UPSC POINT.com

PREPARE. PERSEVERE. PREVAIL.

Q2 / 2026

QUARTERLY EDITION

CURRENT AFFAIRS

APRIL / MAY / JUNE



THE QUARTER, EXPLAINED.

22 in-depth chapters · 50 Prelims questions
Photographs · Visual explainers · Mains practice

NEWS CUTOFF 30 JUNE 2026

Cover: Earthset from Artemis II, 6 April 2026 · NASA · Public domain

EDITORIAL

Read the event. Understand the issue.

A quarterly companion for Prelims, Mains and clearer thinking.

A good current-affairs note should answer more than “what happened?”. It should explain the problem behind the announcement, the institutions involved and the choices that remain. This edition brings April, May and June together so that related developments can be studied as one connected story.

INSIDE THE ISSUE

22 analytical chapters, 22 comparison tables, 22 mechanism diagrams, 50 original Prelims questions with explanations, 22 Mains prompts with answer outlines, and two original ethics cases.

First reading: build the foundation

Start with the photograph, dated development and plain-language opening. Read the concept page slowly. The worked examples are illustrative teaching examples, not reported events.

Second reading: practise judgement

Use the analysis page to identify benefits, constraints and implementation choices. The mechanism diagram helps reconstruct an argument without memorising a paragraph.

Final revision: test the distinctions

Use the timeline, comparison tables and exam traps before attempting the practice set. Return to the linked chapter when an answer reveals a conceptual gap.

SCOPE AND DATING

This is a retrospective, subject-wise selection of 22 major themes from 1 April to 30 June 2026, not a day-by-day archive of every event. Prepared on 12 November 2026 using dated primary material. Later developments are excluded from the quarter’s narrative. GS links are editorial study links; practice questions are not official UPSC questions.

News summaries are source-linked. Explanations, examples, questions and policy assessments are editorial teaching material. Government projections are described as targets or expectations, not verified outcomes. Photographs are real, credited event or archival images; captions identify their context.

CONTENTS

The core chapters

Tap a chapter title or use the PDF bookmarks.

01 **Women’s representation and delimitation** 8
APRIL | POLITY

02 **Census 2027: digital tools meet field realities** 11
APRIL-MAY | GOVERNANCE

03 **More judges, better justice?** 14
MAY | POLITY AND JUSTICE

04 **Election data: transparency beyond the result** 17
MAY | DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

05 **RBI policy under a supply shock** 20
APRIL-JUNE | ECONOMY

06 **June GDP release: read the period first** 23
MAY-JUNE | ECONOMY AND DATA

07 **ECLGS 5.0: liquidity support with public risk** 26
MAY | ECONOMY

08 **Maritime insurance as economic infrastructure** 29
APRIL-MAY | ECONOMY AND SECURITY

09 **India-New Zealand FTA: from signature to use** 32
APRIL | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND TRADE

10 **G7 and the politics of critical minerals** 35
JUNE | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

11 **Cotton productivity: the farm-to-fabric chain** 38
MAY | AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY

CONTENTS

The wider connections

Tap a chapter title or use the PDF bookmarks.

12 **Farm support: inputs, prices and real incentives** 41
APRIL-MAY | AGRICULTURE

13 **Semiconductors beyond the smallest chip** 44
MAY | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

14 **Artemis II: what a crewed lunar flyby proves** 47
APRIL | SPACE SCIENCE

15 **Kalai-II: hydropower in a mountain basin** 50
APRIL | ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

16 **Coal gasification: security and carbon trade-offs** 53
MAY | ENERGY AND INDUSTRY

17 **Monsoon forecasts: probability, geography and decisions** 56
APRIL-MAY | GEOGRAPHY AND AGRICULTURE

18 **Extreme heat is also a labour-governance issue** 59
APRIL-JUNE | DISASTER MANAGEMENT

19 **Biodiversity: who shares the benefits?** 62
MAY-JUNE | ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

20 **Ebola and the meaning of a global health emergency** 65
MAY-JUNE | HEALTH AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

21 **Rural roads: connectivity is a continuing service** 68
APRIL | RURAL DEVELOPMENT

22 **The Constitution in Sindhi: language and citizenship** 71
APRIL | CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Cross-topic revision · 74

Ethics cases · 76

Prelims practice and explanations · 78

Glossary, sources and photo credits · 94

QUARTER AT A GLANCE

April: institutions and access

Announcement dates organise the story; they do not prove implementation.

