MISSION X FOR UPSC

INNOVATION IN LEARNING

THE X AMPLIFIER

AUGUST 2026 EDITION

UPSC MENTORSHIP & GUIDANCE PROGRAM · T.ME/MISSIONXUPSC

MISSION X FOR UPSC · INNOVATION IN LEARNING

THE X AMPLIFIER

MONTHLY PRELIMS REVISION CAPSULE · AUGUST 2026 EDITION · UPSC MENTORSHIP & GUIDANCE PROGRAM

CURRENT → STATIC → TRAP → RECALL → TEST

Turn current affairs into Prelims-ready knowledge.

41	19	9
CURATED TOPICS	UPSC-PATTERN MCQS	SUBJECT SECTIONS

IN THIS EDITION

01	POLITY & GOVERNANCE	4 topics
02	PLACES IN NEWS	13 topics
03	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	4 topics
04	ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY	3 topics
05	ECONOMY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	2 topics
06	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	4 topics
07	HISTORY, ART & CULTURE	2 topics
08	ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES	4 topics
09	MISCELLANEOUS	5 topics

Sourced from PIB, PRS Legislative Research, The Hindu, Indian Express, Drishti IAS, Vajiram & Ravi, ICTP, ICTS-TIFR, official government releases

Monthly Prelims Dashboard

Nine sections, 41 topics, one route. Broken into a fixed sequence and a five-step checklist, it is a single, manageable monthly ritual.

41 CURATED TOPICS

19 UPSC-PATTERN MCQS

9 SUBJECT SECTIONS

YOUR REVISION ROUTE

01	**CURRENT**	Understand the news
02	**STATIC**	Connect it to the syllabus
03	**TRAP**	Identify likely confusion
04	**RECALL**	Retrieve the facts
05	**TEST**	Apply through MCQs

YOUR REVISION TRACKER — mark each section off as you complete a pass

SECTION	READ	RECALL	TEST
Polity & Governance	☐	☐	☐
Places in News	☐	☐	☐
International Relations	☐	☐	☐
Environment & Ecology	☐	☐	☐
Economy & Economic Development	☐	☐	☐
Science & Technology	☐	☐	☐
History, Art & Culture	☐	☐	☐
Economy - Government Schemes	☐	☐	☐
Miscellaneous	☐	☐	☐

01

Polity & Governance

Four Acts of 2026 that reshaped institutional and judicial architecture, from ISI governance to a larger Supreme Court bench.

— Indian Statistical Institute Act, 2026

— Tribunals Reforms Act, 2026

— Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2026

— Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2026

SECTION 01 · POLITY & GOVERNANCE · TOPIC 1.1

Indian Statistical Institute Act, 2026

GS PAPER II · POLITY & GOVERNANCE

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Parliament converted ISI from a registered society into a statutory body corporate, with the President as Visitor, sparking debate over institutional autonomy.

X-FACT MATRIX

Introduced	Lok Sabha, August 3, 2026 (Bill No. 144 of 2026)
Repeals	Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959
Old status	Society under West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961
New status	Statutory body corporate, not-for-profit
Visitor	President of India
Governing body	Board of Governors (11 members)
Founder	P. C. Mahalanobis, 1931

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- ISI declared Institution of National Importance in 1959.
- New Board of Governors replaces the earlier 33-member Council structure.
- Academic, Finance and Management Councils established under the Act.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

President as Visitor can order inquiries and issue binding directions on ISI's functioning.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Do not confuse with IIT/IIM statutes: ISI's Visitor is the President directly (like Central Universities), and it converts a society, not an existing statutory body, into a corporate entity.

★ X-TEST

With reference to Institutions of National Importance in India, consider the following statements and select the correct answer using the code below.

1. All such institutions are established directly by an Act of Parliament.
2. The President of India acts as Visitor for several such institutions.
3. Institution of National Importance status confers only funding privileges, no distinct legal identity.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: b

SECTION 01 · POLITY & GOVERNANCE · TOPIC 1.2

Tribunals Reforms Act, 2026

GS PAPER II · POLITY & GOVERNANCE

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Parliament passed a new law replacing the 2021 Tribunals Act, setting up a National Tribunals Commission to handle appointments across 16 tribunals.

X-FACT MATRIX

Lok Sabha passage	August 10, 2026 (without debate)
Rajya Sabha passage	August 11, 2026
President's assent	August 13, 2026
Repeals	Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021
New body	National Tribunals Commission (NTC)
NTC composition	Chairperson + 2 judicial members + 2 technical members
Tribunals covered	16, including CAT, NGT, NCLAT, NCDRC, AFT, ITAT

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- NTC chairperson must be a former SC judge or HC Chief Justice.
- NTC functions: selection of members, performance review, discipline, and the National Tribunals Data Grid.
- Follows Supreme Court's Madras Bar Association line of judgments on tribunal independence.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

2021 Act's provisions were struck down by the SC for excessive executive control over tribunals.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

NTC members are still appointed by the Central Government (with CJI consultation for chairperson/judicial members) — independence is procedural, not a transfer of appointing power to the judiciary.

★ X-TEST

The National Tribunals Commission established under a 2026 law is tasked with all of the following EXCEPT:

(a) Selection of chairpersons and members of tribunals
(b) Reviewing performance of tribunals
(c) Adjudicating disputes referred by tribunals
(d) Maintaining the National Tribunals Data Grid

Answer: c

SECTION 01 · POLITY & GOVERNANCE · TOPIC 1.3

Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2026

GS PAPER II · POLITY & GOVERNANCE

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Parliament tightened the rules for delayed birth and death registration, requiring judicial sign-off beyond a two-year delay, effective October 1, 2026.

X-FACT MATRIX

Introduced	Lok Sabha, July 29, 2026
Assent	August 7, 2026 (Act No. 12 of 2026)
Effective from	October 1, 2026
Amends	Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969
Delay 1-2 years	DM / SDM / authorised Executive Magistrate order
Delay beyond 2 years	Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) order only
Legal harmonisation	CrPC 1973 references replaced with BNSS, 2023

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Registration Authorities: Registrar General of India (national) with Chief/District/Local Registrars.
- Civil Registration System (CRS) has been fully digital since October 2023.
- Standard reporting timeline for births/deaths remains 21 days of occurrence.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Purpose: discourage delayed registration and tighten evidentiary reliability of civil records.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

The stricter JMFC requirement applies only beyond two years of delay; the one-to-two-year band still uses the earlier Executive Magistrate route, it is not judicialised.

★ X-TEST

Under the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2026, an order for a birth registered 3 years after occurrence must be issued by:

(a) District Magistrate
(b) Sub-Divisional Magistrate
(c) Judicial Magistrate of the First Class
(d) Registrar General of India

Answer: c

SECTION 01 · POLITY & GOVERNANCE · TOPIC 1.4

Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2026

GS PAPER II · POLITY & GOVERNANCE

NEWS IN BRIEF

- An Ordinance followed by an Act raised the Supreme Court's sanctioned strength from 34 to 38 judges (including the CJI) to tackle a rising case backlog.

VISUAL MEMORY — see it, remember it

From Ordinance to Act — the 2026 SC strength timeline

ORDINANCE May 16, 2026 → **BILL** July 20, 2026 → **PASSED** August 2026 → **ASSENT** August 11, 2026

The Act repeals the Ordinance but protects every action already taken under it.

X-FACT MATRIX

Ordinance promulgated	May 16, 2026 (Article 123)
Bill introduced	Lok Sabha, July 20, 2026
Assent	August 11, 2026
Deemed in force from	May 16, 2026 (retrospective)
Amends	Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956
Judges, excl. CJI	33 to 37
Total strength incl. CJI	34 to 38

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Constitutional basis: Article 124(1) lets Parliament raise SC judge strength by law.
- As of Jan 1, 2026, 92,101 cases were pending in the Supreme Court.
- SC had been at near-full sanctioned capacity of 34 judges since 2019.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

2025 saw 75,410 fresh cases instituted against only 65,615 disposed.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

The 2026 Act is an amendment to the Number of Judges Act, 1956, not a constitutional amendment — Article 124(1) explicitly delegates this power to ordinary legislation.

