architecture improving clarity and reducing the compliance burden for foreign investors. Comments invited till **31 August 2026**.

About the Draft Rules

Key Details

- Seeks to **replace the existing Foreign Exchange Management (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules, 2019 ("NDI Rules").**
- **Origin:** Announced in the **Union Budget 2026-27** by FM **Nirmala Sitharaman**, who promised "a comprehensive review of the FEM (Non-debt Instruments) Rules to create a more contemporary, user-friendly framework for foreign investments, consistent with India's evolving economic priorities."
- The Centre constituted a **committee** to review existing regulations; the RBI prepared the draft based on its recommendations, in consultation with the government and stakeholders.

Salient Proposals

- **Principle-based, not prescriptive:** replaces rigid prescriptive rules with a framework that can

accommodate evolving business practices while retaining safeguards.

- **Clear demarcation of procedural provisions under FEMA from policy and sector-specific requirements** in the government's **FDI Policy** – improving regulatory coherence and enabling timely policy changes.
- **Investor-neutral and investee-neutral** provisions.
- **Ease of doing business:** streamlined procedures, reduced compliance burden, greater operational flexibility, transparent and investor-friendly framework.
- Specifies conditions under which a **public company may issue fresh equity shares, or existing shareholders may offer shares, on international stock exchanges** (direct overseas listing).

Key Concepts

- **FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act), 1999:** The law governing foreign exchange transactions in India (replaced FERA, 1973); administered by the **RBI**, a **civil** law focused on facilitation rather than FERA's criminal-penalty approach.
- **NDI Rules, 2019:** Framed by the **Central Government** under FEMA, governing foreign investment in non-debt instruments (equity, shares, LLP contributions, etc.).
- **Non-Debt vs Debt Instruments:** Non-debt = equity, shares, convertible instruments, real estate (governed by MoF/NDI Rules); debt = ECBs, bonds (governed by RBI regulations).
- **FDI vs FPI:** FDI is a lasting management interest (generally **10%+** stake, long-term); FPI is passive portfolio investment (below 10%, easily reversible – "hot money").

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the regulation of foreign investment in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 replaced the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973.
2. Foreign investment in non-debt instruments is currently governed by the FEM (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules, 2019.
3. FDI is generally distinguished from FPI by a threshold of a 10% stake in a company.
4. India's sectoral FDI policy, including caps and routes, is framed by the Reserve Bank of India.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to the draft Foreign Exchange Management (Foreign Investment) Rules, 2026, consider the following statements:

1. They seek to replace the existing FEM (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules, 2019.
2. The review was announced in the Union Budget 2026-27.
3. The draft proposes clear demarcation of procedural FEMA provisions from policy and sector-specific FDI requirements.
4. The draft rules have already come into force, replacing the 2019 rules with immediate effect.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** – Statement 4 wrong: FDI policy is framed by DPIIT, not the RBI.
2. **(c)** – Statement 4 wrong: the rules are still in draft, open for consultation until 31 August 2026.

Agriculture

1. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)

Source: PIB

Context

The PIB clarified the structure and implementation of **PMKSY**, an umbrella irrigation scheme — including its components, implementing ministries, funding pattern, and the absence of any specific provision for private-sector investment.

About PMKSY

What It Is

- India's flagship **umbrella scheme for irrigation development**, launched **1 July 2015**.
- A **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (Core Scheme)**.
- Mottos: "**Har Khet Ko Pani**" (water to every field) and "**Per Drop More Crop**".
- Aims: enhance physical access to water on farms; expand cultivable area under **assured irrigation**; improve **water use efficiency**; promote sustainable water conservation; achieve **convergence of investments** in irrigation at field level.

Components & Implementing Ministries

Component	Implementing Body
Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP)	Dept. of Water Resources, RD & GR — Ministry of Jal Shakti
Har Khet Ko Pani (HKKP)	Dept. of Water Resources, RD & GR — Ministry of Jal Shakti
Watershed Development Component (WDC)	Dept. of Land Resources — Ministry of Rural Development
Per Drop More Crop (PDMC)	Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (now largely under RKVY)

- **AIBP**: Fast-tracks completion of ongoing **major and medium** irrigation projects, including National Projects.
- **HKKP**: Creates new water sources via **minor irrigation** (surface + ground water); includes sub-components — **CAD&WM, Surface Minor Irrigation (SMI), Repair, Renovation & Restoration (RRR) of water bodies, Ground Water Development**.
- **WDC**: Watershed development in rainfed areas (subsumed the erstwhile **Integrated Watershed Management Programme, IWMP**).

Schemes Subsumed at Launch

- **AIBP** (Ministry of Water Resources) + **IWMP** (Dept. of Land Resources) + **On Farm Water Management (OFWM)** (Dept. of Agriculture & Cooperation).

Implementation & Funding

- **Central Assistance** is provided to States for **creation of irrigation potential, command area development, and on-farm development**.
- Projects are generally implemented by **State Governments through competitive tendering**; private contractors may participate as per **State procurement rules**.
- Works executed **as per State norms**.
- **The scheme contains no specific provision for private-sector investment**.
- **Capacity building and training** on efficient water management is undertaken by **States/UTs** under scheme guidelines — but **consolidated State-wise data on farmers/field workers trained is NOT maintained centrally**.

Verified Financial & Structural Details

- **Funding pattern:** Centre–State **75:25; 90:10** for **North–Eastern and Hilly States**.
- **Outlay:** initial ₹50,000 crore (2015–16 to 2019–20); extended **2021–22 to 2025–26** with an outlay of ~₹93,068 crore, including **₹37,454 crore central assistance**.
- **90% grant** to two National Projects — **Renukaji (Himachal Pradesh)** and **Lakhwar (Uttarakhand)** — critical for Delhi's water supply and **Yamuna rejuvenation**.
- **M-CADWM (Modernization of Command Area Development and Water Management)** approved in **2025–26** as a **sub-scheme of PMKSY–AIBP** (initial outlay **₹1,600 crore**) — delivers water via **pressurised piped and micro-irrigation** systems.

Exam Relevance

- **UPSC Prelims:** PMKSY launched **2015**, CSS, funding **75:25 / 90:10**; **AIBP & HKKP under Ministry of Jal Shakti**, **WDC under Ministry of Rural Development**, **PDMC under Agriculture**; NSC chaired by **PM**, NEC by **NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman**; Renukaji & Lakhwar national projects; M-CADWM (2025–26).
- **NABARD Grade A/B: Extremely high relevance** — core ARD topic: PMKSY components and ministries, watershed development, micro-irrigation, CAD, RRR, funding pattern; near-certain question area. (Also note NABARD administers the **Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF)** for AIBP projects.)

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), consider the following statements:

1. It was launched in 2015 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
2. The Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme and Har Khet Ko Pani components are implemented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
3. The Watershed Development Component is implemented by the Department of Land Resources under the Ministry of Rural Development.
4. The scheme is implemented solely by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to the implementation of PMKSY, consider the following statements:

1. Central assistance is provided to States for creation of irrigation potential and command area development.
2. Projects are generally implemented by State Governments through competitive tendering as per State procurement rules.
3. The Centre–State funding pattern is 75:25 for general States and 90:10 for North–Eastern and Hilly States.
4. The scheme contains a dedicated provision mandating private sector investment in irrigation projects.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: PMKSY spans three ministries, not the Agriculture Ministry alone.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: no specific provision for private sector investment exists.

2. White Gold: India's Cotton Story

Source: PIB

Context

“The syllabus is finite. Your effort decides how soon it ends.”

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The PIB published the feature article "**White Gold: India's Cotton Story – From Seed to Shirt**", highlighting India's cotton sector, recent policy initiatives, and its role in agriculture, textiles and exports. It showcases India's journey from traditional cultivation to a modern, technology-driven, value-added cotton ecosystem under the vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.

About the Feature

What It Is

- A PIB feature underlining cotton's importance to India's agricultural, industrial and export economy, and the government's push on productivity, quality and global competitiveness.
- Cotton is termed "**White Gold**" for its economic value.

Key Characteristics

1. Global Cotton Leader

- India is the **only country cultivating all four recognised cotton species**.
- **Rank 1 in cultivated area** (114.84 lakh ha $\approx$ 38% of the global 304.08 lakh ha); **Rank 2 in production and consumption**.
- Contributes roughly **19–23% of global fibre production**.

2. Economic Backbone

- Supports nearly **6 million cotton farmers**; employs **40–50 million** across the textile value chain.
- **62% of cultivation is rain-fed**, 38% irrigated.

3. Policy-Driven Growth

- Backed by **MSP procurement, Mission for Cotton Productivity, Kapas Kisan App, and Kasturi Cotton Bharat**.

4. Technology & Quality Focus

- Promotes **High-Density Planting System (HDPS)**, digital procurement, **blockchain-based traceability**, and climate-resilient varieties.

Geographical Spread (3 Zones, 9 States)

- **Northern:** Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan
- **Central:** Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh (*largest producing zone*)
- **Southern:** Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka
- Also grown in **Odisha and Tamil Nadu**.

Major Initiatives

MSP Operations

- MSP recommended by **CACP** before each **cotton year (Oct–Sept)**, for **Medium and Long Staple seed cotton (kapas)**; targets $\geq$ **50% return over cost**.

Mission for Cotton Productivity

- Aligned with the '**5F**' vision — **Farm → Fibre → Factory → Fashion → Foreign**.
- Implemented jointly by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Ministry of Textiles**, with 10 ICAR institutes.

Kapas Kisan App

- Digitised MSP procurement — self-registration, **four-week rolling slot booking**, Aadhaar-linked payments, real-time SMS updates; **41 lakh+ farmers registered**.

Kasturi Cotton Bharat

- Branding/traceability initiative; outlay **₹30 crore** (₹15 cr industry + ₹15 cr Ministry of Textiles); partners **Ministry of Textiles, CCI, TEXPROCIL**.

3. Financial Assistance for Natural Farming

Source: PIB

Context

The PIB detailed research findings and financial support under India's natural farming push — including ICAR's **All India Network Programme on Natural Farming** and the **output-based incentive of ₹4,000/acre/year** under the **National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)**.

ICAR Research Programme

All India Network Programme on Natural Farming (AINP-NF)

- Initiated from **2020–21** (previously **AINP–Organic Farming**).
- **20 cooperating centres** across **16 States**; evaluates **8 major cropping systems** and develops packages of practices.
- Involves **11 State Agricultural Universities, 8 ICAR institutes/centres, 1 deemed university**.

Key Research Findings

Crop–System Packages Developed

Region	Cropping System
Rajasthan & Gujarat	Groundnut + sesame – fennel + cabbage
Chhattisgarh & MP	Soybean + maize – wheat + mustard
Kerala	Cassava

Soil Health Improvements

- **Soil Organic Carbon (SOC)** rose over 2–3 years — in Himalayan trials, from **~0.90% to 1.15%**.
- Higher **number and diversity of soil microorganisms** than chemically farmed soils; balanced abundance of beneficial **bacteria, fungi and actinomycetes**.
- Improved **nutrient cycling and soil structure** → foundation for long-term fertility.

Practice–Level Benefits

- **Mulching**: maintains soil moisture, controls weeds, adds organic matter, boosts microbial activity.
- **Multi-cropping**: raises field biodiversity, reduces pest/disease incidence, improves nutrient use.
- Reduced chemical costs → higher **net profits**.

NITI Aayog Assessment Report

- **~91.2%** of farmers adopting natural farming reported **increased crop productivity and improved soil health**.
- **90.1%** reported **reduced input/production costs**.

Financial Assistance under NMNF

- **Output-Based Incentive: ₹4,000 per acre per year for 2 years** (up to **1 acre per farmer**).
- Covers: practising natural farming, training more farmers, **upkeep of livestock**, preparation of natural farming inputs (including mixing/storage containers), or purchase of inputs from **Bio-input Resource Centres (BRCs)**.

About NMNF

- A **standalone Centrally Sponsored Scheme** launched in **November 2024**, under the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**.
- Builds on the earlier **Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP)** under **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)**.
- **Community support**: two **Krishi Sakhis / Community Resource Persons (CRPs)** per cluster.
- **Certification**: simple farmer-friendly system under **Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)-India**, managed by the **National Centre for Organic & Natural Farming (NCONF)**, Ghaziabad (reconstituted from the National Centre of Organic Farming).
- Real-time geo-tagged monitoring via the **NMNF portal**.

Facts To Remember

1. India's Fertiliser Exports Rise 52% in Three Years

India's fertiliser exports increased by nearly **52% between FY24 and FY26**, according to data presented in Parliament. Although export volumes remain significantly lower than imports, the growth highlights India's expanding presence in the global fertiliser market despite rising import dependence.

2. Santhali Film Angen Wins Historic National Film Award

The Santhali-language short film *Angen (Invisible)* became the **first Santhali film to win a National Film Award**. Directed by **Ravi Raj Murmu**, the 12-minute film received the **Best Debut Film of a Director (Non-Feature Category)** at the 72nd National Film Awards, showcasing Jharkhand's tribal culture and indigenous storytelling.

3. Nation Pays Tribute to Freedom Fighter Batukeshwar Dutt

Union Home Minister Amit Shah paid tributes to revolutionary freedom fighter **Batukeshwar Dutt** on his death anniversary. Dutt is remembered for the **1929 Central Legislative Assembly bombing** alongside Bhagat Singh, carried out to protest oppressive British laws and awaken the nation against colonial rule.

4. India Inaugurates First Immersive Language Museum 'Shabdlok'

Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated **Shabdlok**, India's first immersive language museum, at the National Library campus in Kolkata. The museum showcases nearly **380 Indian languages** using digital displays, holograms, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and interactive exhibits to celebrate India's linguistic diversity.

5. India Approves First Dengue Vaccine 'QDENG A'

India approved its first dengue vaccine, **QDENG A (TAK-003)**, after receiving clearance from the **Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)**. The vaccine provides protection against all four dengue virus serotypes and is approved for individuals aged **4 to 60 years** through a two-dose schedule.

6. India Receives 21st MH-60R Seahawk Helicopter from USA

The United States delivered the **21st MH-60R Seahawk helicopter** to the Indian Navy under the 2020 Foreign Military Sales agreement. The advanced multi-role helicopter will strengthen India's anti-submarine warfare, maritime surveillance, search and rescue, and naval operational capabilities.

7. DoLR and RBI Innovation Hub Explore Digital Land-Credit Infrastructure

The Department of Land Resources (DoLR) and the **RBI Innovation Hub (RBIH)** discussed integrating

digital land records with the **Unified Lending Interface (ULI)**. The initiative aims to improve institutional credit access for farmers through secure, consent-based digital lending using authenticated land records.

8. NSA Ajit Doval Selected for Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026

National Security Advisor **Ajit Doval** was selected for the **Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026** in recognition of his outstanding contributions to national security, counter-terrorism, and border management. The award will be presented in Pune on **1 August 2026**.

9. Andy Burnham Becomes New Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

Andy Burnham became the **59th Prime Minister of the United Kingdom** after the resignation of Keir Starmer. A senior Labour Party leader and former Mayor of Greater Manchester, Burnham secured victory in the party leadership election before being invited by King Charles III to form the government.

10. Senegal President Bassirou Faye Becomes ECOWAS Chairman

Senegal's President **Bassirou Diomaye Faye** was elected as the new Chairman of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** during its 69th summit held in Sierra Leone. He will serve a one-year term focusing on regional cooperation and institutional reforms.

11. NASA's James Webb Telescope Discovers Exoplanet 'Beta Pictoris d'

Astronomers using the **James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)** discovered a new giant exoplanet named **Beta Pictoris d**, located about **63 light-years** from Earth. The discovery makes the Beta Pictoris system only the second known planetary system with **three directly imaged planets**.

12. US Air Force's YFQ-44A Fury Drone Conducts First Live Missile Test

The **YFQ-44A Fury**, a Collaborative Combat Aircraft developed by **Anduril Industries**, successfully launched its first live **AIM-120 AMRAAM** missile during testing. The drone is designed to operate alongside fighter aircraft such as the F-35 and F-22 in future combat operations.

13. FIFA World Cup 2026 Announces Record Prize Money

FIFA announced a record **USD 871 million prize pool** for the **2026 FIFA World Cup**, making it the richest tournament in football history. Champions Spain received **USD 51 million**, while Argentina and England earned **USD 34 million** and **USD 30 million**, respectively.

14. Pakistan to Host SAF Games 2027

Pakistan will host the **14th South Asian Federation (SAF) Games** from **23 to 31 March 2027** across Islamabad, Lahore, and Faisalabad. It will be the third time Pakistan hosts the regional multi-sport event after **1989 and 2004**.

15. England Football Legend Kevin Keegan Passes Away

Former England football captain and two-time **Ballon d'Or** winner **Kevin Keegan** passed away at the age of **75**. Widely regarded as one of England's greatest footballers, he enjoyed a distinguished playing and managerial career.

16. Vice President Releases Book 'RSS @100'

Vice President **C. P. Radhakrishnan** released the book '**RSS @100: A Century of Service, Unity & Sacrifice**', authored by **Shyam Jaju** and **Anupam Trivedi**. The book chronicles the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's century-long journey and its contributions to nation-building.

17. International Moon Day Observed on 20 July

The United Nations observed **International Moon Day** on **20 July** to commemorate the **Apollo 11 Moon landing** in 1969. The day promotes peaceful space exploration, scientific research, and sustainable use of lunar resources.

18. Andhra Pradesh Partners with UN-Habitat for Sustainable Urban Development

The Government of Andhra Pradesh signed an **MoU with UN-Habitat** to establish a **Centre of Excellence for Urban Affairs** in Amaravati. The partnership will support climate-resilient cities, urban planning, digital governance, and sustainable development initiatives.

19. Uttar Pradesh Launches Kaushal Setu and Kaushal Sarathi Portals

The Uttar Pradesh Government launched the **Kaushal Setu** and **Kaushal Sarathi** portals to strengthen the state's skill development ecosystem. The digital platforms will facilitate training registration, course information, district-wise training centres, and employment opportunities.