APRIL

01 APR	**Artemis II launches** - Crewed lunar flyby begins; no lunar landing.
08 APR	**RBI, fertilizer and hydropower** - Repo retained; Kharif NBS and Kalai-II approval.
10 APR	**Return and constitutional access** - Artemis II splashdown; Sindhi Constitution release.
16 APR	**Census and constitutional process** - Karnataka fieldwork starts; amendment debate begins.
18 APR	**Cabinet decisions** - Maritime insurance pool and PMGSY-III continuation.
27 APR	**India-New Zealand FTA** - Agreement signed in New Delhi; implementation stages remain.
28 APR	**Heat and labour** - Worker-protection advisory issued.

STUDY PRIORITY

Connect the constitutional debate with census fieldwork and language access. Follow the trade agreement from signature to future operation, and distinguish project approval from completion.

KEEP THE STAGES SEPARATE

Proposal → approval → legal or operational steps → delivery → measured outcome. The chapters identify what the quarter's evidence actually establishes.

QUARTER AT A GLANCE

May: policy responses and incentives

Announcement dates organise the story; they do not prove implementation.

MAY

05 MAY	**Credit, cotton, chips and courts** - ECLGS, cotton and semiconductor approvals; judges Bill proposal.
08 MAY	**Election statistics** - ECI publishes reports and identifies primary records.
12 MAY	**Insurance and statistics** - Maritime pool launched; GDP release calendar revised.
13 MAY	**Agriculture and industry** - Kharif MSPs and gasification scheme approved.
17 MAY	**International health alert** - WHO determines Bundibugyo epidemic a PHEIC.
22 MAY	**WHO recommendations** - Statement distinguishes PHEIC from pandemic emergency.
29 MAY	**Monsoon outlook** - National forecast updated to 90% of LPA, ±4%.

STUDY PRIORITY

Compare guarantees, subsidies and investment support. Ask who bears risk, which stage has been reached and what evidence would establish a useful outcome.

KEEP THE STAGES SEPARATE

Proposal → approval → legal or operational steps → delivery → measured outcome. The chapters identify what the quarter’s evidence actually establishes.

QUARTER AT A GLANCE

June: read the evidence carefully

Announcement dates organise the story; they do not prove implementation.

JUNE

05 JUN	**RBI and national accounts** - Repo held; provisional FY 2025-26 real growth at 7.7%.
06 JUN	**Biodiversity and business** - Voluntary ABS certification initiative announced.
17 JUN	**Evian diplomacy** - G7 critical-minerals declaration; India-US meeting.
30 JUN	**Editorial cutoff** - Later ratification, rollout and seasonal outcomes excluded.

STUDY PRIORITY

Keep GDP reference periods, policy-decision dates and international declarations separate. The issue closes on 30 June; later rainfall outcomes, implementation updates and trade ratification are not used to rewrite the quarter.

KEEP THE STAGES SEPARATE

Proposal → approval → legal or operational steps → delivery → measured outcome. The chapters identify what the quarter's evidence actually establishes.

01 / POLITY / APRIL

Women’s representation and delimitation

Why assent, commencement and actual implementation are different constitutional stages.



New Parliament building, New Delhi, 2023. Archival institutional context; not a photograph of the April 2026 debate or May election. Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs / GODL-India.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

Parliament debated the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 and two connected Bills on 16-17 April. The constitutional Bill did not secure the required majority; the government’s session-end account says the dependent Bills were not proceeded with. Separately, the 106th Amendment Act, 2023 commenced on 16 April 2026. Its existing implementation conditions remain crucial: commencement alone did not immediately reserve seats in the sitting legislatures.

A law can be enacted, brought into force and still require a further constitutional process before a particular benefit operates. The women’s reservation debate is a useful way to understand this sequence. Read the operative provision before assuming that a date in a headline has changed the composition of Parliament.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS II: constitutional amendments; Parliament; representation; federalism

Source notes: S01, S02, S03, S37, S40 | Full register at the back.