★ X-TEST

The strength of the Supreme Court of India, including the Chief Justice of India, is fixed by:

(a) The Constitution directly, and needs a constitutional amendment to change
(b) An Act of Parliament under Article 124(1)
(c) A Presidential notification alone
(d) A Chief Justice of India order with Cabinet concurrence

Answer: b

02

Places in News

Static-connect format: geographic identity, bordering features, and administrative facts for each location. No subjective framing.

— Petermann Glacier

— Lake Erie

— Mount Ararat

— Larak Island

— Delft Island

— Madura Island

— Kunashir Island

— Chilwa Lake (Lake Chilwa)

— Medak Fort

— Kollidam River

— Pampa River

— Hara Mangroves

— Ceuta (Spain)

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.1

Petermann Glacier

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- One of Greenland's largest floating ice tongues has been in focus amid tracking of Arctic ice-sheet calving and stability.

X-FACT MATRIX

Type	Floating glacier / ice tongue
Location	Northwest Greenland
Drains into	Nares Strait (between Greenland and Ellesmere Island, Canada)
Significance	One of the two largest remaining ice tongues in Greenland
Administering territory	Greenland (autonomous territory of Denmark)

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- Feeds directly from the Greenland Ice Sheet into the Arctic Ocean system via Nares Strait.
- Nares Strait separates Greenland from Ellesmere Island, part of Canada's Arctic Archipelago.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Periodic large calving events are tracked as indicators of Arctic ice sheet stability.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.2

Lake Erie

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The shallowest of the Great Lakes remains in the news for cross-border US-Canada water-quality and algal-bloom monitoring.

X-FACT MATRIX

Type	Freshwater lake, one of the five Great Lakes
Bordering countries	United States and Canada
Bordering US states	Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Michigan
Bordering Canadian province	Ontario
Connects	Detroit River (from Lake Huron/St. Clair) to Niagara River (to Lake Ontario)

Rank	Shallowest and smallest by volume of the Great Lakes

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- Niagara Falls lies on the Niagara River, the outlet connecting Lake Erie to Lake Ontario.
- Part of the St. Lawrence Seaway system linking the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Known for seasonal algal blooms affecting water quality, monitored under US-Canada agreements.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.3

Mount Ararat

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Turkiye's highest peak, near the Armenia-Iran border, continues to draw attention for its geological and cultural significance.

X-FACT MATRIX

Type	Dormant volcanic massif, two peaks (Greater and Lesser Ararat)
Location	Eastern Turkiye, near borders with Armenia and Iran
Elevation (Greater Ararat)	5,137 m, highest peak in Turkiye
Bordering countries nearby	Armenia, Iran, Azerbaijan (Nakhchivan exclave)
Cultural significance	Traditionally associated with the biblical Noah's Ark narrative

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- Part of the Armenian Highland, though the peak itself lies within Turkiye.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Iran and Armenia both border Turkiye in this region, making it a tri-junction zone of cultural memory.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.4

Larak Island

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- This Iranian island overlooking the Strait of Hormuz has featured in coverage of Persian Gulf shipping-lane security.

X-FACT MATRIX

Location	Strait of Hormuz, Persian Gulf
Country	Iran (Hormozgan Province)
Strategic significance	Overlooks the Strait of Hormuz shipping chokepoint
Nearby islands	Qeshm, Hormuz Island
Waterbody connects	Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- The Strait of Hormuz is the world's most critical oil transit chokepoint.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Larak lies close to Qeshm, Iran's largest island in the Persian Gulf.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.5

Delft Island

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- A Palk Strait island central to India-Sri Lanka fishermen and maritime-boundary discussions.

X-FACT MATRIX

Location	Palk Strait, off the Jaffna Peninsula
Country	Sri Lanka (Northern Province)
Local name	Neduntheevu
Separates	Sri Lanka and India (Palk Strait/Palk Bay)
Nearby Indian region	Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, across Palk Strait

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- Part of a cluster of islands in the Palk Strait relevant to India-Sri Lanka fishermen issues.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Palk Strait connects the Bay of Bengal to the Palk Bay/Gulf of Mannar system.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.6

Madura Island

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- An Indonesian island east of Java, linked to Surabaya by the Suramadu Bridge, in the news for regional infrastructure and culture.

X-FACT MATRIX

Location	East of Java, Indonesia
Country	Indonesia
Separated from Java by	Madura Strait
Connectivity	Suramadu Bridge, Indonesia's longest bridge, links it to Surabaya
Administrative unit	Part of East Java Province

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- Known for the traditional Madura bull-racing (Karapan Sapi) culture.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city, lies directly across the strait.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.7

Kunashir Island

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- A disputed southern Kuril island administered by Russia and claimed by Japan as part of its Northern Territories.

X-FACT MATRIX

Location	Southern Kuril Islands, North Pacific
Administered by	Russia (disputed by Japan as part of Northern Territories)
Separates	Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific Ocean
Nearest Japanese territory	Hokkaido, across the Nemuro Strait
Geology	Volcanic island, part of the Kuril-Kamchatka arc

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- Part of the Kuril Islands chain disputed between Japan and Russia since WWII.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

The Kuril arc separates the Sea of Okhotsk from the open Pacific.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.8

Chilwa Lake (Lake Chilwa)

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- This Malawi-Mozambique border lake, a Ramsar site, has drawn attention for seasonal water-level fluctuations and migratory birdlife.

X-FACT MATRIX

Type	Endorheic (closed-basin), shallow lake
Location	Border of Malawi and Mozambique
Bordering countries	Malawi and Mozambique
Feeding rivers	Sombani, Likangala, Phalombe
Recognition	Ramsar Wetland of International Importance

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- No outlet to the sea; water level fluctuates seasonally, occasionally drying substantially.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

One of Africa's most important sites for migratory waterbirds.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.9

Medak Fort

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- A Kakatiya-era fort in Telangana, noted alongside the nearby Medak Cathedral in regional heritage coverage.

X-FACT MATRIX

Location	Medak town, Telangana
Built by	Kakatiya dynasty (13th century), later Qutb Shahi additions
District	Medak district, Telangana
Nearby landmark	Medak Cathedral, one of Asia's largest churches
River nearby	Manjira River basin

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- Located roughly 100 km from Hyderabad in the Telangana plateau region.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Medak district lies in the Manjira river basin, a tributary of the Godavari.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.10

Kollidam River

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

• The northern distributary of the Kaveri, serving as a flood-relief channel for the Kaveri delta in Tamil Nadu.

X-FACT MATRIX

Origin	Distributary of the Kaveri (Cauvery), branches off near Tiruchirappalli
States it flows through	Tamil Nadu
Mouth	Bay of Bengal, near Kollidam town
Sister channel	Kaveri main channel (Kaveri flows to Poompuhar)
Significance	Flood-relief channel for the Kaveri delta

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

• Kollidam is the northern distributary; the southern channel retains the Kaveri name.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Kaveri delta is one of India's most fertile deltaic regions, known as the 'Rice Bowl of Tamil Nadu.'

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.11

Pampa River

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

• Kerala's river linked to the Sabarimala pilgrimage route, known locally as the Dakshina Bharatha Ganga.