20. Transition VC Launches ₹1,500 Crore Fund II

Energy-transition-focused venture capital firm **Transition VC** launched its **₹1,500 crore Fund II** to invest in engineering-led startups across clean energy, industrial deep-tech, and advanced manufacturing. The fund plans to support nearly **20 startups** over a four-year investment period.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 22 JULY 2026

1. **M-CADWM (Modernization of Command Area Development and Water Management)** approved in **2025-26** as a **sub-scheme of PMKSY-AIBP** (initial outlay **₹1,600 crore**) — delivers water via **pressurised piped and micro-irrigation** systems. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)
2. A **standalone Centrally Sponsored Scheme** launched in **November 2024**, under the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**. Financial Assistance for Natural Farming
3. Implemented jointly by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Ministry of Textiles**, with 10 ICAR institutes. *White Gold: India's Cotton Story*
4. To plug a long-standing **statutory gap** — the 1971 Act had **no specific penal provision protecting the National Song**. *The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (A...*
5. **FDI vs FPI**: FDI is a lasting management interest (generally **10%+ stake**, long-term); FPI is passive portfolio investment (below 10%, easily reversible — "hot money"). *RBI Moots Easier FDI Compliance Regime*

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DAY 19 OF 24

23 July 2026

Thursday · 27 items · 2 topics

Banking and Finance 3 · Facts To Remember 24

Context

The Union Government released an **updated series of the Index of Core Industries (ICI)** on **20 July 2026**, introducing a revised **base year of 2022–23** (replacing 2011–12) and expanding the basket from **eight to nine** core industries with the addition of **Iron Ore**.

About the ICI**What It Is**

- A **monthly production volume index** measuring the combined performance of key infrastructure-supportive core sectors.
- Acts as a **high-frequency lead indicator** for the broader **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.

Published By

- Compiled and published monthly by the **Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA), DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

Aim of the Revision

- Align the core sector gauge with **structural shifts** and modern production patterns.
- Ensure **coherence across macroeconomic indicators** — **GDP, WPI and IIP** have all already adopted **2022–23** as the common base year.
- Reflect post-2011–12 changes: renewable energy, digital infrastructure, GST implementation, post-pandemic transformation.

Key Changes

Key Change	Details
Base Year Update	2022–23 = 100 replaces 2011–12 ; new series available from June 2026 with a 38-month back series (Apr 2023–May 2026) .
Expansion to Nine Sectors	Iron Ore added as the 9th core industry (weight 4.905%); original 8 core industries retained.
Weight in IIP	Combined weight of the 9 core industries revised to 32.88% (from 40.27% in the 2011–12 series).
Steel Index Revision	Uses gross steel production instead of net production for consistency with the IIP .
Coal Index Revision	Tracks raw coal only , removing coal middlings and washed coal to avoid double-counting .

Weight Redistribution (pro-rata from IIP 2022–23)

Sector	New Weight	Old Weight (2011–12)
Electricity	30.932% (now largest)	19.85%
Refinery Products	22.572%	28.04%
Iron Ore	4.905% (new)	—
Coal	5.596%	10.33%

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Sector	New Weight	Old Weight (2011-12)
Natural Gas	3.841%	6.88%
Fertilizers	2.731%	2.63%
(Steel, Cement, Crude Oil also rebalanced)	—	17.92 / 5.37 / 8.98

Key Concepts

- **Base Year:** The reference year (set = 100) against which index values are compared; periodically revised to reflect structural changes in the economy.
- **IIP (Index of Industrial Production):** A composite index measuring short-term changes in industrial output volume; released by **MoSPI/NSO**, with three sectors — **Mining, Manufacturing (largest), Electricity** — and six use-based categories.
- **Lead Indicator:** A variable that changes before the broader economy does, helping forecast trends (ICI leads IIP).
- **Volume Index vs Value Index:** A volume index measures physical output quantity, insulated from price changes; a value index reflects prices too.
- **Core Industries:** Basic infrastructure/input industries whose output drives the rest of manufacturing.
- **Pro-rata Weight Redistribution:** Scaling a subset of IIP weights up proportionally so they total 100 for the ICI basket.
- **Coal Middlings:** A by-product of coal washing with intermediate ash content — counting it alongside raw coal caused double-counting.
- **Common Base Year Alignment:** Using 2022-23 across GDP, IIP, WPI and ICI so indicators are directly comparable.

Banking and Finance

1. RBI Bulletin (July 2026)

Source: The Hindu

Context

The **RBI Bulletin, July 2026** (released 22 July) states that the Indian economy has **navigated external uncertainties and supply chain pressures well**, underpinned by healthy demand conditions and resilient industrial and services performance. India **remains among the fastest-growing major economies** and sustained economic momentum through **June**.

Key Observations from the Bulletin

- **Global Economy:** Facing **economic uncertainty, supply chain disruptions, fragmented trade**, and **West Asia tensions**.
- **Domestic Growth: Industrial and services sectors remained strong;** economic activity stayed **robust in June**.
- **Agriculture: Uneven southwest monsoon** may affect farming, but **adequate foodgrain stocks** could limit food inflation.
- **Inflation: Retail inflation edged up in June**, while **core inflation remained subdued**.
- **Liquidity: Liquidity improved further**, supporting **strong credit growth**.

External Sector

- **Trade: Exports and imports grew strongly in Q1 2026-27;** expected to improve further with the **India-UK CETA** and other trade agreements.
- **External Stability: Forex reserves remained comfortable** and **external vulnerability indicators**

stayed stable.

- **Capital Flows: FDI increased**, while **FPI inflows turned positive** in **June–July 2026**.
- **FCNR(B) Deposits: Concessional swap measures** led to **\$17.4 billion** in **FCNR(B) deposits** (8 June–17 July 2026).
- **Overall:** Rising foreign investment reflects **improving investor confidence** in the Indian economy.

Key Concepts

- **RBI Bulletin:** A **monthly** publication of the RBI carrying speeches, articles and statistics; its flagship "State of the Economy" article reviews current macro conditions (author views, not official RBI stance).
- **Headline vs Core Inflation:** Headline CPI includes all items; **core inflation excludes volatile food and fuel** (and here, precious metals) — a better gauge of underlying demand pressure.
- **Supply Chain Disruption:** Breaks in the flow of inputs/goods across borders, raising costs and delaying production — a **cost-push** inflation source.
- **Liquidity Conditions:** The availability of funds in the banking system, managed by the RBI through the **LAF, repo/reverse repo, OMOs and CRR**.
- **Credit Growth:** Expansion of bank lending — a lead indicator of investment and consumption demand.
- **External Vulnerability Indicators:** Metrics like the CAD/GDP ratio, external debt to GDP, short-term debt to reserves, and import cover of reserves.
- **FDI vs FPI:** FDI is stable, long-term, non-debt-creating; FPI is volatile portfolio investment ("hot money").

Exam Relevance

- **RBI Grade B (ESI + F&M): Extremely high relevance** — RBI publications, State of the Economy, inflation types, liquidity management tools, credit growth, external sector indicators, FCNR(B)/swap facility; near-certain question material

2. The Nifty500 Ahimsa Index

Source: Indian Express

Context

NSE Indices Limited, in collaboration with the **Ahimsagain Foundation**, launched the **Nifty500 Ahimsa Index** on **10 July 2026**. It tracks **326 companies** (as of 30 June 2026) from the Nifty 500 universe that follow **Ahimsa** — non-violence towards animals.

About the Index

What It Is

- India's first specialised, **rules-based equity index** designed to screen and track companies free from **animal cruelty**.
- Offers ethical investors a structured way to direct capital away from industries that harm animals.
- A **thematic/ethical benchmark**, adding to India's growing ESG-linked index space.

Launched By

- **NSE Indices Limited** (the index services arm of NSE), in partnership with the **Ahimsagain Foundation**, using its proprietary **Ahimsa Investment Movement (AIM)** screening framework.

Aim

- Provide retail and institutional investors a **transparent benchmark** aligning portfolios with compassion and ethical values.
- Serve as an underlying asset base for **passive investment products** — ETFs, index funds, and structured offerings.

Key Features

1. AIM Banding Framework

- **Screens Nifty 500 companies** based on products, services, and business practices.
- Classifies firms into **Green, Orange, and Red** bands.
- **Only Green-band companies** are included.

2. Sector Inclusions

- Includes **IT, automobiles, capital goods, and telecom** companies.
- Top holdings include **Bharti Airtel, Infosys, M&M, TCS, Maruti Suzuki, and NTPC**.

3. Sector Exclusions

- Excludes **meat, dairy, poultry, leather, cosmetics, wool/leather fashion, and animal-testing pharma** firms.
- Also excludes **commercial banks, major NBFCs, and most Reliance Group companies**.

4. Construction Methodology

- **Free-float market-cap weighted** index.
- **Base date:** 1 April 2016 | **Base value:** 1,000.
- **Rebalanced semi-annually**.

Key Concepts

- **Stock Market Index:** A statistical measure tracking the performance of a selected basket of stocks, used as a benchmark and as an underlying for passive funds.
- **Free-Float Market Capitalisation:** Market value of only those shares readily available for trading (excluding promoter/government locked-in holdings) — the standard weighting method for Nifty and Sensex.
- **Thematic Index:** An index built around a specific theme (ESG, manufacturing, ahimsa) rather than broad market representation.
- **ESG Investing:** Investment screening based on Environmental, Social and Governance criteria.
- **Negative/Exclusionary Screening:** Excluding companies in objectionable sectors (tobacco, arms, animal cruelty) — the approach used here.
- **Passive Investing:** Investing that tracks an index rather than picking stocks (ETFs, index funds), typically low-cost.
- **ETF (Exchange-Traded Fund):** A fund tracking an index whose units trade on an exchange like a stock.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the Nifty500 Ahimsa Index, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched by NSE Indices Limited in collaboration with the Ahimsagain Foundation.
2. It uses the Ahimsa Investment Movement (AIM) framework, which classifies companies into Green, Orange and Red bands.
3. Only companies classified in the Green band are eligible for inclusion.
4. The index includes all major commercial banks and NBFCs from the Nifty 500 universe.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to stock market indices in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Nifty500 Ahimsa Index is weighted by free-float market capitalisation and reconstituted semi-annually.

2. Free-float market capitalisation considers only those shares readily available for trading in the market.
3. The BSE has launched the Saatvik 100 Index, which similarly screens against animal cruelty and harmful products.
4. The Nifty500 Ahimsa Index is itself a mutual fund scheme in which investors can directly invest.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: banks and NBFCs are excluded from the index.
2. **(c)** — Statement 4 wrong: it is an index, not a mutual fund scheme.

3. The EPFO 3.0 Reforms

Source: Indian Express

Context

The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** is preparing its next reform phase — **EPFO 3.0** — moving beyond the claims-focused **EPFO 2.0** framework, with a proposed **universal contributory pension scheme** covering gig, platform, unorganised and construction workers.

About EPFO 3.0

What It Is

- The next generation of social security and retirement fund administration in India.
- Transitions EPFO from a traditional **formal-sector provident fund manager** into a **universal, multi-source social security platform** capable of managing pension drawdowns, unorganised-sector contributions and gig-economy integration.

Aim

- Eliminate **pension exclusion** by bringing unorganised sector workers, **construction workers (BOCW)** and **gig/platform workers** into a structured social security framework.
- Offer flexible, inflation-linked retirement solutions for all Indian workers.
- Global models — notably **Singapore's CPF** — are being studied.

Key Features

Feature	Key Points
Core Banking Solution (CBS)	RBI-regulated CBS for real-time, centralized management of 60+ crore workers ; builds on EPFO 2.0 .
Target Retirement Sum (TRS)	Personalized retirement goal , required contributions calculated automatically, real-time dashboard, annual interest on government-backed investments.
Retirement Options	At 60 years , choose Annuity/Pension or Systematic Withdrawal Plan (SWP) for flexible withdrawals.
Gig Worker Coverage	Covers gig and platform workers under the Code on Social Security, 2020 ; aims to add 2.5 crore workers.
One-to-Many UAN	Single UAN linked to multiple employers/platforms, avoiding duplicate accounts.
Multi-Source Contributions	Contributions from workers, employers, government, CSR, NGOs, consumer tips ; proposed GPF transfer and Family Benefit Fund .

Facts To Remember

1. India Rejects Pakistan's Remarks on Indus Waters Treaty at UNSC

India strongly rejected Pakistan's remarks at the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**, accusing it of using **cross-border terrorism** as an instrument of state policy. India reiterated that **Jammu & Kashmir** is an integral and inalienable part of the country and maintained that the **Indus Waters Treaty** will remain in **abeyance** until Pakistan credibly ends cross-border terrorism.

2. Centre Considers Lifting Airport–Airline Cross-Ownership Restrictions

The Central Government is considering removing restrictions on **cross-ownership between airport operators and airlines**, allowing airport companies to own airlines and airline groups to acquire airport stakes. The proposal is currently at the **consultation stage** and requires **legal clearance** and **Union Cabinet approval**. If implemented, it could encourage greater **investment**, improve **operational efficiency**, and reshape India's **civil aviation sector**.

3. Mission 'Golden Spice' Launched for Meghalaya's Lakadong Turmeric

The **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER)** launched the **₹175.45-crore Mission "Golden Spice"** to strengthen the value chain of **GI-tagged Lakadong Turmeric**. The **five-year initiative (2025–2030)** aims to improve **cultivation, processing, branding, and exports**, making Lakadong turmeric a globally competitive premium spice. **MDoNER** will contribute **50%** of the project funding.

4. Maharashtra Tops PLI-Auto Scheme with 66 Manufacturing Units

The **Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI)** informed Parliament that **Maharashtra** leads the **PLI Scheme for Automobile and Auto Components** with **66 manufacturing units**, followed by **Tamil Nadu (38)**, **Haryana (35)**, and **Karnataka (35)**. A total of **225 manufacturing units** have been established under the **₹25,938-crore PLI-Auto Scheme** approved in **2021**.

5. ISRO's VSSC and CSIR-IICT Sign MoU for Eco-Friendly Blowing Agent Technology

ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and **CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT)** signed an **MoU** to jointly develop **indigenous eco-friendly blowing agent technology** for advanced space applications. The collaboration aims to reduce dependence on **imported fluorochemicals** and strengthen India's capabilities in **strategic materials**. Separately, **ISRO's HSFC** and **SCTIMST** launched India's first indigenous **Postdoctoral Fellowship in Bioastronautics**.

6. Government Launches 'Gems of India' Challenge for Digital Creators

Union Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** launched the pilot phase of the **'Gems of India' Challenge** through the **MyWAVES platform** to promote grassroots digital creators. Participants will create **1–3 minute videos** showcasing their district's **culture, heritage, tourism, and traditions**. The initiative offers awards of up to **₹5 lakh** and will later expand across all **States and Union Territories**.

7. ISSDA and GSSE Partner to Promote Stainless Steel in Clean Energy

The **Indian Stainless Steel Development Association (ISSDA)** and **Global Stainless Steel Expo (GSSE)** signed a strategic partnership to promote stainless steel applications in **green hydrogen, renewable energy, LNG**, mobility, and infrastructure. The collaboration also advocates a **National Stainless Steel Policy (NSSP)**. India's **stainless steel market** is projected to reach **USD 15.8 billion** by **2030**.

8. IAMAI Launches E-Commerce Council of India

The **Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)** launched the **E-Commerce Council of India (ECCI)**

in **Bengaluru** to strengthen India's **digital commerce ecosystem**. The platform brings together **marketplaces, logistics firms, MSMEs, policymakers, and technology companies** for policy advocacy, research, and collaboration. It will also host the annual **Indian E-Commerce Summit (IECS)**.

9. IIT Kanpur to Establish Green Hydrogen Centre of Excellence

IIT Kanpur will establish the **Centre of Excellence on Innovative and Integrated Ecosystem for Green Hydrogen (ECOGEN)** under the **Uttar Pradesh Green Hydrogen Policy 2024**. The centre will undertake research on **hydrogen production, storage, distribution, and utilisation** to reduce costs and support India's **clean energy transition**. The project has been approved by **UPNEDA**.

10. IIPA and ICAI Sign MoU for Municipal Financial Governance

The **Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)** and the **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)** signed a **three-year MoU** to strengthen **municipal accounting and financial management**. The partnership will focus on **research, capacity building, training programmes, and advisory support** for **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** to improve transparency and accountability.

11. India's Outward FDI Falls 47.9% in June 2026

According to **RBI** data, India's **outward Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** commitments declined by **47.9%** year-on-year to **USD 3 billion** in **June 2026**. **Equity, debt, and guarantee commitments** all witnessed declines. **ONGC Videsh Rovuma Limited (OVRL)** made the largest overseas equity commitment during the month.

12. Eight-Year-Old Iya Krish Scales Mount Toubkal

Iya Krish, an **eight-year-old** mountaineer from **Kerala**, became the **youngest Asian** to summit **Mount Toubkal (4,167 m)**, the highest peak in **North Africa**. She prepared through mountain trekking and **Kalaripayattu** training and now aims to climb **Mount Elbrus, Mount Kilimanjaro, and Mount Everest**.

13. Indian Navy Commissions INS Malvan

The **Indian Navy** commissioned **INS Malvan**, the **second Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)**, at **Naval Base Karwar**. Built by **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)** with **over 80% indigenous content**, it is the **first naval vessel commissioned at Karwar** and strengthens India's **coastal anti-submarine warfare capabilities**.

14. Paninian India Launches Private-Sector Turbofan Engine Programme

Paninian India Private Limited launched the **Yantur 4.5 kN Turbofan Engine Programme**, India's **first privately developed turbofan engine** in its category. The engine is designed for **long-range autonomous cruise missiles** and future **Collaborative Combat Aerial Vehicles (CCAAs)**, strengthening indigenous **aerospace propulsion technology**.

15. Five New Allographa Lichen Species Discovered in Western Ghats

Researchers from the **Agharkar Research Institute (ARI)** discovered **five new Allographa lichen species** in the **Western Ghats of Kerala**. Published in the journal **Mycological Progress**, the discovery represents the **first comprehensive molecular phylogenetic study** of the genus from the region and expands India's documented **lichen biodiversity**.