01 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

What the existing amendment provides

The 106th Amendment provides for reservation, as nearly as may be, of one-third of directly elected seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, with related provision for the Delhi Assembly. Women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are included within the respective reserved-seat arrangements. This is about seats, not merely a requirement that parties nominate women. It does not create a corresponding reservation in the Rajya Sabha. Read Articles 330A, 332A and 334A together with the amendment to Article 239AA.

Why census and delimitation matter

Article 334A links operation to a delimitation exercise undertaken for this purpose after publication of the relevant figures of the first census taken after commencement. A census establishes demographic evidence; delimitation determines constituency boundaries and related representation arrangements under the applicable law. Neither is the same as conducting an election. In a federation, population-based representation must also be debated alongside regional interests, administrative practicality and the incentives created by past population policies. These are political and institutional choices, not an automatic arithmetic exercise.

The special-majority test

Under Article 368, a constitutional amendment requires a majority of the total membership of each House and at least two-thirds of members present and voting. Both conditions must be satisfied. Certain amendments affecting specified federal provisions additionally require ratification by at least half the State legislatures. A government having an ordinary working majority does not by itself establish that it can amend the Constitution. Nor does a failed attempt to change an existing provision erase that existing provision.

Stage	Meaning
Assent	The Bill becomes an Act.
Commencement	The Act or provision comes into force.
Operational condition	A further specified event may still be required.
April 2026 Bill	Did not pass; proposed changes are not enacted law.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative calculation: if a House has a total membership of 500 and 450 members are present and voting, the amendment needs at least 300 affirmative votes. That satisfies both the two-thirds test and the requirement of a majority of the total membership. A simple majority of those voting would not suffice.

Source notes: S01, S02, S03, S37, S40 | Full register at the back.

01 / POLITY / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Representation needs a wider support system

Seat reservation can widen access to institutions historically dominated by men. Effective participation also depends on party selection, campaign finance, personal security, training, accessible legislative procedures and opportunity to influence committees. An answer should distinguish entry into office from influence within it. Neither dismissing reservation as merely symbolic nor treating it as sufficient by itself captures the institutional problem.

Delimitation requires public confidence

Boundary changes can affect communities, incumbents and the balance among regions. Credible criteria, published demographic evidence, consultation and reasoned decisions help reduce suspicion. Population equality among constituencies is an important concern, but practical geography and the applicable legal framework also matter. Avoid asserting a final number of future Lok Sabha seats when discussing a proposal that did not pass.

How to frame a balanced answer

Begin with the democratic case for broader participation. Explain the constitutional sequence accurately, then examine federal concerns and implementation capacity. A practical way forward combines transparent demographic processes with stronger opportunities for women within parties and legislatures. The quarter's lesson is that urgency of a policy goal does not remove the need for the constitutionally required procedure.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

Do not confuse the 131st Amendment Bill, 2026 with an enacted 131st Amendment Act. The 106th Amendment's commencement is also distinct from immediate implementation of seat reservation.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

"Political representation requires both constitutional design and institutional support." Discuss with reference to women's representation. (250 words)

Answer route: Explain the existing framework and its implementation condition. Present the case for inclusion, examine delimitation and federal concerns, then address party practices, finance, capacity and safety. Conclude with transparent implementation and substantive participation rather than an unsupported implementation date.

Source notes: S01, S02, S03, S37, S40 | Full register at the back.

02 / GOVERNANCE / APRIL-MAY

Census 2027: digital tools meet field realities

The April fieldwork shows why a digital census still needs trained people and public trust.



Census 2027 digital-tools launch, New Delhi; photograph in the 5 March 2026 PIB release. Press Information Bureau, Government of India / PIB reproduction policy.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

Phase I houselisting fieldwork in Karnataka was scheduled for 16 April-15 May, following self-enumeration from 1-15 April. The 15 April official release reported 4.8% household self-enumeration by 6.30 p.m.; this was a Karnataka update, not a national completion rate. The broader first-phase window runs April-September 2026, with state-specific schedules. Population enumeration is a separate phase; the first phase does not produce the final national population count.

A household may have a smartphone but share it among several members. Another may have reliable income but limited reading ability. A third may be away for seasonal work. Designing enumeration around one imagined “digital citizen” would miss real people. The public value of digitisation depends on how well it handles such ordinary differences.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS II: governance; transparency; welfare planning | GS I: population

Source notes: S04, S05 | Full register at the back.