X-FACT MATRIX

Origin	Western Ghats, Peerumedu plateau, Kerala
States it flows through	Kerala
Mouth	Vembanad Lake (backwaters), Arabian Sea system
Also called	Dakshina Bharatha Ganga (Ganges of South India)
Key pilgrimage site on banks	Sabarimala (via Pamba town)

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- Third-longest river in Kerala after the Periyar and Bharathapuzha.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Drains into the Vembanad-Kol wetland system, a Ramsar site.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.12

Hara Mangroves

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Iran's Hara mangrove forests around Qeshm Island, the Persian Gulf's largest mangrove stand, remain a key UNESCO biosphere reserve.

X-FACT MATRIX

Location	Qeshm Island and Khuran Strait, Hormozgan Province
Country	Iran
Ecosystem type	Mangrove forest (Avicennia marina, locally "Hara")
Extent	Largest single mangrove stand in the Persian Gulf, about 2,400 hectares on Qeshm
Recognition	Ramsar site (1975) and UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve (1977)

STATIC CONNECT — Facts about the location.

- Khuran Strait separates Qeshm Island from the Iranian mainland, near the Strait of Hormuz.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Fed by the Mehran River delta; supports migratory birds and serves as a key Persian Gulf fish and shrimp nursery.

SECTION 02 · PLACES IN NEWS · TOPIC 2.13

Ceuta (Spain)

GS PAPER I · GEOGRAPHY (PRELIMS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- A Spanish autonomous city on the North African coast, a recurring flashpoint in Spain-Morocco and EU migration diplomacy.

X-FACT MATRIX

Status	Spanish autonomous city (exclave)

Location	North African coast, Strait of Gibraltar
Land border with	Morocco (only land border)
Separated from mainland Spain by	Strait of Gibraltar
Strategic significance	Controls southern approach to the Strait of Gibraltar

STATIC CONNECT — Bordering features and status.

- Along with Melilla, one of Spain's two autonomous cities on the African continent.
- Strait of Gibraltar connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

A frequent flashpoint in Spain-Morocco relations and EU migration policy.

03

International Relations

A new West Asian defence pact, a Pacific nation's identity reclamation, US secondary tariffs, and the 26th SCO Summit.

— Mecca Joint Defence Agreement

— Nauru renamed Republic of Naoero

— Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, 2026

— 26th SCO Summit, Bishkek

SECTION 03 · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · TOPIC 3.1

Mecca Joint Defence Agreement

GS PAPER II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan signed a mutual-defence pact in Mecca in August 2026, treating an attack on one as an attack on all three.

X-FACT MATRIX

Signed	August 7, 2026, Mecca, Saudi Arabia
Signatories	Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Pakistan
Core clause	Attack on one treated as attack on all three (Article 51 UN Charter basis)
Builds on	September 2025 Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement
Key leaders	Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, President Erdogan, PM Shehbaz Sharif

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Combines Saudi financial/geographic weight, Turkish NATO-standard defence industry, and Pakistan's nuclear status.
- Signed against the backdrop of the US-Israel-Iran confrontation since February 28, 2026.
- Syria has indicated it is considering joining the agreement (as of August 2026).

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Officials describe it as purely defensive, not directed at any specific country.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Analysts caution against calling it a 'NATO of the East' — it lacks NATO's integrated command structure; treat comparisons to Article 5 as analytically weak, not equivalent.

★ X-TEST

The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement of August 2026 was signed between which three countries?

(a) Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkiye
(b) Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Pakistan
(c) Turkiye, Pakistan, Iran
(d) Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan

Answer: b

SECTION 03 · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · TOPIC 3.2

Nauru renamed Republic of Naoero

GS PAPER II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Nauru formally adopted its indigenous name, Republic of Naoero, dropping the colonial-era name used internationally since 1968.

X-FACT MATRIX

Legal effect	June 26, 2026; publicly announced late July 2026
New country code	NRO (from NRU)
Citizens now called	dei-Naoero (from Nauruans)
Parliamentary approval	Constitutional amendment, unanimous, May 2026
President	David Adeang
Size rank	World's smallest island nation; 3rd-smallest sovereign state by land area

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Referendum plans were dropped — the name was deemed already the people's identity, per the President.
- Reflects a wider trend: Eswatini (2018) and Turkiye's international rebrand (2022) cited as parallels.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Located northeast of Australia; independence from Australian administration came in 1968.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Nauru/Naoero remains the world's smallest island NATION but is the world's third-smallest sovereign state by land area, after Vatican City and Monaco — don't overstate the size ranking.

★ X-TEST

The Pacific island nation of Nauru officially renamed itself in 2026 as:

(a) Republic of Naoero
(b) Nauru Islands Federation
(c) Pleasant Republic
(d) Dorerin Republic

Answer: a

SECTION 03 · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · TOPIC 3.3

Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, 2026

GS PAPER II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The US Senate passed a bill authorising up to 100% tariffs on the top-5 importers of Russian oil and gas, including India and China.

X-FACT MATRIX

Senate passage	August 7, 2026, 86-11 vote
Tariff authority	Up to 100% on top-5 importers of Russian oil/gas
Affected countries	China, India, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Slovakia (current top-5)
Extreme provision	Up to 500% tariff on Russian-origin goods (with uranium/medical isotope exceptions)
Iran Sanctions Act extension	1996 Act's expiry pushed from 2026 to 2031
Next step (at passage)	US House of Representatives, post-August recess

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Named for the late Senator Lindsey Graham, who championed the bill before his death; co-sponsored with Sen. Richard Blumenthal.
- President is given waiver authority if deemed in the US national interest.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Also targets Russian officials, oligarchs, banks, and the 'shadow fleet' evading sanctions.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Passage in the Senate (86-11) is not enactment — the bill required House passage and presidential signature to become binding law; track the stage carefully in any question.

★ X-TEST

The Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, 2026 as passed by the US Senate authorises tariffs of up to what percentage on the top-5 importers of Russian oil and gas?

(a) 25%
(b) 50%
(c) 100%
(d) 500%

Answer: c

SECTION 03 · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · TOPIC 3.4

26th SCO Summit, Bishkek

GS PAPER II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

NEWS IN BRIEF

- PM Modi attended the 26th SCO Summit in Bishkek, marking the bloc's 25th anniversary, ahead of India hosting the BRICS Summit in September.

VISUAL MEMORY — see it, remember it

The COP Troika handover — who does what at COP31



First COP with a formally split hosting/negotiations-lead arrangement between two countries.

X-FACT MATRIX

Dates	August 31 - September 1, 2026
Venue	Yrys Ordo, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Host/Chair	Kyrgyzstan (2025-26 rotating chairmanship)
Theme	25 Years of the SCO: Together Towards Sustainable Peace, Development and Prosperity
India's SCO status	Full member since 2017
India's stated priorities	Security, Connectivity, Opportunity

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- SCO's 10 member states: India, China, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus.
- PM Modi's visit combined a bilateral Uzbekistan leg (Tashkent, Aug 29-30) before Bishkek.
- Marked PM Modi's second interaction with President Xi Jinping since the 2025 Tianjin SCO Summit.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

India separately hosts the BRICS Summit in New Delhi from September 11, 2026.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

SCO membership (10 states) is distinct from its 2 Observer States (Azerbaijan, Armenia) and 15 Dialogue Partners — do not count observers/partners as full members.

★ X-TEST

The 26th Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (2026) was hosted by which country?

(a) China

(b) Kyrgyzstan
(c) Kazakhstan
(d) Uzbekistan

Answer: b

04

Environment & Ecology

A national ecosystem classification exercise, a Northeast conservation programme, and a transboundary glacial-flood risk.

— 1st National Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs)

— Mission Clouded Leopard (Meghalaya)

— Nepal GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood)

SECTION 04 · ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY · TOPIC 4.1

1st National Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs)

GS PAPER III · ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- India launched its first-ever guide to grasslands and open natural ecosystems at UNCCD COP17 in Mongolia, moving these away from the 'wasteland' label.