16. Indian Grandmasters Win Top Honours at Menuires Chess Championship

Grandmaster S. Rohith Krishna won the **Menuires International Chess Championship 2026** in **France**, while **GM Raja Rithvik** secured the **silver medal**. Both players remained **unbeaten** with **7 points from 9**

rounds, with Rohith Krishna winning on **tie-break** under **FIDE regulations**.

17. Pi Approximation Day Observed on 22 July

Pi Approximation Day is observed annually on **22 July** because the fraction **22/7** closely approximates the mathematical constant **π (Pi)**. The day promotes awareness of **mathematics, science**, and the importance of **Pi** in geometry and engineering. It was first celebrated in **1995** in **Sweden**.

18. World Brain Day 2026 Observed on 22 July

World Brain Day 2026 was observed on **22 July** with the theme "**Brain Health: Access for All.**" Led by the **World Federation of Neurology (WFN)**, the observance raises awareness about **brain health** and **neurological disorders**. The date also marks the establishment of the **WFN** in **1957**.

19. Sikkim Presents ₹19,215-Crore Budget for FY27

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang presented the **₹19,215-crore Budget for FY2026–27**, prioritising **healthcare, education, infrastructure, and social welfare**. Key announcements include **statewide HPV screening, Sikkim's first Renal Transplant Programme, an ART Centre, and 100 MBBS seats** at the **Sikkim Government Medical College**.

20. Andhra Pradesh Signs MoU with UAE for Food Processing Cluster

The **Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB)** signed an **MoU** with the **UAE Food Cluster** to establish a **food processing cluster** for **horticultural exports**. The partnership will promote **value-added processing**, attract **UAE investments**, and establish a **₹100-crore processing unit** in **Chittoor district** to strengthen exports to global markets.

21. World Bank Warns War Could Cut Global Growth to 1.3% in 2026

The **World Bank** has warned that prolonged **US–Iran hostilities** could reduce **global economic growth** to **1.3% in 2026**, down from **2.9% in 2025**, while pushing **global inflation** to around **4.5%**. According to the **June 2026 Global Economic Prospects (GEP) Report**, the **worst-case scenario** assumes severe energy supply disruptions and financial market volatility lasting **six months or more**, whereas the **baseline forecast** projects **2.5% global growth** with inflation around **4.0%** if disruptions ease.

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23. CSIR Transfers Four Indigenous Technologies to Industry

The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** organised a **Technology Transfer Event** at its headquarters in **New Delhi** on **23 July 2026**, where it transferred **four indigenous technologies** to industry, commercially launched an **IoT-enabled Smart Rural Water Monitoring System**, and recognised **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** for royalty generated from licensed defence technology. The event was organised by **CSIR-CSIO, Chandigarh**, under the leadership of **Dr. N. Kalaiselvi**, Director General, **CSIR**.

24. AYUSH Ministry Inaugurates Prakriti Café

Union **AYUSH Minister Prataprao Jadhav** inaugurated **Prakriti Café** at **Ayush Bhawan, New Delhi**, the first workplace initiative of its kind by the **Ministry of AYUSH**. The café aims to promote **healthy dietary**

practices based on the principles of **Ayush Ahaar**, encouraging nutritious and balanced food choices aligned with traditional Indian wellness systems.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 23 JULY 2026

1. The index includes all major commercial banks and NBFCs from the Nifty 500 universe. *The Nifty500 Ahimsa Index*
2. **Trade: Exports and imports grew strongly** in **Q1 2026–27**; expected to improve further with the **India–UK CETA** and other trade agreements. *RBI Bulletin (July 2026)*
3. Transitions EPFO from a traditional **formal-sector provident fund manager** into a **universal, multi-source social security platform** capable of managing pension drawdowns, unorganised-sector contributions and gig-economy integration. *The EPFO 3.0 Reforms*

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DAY 20 OF 24

24 & 25 July 2026

27 items · 3 topics

General 3 · Banking and Finance 2 · Agriculture 2 · Facts To Remember 20

Context

DRDO successfully conducted the **maiden flight test** of the '**Kusha**' **Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LR-SAM)** on **23 July 2026** from **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island** off the Odisha coast. The test was conducted against an **electronic target simulating a high-speed, high-altitude aerial threat**, which was successfully intercepted.

What It Is

- **Project Kusha** is India's indigenously developed long-range air defence missile system.
- Often described as India's indigenous answer to the **Russian S-400 Triumph**.
- A **fully automated, scalable surface-to-air missile ecosystem** to detect, track and destroy aerial threats at standoff distances.

Developing Organisation

- **R&D lead:** DRDO, with public and private defence industry partners.
- **Testing oversight:** Ministry of Defence, through the **Integrated Test Range (ITR)** infrastructure in Odisha.
- The launch was monitored by **Defence Secretary and DRDO Chairman Rajesh Kumar Singh**.

Aim

- Build a **scalable, multi-layered national air defence shield** aligned with the integrated "**Sudarshan Chakra**" national air umbrella vision.
- Protect critical civilian and strategic assets while eliminating reliance on foreign air defence imports.

Three-Tiered Interceptor Family

- **M1 variant:** engagement range up to **150 km**
- **M2 variant:** engagement range up to **250 km**
- **M3 variant:** extended engagement range up to **350 km**

Fully Integrated Indigenous Subsystems

- Locally developed **Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA)** radars.
- **Command and control centres** and **automated battle management software**.
- **High-precision missile seekers**.

5. Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024

Source: Mint

Context

The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by the Prime Minister, approved a **draft Bill on 24 July 2026** to amend the **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024**. The amendments raise the **minimum punishment from 3 years to 5 years**, the **maximum imprisonment to 10 years**, and the **maximum fine to ₹10 crore**.

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What the Parent Act Is

- India's **first dedicated central law** to curb paper leaks, cheating and organised malpractice in national recruitment and entrance examinations.
- Passed by Parliament in February 2024 and **brought into effect on 21 June 2024**.
- Introduced in the Lok Sabha by the **Union Minister of State for Personnel**.

Aim

- Deter **organised syndicates, cheating networks and rogue service providers** from compromising examination integrity.
- Protect a transparent, merit-based selection process for millions of aspirants.
- Importantly, the Act targets **organised gangs and institutions acting for monetary gain**; ordinary candidate misconduct in the exam hall continues to be handled under the examination body's own rules.

Comprehensive Definition of Unfair Means

- Leakage of question paper or answer key; unauthorised assistance to a candidate; **tampering with a computer network, resource or system**; creating **fake websites** for cheating or monetary gain; conducting **fake examinations** or issuing **fake admit cards/offer letters**; and **manipulation of seating arrangements, dates and shifts** to facilitate unfair means.
- Also covers falsification of merit lists and documents.

Penalty Structure Under the 2024 Act

- **Section 10 — Individuals resorting to unfair means:** imprisonment of **3 to 5 years** and fine up to **₹10 lakh**.
- **Section 11 — Organised crime:** imprisonment of **5 to 10 years** and a fine of **at least ₹1 crore**.
- **Service providers:** fine up to **₹1 crore**, recovery of proportionate examination cost, and a **4-year bar** from any responsibility in conducting public examinations.
- **Management liability:** directors, senior managers or persons-in-charge who consent to or connive in cheating face **3 to 10 years** imprisonment and a **₹1 crore** fine.
- **Property attachment and forfeiture** for institutions and coaching centres found guilty of organised cheating, plus full cost recovery for re-conducting cancelled exams.

Procedural Features

- All offences are **cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable**.
- Investigation must be by an officer **not below the rank of DSP or ACP**.
- The Central Government may transfer any case to a **central agency such as the CBI**.

What the 2026 Amendments Propose

- **Minimum penalty for individual offenders raised to 5 years**, with a **three-month deadline for completing investigations**.
- Organised paper leaks to attract **up to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹10 crore**.
- **Statutory backing for fast-track courts** and time-bound trials.
- A **special fast-track court at Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court** has already been designated for paper-leak trials under the Act.
- The **Delhi Police** has constituted a **Special Task Force (STF)** in the Crime Branch to investigate paper leaks.

6. Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA) Expands to 90 Members

Context

The **Minister of State for Communications** announced that the **Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA)** has expanded its membership to **90 organisations**. B6GA is an **industry-led, government-facilitated** platform to position India as a global leader in **6G**.

What It Is

- An **industry-led, government-facilitated collaborative platform** bringing together domestic and international stakeholders.
- Drives **research, intellectual property creation and standard-setting** for next-generation networks.
- Established in **July 2023**, flowing from the **Bharat 6G Vision** unveiled by the Prime Minister in **March 2023**.

Nodal Support

- Facilitated by the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)**, Ministry of Communications.

Aim

- Drive **indigenous 6G R&D** toward a self-reliant (**Atmanirbhar**), globally competitive 6G ecosystem.
- Ensure India's **technological, manufacturing and IP priorities** are embedded into global 6G standards.

Global Strategic Partners (Bilateral MoUs)

- **NextG Alliance** (USA)
- **6G-IA** (Europe)
- **6G Forum** (South Korea)
- **XGMF** (Japan)
- **6G Brasil**
- **European Space Agency (ESA)**

7. PM-YASASVI (Prime Minister Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India)

Source: PIB

Context

The **Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment** reaffirmed the Government's commitment to expanding educational opportunities for disadvantaged students through **PM-YASASVI**. The statement highlighted both **scholarship support** and **hostel infrastructure** for socially and educationally backward youth.

What It Is

- A comprehensive umbrella scheme implemented by the **Department of Social Justice and Empowerment**, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Unifies scholarship support and residential hostel infrastructure for socially and educationally backward youth across India.

Origin and Evolution

- The **hostel construction component originated in 1998–99** to address educational backwardness among OBC youth, with a major revision in **2017–18**.
- Later restructured into the present **PM-YASASVI umbrella framework**, covering assistance from school level through top-tier college education.

Aim

- Eliminate **financial constraints and geographical barriers** for students from rural and economically weaker sections.
- Ensure equitable access to secondary and higher education through scholarships and quality hostel facilities.

Target Beneficiaries and Eligibility

- Open to **Other Backward Classes (OBC)**, **Economically Backward Classes (EBC)**, and **Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNT)**.
- Applicants must be listed in **Central/State/UT OBC lists** and fall strictly **outside the creamy layer**.
- **Annual family income ceiling: ₹2.50 lakh.**
- Selection for top-class components is through the **YASASVI Entrance Test (YET)** conducted by the **National Testing Agency (NTA)**.
- Applications are made through the **National Scholarship Portal (NSP)**, with funds transferred by **DBT** into **Aadhaar-seeded accounts**.

Four-Tiered Scholarship Structure

- **Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme** (Classes 9–10).
- **Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme** (post-secondary stage).
- **Top Class Education in Schools Scheme.**
- **Top Class Education in Colleges Scheme.**
- Under the Top Class School component, **Class 9–10 students receive up to ₹75,000 per annum** and **Class 11–12 up to ₹1,25,000 per annum**, covering tuition and hostel expenses.

Banking and Finance

1. Updated Index of Core Industries (ICI)

Source: The Hindu

Context

The Government of India released the **updated Index of Core Industries (ICI)** with a **new base year of 2022–23**, replacing the earlier **2011–12** series.

About Index of Core Industries (ICI)

What is it?

- A **monthly production index** that measures the performance of India's **core infrastructure industries**.
- Acts as a **lead indicator** for the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.

Published By

- **Office of Economic Adviser (OEA)**
- **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**
- **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**

Objective

- Reflect current industrial and economic conditions.
- Align with updated **GDP, GVA, CPI, and IIP** series.
- Improve the accuracy of industrial growth measurement.

Key Changes

- **Base Year:** Updated from **2011–12** to **2022–23 = 100**.
- **Number of Core Industries:** Increased from **8 to 9** with the addition of **Iron Ore**.
- **Iron Ore Weight:** **4.905%**.
- **Steel:** Uses **gross steel production** instead of net production.
- **Coal:** Measures only **raw coal** production to avoid double counting.

Revised Sector Weights

- **Electricity: 30.932%** (Highest)
- **Refinery Products: 22.572%**
- **Steel**
- **Cement**
- **Coal: 5.596%**
- **Iron Ore: 4.905%**
- **Natural Gas: 3.841%**
- **Fertilizers: 2.731%**
- **Crude Oil**

Nine Core Industries

- Coal
- Crude Oil
- Natural Gas
- Refinery Products
- Fertilizers
- Steel
- Cement
- Electricity
- Iron Ore (*Newly Added*)

2. Offline UPI Payment (NFC-based Tap-and-Pay)

Source: Business Standard (Editorial)

Context

The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** is developing an **offline NFC-based Tap-and-Pay UPI feature**, enabling users to make **UPI payments up to ₹2,000 without internet connectivity**.

What is the New Feature?

- Allows **offline UPI payments** using **Near Field Communication (NFC)** technology.
- Users can make payments by **tapping NFC-enabled devices**.
- No need to scan a QR code.
- Payments can be made by capturing the recipient's **UPI ID** or **Virtual Payment Address (VPA)**.
- Transaction limit: **Up to ₹2,000** without internet.

Technology Used

- **NFC (Near Field Communication):** A short-range wireless communication technology that enables contactless payments.
- **UPI ID / VPA:** Unique payment address linked to a bank account.

Background

- Builds upon earlier initiatives such as **UPI Lite X**.
- Aims to bridge the gap between **UPI payments** and **contactless card payments**.

Agriculture

1. Mission Golden Spice — Lakadong Turmeric Value Chain Project

Source: News on Air

Context

Union Minister for Communications and DoNER **Jyotiraditya M. Scindia**, with Meghalaya CM **Conrad K. Sangma**, launched "**Mission Golden Spice – Integrated Lakadong Turmeric Value Chain Enhancement Project**", a **₹175.45-crore** convergence-led initiative, on **21 July 2026** at Sanchar Bhavan, New Delhi. It is a **five-year (2025–2030)** phased roadmap to build a farm-to-global-market ecosystem for Meghalaya's **GI-tagged Lakadong turmeric**.

What It Is

- Officially the **Integrated Lakadong Turmeric Value Chain Enhancement Project**.
- A five-year phased initiative to turn Lakadong turmeric into a globally competitive premium brand.
- Part of the Centre's "**Unlock the Economic Potential of India's Northeast**" (**USP**) initiative under the **Ashtalakshmi** strategy.

Organisations Involved

- **Anchor bodies:** MDoNER and the North Eastern Council (NEC).
- **State implementation:** Government of Meghalaya.
- **Convergence partners:** Ministries of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Food Processing Industries and Commerce, along with **APEDA, Spices Board, National Turmeric Board, ICAR, MeitY, NABARD** and **SFAC**.

Aim

- Double farmers' earnings from **₹30–40/kg to ₹80/kg by 2030**.
- Overcome post-harvest losses and end **distress sales**.
- Establish processing facilities and position Lakadong as a flagship export to the **US, EU, Japan and Gulf countries**.
- Build a **₹100-crore local value-chain economy by 2028–29**.

Phased Roadmap (2025–2030)

- **Phase 1 — Value Chain Strengthening:** infrastructure, cold chains and processing.
- **Phase 2 — Expansion & Scale-up:** commercial expansion, branding and export scaling.

Multi-Agency Funding Model

- **MDoNER/NEC: 50%**
- **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare: 33.1%**
- **Government of Meghalaya: 16.9%**

Why Lakadong Is Special

- **Curcumin content of 7–12%**, nearly **four times the global average** — its core competitive advantage.
- Gained international visibility after being **showcased by the Prime Minister at the G7 Summit**.
- Grown mainly in **Jaintia Hills**, where soil and ecosystem give the crop its distinctive quality; it received

the **GI tag** for Meghalaya.

Exam Relevance

- **NABARD Grade A: Extremely high — direct subject matter;** agri value chains, FPOs, cold chain finance, rural entrepreneurship, SFAC and NABARD's own role.

2. Kutki (*Picrorhiza kurroa*) — Sustainable Cultivation Breakthrough in Himachal

Source: The Hindu

Context

Farmers in **Mandi district, Himachal Pradesh**, have pioneered a **sustainable, stolon-based cultivation and harvesting model** for **Kutki (*Picrorhiza kurroa*)**. Kutki is an **endangered** high-altitude Himalayan medicinal herb, declared so because of **over-exploitation from its natural habitat**. The new model harvests only the **lateral creeping stolons**, leaving the mother rhizome intact to regenerate. This converts a destructively wild-harvested species into a **multi-year perennial crop**, aligning conservation with farmer income.

What It Is

- Botanical name ***Picrorhiza kurroa* Royle ex Benth.**; known in Ayurveda as **Katuki** or **Katukarohini**, and locally as **Kadu**.
- A **creeping perennial medicinal herb** of the family **Scrophulariaceae** (placed in Plantaginaceae under modern APG classification).
- The name derives from Greek "**Picros**" (**bitter**) and "**Rhiza**" (**root**), reflecting its intense bitterness.

Native Habitat and Distribution

- Found in the **alpine Himalayan region from Kashmir to Sikkim** at elevations of **2,700–4,500 metres** above mean sea level.
- Prefers **moist, rocky, north-west facing slopes** with well-drained, porous sandy-clay soil that lets rhizomes spread horizontally.
- **In India:** Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Key Himachal habitats: **Chamba, Kangra, Mandi, Shimla, Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti**.
- **Outside India:** Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Tibet, western China and northern Myanmar.

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List: Endangered** — due to severe population decline from over-exploitation and destructive wild harvesting.
- **CITES: Appendix II** — international trade permitted only under strictly regulated export permits.
- Listed among the **37 top-priority species** identified for conservation and cultivation in the Western Himalayas, owing to its narrow distribution range, small population size and high value.

Key Morphological Features

- **Medicinal stolon vs non-medicinal fibrous root:** the drug component resides in the **stolon** — a specialised horizontal stem creeping along the soil bearing nodes — while the fibrous roots carry **no medicinal value**.
- Forms **low-growing mats** through creeping underground rhizomes and aerial stolons.
- Bears a **whorl of serrated leaves** and **white to pale purple flowers**, flowering around June.