02 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Houselisting creates the operational frame

Houselisting identifies buildings and households and records housing conditions, amenities and assets. It helps organise the later population count. A household, a family and a building are not interchangeable statistical units: one building may contain several households, while members of a family may live in different places. Enumerators need clear definitions and consistent application. These apparently small distinctions influence coverage, comparisons and the usefulness of local planning data.

A census differs from a survey

A census aims at complete enumeration of the defined population. A sample survey observes a selected part and uses a statistical design to estimate wider characteristics. Neither approach is automatically error-free. A census can miss migrants or duplicate people; a survey can suffer from coverage problems, non-response or poor sampling. Digital validation can detect impossible entries, but it cannot always identify a plausible answer entered for the wrong household.

Digital capture changes the workflow

Mobile collection can reduce transcription delays and support quicker monitoring. Self-enumeration offers convenience, while field visits cover those who do not use it and verify submitted references. Supervisors still need to resolve unusual cases and ensure consistent coverage. Confidentiality is essential because respondents must be willing to answer honestly. Public release of useful aggregates should be distinguished from exposing identifiable household responses.

Do not confuse	Key distinction
Building / household	A physical structure may contain several households.
Self-enumeration / census	An optional response channel is not the whole exercise.
Houselisting / population count	Preparatory household information differs from individual enumeration.
Digital validation / truth	A technically valid entry may still be wrong.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Suppose an apartment building contains 12 separately managed households. Recording one household because there is one postal address would undercount. A well-designed app cannot prevent that mistake unless the enumerator understands the statistical unit and checks the living arrangements.

Source notes: S04, S05 | Full register at the back.

02 / GOVERNANCE / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Inclusion is an operational responsibility

Training should prepare staff for language barriers, disability, remote settlements and mobility. Local assistance can help, but must not allow influential intermediaries to dictate answers. Revisit arrangements, clear identification of enumerators and accessible explanations of purpose are practical safeguards. An impressive dashboard is not a substitute for checking who has been left out of it.

Better data can improve service planning

Housing and amenity data help identify gaps in water, sanitation and other basic services. Their value rises when definitions, geography and dates are clear. Administrative datasets may be more frequent, but often cover only registered users of a programme. Census and survey evidence can reveal people missing from those registers. The datasets should complement one another rather than be treated as identical.

Trust and quality should be measured

A strong review asks about coverage, correction, consistency and the handling of complaints, not only the speed of submission. Security controls must extend to access permissions, staff practices and the retention of records. Publish methods and aggregate quality information so researchers can understand limitations. A digital census succeeds when it produces credible knowledge of the population, including those least visible online.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

The Karnataka self-enumeration percentage was a dated state update. Do not present it as India's census completion rate or confuse the April-September window with simultaneous fieldwork everywhere.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

How can digital enumeration improve public planning without deepening exclusion or weakening confidentiality? (250 words)

Answer route: Define the census's planning role. Explain faster capture and monitoring, then discuss coverage errors, language and device barriers, privacy and supervision. Propose assisted channels, field verification, clear definitions, controlled access and transparent quality reporting.

Source notes: S04, S05 | Full register at the back.

03 / POLITY AND JUSTICE / MAY

More judges, better justice?

Capacity expansion matters, but the route from sanctioned posts to timely hearings has several steps.



Supreme Court of India, September 2019. Archival photograph; not evidence that additional judges have been appointed. Pinakpani / CC BY-SA 4.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 5 May, the Cabinet approved a proposal to introduce a Bill increasing Supreme Court judges from 33 to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India. Including the CJI, those figures correspond to 34 and a proposed 38. The release described a legislative proposal to amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956. Cabinet approval by itself neither amended that Act nor appointed four additional judges.

A hospital gains little from sanctioning more doctors if recruitment, rooms and diagnostic support do not follow. Courts face a comparable capacity problem, although judicial independence makes their institutional design distinctive. The useful question is not simply how many posts exist, but whether the system can give parties a fair hearing within a reasonable time.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS II: judiciary; access to justice; institutional capacity

Source notes: S03, S06 | Full register at the back.

03 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Sanctioned strength and working strength

Sanctioned strength is the legally authorised number of posts; working strength is the number actually occupied. Vacancies, retirements and appointment timelines create a gap between them. Additional judges also need courtrooms, registries, research assistance and administrative support. Article 124 establishes the Supreme Court and allows Parliament by law to provide for a larger number of judges. Expanding the statutory ceiling and filling posts are separate institutional actions.