X-FACT MATRIX

Launched	August 17, 2026, UNCCD COP17, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Ministry	MoEFCC
Partner institutions	ATREE, IUCN, CoE-SLM, ICFRE, ISRO's Space Applications Centre
Ecosystems covered	Himalayan/Terai grasslands, Thar and Banni landscapes, Deccan savannas, coastal ecosystems
Linked commitment	Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) under UNCCD

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- First formal step to stop classifying grasslands, deserts, scrublands and ravines as 'wastelands.'
- Includes thematic sections on pastoralism, fire ecology, and carbon sequestration.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Reinforces a science-based, landscape-level approach to restoration alongside forest cover.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

ONEs (Open Natural Ecosystems) is a classification correcting the 'wasteland' label — it does not create a new protected-area category with legal force like a Wildlife Sanctuary or National Park.

★ X-TEST

India's first Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems was launched at which forum?

(a) UNFCCC COP
(b) UNCCD COP17
(c) CBD COP16
(d) Ramsar COP15

Answer: b

SECTION 04 · ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY · TOPIC 4.2

Mission Clouded Leopard (Meghalaya)

GS PAPER III · ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Meghalaya launched a dedicated conservation programme for the clouded leopard, its state animal, on International Clouded Leopard Day.

X-FACT MATRIX

Launched	August 4, 2026, International Clouded Leopard Day
Launched by	CM Conrad K. Sangma
Species	Mainland clouded leopard, Neofelis nebulosa — Meghalaya's state animal
IUCN status	Vulnerable
Legal protection	Schedule I, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; CITES Appendix I
Key habitats	Nokrek, Balpakram, Baghmara, Narpuh, Nongkhyllem

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Balpakram landscape alone has ~21 individual clouded leopards per preliminary surveys.
- Focus areas: habitat restoration, landscape connectivity, monitoring (camera traps, eDNA), anti-poaching.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Complements the national Clouded Leopard Conservation Action Plan under the IDWH scheme's Species Recovery Programme.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Distinguish from Project Snow Leopard (2009, Panthera uncia, high-altitude Himalaya, rosette markings) — clouded leopard is an arboreal cat of Northeast India's tropical forests with cloud-shaped blotches.

★ X-TEST

The clouded leopard (Neofelis nebulosa) is the official state animal of which Indian state?

(a) Assam
(b) Nagaland
(c) Meghalaya
(d) Mizoram

Answer: c

SECTION 04 · ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY · TOPIC 4.3

Nepal GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood)

GS PAPER III · ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Glacial Lake Outburst Flood risk in the Nepal Himalaya remains a live transboundary disaster-management concern for downstream Indian states.

X-FACT MATRIX

Phenomenon	Sudden release of water from a glacial lake due to moraine/ice-dam failure
Region affected	Nepal Himalaya, transboundary impact on downstream Indian states
Trigger factors	Glacial retreat, permafrost thaw, extreme rainfall, seismic activity
Monitoring bodies	ICIMOD (regional), Nepal's DHM, India's CWC for downstream basins
Comparable event	2023 South Lhonak GLOF, Sikkim

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Himalayan glacial lakes are expanding due to accelerated glacier melt linked to climate change.
- GLOF risk assessment is a standing agenda item in India-Nepal transboundary river cooperation.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

ICIMOD's Hindu Kush Himalaya assessments flag rising GLOF frequency across the region.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

GLOF is distinct from a cloudburst — GLOF originates from a glacial lake breach, while a cloudburst is an extreme, localised rainfall event; both can compound flood disasters in the same basin.

★ X-TEST

A Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) is most directly caused by:

(a) Sudden intense localised rainfall over a short duration
(b) Failure of a moraine or ice dam impounding a glacial lake
(c) Seasonal snowmelt during summer months
(d) Release of water from a dam reservoir

Answer: b

05

Economy & Economic Development

A five-year labour-database milestone and an expanded cooperative-finance mandate passed by Parliament in August 2026.

— e-Shram Portal completes 5 years

— National Cooperative Development Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2026

SECTION 05 · ECONOMY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT · TOPIC 5.1

e-Shram Portal completes 5 years

GS PAPER III · ECONOMY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- India's unorganised-workers database crossed 31.89 crore registrations as it marked five years of operation in August 2026.

X-FACT MATRIX

Launched	August 26, 2021
Milestone	5 years completed, August 26, 2026
Registrations	Over 31.89 crore unorganised workers
Nodal ministry	Ministry of Labour and Employment
Developed by	National Informatics Centre (NIC)
Identifier issued	12-digit Universal Account Number (UAN)

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- India's first Aadhaar-authenticated National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW).
- Upgraded October 21, 2024 into the 'e-Shram One-Stop Solution,' unifying 15+ welfare schemes plus PM-SYM pension.
- Linked to National Career Service (NCS) for employment access; multilingual support in 22 languages.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Eligibility: unorganised workers aged 16+, not an income-tax payer, not an EPFO/ESIC member.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

e-Shram is a database-plus-service-delivery platform, not itself a pension or insurance scheme — PM-SYM and other schemes are accessed through it, not replaced by it.

★ X-TEST

The e-Shram Portal, launched in 2021, primarily provides registered unorganised workers with:

(a) A guaranteed minimum monthly pension
(b) A 12-digit Universal Account Number (UAN) and access to welfare schemes
(c) Direct cash transfer of Rs 5,000 per month
(d) Automatic EPFO membership

Answer: b

SECTION 05 · ECONOMY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT · TOPIC 5.2

National Cooperative Development Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2026

GS PAPER III · ECONOMY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Parliament passed a law expanding NCDC's mandate to directly fund and finance a wider range of cooperative activities.

X-FACT MATRIX

Introduced	Lok Sabha, August 10, 2026
Lok Sabha passage	August 11, 2026
Rajya Sabha passage	August 12, 2026
Amends	NCDC Act, 1962
NCDC established	March 14, 1963
Administrative ministry	Ministry of Cooperation (est. 2021)

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Widens the range of activities and entities eligible for NCDC assistance.
- Enables greater direct funding and investment by NCDC, beyond earlier channelling routes.
- Improves credit assessment through expanded information-sharing mechanisms.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Reflects the cooperative sector's expansion into food processing, manufacturing, and value addition since 1962.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

NCDC is a statutory corporation under the Ministry of Cooperation, distinct from NABARD (apex agricultural/rural credit bank) — the two work in overlapping but separate financing spaces.

★ X-TEST

The National Cooperative Development Corporation functions under which Union Ministry?

(a) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
(b) Ministry of Finance
(c) Ministry of Cooperation
(d) Ministry of Rural Development

Answer: c

06

Science & Technology

India's first private orbital rocket, an indigenous rocket-propellant material, a global physics honour, and a frontier open-weight AI model.

— Vikram-1 (Skyroot Aerospace)

— Hyderacene

— Deepak Dhar wins the 2026 Dirac Medal

— Kimi K3 (Moonshot AI)

SECTION 06 · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · TOPIC 6.1

Vikram-1 (Skyroot Aerospace)

GS PAPER III · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 became India's first privately built rocket to reach orbit, launching from Sriharikota in July 2026.

X-FACT MATRIX

Launch date	July 18, 2026
Launch site	Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota
Mission name	Aagaman (Arrival)
Significance	India's first privately built rocket to reach orbit
Orbit achieved	~450 km Low Earth Orbit, 15-16 minutes after liftoff
Global rank	India becomes 3rd country (after US, China) with private orbital launch capability

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Skyroot Aerospace, Hyderabad-based, founded 2018 by ex-ISRO engineers Pawan Kumar Chandana and Naga Bharath Daka.
- Four-stage rocket, ~20 m tall, carbon-composite body, partly 3D-printed engine parts; payload capacity ~350 kg to LEO.
- Carried cubesats from Skyroot and Grahaa Space, plus payloads from Dcubed and Cosmoserve Space.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Follows Skyroot's 2022 Vikram-S, India's first privately developed sub-orbital rocket.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Vikram-1 is Skyroot's first ORBITAL launch; Vikram-S (2022) was only SUB-orbital — don't credit Vikram-S with reaching orbit.