Bioactive Phytochemicals

- The active principle is **kutkin**, comprising **kutkoside** and the iridoid glycosides **Picroside I and Picroside II**, used in **more than 2,000 herbal formulations**.

- Also contains **cucurbitacins, acetophenones, apocyanin and ferulic acid**.
- The derived drug **Picroliv** is a well-known hepatoprotective extract.

The Non-Destructive Harvesting Breakthrough

- Traditional harvesting **uproots the entire plant**, which is why wild populations collapsed.
- The new model harvests **only lateral creeping stolons**, leaving the **mother rhizome intact** in the soil to regenerate continuously.
- When propagated through **stolon cuttings**, Kutki can be harvested in about **2–2.5 years**, with harvest in **September–October** as the aerial parts wither.
- Stolon cuttings give **faster multiplication and higher production** than seed propagation.

Medicinal Significance

- A renowned **Ayurvedic liver tonic** used for hepatitis, cirrhosis and other liver disorders; it promotes **bile flow**.
- A key ingredient in **Arogyavardhani Vati**.
- Used to manage chronic fever, diabetes, asthma, cough, digestive disorders and inflammatory skin diseases.
- In Ayurvedic terms, it balances **Pitta and Kapha doshas**.

Exam Relevance

- **NABARD Grade A: Very high — direct subject matter**; high-value crop diversification, NTFP, farmer producer organisations, medicinal plant financing.

Facts To Remember

1. MoC Releases 'AAROH', India's First Scientific Mine Closure Report

The **Ministry of Coal (MoC)** released '**AAROH: Annual Report on Mine Closure**', India's **first comprehensive report** on **scientific mine closure, ecological restoration, and post-mining land utilisation**. Prepared by the **Coal Controller Organisation (CCO)**, the report documents **42 scientifically closed coal mines**, including **33 closed in the last year**. During the event, **Coal NEER Plants** of **Coal India Limited** were virtually inaugurated, and a **tripartite MoU** was signed by **BCCL, JRDA, Hindalco Industries, and Rajdhani Universal Fabrics**.

2. India Emerges as Global Leader in Cotton Cultivation

The **Government of India** released a factsheet describing **cotton as India's "White Gold"**, supporting the livelihoods of **6 million farmers** and **40–50 million people** in the textile value chain. India ranks **1st globally in cotton cultivation area (114.84 lakh hectares)** and **2nd in both cotton production and consumption**, contributing nearly **19% of global fibre production**. The **United States** remains the largest destination for India's cotton fabric exports.

3. DRDO Signs Contracts for AEW&C Mk-II Programme

The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** signed two major contracts for the **AEW&C Mk-II Programme** to strengthen India's **airborne surveillance and air defence capabilities**. The **₹19,000-crore programme**, approved by the **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)**, will convert **six Airbus A321 aircraft** into advanced airborne warning platforms with induction planned for **2032–33**.

4. Zanzibar President Hussein Ali Mwinyi Visits India

Zanzibar President Hussein Ali Mwinyi visited **India from 17–20 July 2026** to strengthen the

India–Tanzania Strategic Partnership. The visit focused on cooperation in the **blue economy, trade, tourism, health, education, and technology**, while also unveiling the **master plan of the IIT Madras Zanzibar campus**, India's **first international IIT campus**.

5. NCVET Recognises NIRDPR as Dual Awarding Body

The **National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)** recognised the **National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR)** as a **Dual Awarding Body**, enabling it to **assess, certify, and award NSQF-aligned qualifications**. The initiative will strengthen **rural skilling, entrepreneurship, and Panchayati Raj capacity building**, with **107 Dual Awarding Bodies** recognised as of **July 2026**.

6. BHASHINI Rajyam Promotes AI-Powered Multilingual Governance

The **Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD)** and the **Government of Goa** organised the '**BHASHINI Rajyam**' **Workshop** to promote **AI-powered multilingual governance**. The workshop showcased **AI-based translation, speech recognition, transcription, and multilingual citizen services**, while strengthening the **Konkani language ecosystem**.

7. NABARD Signs MoU with MAHAPREIT for Green Rural Infrastructure

NABARD signed an **MoU** with **MAHAPREIT** to jointly finance **green, climate-resilient infrastructure** across rural India, initially focusing on **Maharashtra**. Priority areas include **renewable energy, Gram Panchayat infrastructure, biogas projects, solar-powered cold storage, and decarbonisation of public institutions**, supporting the **circular economy** and rural sustainability.

8. Microsoft India and IIT Delhi Launch UNNATI AI 2.0

Microsoft India, in partnership with **IIT Delhi's FITT**, launched **UNNATI AI 2.0** to expand **AI innovation, startup support, and AI skilling** across **Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities**. The initiative aims to strengthen India's **AI talent pipeline** and promote responsible AI solutions in **healthcare, education, agriculture, and sustainability**.

9. UN SOFI Report: Global Hunger Declines Slightly in 2025

The **UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** released the **SOFI 2026 Report**, estimating that **645 million people (7.8% of the global population)** faced hunger in **2025**, a slight improvement over the previous year. However, the world remains **off track to achieve SDG-2 (Zero Hunger by 2030)**, with **Africa replacing Asia** as the region with the highest number of undernourished people.

10. EbixCash Becomes India's First AD-II Entity for Trade Remittances

EbixCash World Money Limited became India's **first Authorised Dealer Category-II (AD-II)** entity to receive **RBI approval** for offering **trade remittances and family maintenance remittances**. The licence enables trade remittances of up to **₹25 lakh per transaction** and provides greater support to **MSME importers and exporters**.

11. EnKash Launches India's First UPI-Enabled Meal Card

EnKash launched **India's first UPI-enabled meal card**, allowing employees to make payments by scanning **eligible UPI QR codes** directly from their meal balance. The initiative provides **tax-saving benefits** while expanding the use of **digital employee benefit solutions**.

12. ICRA Projects India's GDP Growth at 6.4–6.6% in Q1 FY27

ICRA projected **India's real GDP growth** at **6.4–6.6%** for **Q1 FY27**, supported by **strong industrial activity**,

infrastructure growth, and improved high-frequency indicators. Despite **higher energy prices** and **input cost pressures**, the report indicates continued economic momentum.

13. Paras Semiconductors to Set Up ₹6,200-Crore OSAT Facility in MP

Paras Semiconductors signed an **MoU** with **MPSeDC** to establish a **₹6,200-crore Greenfield OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test)** facility in **Madhya Pradesh**. The project will strengthen India's **semiconductor ecosystem**, support the **India Semiconductor Mission**, and manufacture advanced semiconductor packages for strategic applications.

14. Anurag Jain Appointed CEO of NITI Aayog

The **Government of India** appointed **Anurag Jain**, a **1989-batch IAS officer**, as the new **CEO of NITI Aayog** for a **two-year tenure**. He succeeds **Nidhi Chhibber**, who had been holding the additional charge, and will lead **policy formulation, governance reforms, and long-term development planning**.

15. RBI Approves Areion Group's Acquisition of Aviom India Housing Finance

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approved **Areion Group's ₹936-crore acquisition** of **Aviom India Housing Finance** as part of its **Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP)**. The acquisition is expected to provide lenders with an estimated **65% recovery**, subject to final approval by the **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)**.

16. India Bids to Host 2029 World Ability sport Games

The **Paralympic Committee of India (PCI)** and the **Cerebral Palsy Sports Federation of India (CPSFI)** signed an **MoU** to jointly bid for hosting the **2029 World Abilitysport Games**. **Chennai** and **Bhubaneswar** are under consideration as host cities for the international multi-sport event for athletes with disabilities.

17. National Flag Adoption Day Observed on 22 July

National Flag Adoption Day is observed every year on **22 July** to commemorate the adoption of the **Indian National Flag (Tiranga)** by the **Constituent Assembly** on **22 July 1947**. The **2026 observance** marks the **79th anniversary**, celebrating the Tiranga as a symbol of **freedom, justice, liberty, and equality**.

18. National Broadcasting Day Observed on 23 July

National Broadcasting Day is observed annually on **23 July** to commemorate India's **first organised radio broadcast** by the **Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC)** in **1927**. The year **2026** marks the **99th anniversary** of organised radio broadcasting in India, highlighting its role in **public communication, education, and cultural preservation**.

19. India Approves First Dengue Vaccine Qdenga

India has approved **Qdenga**, the country's **first dengue vaccine**, developed by **Takeda (Japan)** and already licensed in **over 40 countries** with **WHO prequalification**. The vaccine protects against all **four dengue virus serotypes** and can be administered **without prior dengue screening**, unlike Dengvaxia. However, it requires **two doses three months apart**, has relatively lower protection against **DENV-3 and DENV-4** in dengue-naïve individuals, and concerns remain over **affordability** and ensuring complete vaccination coverage among high-risk populations.

20. US Imposes 10% Section 301 Tariff on Indian Goods

The **United States** imposed a **10% Section 301 tariff** on Indian goods from **24 July 2026**, citing inadequate enforcement against **forced labour** in supply chains. India was shifted from the proposed **12.5% tariff** to

the **10% bracket** after the **DGFT amended the Foreign Trade Policy (13 July 2026)** to prohibit imports made using forced labour and due to progress in implementing the **four Labour Codes**. While **FIEO** viewed the lower tariff as a competitive advantage over countries facing **12.5% tariffs**, the **gems & jewellery** and **textile industries** expressed concerns over **profit margins, reputational risks, and export competitiveness**.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 24 & 25 JULY 2026

1. Established in **July 2023**, flowing from the **Bharat 6G Vision** unveiled by the Prime Minister in **March 2023**. Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA) Expands to 90 Members
2. **Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme** (Classes 9–10). PM-YASASVI (Prime Minister Young Achievers Scho...
3. Double farmers' earnings from **₹30–40/kg to ₹80/kg by 2030**. Mission Golden Spice — Lakadong Turmeric Value ...
4. **Section 10 — Individuals resorting to unfair means**: imprisonment of **3 to 5 years** and fine up to **₹10 lakh**. Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means...
5. Transaction limit: **Up to ₹2,000** without internet. Offline UPI Payment (NFC-based Tap-and-Pay)

Now test yourself: c4scourses.in/daily-quiz/daily-current-affairs-quiz-2425-july-2026/

DAY 21 OF 24

26 & 27 July 2026

23 items · 3 topics

General 3 · Banking and Finance 1 · Agriculture 1 · Facts To Remember 18

Context

The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance**, chaired by **Bhartruhari Mahtab**, has **tabled its report** on the **Securities Markets Code Bill**, which consolidates India's securities laws into a single framework. The Bill was introduced in the **Lok Sabha by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on 18 December 2025** and referred to the Committee for scrutiny.

What the SMC Bill Does

- Consolidates and replaces three statutes: the **SEBI Act, 1992**, the **Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956**, and the **Depositories Act, 1996**.
- The Bill has **157 clauses**; the Committee accepted **more than 85 suggestions** during clause-by-clause examination.
- Stakeholders consulted included **RBI, SEBI, chartered accountants, stock exchanges, investors and banks**.

Recommendation 1 – Revised Preamble & Long Title

- Preamble should clearly state the objectives: **investor protection, securities market development, and effective regulation**, not merely consolidation of existing laws.

Recommendation 2 – Delete Clause 93(g)

- Remove Clause 93(g) as it gives **SEBI excessive power to create criminal offences**, amounting to excessive legislative delegation.

Recommendation 3 – Criminal Offences in the Code

- All criminal market abuse offences should be **explicitly listed in the Code**, not left to SEBI's regulations.

Recommendation 4 – Limit Delegated Legislation

- Prohibit delegation of **essential legislative functions** and clearly define Parliament's and SEBI's respective roles.

Recommendation 5 – Investigation Notices

- Prior notice applies only to the person under investigation, with **exceptions where evidence may be destroyed or tampered with**.

Recommendation 6 – Ombudsperson

- Retains SEBI officer as ombudsperson; **120-day timeline** prescribed for grievance redressal.

Recommendation 7 – Surplus Transfer Retained

- SEBI's annual surplus will continue to be transferred to the **Consolidated Fund of India**, while **25%** is kept in a reserve fund (subject to the prescribed cap). Critics argue this may blur the distinction between a **regulatory fee and a tax**.

Key Terms

- **Securities Markets Code (SMC)**: A proposed single consolidated statute merging the SEBI Act, 1992, the SCRA, 1956, and the Depositories Act, 1996. It follows the model of the Labour Codes and the Income

Tax Bill in consolidating fragmented law.

2. Sarnath Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

Source: The Hindu

Context

The "**Ancient Buddhist Site, Sarnath**" in Uttar Pradesh was inscribed on the **UNESCO World Heritage List on 25 July 2026**, during the **48th session of the World Heritage Committee** at **Busan, Republic of Korea**, making it **India's 45th World Heritage Site**. It is **Uttar Pradesh's fourth** site, after the **Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri**, all in the Agra region.

Key Facts

The Inscription

- India now has **45 World Heritage Sites**, placing it **sixth in the world** and **second in the Asia-Pacific region**.
- India submitted the dossier titled "**Ancient Buddhist Site, Sarnath**" for the **2025–26 nomination cycle**; under the **Operational Guidelines, 2024**, only **one property may be submitted per cycle**, and the process takes about **1.5 years**.
- The nomination was evaluated by **ICOMOS**, the advisory body for cultural properties.

What the Property Comprises

- The legacy survives in **two protected archaeological sites**: the **Chaukhandi Stupa** and the **Archaeological Remains of Sarnath**, which include the **Dhamek Stupa** and the **Dharmarajika Stupa**.
- The Chaukhandi Stupa is a lofty brick structure crowned by an **octagonal Mughal tower built by Govardhan, son of Raja Todar Mal, in AD 1588**, to commemorate **Humayun's visit**.
- The second group contains stupas, monasteries, temples and the **Ashokan column**, in brick and stone, datable from the **3rd century BCE to the 12th century CE**.

Historical Significance

- According to Buddhist texts, the Buddha travelled to Sarnath in the **sixth century BCE** after attaining enlightenment, met his **first five disciples** and delivered his first sermon — regarded as the beginning of the spread of Buddhist teachings.
- Known in ancient texts as **Mrigadava (Deer Park)**, **Rishipattana** and **Isipatana**.
- The first sermon, the **Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta**, expounded the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Eightfold Path**, and marked the founding of the **Sangha**.
- Sarnath evolved into a **major centre of Buddhist learning and pilgrimage**, one of the **four principal Buddhist pilgrimage destinations**.
- The **Ashokan Pillar** here bears the **Lion Capital**, adopted as **India's National Emblem** in 1950, with the **Dharmachakra** appearing on the national flag.
- Sarnath also produced the famed **Gupta-period Buddha in dharmachakra-pravartana mudra**, a masterpiece of the Sarnath school of sculpture.

Buddhist Pilgrimage Circuit

- The **four principal sites**: **Lumbini** (birth, Nepal), **Bodh Gaya** (enlightenment, Bihar), **Sarnath** (first sermon, UP) and **Kushinagar** (mahaparinirvana, UP).
- With Sarnath, **three of these four are now on the World Heritage List** — Lumbini (1997), Mahabodhi Temple Complex, Bodh Gaya (2002), and now Sarnath; **Kushinagar remains uninscribed**.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the inscription of Sarnath on the UNESCO World Heritage List, consider the following

statements:

1. It was inscribed during the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Busan, Republic of Korea.
2. It is India's 45th World Heritage Site and Uttar Pradesh's fourth.
3. The inscribed property includes the Chaukhandi Stupa and the archaeological remains containing the Dhamek and Dharmarajika stupas.
4. Sarnath was placed on UNESCO's Tentative List only in 2020, shortly before its nomination.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to Sarnath and Buddhist heritage, consider the following statements:

1. Sarnath is where the Buddha delivered his first sermon, an event known as the Dharmachakra Pravartana.
2. The Lion Capital of Ashoka, adopted as India's State Emblem, originally surmounted a pillar at Sarnath.
3. Sarnath is known in ancient texts as Mrigadava or Deer Park.
4. With Sarnath's inscription, all four principal Buddhist pilgrimage sites are now on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statements 1, 2, 3 are correct; Statement 4 is wrong because Sarnath was placed on the **Tentative List on 3 July 1998**, 28 years before inscription.
2. **(c)** — Statements 1, 2, 3 are correct; Statement 4 is wrong because **Kushinagar**, the site of the Buddha's mahaparinirvana, is **not yet inscribed**; three of the four — Lumbini, Bodh Gaya and Sarnath — are.

3. Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026

Source: The Hindu

Context

The Union government has proposed the **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026**, a copy of which was **circulated among Members of Parliament on Saturday, 25 July 2026**.

Key Facts

- **Correction to the Earlier Note**
 - Investigation must be completed within **60 days** (not three months). The **three-month timeline applies to trial completion** after filing of the chargesheet.
- **Enhanced Penalties**
 - Maximum imprisonment increased, with financial penalties up to **₹10 crore** for organised crime networks.
- **Specialised Enforcement Units**
 - Union Government may constitute **Special Task Forces (STFs)** for exclusive investigation. All investigations must conclude within **60 days**.
- **Special Fast Track Courts**
 - States/UTs may designate **Courts of Session as Special Fast Track Courts**. Trials will be conducted **day-to-day** and completed within **three months** of chargesheet filing.

- **New Sections 12A & 12B**

- Introduce a continuous procedural pipeline by restricting adjournments beyond the next day except for **recorded exceptional reasons**.

- **Appellate Timelines**

- Appeals to be heard by a **Division Bench** and disposed of within **three months**. Appeals must be filed within **30 days**, with a maximum **90-day** condonation period.

- **Transfer of Pending Cases**

- Pending cases under the **2024 Act** will be transferred to **Special Fast Track Courts** and completed within **three months** of transfer.

- **Special Public Prosecutors**

- States and UTs must appoint **Special Public Prosecutors** under the **BNSS, 2023** to exclusively conduct these trials.