Pendency is a stock; disposal is a flow

Pending cases accumulate when new filings exceed disposals over time, subject to transfers and other adjustments. A court may dispose of more cases than last year yet still see pendency rise if filings grow faster. Total pendency also conceals differences in age and urgency. A long-pending liberty matter and a newly filed commercial dispute should not be treated as identical simply because each adds one to the count.

Speed must remain compatible with fairness

Access to justice includes affordable procedures, understandable orders, representation and meaningful opportunity to be heard. Article 39A directs the State to promote equal justice and provide free legal aid through appropriate measures. Case management can reduce avoidable delay, but crude disposal targets may encourage hurried handling of complex disputes. Institutional performance needs measures that capture timeliness, quality and the position of vulnerable litigants.

Term	Meaning
33 / 37	Existing / proposed judges, excluding CJI, in the May release.
34 / 38	The same figures including the CJI.
Sanctioned / working	Authorised posts / occupied posts.
Cabinet approval	Approval of the proposal; not enactment or appointment.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative court figures: 1,000 cases are pending at the start of a year; 600 arrive and 550 are disposed of. Pending cases rise to 1,050, despite substantial work. The calculation explains why disposal numbers need to be read alongside new filings and case age.

Source notes: S03, S06 | Full register at the back.

03 / POLITY AND JUSTICE / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

What additional capacity can achieve

More occupied benches can distribute workload and create space for specialised or constitutionally significant matters. Benefits depend on the mix of cases and the supporting workflow. Strengthening the Supreme Court is only one part of the system: people often experience justice first through police stations, legal-aid services and district courts. Reform should follow the entire dispute pathway.

Remove delay at its source

Incomplete filings, delayed service of notice, repeated adjournments and weak record management can consume scarce hearing time. Better registries and reliable digital records can help, with assistance for users unable to file electronically. Transparent scheduling and reasoned adjournment practices make proceedings more predictable. Technology should make a fair process easier to use, not become another barrier to entry.

A credible reform package

Combine timely appointments with infrastructure, legal aid and administrative improvement. Track old cases, urgent categories and reasons for delay rather than celebrating aggregate disposal alone. Preserve judicial independence in staffing and evaluation. The defensible conclusion is that capacity expansion is valuable when it forms part of a coherent institutional response; it is not proof that delay has already been solved.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



> **PRELIMS TRAP**
>
> Count the CJI consistently. Do not describe the Cabinet's May proposal as an already enacted increase in the court's statutory strength.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

"Judicial capacity is necessary but not sufficient for timely justice." Examine. (250 words)

Answer route: Distinguish sanctioned and working strength. Explain case inflow and pendency, then connect appointments with infrastructure, registries, legal aid and case management. Use fairness and independence as safeguards against a disposal-only approach.

Source notes: S03, S06 | Full register at the back.

04 / DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS / MAY

Election data: transparency beyond the result

Turnout, vote share and seat share answer different questions about democratic participation.



New Parliament building, New Delhi, 2023. Archival institutional context; not a photograph of the April 2026 debate or May election. Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs / GODL-India.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 8 May, the Election Commission reported publication of Index Cards and 14 Statistical Reports for the 2026 Assembly elections and bye-elections through ECINET and its website. The release described publication within 72 hours of results and identified statutory forms maintained by Returning Officers as the final primary record. It also noted a scheduled re-poll in Falta; the release should not be read as an assertion that every constituency process was complete.

Two parties can receive similar statewide vote shares yet win very different numbers of constituencies. That is not a mathematical contradiction: votes are converted into seats through constituency-level contests. A serious reading of election data begins by identifying the unit being measured before drawing conclusions about mandates, participation or representation.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS II: elections; constitutional bodies; accountability | GS IV: transparency

Source notes: S03, S07 | Full register at the back.

04 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Understand the denominator

Turnout relates participation to the relevant electorate; vote share relates a party's votes to the relevant votes in the stated dataset. Seat share relates seats won to seats being considered. Comparing them without checking definitions can mislead. A rise in the number of voters may occur even when the turnout percentage falls if the electorate has grown. Gender and constituency disaggregation can reveal patterns hidden by a state average.