★ X-TEST

Vikram-1, India's first privately built rocket to reach orbit, was launched by which company?

(a) Agnikul Cosmos
(b) Skyroot Aerospace
(c) Bellatrix Aerospace
(d) Dhruva Space

Answer: b

SECTION 06 · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · TOPIC 6.2

Hyderacene

GS PAPER III · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- University of Hyderabad researchers patented Hyderacene, an indigenous binder-cum-catalyst material for solid rocket propellants.

X-FACT MATRIX

Developed by	University of Hyderabad, School of Chemistry
Researchers	Mutyalanaidu Ganivada, Sourav Jana, Tushar Jana
Formal description	Ferrocene Polyethylene Glycidyl Grafted Hydroxyl-Terminated Polybutadiene
Function	Dual-action polymer binder-cum-catalyst for solid rocket propellants
Replaces	Butacene (largely imported from Europe)
IP status	Indian patent secured, 2026

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Solid rocket propellants need a binder (structural glue) and a catalyst (burn-rate control) — Hyderacene combines both roles in one material.
- Prevents catalyst-binder separation over time, improving long-term propellant stability and combustion control.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Synthesised via ring-opening polymerisation; named after the city of Hyderabad.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Hyderacene is from the University of Hyderabad, not IIT Hyderabad — the two are separate institutions and a common mix-up in current-affairs sources.

SECTION 06 · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · TOPIC 6.3

Deepak Dhar wins the 2026 Dirac Medal

GS PAPER III · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Indian physicist Deepak Dhar won the 2026 Dirac Medal for his contributions to statistical mechanics, including the sandpile model.

X-FACT MATRIX

Awarding body	ICTP (International Centre for Theoretical Physics), Trieste, Italy

Announced	August 10, 2026
Affiliation	ICTS-TIFR, Bengaluru (INSA Distinguished Professor)
Co-recipients	Bernard Derrida (France), Marc Mezard (Italy/France), Haim Sompolinsky (Israel/US)
Field recognised	Statistical mechanics and complex systems
Medal instituted	1985, named after physicist Paul A. M. Dirac

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Known for the 'sandpile model,' a foundational example of self-organised criticality.
- Model's insights extend to earthquakes, traffic jams, and financial-market fluctuations.
- Second India-based scientist to win the Dirac Medal, after Ashoke Sen.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Educated at Allahabad University, IIT Kanpur (MSc), and Caltech (PhD); long TIFR association.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Dirac Medal (ICTP, theoretical physics) is distinct from the Nobel Prize and the Fields Medal — several past Dirac Medallists went on to win those, but the Dirac Medal itself is a separate, earlier-stage honour.

★ X-TEST

Deepak Dhar, the 2026 Dirac Medal recipient, is best known for his pioneering work on which model?

(a) The Ising model
(b) The sandpile model
(c) The Lotka-Volterra model
(d) The Higgs mechanism

Answer: b

SECTION 06 · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · TOPIC 6.4

Kimi K3 (Moonshot AI)

GS PAPER III · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Chinese AI lab Moonshot AI released Kimi K3, a 2.8-trillion-parameter open-weight model rivalling closed frontier systems on coding benchmarks.

X-FACT MATRIX

Developer	Moonshot AI (China)

Announced / weights released	July 16 / July 27, 2026
Architecture	Mixture-of-Experts, ~2.8 trillion total parameters
Class	World's first open-weight 3-trillion-class model
Modality	Multimodal — text, image, and video input
Notable benchmark	Ranked #1 on a frontend-coding leaderboard, surpassing several closed models

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Part of Moonshot AI's Kimi family, alongside Kimi Chat, Kimi Code, and Kimi for Work agent products.
- Moonshot AI is grouped among China's 'AI Six Tigers' alongside DeepSeek, Zhipu AI, MiniMax, 01.AI, and Baichuan AI.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Built on a Kimi Delta Attention architecture with native agentic tool-calling and browsing capability.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Being 'open-weight' does not mean open-source in the traditional licensing sense — check specific licence terms rather than assuming unrestricted use.

07

History, Art & Culture

A new World Heritage inscription and a freedom-struggle personality drawing renewed national attention.

— Sarnath added to UNESCO World Heritage List

— Rani Avantibai Lodhi

SECTION 07 · HISTORY, ART & CULTURE · TOPIC 7.1

Sarnath added to UNESCO World Heritage List

GS PAPER I · ART, CULTURE & HISTORY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2026, becoming India's 45th World Heritage property.

X-FACT MATRIX

Inscribed	July 25, 2026, 48th Session of World Heritage Committee, Busan, South Korea
Official name	Ancient Buddhist Site, Sarnath
India's tally	45th World Heritage Site
Global rank	6th largest globally, 2nd in Asia-Pacific
Criteria	(iii) and (vi)
UP's tally	4th site after Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Fatehpur Sikri

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Sarnath is where the Buddha delivered his first sermon (Dharmachakra Pravartana / Turning of the Wheel of Law).
- Serial property covers the Chaukhandi Stupa and Archaeological Remains of Sarnath (Dhamek and Dharmarajika Stupas).
- Site yielded the Mauryan Lion Capital, now India's National Emblem, and the Gupta-era Buddha statue.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Sarnath was on India's Tentative List since 1998; dossier submitted January 2025.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Criterion (iii) recognises spiritual/pilgrimage significance, criterion (vi) recognises direct association with the Buddha's life and teachings — do not conflate the two if a question isolates them.

★ X-TEST

The Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List at which session of the World Heritage Committee?

(a) 46th Session, Riyadh
(b) 47th Session, New Delhi
(c) 48th Session, Busan
(d) 49th Session, Paris

Answer: c

SECTION 07 · HISTORY, ART & CULTURE · TOPIC 7.2

Rani Avantibai Lodhi

GS PAPER I · ART, CULTURE & HISTORY

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The Defence Minister paid tribute to Rani Avantibai Lodhi, unveiling her statue and renewing focus on her role in the Revolt of 1857.

X-FACT MATRIX

Born	August 16, 1831, Mankhedi village, Seoni district, Madhya Pradesh
Married into	Ramgarh princely state (present-day Dindori, MP)
Key battle	Battle of Kheri, November 23, 1857 — defeated British forces under Waddington
Death	March 20, 1858; took her own life rather than be captured
Legacy unit	Rani Avanti Bai Lodhi Women's Battalion, UP PAC, Badaun

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Assumed administration of Ramgarh State when her husband Vikramaditya Singh Lodhi fell ill.
- Led resistance against British annexation attempts invoking the Doctrine of Lapse.
- Recent tribute: Defence Minister unveiled her statue, honouring her role in the Revolt of 1857.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

A part of the Bargi Dam project has been named Rani Avantibai Sagar in her honour.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Do not confuse with Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi — both are women leaders of 1857, but Avantibai's theatre was Ramgarh in central India (Mandla/Dindori belt), not Jhansi-Gwalior.

★ X-TEST

Rani Avantibai Lodhi is chiefly associated with resistance against the British in which princely state during the Revolt of 1857?

(a) Jhansi
(b) Ramgarh
(c) Kalpi
(d) Banda

Answer: b

08

Economy - Government Schemes

Manufacturing-linked incentive schemes expanded in Budget 2026-27, plus flagship rooftop solar and blue-economy programmes.

— Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)

— Container Manufacturing Scheme

— Samudra Manthan

— PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

SECTION 08 · ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · TOPIC 8.1

Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)

GS PAPER III · GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Budget 2026-27 nearly doubled the ECMS outlay to Rs 40,000 crore to deepen India's electronics component manufacturing base.

X-FACT MATRIX

Approved	March 28, 2025 (notified April 8, 2025)
Original outlay	Rs 22,919 crore
Revised outlay (Budget 2026-27)	Rs 40,000 crore
Nodal ministry	MeitY
Tenure	6 years (FY 2025-26 to FY 2031-32), 1-year gestation
Incentive types	Turnover-linked, capex-linked, hybrid, employment-linked

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Targets sub-assemblies (display/camera modules) and bare components (PCB, passives, electro-mechanicals).
- Aims to raise Domestic Value Addition (DVA) and integrate Indian firms into Global Value Chains.
- India became world's 2nd-largest mobile manufacturer; electronics is now India's 3rd-largest export commodity.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Complements the India Semiconductor Mission in the electronics value chain.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

ECMS targets components and sub-assemblies (the supply chain feeding manufacturers), distinct from PLI for mobile manufacturing, which targets finished-device assemblers.

SECTION 08 · ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · TOPIC 8.2

Container Manufacturing Scheme

GS PAPER III · GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

NEWS IN BRIEF

- A new Rs 10,000 crore scheme announced in Budget 2026-27 aims to build a competitive domestic container and heavy-equipment industry.

X-FACT MATRIX

Announced	Union Budget 2026-27

Outlay	Rs 10,000 crore
Scope	Shipping containers + construction/infrastructure equipment
Named equipment	Tunnel-boring machines (metros/roads), high-rise building lifts
Objective	Build a globally competitive domestic container/heavy-equipment industry

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Announced alongside doubled ECMS outlay and three new dedicated chemical parks in the same Budget.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Targets import substitution in capital-intensive equipment used in urban infrastructure projects.

SECTION 08 · ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · TOPIC 8.3

Samudra Manthan

GS PAPER III · GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

NEWS IN BRIEF

- India's blue-economy push continues under the Samudra Manthan initiative, working alongside the Deep Ocean Mission.

X-FACT MATRIX

Domain	Deep ocean mission / blue economy initiative
Nodal ministry	Ministry of Earth Sciences
Linkage	Deep Ocean Mission, Blue Economy Policy framework
Focus areas	Ocean resource exploration, marine biodiversity, coastal livelihoods

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Positioned within India's broader Blue Economy push alongside the Deep Ocean Mission (2021).

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Complements Sagarmala (port-led development) and the National Fisheries Policy framework.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Do not conflate with Sagarmala (port and coastal infrastructure) — Samudra Manthan sits in the ocean-resource and blue-economy research space.

SECTION 08 · ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · TOPIC 8.4

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

GS PAPER III · GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The rooftop solar scheme crossed 13 lakh sanctioned installations in 2026, progressing toward its 1-crore-household target.

X-FACT MATRIX

Launched	February 2024
Total outlay	Rs 75,021 crore
Target	1 crore households with rooftop solar by 2027
Benefit	Up to 300 units free electricity/month
Implementing agency	MNRE via DISCOMs
Portal	pmsuryaghar.gov.in

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Subsidy of up to Rs 78,000 for eligible residential rooftop solar installations.
- Over 13 lakh installations were sanctioned as of early 2026, with numbers rising through the year.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Collateral-free loan options are available alongside the direct subsidy component.

09

Miscellaneous

Sports honours, a climate diplomacy handover, and India's fastest-rising badminton and squash talents.

— National Sports Awards 2025

— COP31 Presidency

— Dr. M. S. Swaminathan Award for Environment Protection 2026

— Anahat Singh (Squash)

— Tanvi Sharma wins Taipei Open

SECTION 09 · MISCELLANEOUS · TOPIC 9.1

National Sports Awards 2025

PRELIMS · CURRENT AFFAIRS

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The Sports Ministry announced the National Sports Awards 2025, with no Khel Ratna conferred and 17 sportspersons named for the Arjuna Award.

X-FACT MATRIX

Khel Ratna 2025	None conferred (first since 2014)
Arjuna Awards	17 sportspersons
Arjuna Lifetime Achievement	I. Arumainayagam (1962 Asian Games gold, football)
Selection panel chair	Justice (Retd.) Arun Kumar Mishra
Notable awardees	Divya Deshmukh & Vidit Gujrathi (chess), Tejaswin Shankar (athletics), Treesa Jolly-Gayatri Gopichand (badminton)

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna is India's highest sporting honour, instituted 1991-92 as Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, renamed 2021.
- Arjuna Award instituted in 1961, for consistent performance, leadership and discipline over four years.
- Dronacharya Award (1985) recognises coaches producing medal winners at major international events.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

First-ever yogasana athlete featured among the 2025 Arjuna recommendations.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

The December 2025 recommendation list (with Hardik Singh as sole Khel Ratna nominee) differs from the final list announced by the Ministry — the final conferred list had zero Khel Ratna awardees; go by the final notified list, not the shortlist.

★ X-TEST

The Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award was originally instituted in 1991-92 under which name?

(a) Arjuna Ratna Award
(b) Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award
(c) Dronacharya Ratna Award
(d) Bharat Ratna (Sports)

Answer: b

SECTION 09 · MISCELLANEOUS · TOPIC 9.2

COP31 Presidency

PRELIMS · CURRENT AFFAIRS

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Turkiye and Australia finalised a shared-leadership model for COP31, to be held in Antalya in November 2026.

X-FACT MATRIX

Host country/city	Turkiye, Antalya
Dates	November 9-20, 2026
COP31 President	Murat Kurum, Turkish Environment Minister
Negotiations lead	Australia (shared-leadership/Troika model)
Troika partners	Azerbaijan (COP29), Brazil (COP30), Turkiye (COP31)
Pre-COP host	Fiji; special leaders' segment host: Tuvalu

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Novel arrangement: Turkiye hosts and holds the formal presidency; Australia leads substantive negotiations.
- COP31 follows COP30 (Brazil, Belem) in the annual UNFCCC Conference of Parties cycle.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Decision to split hosting/negotiation roles resolved an earlier Turkiye-Australia hosting contest.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Do not assume the host country automatically leads negotiations — COP31 is the first instance of a formally split Presidency/negotiations-lead arrangement.

★ X-TEST

COP31 of the UNFCCC, scheduled for November 2026, will be hosted by which country?

(a) Brazil
(b) Azerbaijan
(c) Turkiye
(d) Australia

Answer: c

SECTION 09 · MISCELLANEOUS · TOPIC 9.3

Dr. M. S. Swaminathan Award for Environment Protection 2026

PRELIMS · CURRENT AFFAIRS

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Two Tamil Nadu women were honoured for grassroots marine conservation and sustainable agriculture work under this year's award.

X-FACT MATRIX

Awardees	P. Pechiyammal (Ramanathapuram) and Govindhammal (Villupuram)
Supporting bodies	M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Rotary Club of Madras East, CavinKare
Pechiyammal's work	Ghost-gear recovery, Gulf of Mannar coastline, Neithal Self Help Group
Recognition theme	Grassroots, community-led environmental protection

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- Award links ecological sustainability with community livelihoods, in the spirit of Dr. M. S. Swaminathan's work.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Focus in 2026 was marine conservation (ghost fishing-gear removal) and sustainable agriculture.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Distinct from the global World Food Prize (which Swaminathan himself won in 1987) — this is a grassroots domestic award instituted in his memory, not an international science prize.