4. Fast-Track Courts (FTCs)

Source: TOI

Context

The **Prime Minister announced the establishment of fast-track courts** to deliver swift and stringent justice for offences related to **examination paper leaks**. The **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026** gives **statutory backing** to Special Fast Track Courts for such offences.

What They Are

- Special, usually **temporary** judicial benches for expedited trial of specific, high-priority offences, complex corporate frauds, or cases involving vulnerable groups.
- They aim to reduce backlog by holding **daily hearings** and adhering to strict timelines, bypassing routine adjournments.
- Most are **designated** existing courts rather than newly created ones — the core structural weakness.

Constitutional and Judicial Framework

- **Article 14 (equality before law)**: the Supreme Court has held that Fast Track or Special Courts must comply with Article 14 — classification of offences for special treatment must be **reasonable and have a rational nexus** with the objective.
- **Article 21**: the **right to a speedy trial** was read into the right to life in **Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar (1979)**.
- **Article 247**: empowers Parliament to establish **additional courts** for better administration of laws made by it.
- **Brij Mohan Lal v. Union of India (2012)**: the Supreme Court examined the FTC scheme and directed that States either **continue FTCs on a permanent basis or phase them out**, rather than run them on uncertain ad hoc extensions.

Evolution of the Scheme

- **11th Finance Commission (2000–2005)**: originally recommended and funded **1,734 Fast Track Courts** for long-pending sessions and undertrial cases.
- **14th Finance Commission (2015–2020)**: recommended setting up **1,800 FTCs** for heinous crimes such as murder and kidnapping, and civil and property disputes pending over five years.
- **Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), October 2019**: a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** funded partly through the **Nirbhaya Fund**, dedicated exclusively to **rape and POCSO Act** cases.
- **BNSS, 2023**: prescribes time limits for criminal trials — including completion of **sexual offence trials within two months** of the chargesheet.

"Selection is not made in a day. It is made a little every day."

Banking and Finance

1. NABARD Study — Rural Fintech Credit Adoption Remains Negligible

Source: Mint

Context

A **NABARD** study finds that **less than 2% of rural households** reported borrowing from **fintech entities**, despite India being the **world's third-largest fintech ecosystem**. The expected breakthrough in **last-mile financial inclusion through fintech-led credit has not materialised**, even as banks expanded digital infrastructure and the government built robust **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**.

Key Highlights

- **Core Finding**
 - Less than **2% of rural households** borrow from fintech lenders. The main barriers are **trust, awareness, and suitability**, not digital infrastructure.
- **What Rural Households Prefer**
 - Rural borrowers rely on **PACS functioning as Common Service Centres (CSCs)** because they are locally trusted, physically accessible, and offer multiple services, including input supply, procurement, deposits, and e-services.
- **Fintech Market Context**
 - India is the **world's third-largest fintech ecosystem** (after the US and UK), with the market projected to exceed **\$400 billion by 2028–29**.
- **Institutional Response**
 - Queries sent to the **Finance Ministry, Rural Development Ministry, NABARD, RBI, and the Fintech Association for Consumer Empowerment (FACE)** received no response.

Why Fintech Credit Has Not Penetrated Rural India

- **Credit assessment models** rely on digital footprints, salary slips and formal bureau scores that most rural borrowers lack.
- **Thin-file and no-file borrowers** — agricultural incomes are seasonal, irregular and undocumented.
- **Absence of collateral recognition** — fintechs cannot lend against land as cooperatives and banks do.
- **Interest rates** of digital lenders are typically far above subsidised KCC credit at **7% under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme**.
- **Digital literacy and language barriers**, plus reluctance to grant app permissions.
- **Trust deficit**, worsened by publicised **illegal loan-app scandals**, harassment and data misuse.
- **Grievance redressal is remote** — no branch, no local officer to approach.
- **Smartphone and connectivity gaps** persist despite high overall mobile penetration.

The Institutional Alternative Is Being Strengthened

- **PACS computerisation**: an ERP-based national project with an outlay of about **₹2,516 crore** covering roughly **one lakh functional PACS**, though implementation is uneven across states.
- PACS are being converted into **multipurpose societies** delivering CSC services, fair price shops, PM-KUSUM, Jan Aushadhi Kendras and more.
- **eKisanCredit (eKCC)**, a fully digital loan origination system for cooperative banks, PACS and RRBs, integrating land records, Aadhaar, eKYC and core banking; **NABARD acquired a 10% stake** in the developer, **24x7 Moneyworks**, in 2025.
- NABARD is working with the RBI on the **National Strategy for Financial Inclusion 2.0**.

"Selection is not made in a day. It is made a little every day."

Agriculture

1. India's Rice Fields as Methane Hotspots

Source: The Hindu

Context

The **Nature Food** study finds global paddy GHG emissions **doubled since the 1960s**, reaching **1.1 billion tonnes CO₂e annually** in 2011–2020 — a **90.4% rise** over 1961–1980. **India tops world rice production at 154 million tonnes in 2025–26**, and its irrigated paddy releases about **3.9 million tonnes of methane annually**. **Eastern India** is among the global methane hotspots, with **Odisha's paddy fields contributing most to the state's GHG emissions**.

Key Highlights

- **Why Indian Paddy Emits High GHGs**
 - Continuous flooding creates **anaerobic conditions** that produce methane, while **residue incorporation** and rising **nitrogen fertiliser use** increase methane and nitrous oxide emissions. Eastern India is a major **global methane hotspot**.
- **Loss of Soil Carbon**
 - Besides methane emissions, paddy fields are losing **soil organic carbon**. Many fields have shifted from being **carbon sinks to net emitters**, with about **half of the emission increase** linked to soil carbon loss.
- **Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD)**
 - Periodic drying of fields can reduce **methane emissions by 30–70%** and save **15–30% irrigation water**, but requires reliable irrigation infrastructure.
- **Direct Seeded Rice (DSR)**
 - Direct sowing reduces **methane emissions, water use, and labour**, though adoption is limited by **weed management challenges** and the need for level fields.
- **System of Rice Intensification (SRI)**
 - Uses **young seedlings, wider spacing, and intermittent irrigation** to increase yields while reducing water use and methane emissions. However, it is **labour-intensive** and requires farmer training.
- **Crop Diversification**
 - Promotes shifting from paddy to **millets, pulses, oilseeds, and maize** in unsuitable regions. Adoption remains limited due to **MSP, assured procurement, and subsidised electricity** favouring paddy cultivation.
- **Other Mitigation Measures**
 - Includes **optimised fertiliser use (nano urea, neem-coated urea)**, **Soil Health Cards**, **PM-PRANAM**, **reduced tillage**, **biochar/straw management**, and **carbon credit incentives**.
- **Core Policy Challenge**
 - India balances **food security and climate goals**. Rice supports the **PDS and NFSA**, agriculture is excluded from India's **NDC mitigation targets**, and India has not joined the **Global Methane Pledge**, citing livelihood concerns for small farmers. Even with improved practices, global rice emissions may decline by only **about 10% by mid-century**.

Key Terms

- **Odisha Millet Mission (Shree Anna Abhiyan)**: A state programme launched in **2017**, among India's most successful millet revival efforts, combining seed systems, farmer training, and **millet inclusion in the PDS and mid-day meals**. It is the standard example of procurement-backed diversification working.

- **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA):** One of the **eight national missions** under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (2008)**, promoting climate-resilient practices, water-use efficiency and soil health.
- **Phosphogypsum:** A by-product of phosphoric acid manufacture supplying calcium and sulphur, usable as a soil amendment. Being trialled as a partial substitute for lime in acidic Kerala soils, with observed emission benefits.
- **Soil Acidity and Liming:** Acidic soils limit nutrient availability; **lime (calcium carbonate)** is applied to neutralise them. Lime application also affects soil carbon and gas fluxes, which is why the substitution matters.

Facts To Remember

1. Mirabai Chanu Wins Gold at Commonwealth Games 2026

Mirabai Chanu won the **women's 48 kg gold medal** at the **Commonwealth Games 2026** in **Glasgow**, securing **India's first gold medal** of the Games. She created **new Games records** in the **snatch (85 kg)**, **clean & jerk (105 kg)**, and **total lift (190 kg)**, completing a historic **hat-trick of Commonwealth Games gold medals** after **Gold Coast 2018** and **Birmingham 2022**. **Chanambam Rishikanta Singh** also won the **silver medal** in the **men's 60 kg** category.

2. U Mumba TT Retains Ultimate Table Tennis Title

U Mumba TT successfully defended its **Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) Season 7** title by defeating **Dempo Goa Challengers 8–5** in the final held at **Panaji, Goa**. The victory ended Goa's **unbeaten run**, with **Manush Shah** and teammates delivering crucial performances to help U Mumba retain the championship through superior **depth and composure**.

3. CPCB Flags New 'Green' Firecrackers

The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** informed the **Supreme Court** that there is **no consensus** on permitting the **commercial production of next-generation green firecrackers**. While some agencies support their introduction, others have raised concerns over the use of a **banned chemical**, prompting the **Centre** to leave the final decision to the **Supreme Court**.

4. Banks to Launch CKYC 2.0 in August 2026

Banks and insurance companies will launch **Central Know Your Customer (CKYC) 2.0** in **August 2026**, with **mutual funds** joining later. The upgraded system enables institutions to retrieve customers' **verified KYC records** from a **central registry** after **OTP-based consent**, eliminating the need to repeatedly submit **PAN, Aadhaar, or address proof**.

5. India Witnesses First Drone-Based Transport of Tea Leaves

A tea company has introduced **India's first drone-based transport system** for moving **freshly harvested tea leaves** from plantations to processing centres in **Idukki, Kerala**. The initiative, undertaken by **Harrisons Malayalam Limited (HML)** in collaboration with **Tropoworks**, aims to **reduce transport time, lower fuel costs, and improve plantation logistics**.

6. Cabinet Approves ₹3,030-Crore BHAVYA-Rasayan Scheme

The **Union Cabinet** approved the **₹3,030-crore BHAVYA-Rasayan Scheme** to establish **three large chemical parks** across India over **FY27–FY31**. The scheme will provide **₹3,000 crore** for **common infrastructure and utilities**, while parks will be developed by **state governments** through a **challenge-based selection process**, with each requiring at least **2,000 acres** of land.

7. Cabinet Approves Ballari–Guntakal Railway Multitracking Project

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** approved the **3rd and 4th railway lines** on the **Ballari–Guntakal section** across **Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh** at a cost of nearly **₹1,264 crore**. The **46-km project**, targeted for completion by **2028–29**, will improve connectivity to around **99 villages** with a population of nearly **7 lakh**.

8. CSIR Transfers Four Indigenous Technologies to Industry

The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** transferred **four indigenous technologies** to industry and commercially launched an **IoT-enabled Smart Rural Water Monitoring System** during a **Technology Transfer Event** in **New Delhi**. Organised by **CSIR-CSIO**, the event also saw **BEL** receive licensed defence technologies, while **CSIR** earned **₹1.67 crore in royalties**.

9. Bihar to Establish NSTI–W Campus and Skill India International Centre

The **Government of Bihar** and the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** announced the establishment of a permanent **National Skill Training Institute for Women (NSTI–W)** campus at **Bihta** and a **Skill India International Centre (SIIC)** in **Patna**. The projects, with investments of **₹99.97 crore** and **₹7 crore**, aim to promote **women's skilling** and **global employment opportunities**.

10. ICAR–CMFRI Launches DeepDATA App

ICAR–CMFRI launched the **DeepDATA** mobile application under the **Deep Ocean Mission** to provide **scientifically verified information** on **deep-sea fish species**. The app enables **citizen participation** in documenting marine biodiversity while supporting **marine research, conservation, and sustainable fisheries management**.

11. Viswanathan Anand Becomes Interim President of FIDE

India's **five-time World Chess Champion Viswanathan Anand** assumed charge as the **Interim President of FIDE** after **Arkady Dvorkovich** suspended his duties. Anand, who has served as **FIDE Deputy President since 2022**, became the first Indian to lead the **International Chess Federation** in an interim capacity.

12. Infosys Appoints Ashiss Kumar Dash as CEO–Designate

Infosys appointed **Ashiss Kumar Dash** as its **CEO–Designate**, with effect from **1 April 2027**, succeeding **Salil Parekh**. Dash, an **Infosys veteran with over 30 years of experience**, has been appointed for a **five-year term (2027–2032)**, subject to shareholders' approval.

13. ZSI Discovers Two New Spider Species

Scientists from the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** discovered two new spider species—**Simonia lawbah** from **Meghalaya** and **Hamataliwa papikonda** from **Andhra Pradesh**. The discoveries mark the **first Indian record of the genus Simonia** and the **first record of Hamataliwa in Andhra Pradesh**, enriching India's biodiversity records.

14. Nicolás Otamendi Retires from International Football

Argentina's veteran defender Nicolás Otamendi announced his retirement from **international football** after a distinguished **17-year career**. He represented Argentina in **139 international matches**, won the **2022 FIFA World Cup** and **two Copa América titles**, and retired after the **2026 FIFA World Cup Final**.

15. World IVF Day Observed on 25 July

World In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) Day, also known as **World Embryologist Day**, is observed annually on **25**

July to promote awareness about **IVF technology** and **Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)**. The day commemorates the birth of **Louise Brown**, the world's **first IVF baby**, born in **1978**.

16. International Day for Judicial Well-being Observed on 25 July

The **International Day for Judicial Well-being** is observed annually on **25 July** to promote the **mental, emotional, and physical well-being of judges and magistrates**. The day commemorates the adoption of the **Nauru Declaration on Judicial Well-being (2024)** and was officially proclaimed by the **UN General Assembly** in **2025**.

17. International Day of Women and Girls of African Descent Observed

The **United Nations** observed the **International Day of Women and Girls of African Descent** on **25 July 2026** with the theme "**Right to Health – A Fundamental Right Still Denied**." The observance highlights the **rights, leadership, and contributions** of women and girls of African descent while addressing inequalities in **healthcare access and social inclusion**.

18. Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games Underway

The **2026 Commonwealth Games (Glasgow 2026)** are being held from **23 July to 2 August 2026** in **Glasgow, Scotland**. The **XXIII Commonwealth Games** are a **scaled-back, low-cost edition** after **Victoria (Australia)** withdrew in **2023** due to **cost escalation**. The **quadrennial multi-sport event**, governed by **Commonwealth Sport**, features athletes from **74 Commonwealth nations and territories**, while **Scotland** hosts the Games for the fourth time after **Edinburgh (1970 & 1986)** and **Glasgow (2014)**.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 26 & 27 JULY 2026

1. India submitted the dossier titled "**Ancient Buddhist Site, Sarnath**" for the **2025–26 nomination cycle**; under the **Operational Guidelines, 2024**, only **one property may be submitted per cycle**, and the process takes about **1.5 years**. Sarnath Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage ...
2. States and UTs must appoint **Special Public Prosecutors** under the **BNSS, 2023** to exclusively conduct these trials. Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means...
3. **14th Finance Commission (2015–2020)**: recommended setting up **1,800 FTCs** for heinous crimes such as murder and kidnapping, and civil and property disputes pending over five years. Fast-Track Courts (FTCs)
4. **Interest rates** of digital lenders are typically far above subsidised KCC credit at **7% under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme**. NABARD Study – Rural Fintech Credit Adoption Re...
5. **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)**: One of the **eight national missions** under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (2008)**, promoting climate-resilient practices, water-use efficiency and soil health. India's Rice Fields as Methane Hotspots

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DAY 22 OF 24

28 July 2026

Tuesday · 17 items · 3 topics

General 1 · Banking and Finance 1 · Agriculture 1 · Facts To Remember 14

Context

Following directions in a **suo motu proceeding by the National Green Tribunal (NGT)**, the **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** constituted a **multi-disciplinary Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species**. The NBA is an **autonomous statutory body** under the **MoEFCC**, implementing the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**.

About the NBA

- **Established: 1 October 2003**, headquartered at **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**.
- Performs **regulatory, advisory and facilitative** functions to safeguard India's biological resources and associated traditional knowledge.
- **Aim:** conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and **fair and equitable sharing of benefits (Access and Benefit Sharing, ABS)**.

The Three-Tier Structure

- **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** — national level, Chennai.
- **State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs)** — **28 boards**, regulating commercial utilisation and bio-surveys by **Indian citizens** in their territories.
- **Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)** — about **2.76 lakh** at panchayat and municipal level, preparing **People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs)**.

Key Functions

- **Advising the Central Government** on conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing.
- **Biodiversity Heritage Sites** — advises **state governments** on notifying ecologically significant areas under **Section 37**.
- **Regulating IPR and commercial access** — grants approvals under **Sections 3, 4 and 6** for **foreign individuals or entities** seeking access to Indian biological resources, transfer of research results, or IPR based on biological material.
- **Overseeing SBBs and empowering BMCs**.
- **Constituting expert committees** — such as the new panel on Invasive Alien Species.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the National Biodiversity Authority, consider the following statements:

1. It is an autonomous statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, established in 2003 and headquartered at Chennai.
2. It was constituted to implement the provisions of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
3. It advises state governments on the notification of Biodiversity Heritage Sites under Section 37 of the Act.
4. Indian citizens and Indian companies must obtain prior approval of the NBA before accessing biological resources for commercial use.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to biodiversity governance in India, consider the following statements:

1. Biodiversity Management Committees at panchayat and municipal level prepare People's Biodiversity Registers documenting local resources and traditional knowledge.
2. Approval of the NBA is required before applying for any intellectual property right based on research on Indian biological resources.
3. The Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species was constituted by the NBA following directions in a suo motu proceeding of the National Green Tribunal.
4. India ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, whose three objectives include the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statements 1, 2, 3 are correct; Statement 4 is wrong because **Indian citizens and Indian bodies need only give prior intimation to the State Biodiversity Board under Section 7**; prior NBA approval under Sections 3, 4 and 6 applies to **foreigners, NRIs and foreign-controlled entities**.
2. **(d)** — All four statements are correct.