Why the electoral system matters

Under first-past-the-post, the candidate with the highest number of valid votes wins the constituency; an absolute majority is not a universal requirement. Geographic distribution therefore matters. A party with support spread thinly across many seats may win fewer than one with concentrated support. Seat share cannot be treated as a direct measure of the percentage of all residents supporting a party, especially because non-voters and people not eligible to vote are different groups.

Publication and evidentiary hierarchy

Statistical reports make data usable for researchers and the public, but they are prepared from underlying records. The ECI's release distinguishes secondary statistical compilation from statutory forms held by Returning Officers. A discrepancy should lead to examination of the relevant records and applicable procedure, not an automatic assumption of either fraud or perfect accuracy. Version control and clear correction notices are part of credible publication.

Measure	What it describes
Turnout	Participation relative to the defined electorate.
Vote share	Votes for a party/candidate within the relevant vote total.
Seat share	Proportion of constituencies won.
Statistical report	A compilation; statutory primary records remain important.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative result: Party A wins 40% of votes in each of ten seats; Party B wins 35% and Party C 25% in each. A wins every seat with 40% of the vote. The example explains the electoral rule; it is not a claim about the 2026 results.

Source notes: S03, S07 | Full register at the back.

04 / DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

What faster publication makes possible

Timely, accessible datasets allow independent study of participation, competition and representation. Journalists and civil-society groups can test claims with a common evidentiary base. Machine-readable tables and consistent definitions reduce the burden of manual transcription. The public benefit depends on the data remaining understandable and comparable, not simply appearing quickly online.

Avoid misleading comparisons

Boundary changes, electorate revisions, different election types and uncontested seats can affect comparisons. Statewide turnout is not obtained by casually averaging constituency percentages when electorate sizes differ. Nor does a higher turnout alone establish better electoral conditions: participation needs to be considered alongside accessibility, freedom and the integrity of the process. Evidence should support the claim actually being made.

The administrative principle

Transparency works best when institutions publish definitions, preserve primary records and make correction procedures visible. Citizens should be able to question a statistic without being forced into partisan conclusions. In a Mains answer, connect data access with institutional trust, but also explain the need for auditability and due process. Publication is the beginning of accountable scrutiny, not its replacement.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

First-past-the-post does not require every winner to obtain over 50% of votes. Do not equate a seat majority with a majority of all electors or residents.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Assess the role of timely election-data publication in strengthening democratic accountability. (150 words)

Answer route: Link accessible data with scrutiny and informed participation. Explain denominators, constituency effects and primary-record verification. Recommend clear metadata, correction trails and usable formats while preserving lawful safeguards.

Source notes: S03, S07 | Full register at the back.

05 / ECONOMY / APRIL-JUNE

RBI policy under a supply shock

An unchanged interest rate can reflect an active judgement about competing risks.



North Block, New Delhi, 2012. Archival photograph of the fiscal-policy setting; not the 2026 Budget presentation. Mukulfaiz / CC BY-SA 3.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

The MPC kept the policy repo rate at 5.25% in its April and June meetings and retained a neutral stance. The 5 June resolution placed the SDF rate at 5.00% and the MSF and Bank Rate at 5.50%. It highlighted risks from West Asia, higher energy and freight costs, and the monsoon outlook. These were dated policy assessments; they should not be replaced with assumptions drawn from later developments.

When fuel becomes costlier because supply is disrupted, firms face higher costs while households have less money for other purchases. Prices can rise even as growth weakens. This is harder for a central bank than a simple demand boom: the same interest-rate increase that restrains spending can add pressure to an already slowing economy.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: monetary policy; inflation; growth; external shocks

Source notes: S08, S09 | Full register at the back.

05 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Demand inflation and cost pressures

Demand-driven inflation occurs when spending presses against available productive capacity. A supply shock can instead reduce availability or raise input costs. The two may interact: businesses facing expensive freight may pass costs to consumers, while households seek higher wages to protect purchasing power. Monetary policy cannot produce crude oil or reopen a shipping route. It can influence financing conditions, demand and expectations about whether price pressures will persist.

How the policy rate reaches the economy

The repo rate is a policy signal transmitted through money markets, bank funding and lending decisions. The SDF provides an absorption facility, while the MSF serves as a marginal borrowing facility for eligible banks. A change in the policy rate does not instantly or uniformly change every household's loan rate. Loan contracts, deposit repricing, liquidity, competition and borrower risk influence transmission. Distinguish the announced rate from the rates actually paid by firms and households.