SECTION 09 · MISCELLANEOUS · TOPIC 9.4

Anahat Singh (Squash)

PRELIMS · CURRENT AFFAIRS

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Anahat Singh became the first Indian to win the World Junior Squash Championships Girls' Singles title, ending Egypt's 16-year hold on the event.

X-FACT MATRIX

Achievement	First Indian to win World Junior Squash Championships Girls' Singles title
Event	World Junior Squash Championships 2026, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada
Final result	Defeated Ruqayya Salem (Egypt) 3-0
Historic note	Ended Egypt's 16-year streak in the event; won without dropping a game
Current PSA rank	World No. 20 (as of the achievement)

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- First Indian squash player of either gender to reach the World Junior final since Joshna Chinappa (2005).
- Squash is on the Olympic programme for the first time at LA 2028; Anahat is viewed as a medal prospect.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Earlier broke into the world top-20 by winning the Squash On Fire Open (PSA Tour, USA) in February 2026.

⚠ EXAM TRAP — DON'T CONFUSE

Squash's Olympic debut is at LA 2028, not an already-concluded Games — do not mark it as a past Olympic event.

SECTION 09 · MISCELLANEOUS · TOPIC 9.5

Tanvi Sharma wins Taipei Open

PRELIMS · CURRENT AFFAIRS

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Tanvi Sharma, 17, won her maiden BWF World Tour title at the Taipei Open, India's first women's singles win there since Saina Nehwal in 2008.

X-FACT MATRIX

Event	Taipei Open 2026, BWF World Tour Super 300
Result	Defeated Nguyen Thuy Linh (Vietnam) 21-16, 21-16
Age at win	17 years, 222 days — youngest Taipei Open champion in history
Historic note	First Indian women's singles winner at this event since Saina Nehwal (2008)
Coach	Park Tae-sang (former coach of P. V. Sindhu)

STATIC CONNECT — KEY LINKAGES

- First BWF World Tour title of her career; had finished runner-up at the 2025 US Open Super 300.
- Ranked World No. 1 in junior badminton; first Indian with two medals at a single World Junior Championships.

✦ X-RECALL — one fact to take with you

Part of India's maiden Asian Team Championships gold-winning squad.

X-Numbers

The headline figures from this issue, collected in one place. No new information — every number here is stated in full inside its topic.

38	Supreme Court's new sanctioned strength, including the CJI (up from 34)
45th	India's World Heritage Site tally after Sarnath's UNESCO inscription
31.89 crore	Unorganised workers registered on e-Shram after 5 years of operation
Rs 40,000 cr	Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme outlay after Budget 2026-27 doubled it
Rs 10,000 cr	Outlay for the new Container Manufacturing Scheme, Budget 2026-27
450 km	Low Earth Orbit reached by Vikram-1, India's first private orbital rocket
17	Arjuna Award 2025 recipients; zero Khel Ratna conferred this cycle
100%	Maximum tariff the US Senate bill authorises on top-5 Russian oil/gas importers
26th	Edition of the SCO Summit, hosted by Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek
2.8 trillion	Total parameters in Kimi K3, Moonshot AI's open-weight model
Rs 75,021 cr	Total outlay of the PM Surya Ghar rooftop solar scheme
16	Tribunals brought under the new National Tribunals Commission

X Master Recall — This Month's Key Takeaways

✦ **X-RECALL COMPILATION** — every takeaway from this issue

POLITY & GOVERNANCE · INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE ACT, 2026

President as Visitor can order inquiries and issue binding directions on ISI's functioning.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE · TRIBUNALS REFORMS ACT, 2026

2021 Act's provisions were struck down by the SC for excessive executive control over tribunals.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE · REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2026

Purpose: discourage delayed registration and tighten evidentiary reliability of civil records.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE · SUPREME COURT (NUMBER OF JUDGES) AMENDMENT ACT, 2026

2025 saw 75,410 fresh cases instituted against only 65,615 disposed.

PLACES IN NEWS · PETERMANN GLACIER

Periodic large calving events are tracked as indicators of Arctic ice sheet stability.

PLACES IN NEWS · LAKE ERIE

Known for seasonal algal blooms affecting water quality, monitored under US-Canada agreements.

PLACES IN NEWS · MOUNT ARARAT

Iran and Armenia both border Turkiye in this region, making it a tri-junction zone of cultural memory.

PLACES IN NEWS · LARAK ISLAND

Larak lies close to Qeshm, Iran's largest island in the Persian Gulf.

PLACES IN NEWS · DELFT ISLAND

Palk Strait connects the Bay of Bengal to the Palk Bay/ Gulf of Mannar system.

PLACES IN NEWS · MADURA ISLAND

Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city, lies directly across the strait.

PLACES IN NEWS · KUNASHIR ISLAND

The Kuril arc separates the Sea of Okhotsk from the open Pacific.

PLACES IN NEWS · CHILWA LAKE (LAKE CHILWA)

One of Africa's most important sites for migratory waterbirds.

PLACES IN NEWS · MEDAK FORT

Medak district lies in the Manjira river basin, a tributary of the Godavari.

PLACES IN NEWS · KOLLIDAM RIVER

Kaveri delta is one of India's most fertile deltaic regions, known as the 'Rice Bowl of Tamil Nadu.'

PLACES IN NEWS · PAMPA RIVER

Drains into the Vembanad-Kol wetland system, a Ramsar site.

PLACES IN NEWS · HARA MANGROVES

Fed by the Mehran River delta; supports migratory birds and serves as a key Persian Gulf fish and shrimp nursery.

PLACES IN NEWS · CEUTA (SPAIN)

A frequent flashpoint in Spain-Morocco relations and EU migration policy.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · MECCA JOINT DEFENCE AGREEMENT

Officials describe it as purely defensive, not directed at any specific country.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · NAURU RENAMED REPUBLIC OF NAOERO

Located northeast of Australia; independence from Australian administration came in 1968.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · LINDSEY O. GRAHAM SANCTIONING RUSSIA AND IRAN ACT, 2026

Also targets Russian officials, oligarchs, banks, and the 'shadow fleet' evading sanctions.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · 26TH SCO SUMMIT, BISHKEK

India separately hosts the BRICS Summit in New Delhi from September 11, 2026.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY · 1ST NATIONAL GUIDE TO GRASSLANDS AND OTHER OPEN NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS (ONES)

Reinforces a science-based, landscape-level approach to restoration alongside forest cover.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY · MISSION CLOUDED LEOPARD (MEGHALAYA)

Complements the national Clouded Leopard Conservation Action Plan under the IDWH scheme's Species Recovery Programme.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY · NEPAL GLOF (GLACIAL LAKE OUTBURST FLOOD)

ICIMOD's Hindu Kush Himalaya assessments flag rising GLOF frequency across the region.

ECONOMY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT · E-SHRAM PORTAL COMPLETES 5 YEARS

Eligibility: unorganised workers aged 16+, not an income-tax payer, not an EPFO/ESIC member.

ECONOMY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT · NATIONAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2026

Reflects the cooperative sector's expansion into food processing, manufacturing, and value addition since 1962.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · VIKRAM-1 (SKYROOT AEROSPACE)

Follows Skyroot's 2022 Vikram-S, India's first privately developed sub-orbital rocket.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · HYDERACENE

Synthesised via ring-opening polymerisation; named after the city of Hyderabad.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · DEEPAK DHAR WINS THE 2026 DIRAC MEDAL

Educated at Allahabad University, IIT Kanpur (MSc), and Caltech (PhD); long TIFR association.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · KIMI K3 (MOONSHOT AI)

Built on a Kimi Delta Attention architecture with native agentic tool-calling and browsing capability.

HISTORY, ART & CULTURE · SARNATH ADDED TO UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Sarnath was on India's Tentative List since 1998; dossier submitted January 2025.