3. Exam Reform Task Force Led by Nandan Nilekani

Source: News on Air

Context

PM Narendra Modi announced a six-member high-powered task force on 26 July 2026, chaired by **Nandan Nilekani**, to recommend comprehensive reforms to India's examination system. Formed in response to **nationwide protests** and the **NEET-UG paper leak controversy**. It came a day after **Dharmendra Pradhan resigned as Education Minister**, with **Pralhad Joshi** succeeding him.

The Six Members

Member	Designation	Expertise Brought
Nandan Nilekani (Chair)	Infosys co-founder; founding Chairman, UIDAI	Digital public infrastructure, identity systems
S. Somanath	Former Chairman, ISRO	Mission-critical, zero-failure systems engineering
Tapan Deka	Former Director, Intelligence Bureau	Internal security, organised crime networks
V. Kamakoti	Director, IIT Madras	Computer science, cybersecurity, cryptography
Anita Karwal	Former Education Secretary , MoE	Education administration, examination governance
Amrit Lal Meena	Senior IAS; former Coal Secretary and Chief Secretary, Bihar	Logistics and administration

Banking and Finance

1. RBI Gets Government Nod to Issue ₹10 and ₹20 Polymer Banknotes

Source: Business Standard

Context

The government has approved the RBI's proposal to issue **1 billion pieces each of ₹10 and ₹20 polymer banknotes for field trials**, Minister of State for Finance **Pankaj Chaudhary** told the Lok Sabha on **27 July**

"The cut-off is a number. Your preparation is a habit. Habits win."

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2026. After successful field trials, the RBI will **regularly issue polymer banknotes** in these two denominations.

The Approval

- The RBI, on the recommendation of its **Central Board**, sent the proposal to the government under **Section 25 of the RBI Act, 1934**.
- The proposal covered both the **1 billion-piece field trial** in each denomination and **regular issuance thereafter**.
- The reply came as a **written answer to a Lok Sabha question**.

Section 25 of the RBI Act, 1934 — The Legal Basis

- It provides that the **design, form and material** of banknotes shall be approved by the **Central Government** on the **recommendation of the RBI's Central Board**.
- This is why a change of substrate from paper to polymer requires **government approval**, not merely an RBI decision.

Why Polymer?

- **Longer lifespan:** the RBI cited **international studies** showing polymer notes last significantly longer than paper notes — typically **2.5 to 4 times**.
- **Lower replacement cost over time**, despite higher unit printing cost.
- **Better resistance to dirt, moisture and wear** — relevant for low-denomination notes, which circulate hardest and soil fastest.
- **Stronger security features**, including transparent windows that are difficult to counterfeit.
- **₹10 and ₹20 are the correct test denominations** precisely because they have the shortest life in circulation.

What Paper Notes Are Made Of?

- Indian "paper" banknotes are not wood-pulp paper — they are made from **cotton pulp and plant fibres**, giving greater durability and a distinctive feel.
- Polymer notes use a **biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP)** substrate.

Agriculture

1. The USDA's "Dairy: World Markets and Trade" Report

Source: [BusinessLine](#)

Context

The **USDA's "Dairy: World Markets and Trade"** report forecasts India's **cow's milk production to rise to 105.4 million tonnes in 2026**, from **103.2 mt in 2025**. India's **dairy herd is expanding**, with cows in milk expected to reach **62.5 million head — the highest among all countries tracked**.

Cow Milk vs Total Milk

- The USDA's **105.4 mt figure is cow's milk only**, which is why the report says India is **"second only to the European Union"**.
- India's **total milk production**, including **buffalo, goat and other species**, was **247.87 million tonnes in 2024–25** per the **Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2025**.
- India is the **world's largest producer of total milk** but the **second-largest producer of cow's milk** after the EU.
- **Buffalo milk is India's distinguishing feature** — no other major dairy nation depends on it at this scale,

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and it has higher fat content, which is why India dominates butter production.

Key Highlights:

- **India's Dairy Production**

- Milk production reached **247.87 million tonnes in 2024–25**, up **3.58%** from 2023–24 and about **69% higher** than in 2014–15.

- **Per Capita Availability**

- Milk availability increased to **485 g/day**, well above the **global average of about 322 g/day**.

- **Leading Milk-Producing States**

- **Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra** together account for **54.09%** of India's total milk production.

- **Economic Importance**

- India produces **nearly one-fourth of the world's milk**. The dairy sector contributes about **5% of the national economy** and provides livelihoods to **over 8 crore farmers**.

- **Global Dairy Outlook**

- **US** butter exports are projected to rise **40%** in 2026, **EU** exports by **10%**, while **New Zealand** is expected to achieve **record milk production of 22.5 million tonnes**.

- **Key Observation**

- Despite **Amul's** global expansion, the **USDA report** does **not project significant growth in India's dairy exports**, indicating India remains primarily a **domestic consumption-driven dairy market**.

Facts To Remember

1. PM Modi Forms Nandan Nilekani-Led Task Force for Exam Reforms

Prime Minister Narendra Modi constituted a six-member high-powered task force headed by Nandan Nilekani to recommend comprehensive reforms in India's examination system. The panel was formed following nationwide protests and the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak controversy to improve transparency, security, and credibility. Members include S. Somanath, Tapan Deka, V. Kamakoti, Anita Karwal, and Amrit Lal Meena. The task force will suggest technology-driven measures for conducting secure and trustworthy examinations.

2. BRICS Science Academies Forum 2026 Held at IIT Hyderabad

The 2nd BRICS Science Academies Forum was held at IIT Hyderabad on 22–23 July 2026 under the theme "**Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Development and Strengthening Global South Cooperation.**" India also hosted the 3rd BRICS Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction and the BRICS Ministers of Interior Meeting. BRICS CCI Women Empowerment released the WISE Whitepaper to enhance women's participation in science and innovation. India further organized the BRICS Network University Governing Board Meeting and Conference on Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

3. Sarnath Becomes India's 45th UNESCO World Heritage Site

The Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List during the 48th World Heritage Committee session in Busan, South Korea. It became India's 45th World Heritage Site and Uttar Pradesh's fourth UNESCO-recognised site. Sarnath was nominated by India in January 2025 after being on UNESCO's Tentative List since 1998. The inscription recognises its Outstanding Universal Value as the place where Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon.

4. President Droupadi Murmu Visits Moldova, North Macedonia and Romania

President Droupadi Murmu undertook a state visit to Moldova, North Macedonia, and Romania from 19–25 July 2026 to strengthen bilateral cooperation. India unveiled the 3Ts Roadmap (Trade, Technology and Talent) during the Moldova visit. She became the first Indian President to visit North Macedonia and inaugurated a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Skopje. In Romania, three MoUs were signed and 2028 was declared the India–Romania Year of Innovation.

5. VIYONA Gets Bharat Connect Approval for Digital Bill Payments

VIYONA Fintech received approval to operate as a Customer Operating Unit under Bharat Connect (formerly BBPS). The approval enables interoperable bill payments for electricity, water, gas, broadband, insurance, EMIs, education fees, and other services. Banks, NBFCs, fintech firms, and government organisations can integrate Bharat Connect services through its platform. The Hyderabad-based startup already holds NPCI certifications including UPI Switch, IMPS, BOU and eKYC Setu.

6. NSE Launches India's First Domestic Natural Gas Futures

The National Stock Exchange launched India's first domestic benchmark-based Natural Gas Futures contract from 27 July 2026. The cash-settled contract is linked to the Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) Gujarat (Dahej) hub price and trades under the symbol NATGASIND. It has a trading unit of 250 mmBtu and aims to help market participants manage gas price volatility. The initiative strengthens India's commodity derivatives market with a domestic pricing benchmark.

7. EIL and CSIR-IMMT Sign MoU for Critical Minerals Research

Engineers India Limited signed an MoU with CSIR-IMMT to collaborate on research and development in critical and strategic minerals. The partnership focuses on mineral processing, extractive metallurgy, technology scale-up, and commercial deployment projects. It also includes technical knowledge exchange and capacity-building initiatives. EIL additionally signed another MoU with the Directorate General of Maritime Administration for maritime infrastructure projects.

8. Vizhinjam Port Approved for Direct EXIM Operations

Vizhinjam International Seaport in Kerala received CBIC approval to commence Export–Import cargo operations from 18 August 2026. The notification designates the port as a Customs Port under the Customs Act, 1962, enabling direct international cargo handling. The project is being developed under a Public–Private Partnership by the Kerala Government and Adani Ports. The approval is expected to reduce dependence on foreign transshipment hubs and improve India's trade efficiency.

9. Pralhad Joshi Gets Additional Charge as Education Minister

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi was given additional charge as the Union Education Minister after Dharmendra Pradhan resigned over the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak controversy. President Droupadi Murmu accepted the resignation under Article 75(2) of the Constitution. Naresh Pal Gangwar became Secretary of Higher Education while T.K. Anil Kumar assumed charge of School Education and Literacy. The leadership change aims to restore confidence in India's education system.

10. SpaceX Starship Completes 13th Test Flight Successfully

SpaceX successfully completed the 13th integrated test flight of Starship from Starbase, Texas, deploying 20 Starlink Version 3 satellites. The mission included a successful re-entry and controlled splashdown in the Indian Ocean. It tested spacecraft systems, satellite deployment, and heat shield performance for future missions. NASA monitored the flight as part of preparations for Artemis lunar missions and future Mars exploration.

11. Kargil Vijay Diwas 2026 Observed on 26 July

India observed the 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas on 26 July 2026 to commemorate victory in the 1999 Kargil War through Operation Vijay. The day honours the courage and sacrifice of the Indian Armed Forces in defending the nation's sovereignty. The conflict began after Pakistani intrusions across the Line of Control in May 1999. The Indian Army and Air Force successfully recaptured the occupied positions through Operations Vijay and Safed Sagar.

12. International Day for Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems 2026

The International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem was observed on 26 July 2026 under UNESCO's initiative. The day promotes awareness about the ecological, climatic, and socio-economic importance of mangroves. It was proclaimed by UNESCO in 2015, with the first observance held in 2016. The occasion also commemorates environmental activist Hayhow Daniel Nanoto, who died during a mangrove restoration protest in 1998.

13. Himachal Pradesh Launches Mukhyamantri Machhuara Samman Nidhi Yojana

The Himachal Pradesh Government launched the Mukhyamantri Machhuara Samman Nidhi Yojana to support reservoir fishermen during the annual fishing ban. Eligible fishermen will receive a lump-sum financial assistance of ₹3,500 under the scheme. Around 3,700 fishing families across five major reservoirs are expected to benefit. The scheme has an estimated annual expenditure of ₹1.20 crore and will be monitored by the Directorate of Fisheries.

14. Odisha Signs AI Data Centre MoU with HCLTech and Sarvam AI

The Odisha Government signed MoUs with HCLTech and Sarvam AI to establish the state's first AI Data Centre at the Odisha Sovereign AI Park. The overall investment is ₹14,257 crore, with HCLTech investing around ₹730 crore in the AI facility. The centre will integrate high-performance computing with indigenous AI models for government and enterprise applications. Another MoU was signed to establish a Global Development Centre in Bhubaneswar, expected to generate around 5,000 jobs by 2028.

Test yourself on this day's news: c4scourses.in/daily-quiz/daily-current-affairs-quiz-28-july-2026/

DAY 23 OF 24

29 July 2026

Wednesday · 18 items · 1 topics

General 4 · Facts To Remember 14

Context

The **Union Minister of Panchayati Raj** launched the **Atmanirbhar Panchayat Programme** and the **SAMARTH Panchayat Portal**. The Programme helps **Gram Panchayats and Block Panchayats convert idle local assets into bankable, revenue-generating projects**.

Part A — Atmanirbhar Panchayat Programme

What It Is

- An initiative of the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**, anchored under the **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)**.
- Assists Gram and Block Panchayats in **identifying idle local assets and untapped opportunities** and converting them into **bankable, revenue-generating projects**.

Aim

- Build **sustainable Own Sources of Revenue (OSR)** for Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Reduce **fiscal dependency on central and state grants**.

Part B — SAMARTH Panchayat Portal

What It Is

- A **unified, configurable national digital platform** for **end-to-end management of OSR** for Gram Panchayats.

Aim

- **Digitise, streamline and standardise the complete OSR lifecycle**, improving fiscal transparency, tax collection efficiency and accountability in rural tax administration.

Features

- **End-to-end lifecycle management:** taxpayer registration, automated demand notice generation, online digital payment, receipt collection and real-time revenue monitoring.
- **Standardisation of local taxes:** property tax, user charges, trade licences and non-tax fees.
- **Track record:** already active in **Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh**, with **over 51 lakh taxpayers registered, demand notices worth ₹95 crore** generated and **more than ₹27 crore collected**.
- **Phased pan-India expansion:** onboarding underway in **Maharashtra, Mizoram, Assam, Haryana, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh**.

3. The PRAXIS Mission

Source: The Hindu

Context

NASA selected an early-stage mission concept called **PRAXIS** for its **NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC) 2026 Phase I** funding.

- **PRAXIS = Planetary Rings Autonomous EXploration with In-situ Sampling.**
- It is a spacecraft concept developed at NASA's **Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)** under **Dr B. Marco**

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- It would be the **first mission to physically sample planetary ring particles**, rather than observe them remotely.

What It Is

- Integrates **bio-inspired robotics, real-time artificial intelligence and lightweight sampling mechanisms** to interact directly with planetary rings.
- **Aim:** answer high-priority questions from the **Planetary Science Decadal Survey** — how planetary rings **originate**, how they **dynamically evolve**, and what ring particles are **composed of**.

Mission Timeline and Status

- **Phase I (current, 2026):** NIAC funding for **feasibility studies, numerical simulations and system design evaluations**.
- **Phase II (potential):** construction and testing of a **physical prototype**.
- **Operational horizon:** a concept-stage study; actual flight implementation targeted for future deep-space timelines.

About NIAC

- The **NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts** programme funds **early-stage, visionary, high-risk aerospace concepts** that could transform future missions.
- **Phase I:** ~9 months of feasibility study; **Phase II:** ~2 years of maturation; **Phase III:** strategic development toward mission readiness.
- Most concepts never fly; the programme's value lies in **de-risking radical ideas cheaply**.

India Angle

- India's planetary programme — **Chandrayaan-3 (2023)**, **Aditya-L1**, and the planned **Shukrayaan (Venus)** and **Mangalyaan-2** — increasingly requires **onboard autonomy** for the same reason: communication delay.
- Chandrayaan-3's **autonomous hazard detection and avoidance** during landing is a comparable capability.

4. The Mahanadi River and ONGC's First Deepwater Well

Source: TH

Context

ONGC commenced drilling its **first deepwater exploratory well, MN-DW18-1-H-D**, in the **Mahanadi Offshore Basin** on **25 July 2026**. It was **virtually spudded from New Delhi by Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri**. It marks the start of India's deepwater programme under the **Samudra Manthan Mission (National Deep Water Exploration Mission)**.

Part A — The Mahanadi River**What It Is**

- "**Mahanadi**" means "**Great River**" in Sanskrit — one of the major **peninsular river systems** of east-central India.
- Renowned for its **large silt-depositing capacity** and extensive **deltaic network** along the Bay of Bengal.
- It is the **largest river of Odisha**.

Origin and Course

- **Origin:** rises in the **Sihawa hill range, Dhamtari district, Chhattisgarh**.

- Flows **northward** draining the eastern Chhattisgarh plain.
- Turns **eastward into Odisha**.
- **Pierces the Eastern Ghats through a forested gorge** — the **Satkosia Gorge**, itself a Tiger Reserve.
- Empties into the **Bay of Bengal at False Point, near Paradip**.
- **States covered: Chhattisgarh and Odisha**; the basin extends into small portions of **Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Maharashtra**.

Tributaries

Left Bank	Right Bank
Seonath (Shivnath) — longest tributary	Jonk
Hasdeo	Ong
Mand	Tel — largest right-bank tributary
Ib	

Part B — The Offshore Basin and Samudra Manthan

Why the Basin Is Hydrocarbon-Rich

- The river's historical discharge deposited **thick sedimentary layers** offshore — the essential precondition for hydrocarbon formation.
- The Mahanadi Basin is one of India's **Category II/III sedimentary basins** moving toward proven commercial production.

The Samudra Manthan Mission

- Follows **PM Narendra Modi's Independence Day address of 15 August 2025**, calling for exploration of India's untapped offshore reserves.
- The Government has opened nearly **one million sq km** of previously restricted offshore areas for exploration.

ONGC's Institutional Response

- Launched the **Deepwater Exploration Mission Centre (DeepX)** in **Mumbai on 5 January 2026**.
- DeepX integrates geoscientific expertise, advanced interpretation, specialised training and global collaboration under a "**One Company, One Data**" philosophy.
- Builds on ONGC's **Utkal and Konark** discoveries in the Mahanadi Offshore Basin.
- **MN-DW18-1-H-D is the first of four planned deepwater wells** in the basin.

5. DWEEPTI Yojana — India's First Women-Led Distributed Renewable Energy Policy

Source: The New Indian Express

Context

Chhattisgarh has launched the **DWEEPTI Yojana — Decentralised Women Empowerment on Energy and Policy for Transformative Inclusion**. It makes Chhattisgarh the **first Indian state to adopt a women-led distributed renewable energy policy**. It integrates **women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** into the distributed solar ecosystem as installers, managers and entrepreneurs.

What It Is

- An initiative of the **Chhattisgarh Panchayat and Rural Development Department**.
- Developed in collaboration with **Transform Rural India (TRI)** under the **Green Economy Transition Mission**.
- Enables SHG women to **install, manage and promote rooftop solar systems**.

Aim

- Promote **women-led clean energy entrepreneurship**.
- Expand **decentralised renewable energy** adoption.
- Create **sustainable livelihood opportunities**.
- Support **rural energy self-reliance**.

Key Features

- **Solar Didi Cadre**
 - **SHG women** are trained as **Solar Didis** to work as **solar vendors, technicians, installers, managers, and entrepreneurs**, making them active participants in the rural solar value chain.
- **Integration with PM Surya Ghar Yojana**
 - **Cluster Level Federations (CLFs)** are registered as **authorised vendors** under the **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana**, enabling direct access to subsidy-linked rooftop solar projects.
- **Affordable Financing**
 - SHG members receive **flexible loans** for rooftop solar installations, leveraging the **SHG-Bank Linkage Programme** to overcome high upfront costs.
- **Statewide Expansion**
 - After a successful **pilot in Kabirdham district**, the initiative will be **expanded across all districts of Chhattisgarh**.

About PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

- Launched in **February 2024** with an outlay of about **₹75,021 crore**.
- Targets **1 crore households** with rooftop solar, providing up to **300 units of free electricity per month**.
- **Central Financial Assistance:** 60% of system cost up to 2 kW, and 40% of additional cost for 2–3 kW, capped at 3 kW.
- Implemented by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**, with a **National Portal** for applications and vendor selection.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the DWEEPTI Yojana, consider the following statements:

1. It has been launched by Chhattisgarh, making it the first Indian state to adopt a women-led distributed renewable energy policy.
2. It trains Self-Help Group members as "Solar Didis" to work as solar vendors, technicians, installers and entrepreneurs.
3. Cluster Level Federations are registered as authorised vendors under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.
4. It was piloted in the Bastar district before statewide expansion.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to related schemes and concepts, consider the following statements:

1. The PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana provides for up to 300 units of free electricity per month to participating households.
2. The Lakhpati Didi initiative aims to enable Self-Help Group women to earn an annual household income of at least ₹1 lakh.
3. In the rural livelihoods architecture, Cluster Level Federations are formed above Village Organisations, which are formed above Self-Help Groups.

4. Distributed renewable energy refers to large, centralised generation plants connected to the interstate transmission system.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statements 1, 2, 3 are correct; Statement 4 is wrong because the scheme was piloted in **Kabirdham district**, not Bastar.
2. **(c)** — Statements 1, 2, 3 are correct; Statement 4 is wrong because **distributed renewable energy** refers to **small-scale generation at or near the point of consumption**, such as rooftop solar and mini-grids — the opposite of large centralised plants.

6. India Becomes World's Second-Largest Supplier of Seafarers

Source: News on Air

Context

The **BIMCO–ICS Seafarer Workforce Report 2026** ranks India the **world's second-largest supplier of seafarers**, with a **12.16% share** of the global seafaring workforce, behind only the **Philippines**. India contributes **311,936 maritime professionals**, up from **fifth place with just 5.2% in 2015**. A seafarer is a person who works on or travels regularly by sea, such as a sailor, mariner, or crew member.

The Report

- Published jointly by **BIMCO** (Baltic and International Maritime Council) and the **ICS** (International Chamber of Shipping).
- Released **every five years** and regarded by the global maritime industry as the **most authoritative assessment of seafarer supply and demand**.

The Numbers at a Glance

Item	Figure
Report	BIMCO–ICS Seafarer Workforce Report 2026 (published every 5 years)
India's rank	2nd , behind the Philippines
Total Indian seafarers	311,936
India's global share	12.16%

India's Climb

Year	Share	Rank
2015	5.2%	5th (behind China, Philippines, Indonesia, Russia)
2021	6%	5th
2026	12.16%	2nd (ahead of China, Russia, Indonesia)

- India has **overtaken China**; its share has **more than doubled in a decade**.
- Ranked ahead of **China, the Russian Federation and Indonesia**.

Mission 20 Per Cent

- **Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal**: the government is pursuing **"Mission 20%"** — raising India's share from **12.16% to 20%**.
- "Mission 20% is our next national milestone."
- Aligned with **Maritime India Vision 2030** and **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**.

Facts To Remember

1. Maharashtra Becomes First State Eligible for Second RKVY Installment

Maharashtra became the first state to qualify for the second installment under the **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)** after utilising over **75%** of the first installment funds. The **Government of India** had released **₹335 crore**, of which nearly **₹260 crore** has been utilised. The state will now receive the second installment of **₹335 crore**. RKVY is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)** that supports state-specific agricultural development.

2. MoES Celebrates 20th Foundation Day with New Scientific Initiatives

The **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** celebrated its **20th Foundation Day** on **27 July 2026** at Prithvi Bhawan, New Delhi. It launched **13 IMD Centres of Excellence**, **IMD NOVA**, the **WINGS app**, the **National Doppler Weather Radar Reflectivity Mosaic**, and the **Strong Motion Atlas of India**. The ministry also upgraded the **Thiruvananthapuram Cyclone Warning Centre** into an **Area Cyclone Warning Centre (ACWC)**. These initiatives strengthen weather forecasting, seismology, and ocean science.

3. MoPR Launches Atmanirbhar Panchayat Programme and SAMARTH Portal

The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)** launched the **Atmanirbhar Panchayat Programme**, **SAMARTH Panchayat Portal**, and **Model Own Source Revenue (OSR) Rules**. The programme helps Panchayats generate sustainable local revenue and achieve financial self-reliance. **SAMARTH** is India's first unified digital platform for Panchayat revenue management. The initiative supports stronger governance under **Viksit Bharat @2047**.

4. India to Use Producer Price Index for GDP Deflation

The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** announced the use of the **Producer Price Index (PPI)** as the GDP deflator in place of the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** wherever applicable. The revised GDP series adopts **2022–23** as the base year and follows the **double deflation** method. The new methodology improves the accuracy of real GDP estimates. It will be implemented from the **April–June quarter of 2026–27**.

5. Government Forms Task Force for Toy Sector Growth

Union Minister **Piyush Goyal** announced a **Task Force** to help India achieve a **5% share of the global toy market by 2032**. The initiative focuses on manufacturing, innovation, exports, skill development, and global value chains. A **Toy Sector Playbook** was also launched for **MSMEs**, startups, and manufacturers. India currently has over **21,000 MSMEs**, **770+ startups**, **50 toy clusters**, and **1,800+ BIS licensees**.

6. Government Approves Anhydrous Ammonia Fertilizer

The **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** approved the agricultural use of **Anhydrous Ammonia** fertilizer for **three years** under the **Fertiliser Control Order, 1985**. The fertilizer contains a minimum of **82% nitrogen**, improving fertilizer-use efficiency. The decision aims to reduce India's dependence on imported urea. A **150 TPD Green Urea** pilot plant will also be developed by **NETRA** in **Andhra Pradesh**.

7. Tourism Ministry Signs MoU with Air India

The **Ministry of Tourism** signed a **two-year MoU** with **Air India** to promote the **Incredible India** brand globally. The partnership includes digital campaigns, inflight promotions, roadshows, and tourism exhibitions. It also supports collaborations with travel trade partners and tour operators. The initiative aims to increase inbound tourism and position India as a global travel hub.

8. RBI to Conduct Polymer Currency Note Field Trials

The **Government of India** approved the **RBI's** proposal to conduct field trials of **one billion polymer notes each** in ₹10 and ₹20 denominations. The trials will evaluate durability, security features, and public acceptance under different conditions. Polymer notes will serve as an additional option and will not immediately replace paper notes. The proposal was made under **Section 25 of the RBI Act, 1934**.

9. Axis Finance Launches Drishti Digital Lending Platform

Axis Finance launched **Drishti**, an in-house **Business Rules Engine (BRE)** for retail and **MSME** lending. The platform automates credit assessment using analytics, underwriting workflows, and statistical scorecards. It has been deployed for **Personal Loans, Business Loans, Loan Against Property, and Home Loans**. The platform improves lending speed, consistency, and risk management.

10. OmniCard Launches India's First Flexi Benefits Basket on UPI

OmniCard launched India's first **Flexi Benefits Basket** on the **UPI** platform for tax-efficient employee benefits. The digital wallet supports spending across meals, fuel, telecom, books, gadgets, and other eligible categories. It can be used at nearly **60 million UPI merchants** using **Merchant Category Code (MCC)** controls. The platform is built on an **RBI-licensed Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI)**.

11. Edelweiss Launches India's First REIT-Oriented Index Fund

Edelweiss Mutual Fund launched the **Edelweiss Nifty REITs & Realty Index Fund**, India's first **REIT-focused** passive index fund. The fund tracks the **Nifty REITs & Realty Total Return Index (TRI)** with around **60% allocation to REITs** and **40% to real estate companies**. The launch follows **SEBI's** reclassification of **REITs** as equity instruments from **1 January 2026**. The fund offers diversified exposure to India's listed real estate sector.

12. NASA Proposes AI-Powered PRAXIS Mission for Saturn

NASA proposed the **PRAXIS** mission under the **NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC) 2026** programme. The AI-powered mission aims to directly collect and analyse particles from **Saturn's rings** for the first time. It will study the origin, age, and evolution of planetary ring systems. The technology could also support future missions to **Uranus, Neptune**, and other ring-bearing bodies.

13. CRPF Foundation Day 2026 Observed on 27 July

India observed the **88th CRPF Foundation Day** on **27 July 2026**, marking the establishment of the force in **1939**. It was originally formed as the **Crown Representative's Police** and renamed the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** in **1949**. The day honours the force's contribution to internal security, disaster response, and counter-insurgency. **CRPF** is India's largest **Central Armed Police Force (CAPF)**.

14. World Hepatitis Day 2026 Observed on 28 July

World Hepatitis Day was observed on **28 July 2026** with the theme "**Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down.**" The day promotes awareness, prevention, and treatment of viral hepatitis to achieve elimination by **2030**. It commemorates the birth anniversary of **Dr. Baruch Samuel Blumberg**, who discovered the **Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)**. The observance was officially recognised by the **World Health Assembly (WHA)** in **2010**.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 29 JULY 2026

1. Launched in **February 2024** with an outlay of about **₹75,021 crore**. DWEEPTI Yojana — India's First Women-Led Distri...
2. Launched the **Deepwater Exploration Mission Centre (DeepX)** in **Mumbai on 5 January 2026**. The Mahanadi River and ONGC's First Deepwater W...
3. **Phase I:** ~9 months of feasibility study; **Phase II:** ~2 years of maturation; **Phase III:** strategic development toward mission readiness. The PRAXIS Mission
4. **Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal:** the government is pursuing **"Mission 20%"** — raising India's share from **12.16% to 20%**. India Becomes World's Second-Largest Supplier o...

Now test yourself: c4scourses.in/daily-quiz/daily-current-affairs-quiz-29-july-2026/

DAY 24 OF 24

30 July 2026

Thursday · 25 items · 3 topics

General 4 · Banking and Finance 1 · Agriculture 3 · Facts To Remember 17

Context

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar launched **SHANTI — Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity** — on **13 July 2026** at UN Headquarters, formally opening India's campaign for a **non-permanent UNSC seat for 2028–29**. The **vote is scheduled for June 2027**, during the **81st session of the UN General Assembly**. The initiative also reinforces India's long-standing demand for a **permanent seat** and for **UNSC reform and expansion**.

What SHANTI Stands For

- **Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity.**
- Jaishankar's stated vision: a **secure, peaceful and equitable world** where the **voice of the Global South is heard in equal measure**; where **peacekeeping is ready for contemporary and future challenges**; and where **multilateralism reflects contemporary realities** rather than "remaining a bystander".
- India will advocate **better-equipped, technologically enabled and realistically mandated peacekeeping operations**, while championing the **Women, Peace and Security** agenda.
- He noted **Indian-funded development projects are being implemented in 79 countries**.

What is the UNSC?

The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** is one of the **six principal organs** of the United Nations. It has the **primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security**. It can adopt **legally binding resolutions** that all UN member states are expected to follow.

Establishment

- Established on **24 October 1945** under the **UN Charter**.
- Headquarters: United Nations Headquarters.
- Created after World War II to prevent future global conflicts.

Composition

The UNSC has **15 members**:

- **5 Permanent Members (P5):**
 - China
 - France
 - Russia
 - United Kingdom
 - United States
- **10 Non-Permanent Members**
 - Elected by the **UN General Assembly**.
 - Serve **2-year terms**.
 - Chosen based on **regional representation**.
 - **Five members retire each year**, and elections are held annually.

Non-Permanent vs Permanent

- **Non-permanent stints** allow India to build coalitions, shape agendas and demonstrate capability — but carry **no veto** and last only two years.
- **Permanent membership** would secure a **durable, veto-backed voice** in decisions on international peace, sanctions and military authorisations.
- The two are complementary: repeated non-permanent terms build the case for permanence.

2. Madanapalle Municipality Waste Management Model

Source: PIB

Context

Madanapalle Municipality, Andhra Pradesh, is emerging as a model **Zero Waste City** under **Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban (SBM–U) 2.0**. It applies an **integrated scientific solid waste management model** built on source segregation, decentralised processing and resource recovery. It also undertakes **legacy waste remediation** through bio-mining to reclaim landfill land.

Key Features

- **Scientific Waste Segregation at Source**
 - Waste is segregated into **biodegradable, non-biodegradable, and upcycling categories**. Source segregation, mandated under the **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016**, is essential for efficient waste processing.
- **Decentralised Waste Processing**
 - **Wet waste** is treated through **composting and vermicomposting**, while **dry waste** is processed at **Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs)**. Decentralised processing reduces transport costs, emissions, and dependence on large centralised plants.
- **Resource Recovery & Circular Economy**
 - **Non-recyclable waste** is converted into **Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF)** for cement plants, while **RRR Centres** promote **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle**, supporting a circular economy.
- **Legacy Waste Remediation**
 - **Bio-mining and bio-remediation** are used to clear old dumpsites, recover usable materials, and convert reclaimed land into **green spaces and productive public assets**.

About SBM–Urban 2.0

- Launched on **1 October 2021** for five years, extended, with an outlay of about **₹1.41 lakh crore**.
- **Vision: "Garbage Free Cities"** — building on SBM–U 1.0 (2014), which focused on **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** status.
- **Key components:** sustainable sanitation (ODF+, ODF++, Water+), **complete solid waste management, remediation of all legacy dumpsites**, used water management in cities under 1 lakh population, and **air quality improvement** through dust and construction waste control.
- **Star Rating Protocol for Garbage Free Cities** — 1-star to 7-star certification.
- **Swachh Survekshan** — the annual cleanliness survey and ranking of cities, the world's largest such exercise, which creates competitive pressure among urban local bodies.

3. The Fields Medal 2026

Source: The Hindu

Context

The **2026 Fields Medal** — mathematics' highest honour — was awarded on **23 July 2026** at the **International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM) in Philadelphia, USA**.

What It Is

- Often called the "**Nobel Prize of Mathematics**", recognising **outstanding mathematical achievement in existing work and the promise of future achievement**.
- Awarded by the **International Mathematical Union (IMU)** every four years at the ICM.
- **Established in 1936** from a trust fund created by Canadian mathematician **John Charles Fields** at the **University of Toronto**.

Key Highlights:

- Recipients: **Yu Deng, John Pardon, Jacob Tsimerman and Hong Wang**.
- **Hong Wang** made history as only the **third woman in the medal's 90-year history** to receive it.
- **Wang and Deng** became the **first Chinese-born recipients since Shing-Tung Yau in 1982** — a gap of 44 years — and the first two to win simultaneously.

Laureate	Institution	Key Contribution
Yu Deng	University of Chicago	Solved a key part of Hilbert's Sixth Problem by deriving the Boltzmann equation , linking microscopic particle dynamics with macroscopic fluid behaviour.
John Pardon	Stony Brook University / Simons Center	Solved the MNOP Conjecture in symplectic geometry, advancing the mathematics of Calabi-Yau 3-folds used in superstring theory.
Hong Wang	NYU Courant Institute & IHES	Solved the three-dimensional Kakeya Conjecture with Joshua Zahl; became the third woman to receive the Fields Medal .
Jacob Tsimerman	University of Toronto	Made landmark contributions to algebraic geometry and number theory , proving the Griffiths and André-Oort Conjectures .

4. The e-Zero FIR System for Cybercrime

Source: News on Air

Context

Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar informed Parliament that the **e-Zero FIR system** for cybercrime has been operationalised across **18 States and Union Territories**.

What It Is

- A **digital, borderless law enforcement framework** that automatically generates a First Information Report for reported **cyber financial crimes**, irrespective of police jurisdiction.
- **Nodal body:** the **Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C)** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

Legal Basis

- Rests on **Section 173(1) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023**, which permits information about a **cognizable offence to be given electronically**, and **irrespective of the area** where the offence is committed.
- This is the provision that replaced **Section 154 of the CrPC, 1973**, and it is what made e-Zero FIR legally possible — a rare case of a **new criminal procedure code directly enabling a technology solution**.

System Integration — Three Pillars

1. **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP)** and **Helpline 1930**
2. **State/UT e-Crime Police Stations**
3. **NCRB's Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS)**

Aim

- Accelerate law enforcement action against cybercriminals.

- **Eliminate jurisdictional delays** in filing complaints.
- Enable **instant freezing of defrauded funds**.
- Facilitate **swift restoration of lost money** to victims.

5. DAANVEER Initiative

Source: PIB

Context

DAANVEER, a citizen participation initiative to strengthen the digital infrastructure of Gram Panchayats, was launched by **Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj**, in New Delhi. It enables citizens and organisations to **voluntarily contribute computers** to Gram Panchayats through the **Meri Panchayat mobile application**.

What It Is

- A **transparent, end-to-end digital and verifiable platform** enabling contributions towards **identified technology and infrastructure needs** of Gram Panchayats.
- Designed not merely to close the **immediate computer gap**, but to evolve into a **long-term, citizen-powered ecosystem** for strengthening local institutions.
- **Institutionalises the spirit of voluntarism** by providing a structured, accountable and seamless mechanism.

How It Works — The Process

1. Donor accesses DAANVEER through the **Meri Panchayat app**.
2. The app integrates with the **DigiHaat marketplace**, offering **pre-approved computer bundles** mapped to **State-specific technical specifications**.
3. **Delivery details are automatically populated**, eliminating additional paperwork.
4. Donors can **track their contribution from dispatch to installation**.
5. Donors receive a **digital certificate of appreciation**.

The Four Design Features That Make It Credible

- **Verified institutional needs** — panchayats' requirements are identified and validated, not self-declared by donors.
- **Standardised contribution options** — pre-approved bundles prevent the dumping of obsolete or mismatched equipment.
- **End-to-end digital tracking** — the donor sees where the contribution goes.
- **Direct delivery** — no intermediary handling of cash or goods.