The meaning of a neutral stance

A neutral stance preserves flexibility; it is not a promise that the next move must be a cut or that rates cannot change. Policymakers examine incoming evidence and the balance of risks. Holding a rate can be a deliberate decision when the duration of a shock is uncertain. The relevant comparison is between plausible policy responses and their costs, not between "action" and an assumed absence of thinking.

Concept	Read it correctly
Repo: 5.25%	Policy rate retained in April and June.
Neutral stance	Flexibility, not a guaranteed next move.
Supply shock	Availability or input-cost disturbance.
Transmission	The path from policy to actual financing conditions.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative firm: freight rises from 10 to 18 units per product while its selling price remains 100. Its margin falls by 8 unless it changes price, absorbs costs or improves efficiency. A cheaper loan can ease cash flow, but does not itself restore the missing shipping capacity.

Source notes: S08, S09 | Full register at the back.

05 / ECONOMY / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Why expectations matter

A temporary fuel shock becomes more difficult if firms and households expect general inflation to remain high and adjust prices and wages accordingly. Clear communication can help distinguish a one-off relative-price change from sustained inflation. Credibility also requires willingness to respond when evidence changes. Overconfidence in an early forecast can be as damaging as reacting mechanically to every volatile monthly figure.

Monetary and supply-side responses

Fiscal authorities may use targeted support, logistics measures or supply diversification, while monetary policy addresses economy-wide conditions. Broad subsidies can protect purchasing power temporarily but impose fiscal costs and weaken incentives to conserve scarce energy. A better answer discusses who bears the shock, how long support lasts and whether it reaches vulnerable users without encouraging waste.

What an aspirant should track

Read inflation's composition, growth indicators, energy prices, exchange-rate pressures and financial conditions together. Distinguish realised data from projections and separate the date of an MPC decision from the later publication of minutes. The quarter illustrates policy under uncertainty: the objective is a reasoned response that limits persistent inflation without imposing unnecessary damage on productive activity.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

An unchanged repo rate is not an unchanged economic environment. A neutral stance does not mean that inflation and growth receive identical numerical weights in every decision.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Why do supply shocks create difficult trade-offs for monetary policy? Discuss using energy and food-price risks. (250 words)

Answer route: Explain the simultaneous inflation and growth effects. Trace transmission and expectations. Assess the costs of premature tightening and prolonged accommodation, then discuss targeted fiscal and supply responses with clear monitoring and communication.

Source notes: S08, S09 | Full register at the back.

06 / ECONOMY AND DATA / MAY-JUNE

June GDP release: read the period first

A statistic released in the second calendar quarter may describe the previous financial year.



Marine Drive skyline, Mumbai, 2016. Archival urban-development context. A.Savin / FAL.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 5 June, MoSPI's provisional estimates put real GDP growth for FY 2025-26 at 7.7% and January-March 2026 growth at 7.8%, using the 2022-23 base year. Nominal annual growth was 8.9%. A 12 May notice had moved the annual provisional release from the last working day of May to 7 June or the preceding working day. These are the June estimates, not later revisions or an April-June growth estimate.

The date printed above a news story is not necessarily the period measured by its main number. Confusing the two can turn a correct GDP figure into a wrong exam answer. Always record four things beside a statistic: what it measures, the period covered, the price basis and the date or version of the estimate.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: growth; national income; development | GS II: evidence-based governance

Source notes: S10, S11 | Full register at the back.

06 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Real output and nominal value

Nominal GDP values production at current prices; real GDP removes price effects using the statistical framework's constant-price measures. A rise in nominal GDP can reflect both additional output and higher prices. GDP at market prices relates to gross value added at basic prices through product taxes less product subsidies. These are accounting concepts, not interchangeable descriptions of household welfare. Per-capita income, distribution and public-service quality answer further questions.

Why provisional estimates change

Early estimates rely on the information available at a particular date. Company results, government accounts and administrative indicators arrive with lags. As coverage improves, earlier figures can be revised. MoSPI's May notice specifically linked the revised release date to availability of audited company results and fiscal data. A revision is not automatically evidence of manipulation, but transparent methods and release calendars are necessary for credibility.