HISTORY, ART & CULTURE · RANI AVANTIBAI LODHI

A part of the Bargi Dam project has been named Rani Avantibai Sagar in her honour.

ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · ELECTRONICS COMPONENT MANUFACTURING SCHEME (ECMS)

Complements the India Semiconductor Mission in the electronics value chain.

ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · CONTAINER MANUFACTURING SCHEME

Targets import substitution in capital-intensive equipment used in urban infrastructure projects.

ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · SAMUDRA MANTHAN

Complements Sagarmala (port-led development) and the National Fisheries Policy framework.

ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · PM SURYA GHAR: MUFT BIJLI YOJANA

Collateral-free loan options are available alongside the direct subsidy component.

MISCELLANEOUS · NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS 2025

First-ever yogasana athlete featured among the 2025 Arjuna recommendations.

MISCELLANEOUS · COP31 PRESIDENCY

Decision to split hosting/negotiation roles resolved an earlier Turkiye-Australia hosting contest.

MISCELLANEOUS · DR. M. S. SWAMINATHAN AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION 2026

Focus in 2026 was marine conservation (ghost fishing-gear removal) and sustainable agriculture.

MISCELLANEOUS · ANAHAT SINGH (SQUASH)

Earlier broke into the world top-20 by winning the Squash On Fire Open (PSA Tour, USA) in February 2026.

MISCELLANEOUS · TANVI SHARMA WINS TAIPEI OPEN

Part of India's maiden Asian Team Championships gold-winning squad.

⚠ TOP EXAM TRAPS — every distractor from this issue

POLITY & GOVERNANCE · INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE ACT, 2026

Do not confuse with IIT/IIM statutes: ISI's Visitor is the President directly (like Central Universities), and it converts a society, not an existing statutory body, into a corporate entity.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE · TRIBUNALS REFORMS ACT, 2026

NTC members are still appointed by the Central Government (with CJI consultation for chairperson/ judicial members) — independence is procedural, not a transfer of appointing power to the judiciary.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE · REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2026

The stricter JMFC requirement applies only beyond two years of delay; the one-to-two-year band still uses the earlier Executive Magistrate route, it is not judicialised.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE · SUPREME COURT (NUMBER OF JUDGES) AMENDMENT ACT, 2026

The 2026 Act is an amendment to the Number of Judges Act, 1956, not a constitutional amendment — Article 124(1) explicitly delegates this power to ordinary legislation.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · MECCA JOINT DEFENCE AGREEMENT

Analysts caution against calling it a 'NATO of the East' — it lacks NATO's integrated command structure; treat comparisons to Article 5 as analytically weak, not equivalent.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · NAURU RENAMED REPUBLIC OF NAOERO

Nauru/Naoero remains the world's smallest island NATION but is the world's third-smallest sovereign state by land area, after Vatican City and Monaco — don't overstate the size ranking.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · LINDSEY O. GRAHAM SANCTIONING RUSSIA AND IRAN ACT, 2026

Passage in the Senate (86-11) is not enactment — the bill required House passage and presidential signature to become binding law; track the stage carefully in any question.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · 26TH SCO SUMMIT, BISHKEK

SCO membership (10 states) is distinct from its 2 Observer States (Azerbaijan, Armenia) and 15 Dialogue Partners — do not count observers/partners as full members.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY · 1ST NATIONAL GUIDE TO GRASSLANDS AND OTHER OPEN NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS (ONES)

ONEs (Open Natural Ecosystems) is a classification correcting the 'wasteland' label — it does not create a new protected-area category with legal force like a Wildlife Sanctuary or National Park.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY · MISSION CLOUDED LEOPARD (MEGHALAYA)

Distinguish from Project Snow Leopard (2009, Panthera uncia, high-altitude Himalaya, rosette markings) — clouded leopard is an arboreal cat of Northeast India's tropical forests with cloud-shaped blotches.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY · NEPAL GLOF (GLACIAL LAKE OUTBURST FLOOD)

GLOF is distinct from a cloudburst — GLOF originates from a glacial lake breach, while a cloudburst is an extreme, localised rainfall event; both can compound flood disasters in the same basin.

ECONOMY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT · E-SHRAM PORTAL COMPLETES 5 YEARS

e-Shram is a database-plus-service-delivery platform, not itself a pension or insurance scheme — PM-SYM and other schemes are accessed through it, not replaced by it.

ECONOMY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT · NATIONAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2026

NCDC is a statutory corporation under the Ministry of Cooperation, distinct from NABARD (apex agricultural/ rural credit bank) — the two work in overlapping but separate financing spaces.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · HYDERACENE

Hyderacene is from the University of Hyderabad, not IIT Hyderabad — the two are separate institutions and a common mix-up in current-affairs sources.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · KIMI K3 (MOONSHOT AI)

Being 'open-weight' does not mean open-source in the traditional licensing sense — check specific licence terms rather than assuming unrestricted use.

HISTORY, ART & CULTURE · RANI AVANTIBAI LODHI

Do not confuse with Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi — both are women leaders of 1857, but Avantibai's theatre was Ramgarh in central India (Mandla/Dindori belt), not Jhansi-Gwalior.

ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · SAMUDRA MANTHAN

Do not conflate with Sagarmala (port and coastal infrastructure) — Samudra Manthan sits in the ocean-resource and blue-economy research space.

MISCELLANEOUS · COP31 PRESIDENCY

Do not assume the host country automatically leads negotiations — COP31 is the first instance of a formally split Presidency/negotiations-lead arrangement.

MISCELLANEOUS · ANAHAT SINGH (SQUASH)

Squash's Olympic debut is at LA 2028, not an already-concluded Games — do not mark it as a past Olympic event.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · VIKRAM-1 (SKYROOT AEROSPACE)

Vikram-1 is Skyroot's first ORBITAL launch; Vikram-S (2022) was only SUB-orbital — don't credit Vikram-S with reaching orbit.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · DEEPAK DHAR WINS THE 2026 DIRAC MEDAL

Dirac Medal (ICTP, theoretical physics) is distinct from the Nobel Prize and the Fields Medal — several past Dirac Medallists went on to win those, but the Dirac Medal itself is a separate, earlier-stage honour.

HISTORY, ART & CULTURE · SARNATH ADDED TO UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Criterion (iii) recognises spiritual/pilgrimage significance, criterion (vi) recognises direct association with the Buddha's life and teachings — do not conflate the two if a question isolates them.

ECONOMY - GOVERNMENT SCHEMES · ELECTRONICS COMPONENT MANUFACTURING SCHEME (ECMS)

ECMS targets components and sub-assemblies (the supply chain feeding manufacturers), distinct from PLI for mobile manufacturing, which targets finished-device assemblers.

MISCELLANEOUS · NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS 2025

The December 2025 recommendation list (with Hardik Singh as sole Khel Ratna nominee) differs from the final list announced by the Ministry — the final conferred list had zero Khel Ratna awardees; go by the final notified list, not the shortlist.

MISCELLANEOUS · DR. M. S. SWAMINATHAN AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION 2026

Distinct from the global World Food Prize (which Swaminathan himself won in 1987) — this is a grassroots domestic award instituted in his memory, not an international science prize.

STUDY STRATEGY · NOT A CLAIM ABOUT EXACT READING TIME

LAST 30 MINUTES

BEFORE YOUR PRELIMS TEST

10 MIN

X-FACT MATRICES

Cover every X-Fact Matrix and reproduce it cold.

10 MIN

EXAM TRAPS / DON'T CONFUSE

Read only the ⚠ boxes and Don't-Mix-These-Up cards — nothing else.

5 MIN

VISUAL MEMORY

Re-look at every diagram/chart; name what each axis or box means.

5 MIN

X-TEST MISTAKES

Re-attempt every X-Test question and PYQ you got wrong.