The Existing Digital Governance Ecosystem It Builds On

- **e-GramSwaraj** — a single platform for panchayat planning, budgeting, accounting and online payments.
- **Meri Panchayat** — the citizen-facing mobile app providing information on panchayat representatives, funds, works and services.
- **Sabha Saar** — for recording and disseminating Gram Sabha proceedings.
- **AuditOnline** — for online audit of panchayat accounts.
- **Gram Manchitra** — a GIS-based spatial planning application for panchayat development plans.

Banking and Finance

1. IRDAI Reforms

Source: The Hindu

Context

IRDAI, at its Authority meeting on **Tuesday, 28 July 2026**, approved several reforms including the **Policyholders' Education and Protection Fund (PEPF) Regulations**. It introduced **perpetual registration with an annual fee regime** for intermediaries, replacing periodic renewals. It approved the **Manner and Procedure for Imposition of Penalties Regulations, 2026**.

Key Reforms

Reform	Key Features & Significance
Policyholders' Education and Protection Fund (PEPF)	Created under Section 16A of the IRDAI Act, 1999 (inserted by the SBSR Act, 2025) to promote insurance awareness, strengthen grievance redressal, improve technology-driven services, and facilitate recovery of unclaimed insurance amounts . IRDAI approved an initial corpus of ₹800 crore .
Perpetual Registration	Replaces periodic licence renewal of insurance intermediaries with perpetual registration supported by an annual fee , reducing compliance burden and shifting regulation to continuous supervision .
Salesperson Tagging	Requires every insurance proposal and policy to be linked to an authorised salesperson , improving accountability, traceability, and reducing mis-selling .
Penalties Regulations, 2026	Introduces a transparent framework for imposition of penalties under insurance laws, specifying procedures, penalty computation, and appeal mechanisms.
New General Insurer	ProTec General Insurance received registration, becoming the fourth new general insurer approved since January 2026 , reflecting increased competition in the sector.

Practice MCQs

Q1. With reference to the recent IRDAI reforms, consider the following statements:

1. The Policyholders' Education and Protection Fund is intended to promote insurance awareness, strengthen grievance redressal and facilitate recovery of unclaimed insurance amounts.
2. IRDAI has replaced periodic renewal of intermediary registrations with perpetual registration backed by an annual fee regime.
3. IRDAI has mandated the tagging of authorised salespersons to every insurance proposal and policy.
4. IRDAI granted registration to ProTec General Insurance, the first new insurer registration since 2020.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Q2. With reference to insurance regulation in India, consider the following statements:

1. IRDAI is a statutory body established under the IRDA Act, 1999, with its headquarters in Hyderabad.
2. The Policyholders' Education and Protection Fund has been constituted under a provision inserted into the IRDAI Act, 1999.
3. Life Insurance Corporation of India, The New India Assurance Company and General Insurance Corporation of India have been designated as Domestic Systemically Important Insurers.
4. The Depositor Education and Awareness Fund, which holds unclaimed bank deposits, is administered by IRDAI.

How many of the above statements are correct? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four (e) None

Answer Key

1. **(c)** — Statements 1, 2, 3 are correct; Statement 4 is wrong because ProTec General Insurance is the

fourth registration since January 2026, not the first since 2020.

2. (c) — Statements 1, 2, 3 are correct; Statement 4 is wrong because the **Depositor Education and Awareness Fund is administered by the Reserve Bank of India** under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 — the insurance analogue is the PEPF under IRDAI.

Agriculture

1. Fertiliser Industry Seeks Mid-Season Hike in Nutrient Based Subsidy

Source: BS

Context

Fertiliser companies have urged the Centre to increase **Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS)** rates for **Kharif 2026**. The demand comes after the **West Asia conflict** sharply increased the cost of imported raw materials like **ammonia** and **sulphur**.

Why is the Industry Demanding a Higher Subsidy?

- Raw material prices have risen significantly.
- Retail fertiliser prices cannot be increased beyond a limit.
- Without higher subsidies, companies may reduce production of **NP and NPKS fertilisers**.

What is the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme?

- Launched on **1 April 2010**.
- Applicable to **Phosphatic (P) and Potassic (K)** fertilisers.
- Government provides subsidy based on the nutrient content of **Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), Potassium (K), and Sulphur (S)**.
- Subsidy is paid directly to fertiliser companies.

Key Issues

- NBS rates are revised only **twice a year**, making it difficult to respond to sudden global price shocks.
- **Urea is not covered under NBS** and remains heavily subsidised, leading to excessive nitrogen use.
- India depends heavily on imports of **DAP, MOP, ammonia, sulphur, and rock phosphate**, making it vulnerable to global disruptions.

Government Initiatives

- **PM-PRANAM**: Encourages states to reduce chemical fertiliser use.
- **Nano Urea & Nano DAP**: Aim to reduce fertiliser imports.
- **One Nation One Fertiliser (Bharat Brand)**: Common branding for subsidised fertilisers.
- **Soil Health Card Scheme**: Promotes balanced nutrient application.

Key Terms

- **NBS**: Subsidy based on nutrient content (N, P, K, S).
- **DAP**: Fertiliser containing **18% Nitrogen** and **46% Phosphorus**.
- **MOP**: Main potash fertiliser; India imports **100%** of its requirement.
- **Balanced Fertilisation**: Recommended **N:P:K ratio is 4:2:1**.
- **Landed Cost**: Total import cost, including freight, insurance, and duties.

2. Research for Resilience – The Case for Agricultural R&D Funding

Source: BS

Context

According to **ICAR**, agricultural research and technology contributed nearly **one-third of the increase in the value of agricultural output (2024–25)**. Experts argue that future agricultural growth should come from **higher productivity, innovation, and diversification**, rather than expanding cultivated land.

Key Highlights

- Every **₹1 invested in agricultural research** generates an estimated **₹13.85** in returns.
- Every **₹1 invested in agricultural extension** generates **₹7.40**.
- **Agricultural Research & Education Budget (2026–27): ₹9,266 crore** (up from **₹4,836 crore** in 2014–15).
- **386 improved crop varieties** were released in 2025:
 - **94% climate-resilient**
 - **29 biofortified varieties**

Key Concerns

- Around **73% of agricultural expenditure** is spent on **subsidies and welfare schemes**, leaving limited resources for research.
- India's **R&D expenditure is only 0.6–0.7% of GDP**, lower than many major economies.
- Agriculture faces growing challenges:
 - Shrinking landholdings
 - Soil degradation and nutrient imbalance
 - Groundwater depletion
 - Climate change and erratic monsoons
 - Increasing pest and disease outbreaks

Why Agricultural R&D is Important

- Develops **climate-resilient and high-yielding crop varieties**.
- Improves **soil health, water-use efficiency, and resource conservation**.
- Promotes diversification into **horticulture, livestock, and fisheries**, which offer higher farmer incomes.
- Strengthens **food security**, enhances climate resilience, and supports sustainable agricultural growth.

Way Forward

- Increase and ensure stable funding for agricultural research.
- Strengthen agricultural extension services for faster technology adoption.
- Promote collaboration between **ICAR, universities, startups, and the private sector**.
- Encourage innovation in precision farming, biotechnology, and digital agriculture.

Key Terms

- **ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research)**: Apex body for agricultural research and education in India.
- **Agricultural R&D**: Research aimed at improving crop productivity, sustainability, and farmers' income.
- **Agricultural Extension**: Transfer of scientific knowledge and modern farming practices to farmers.
- **Climate-Resilient Varieties**: Crop varieties resistant to drought, heat, floods, and pests.
- **Biofortified Crops**: Crops enriched with essential nutrients such as iron, zinc, and vitamin A.
- **GERD (Gross Expenditure on R&D)**: Total national expenditure on research as a share of GDP.
- **ANRF (Anusandhan National Research Foundation)**: Established under the **ANRF Act, 2023** to strengthen research and innovation across Indian institutions.

3. MoRD–PCI India MoU for Women–Led Enterprises through Public Procurement

Source: PIB

Context

The **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**, through **DAY–NRLM**, signed a **3-year (2026–29) Non-Financial MoU** with **Project Concern International (PCI) India**. The partnership aims to strengthen **Women–Led Enterprises (WLEs)**, especially **Self–Help Group (SHG)** enterprises, by improving their access to **government procurement and markets**.

Key Features

- Establishment of a **National Resource Cell (NRC)** within DAY–NRLM with technical support from PCI India.
- **Development of:**
 - Enterprise incubation frameworks
 - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
 - Capacity–building modules
- **Training SHGs on:**
 - Government e–Marketplace (GeM) onboarding
 - Tender participation
 - Quality standards and documentation
 - Procurement compliance
- Promotes **sustainable enterprises** through renewable energy and eco–friendly production practices.

Initial Focus States (2026–27)

- Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

Why Public Procurement Matters

- Government is India's **largest buyer** of goods and services.
- Government contracts provide **assured demand, stable income, and market access** for SHG enterprises.
- Under the **Public Procurement Policy for MSEs, 2012:**
 - **25%** of annual procurement must be from MSEs.
 - **3%** is reserved for **women–owned MSEs**.
 - **4%** is reserved for **SC/ST–owned MSEs**.

Challenges Faced by SHGs

- Difficulty in meeting documentation and compliance requirements.
- Lack of quality certification and tender awareness.
- Limited working capital and delayed government payments.
- Inability to fulfil large procurement orders individually.

DAY–NRLM & Lakhpati Didi

- **DAY–NRLM** has mobilised over **10 crore rural women** into SHGs.
- **Lakhpati Didi** aims to create women with an annual household income of **₹1 lakh or more**.
- Target increased to **6 crore Lakhpati Didis by 2029–30**.
- **Budget 2026–27:** ₹17,280 crore allocated to DAY–NRLM.

Key Terms

- **DAY–NRLM:** Flagship rural livelihoods mission that promotes SHGs and women–led enterprises.

- **SHG (Self-Help Group):** A group of 10–20 women who save, lend, and undertake livelihood activities.
- **GeM (Government e-Marketplace):** Online government procurement portal that includes the **Womaniya** initiative for women entrepreneurs.
- **Non-Financial MoU:** Partnership involving technical support without transfer of funds.
- **Enterprise Incubation:** Mentoring and support to help new businesses become sustainable.
- **Market Linkage:** Connecting producers with reliable buyers to ensure regular sales.
- **SHE-Mart:** Community-owned retail outlets under **Lakshpati Didi 2.0** for marketing SHG products.

Facts To Remember

1. President Murmu Launches New Initiatives to Mark Four Years in Office

President **Droupadi Murmu** launched **multiple citizen-centric initiatives** at **Rashtrapati Bhavan** to mark **four years of her Presidency**, while **Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan** released **five commemorative books** highlighting her tenure. Key initiatives include **e-Audio Guide, e-Upahar (3rd Edition), Bachpan 'Bal Parisar', RAAHI (Rashtrapati Bhavan Access and Heritage Interconnector), Net Zero Energy Strategy**, and **infrastructure development projects**.

2. Delhi Tops e-Zero FIR Registrations for Cyber Financial Fraud

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** informed Parliament that over **12,000 e-Zero FIRs** for **cyber financial fraud** were registered across **18 States and UTs** in **2025**, with **Delhi (6,115)** recording the highest number, followed by **Chandigarh (4,174)**. Launched in **May 2025**, the **e-Zero FIR** system allows victims to report fraud through the **1930 helpline** or **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP)**, after which complaints must be converted into a regular FIR within **three days**.

3. Tripura Signs Three MoUs with NSE

The **Government of Tripura** signed **three MoUs** with the **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** to promote **financial literacy, skill development, entrepreneurship, and investment awareness**. The collaboration covers **investor awareness programmes, banking and capital market training, certification, and industry engagement**, with **NSE funding the programme** and the **State Government providing training infrastructure**.

4. CUK Signs MoU with Indian Navy

The **Central University of Kerala (CUK)** signed an **MoU** with the **Indian Navy (IN)** to strengthen **maritime studies, defence research, innovation, and strategic knowledge development**. The partnership focuses on **AI, cybersecurity, ocean sciences, maritime technologies, environmental sustainability, logistics, and interdisciplinary research**, while promoting **industry-academia collaboration**.

5. IISc to Host New Telecom Centre of Excellence

The **Foundation for Science Innovation and Development (FSID), C-DOT**, and the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru** signed an agreement to establish a **Centre of Excellence (CoE)** for **advanced telecom research**. The CoE will focus on **5G, 6G, AI, cybersecurity, quantum communication, prototype development, IP creation, and industry-academia collaboration**, becoming **C-DOT's fifth Centre of Excellence**.

6. India Becomes World's Second-Largest Supplier of Seafarers

According to the **BIMCO-ICS Seafarer Workforce Report 2026**, **India** became the **world's second-largest supplier of seafarers** with **311,936 professionals**, accounting for **12.16%** of the global workforce, behind the

Philippines. India contributes **140,718 officers** and **171,218 ratings**, reflecting rapid growth from **fifth position in 2015** to **second in 2026**.

7. ADB Approves USD 850 Million for Rooftop Solar

The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** approved a **USD 850 million** loan under **Subprogram 2** of the **Accelerating Affordable and Inclusive Rooftop Solar Systems Development Program** to support the **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSG-MBY)**. The funding aims to help India achieve **30 GW rooftop solar capacity by FY27**, reduce **28.8 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions**, and expand access to affordable solar energy.

8. Open Secure AI Alliance Launched

NVIDIA, Microsoft, IBM, and over **35 technology companies** launched the **Open Secure AI Alliance (OSAA)** to strengthen the **security, transparency, and resilience of AI systems**. The alliance promotes **secure-by-design AI, common cybersecurity standards, information sharing on AI threats**, and **industry-wide collaboration** following recent AI-related cyber incidents.

9. Satya Pal Kumar Appointed Director of FIU-IND

The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** appointed **Satya Pal Kumar**, a **2005-batch IRS officer**, as the **Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND)** for a **five-year term**. He succeeds **Pankaj Kumar Mishra**, and will lead efforts to strengthen India's framework against **money laundering, terror financing, and suspicious financial transactions**.

10. CCI Clears Go Digit Merger

The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved the merger of **Go Digit Infoworks Services Pvt. Ltd.** with **Go Digit General Insurance Ltd. (GDGIL)**. The merger removes the **holding company structure**, allows shareholders to hold shares **directly in the insurance company**, and becomes the **first such merger under the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Act, 2025**.

11. New Fungus Species Discovered in Maharashtra

Researchers discovered a new **polypore fungus** species named **Microporellus kolhapurensis** in **Kolhapur district, Maharashtra**, with the findings published in **Nelumbo**, the journal of the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)**. The discovery adds to the **fungal biodiversity of the Western Ghats**, becoming only the **second recorded species** of the genus in Maharashtra.

12. World Nature Conservation Day – 28 July

World Nature Conservation Day is observed annually on **28 July** to promote the **conservation of natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems**. The observance traces its origins to the **1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment** and supports **SDGs 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water), and 15 (Life on Land)**.

13. Delhi Approves 'Delhi Lakshmi Yojana'

The **Delhi Government** approved the **Delhi Lakshmi Yojana**, providing **₹2,500 per month** to eligible women with a **₹5,110 crore** budget for **2026–27**. The scheme covers **women aged 21–60 years** meeting specified income and residency criteria, with the **first instalment scheduled on 28 August 2026**.

14. Chhattisgarh Launches DWEEPTI Yojana

The **Chhattisgarh Government** launched **DWEEPTI (Decentralised Women Empowerment on Energy and Policy for Transformative Inclusion) Yojana**, India's **first women-led distributed renewable energy**

policy. The scheme aims to create **5,000 women-led solar enterprises**, generate **50,000 green jobs**, provide clean energy to **5 lakh families**, and promote '**Solar Didis**' through **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**.

15. LIC Appoints Shatmanyu Shrivastava as CFO

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) appointed **Shatmanyu Shrivastava** as **Executive Director (Finance & Accounts) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** following the resignation of **Sunil Agrawal**. **Varadarajan Muthuvenkataraman** was simultaneously appointed as **Executive Director (Enterprise Risk Management) and Chief Risk Officer (CRO)**.

16. RBI Ombudsman Complaints Rise 13.5% in FY25

According to **RBI Ombudsman FY25 data**, **total complaints** increased by **13.55%** to **1.33 million** from **1.18 million** in **FY24**, with **Chandigarh** recording the **highest complaint rate**, at **over 4.5 times** the national average. For the **first time since FY21**, **private banks** received more complaints than **public sector banks (PSBs)**, while **NBFC complaints** also increased. **RBI Deputy Governor Swaminathan J** urged regulated entities to strengthen their **Internal Ombudsman mechanisms**, noting that many grievances reaching the RBI had **not been addressed internally first**.

17. Indian Navy Launches Machilipatnam ASW Shallow Water Craft

The **Indian Navy** launched **Machilipatnam (BY 529)**, the **seventh** of the **eight Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC)**, at **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)** on **29 July 2026**. Named after the **historic port city of Machilipatnam** in **Andhra Pradesh**, the warship reflects India's **maritime heritage** while strengthening the Navy's **anti-submarine warfare capabilities** and commitment to safeguarding the country's **maritime interests**.

FIVE TO REMEMBER · 30 JULY 2026

1. Launched on **1 October 2021** for five years, extended, with an outlay of about **₹1.41 lakh crore**. *Madanapalle Municipality Waste Management Model*
2. **Established in 1936** from a trust fund created by Canadian mathematician **John Charles Fields** at the **University of Toronto**. *The Fields Medal 2026*
3. IRDAI is a statutory body established under the IRDA Act, 1999, with its headquarters in Hyderabad. *IRDAI Reforms*
4. **Nodal body:** the **Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C)** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**. *The e-Zero FIR System for Cybercrime*
5. **Agricultural Research & Education Budget (2026–27): ₹9,266 crore** (up from **₹4,836 crore** in 2014–15). *Research for Resilience – The Case for Agricult...*

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