Calendar quarter versus financial quarter

April-June 2026 is Q2 of calendar year 2026 but Q1 of FY 2026-27. January-March 2026 is Q1 of the calendar year but Q4 of FY 2025-26. The magazine uses calendar quarters; national accounts commonly use the April-March financial year. A June release about the previous January-March quarter therefore belongs in this issue as a news development without becoming a measure of production during April-June.

Label	Period or meaning
Calendar Q2 2026	April-June 2026.
FY 2026-27 Q1	The same April-June period.
June provisional release	FY 2025-26 and its January-March Q4.
7.7% / 8.9%	June-vintage annual real / nominal GDP growth.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative calculation: output volume rises from 100 to 105 while its price rises from 10 to 11. Nominal value rises from 1,000 to 1,155, or 15.5%; real volume rises 5%. Adding the two percentage changes gives only an approximation because their effects compound.

Source notes: S10, S11 | Full register at the back.

06 / ECONOMY AND DATA / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Growth is a starting point

A high aggregate growth rate indicates expansion in measured output, but does not show that every sector or household improved equally. Examine employment, wages, investment composition and consumption patterns. A growing economy may still contain stressed firms or regions. Equally, a sector's slowdown does not establish that the whole economy has contracted. Keep the level of the claim aligned with the evidence.

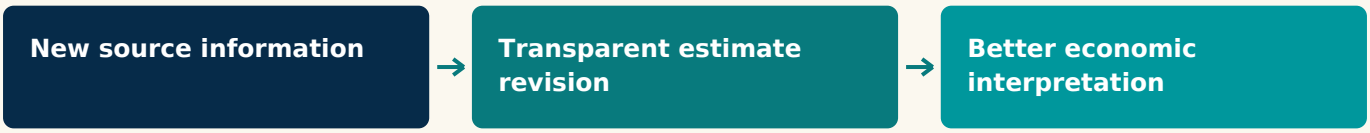
Use comparable series and vintages

Comparisons across rebased series need care because coverage, methods and price measures can change. Comparing one year's revised estimate with another year's early estimate without checking the table can create misleading narratives. Use the same publication where possible, label the vintage and explain important methodological changes. The aim is to interpret the economy, not accumulate impressive-looking percentages.

Timeliness and accuracy are both public goods

Faster publication helps businesses and policymakers act, while fuller data improve reliability. A predictable release calendar makes that trade-off visible. Revision histories and accessible methodological notes help users understand uncertainty. For Mains, connect statistical capacity with better resource allocation and accountability; for Prelims, protect yourself against period, base-year and real-versus-nominal traps.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

The 7.8% figure in the 5 June release refers to January-March 2026. It is not an estimate of April-June output simply because it was published in June.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Reliable economic statistics require a balance between timeliness, comparability and accuracy. Explain. (150 words)

Answer route: Use release lags and revisions to explain the trade-off. Mention consistent definitions, base years, revision histories and calendars. Conclude that transparent uncertainty supports better decisions than either delayed silence or falsely precise early claims.

Source notes: S10, S11 | Full register at the back.

07 / ECONOMY / MAY

ECLGS 5.0: liquidity support with public risk

A credit guarantee can help a viable firm survive disruption, but it does not make borrowing costless.



Textile manufacturing in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, 2022. Archival industry photograph; not a BHAVYA project. Ravi Dwivedi / CC BY-SA 4.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

The Cabinet approved ECLGS 5.0 on 5 May in response to West Asia-related liquidity pressures. The announcement targeted ₹2.55 lakh crore of additional credit, including ₹5,000 crore for airlines. NCGTC guarantee coverage was specified as 100% for eligible MSMEs and 90% for eligible non-MSMEs and airlines. This is a credit-flow target and risk-sharing arrangement, not a cash grant of that amount to all firms.

A business can have profitable orders and still run short of cash if imported inputs become expensive or customers pay late. That is a liquidity problem. A business whose underlying activity persistently loses money faces a different challenge. Credit policy must distinguish the two or it can postpone losses while increasing the eventual public burden.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: MSMEs; credit; employment; fiscal risk

Source notes: S12 | Full register at the back.

07 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

The working-capital cycle

Firms pay for inputs, wages and inventories before collecting all their sales receipts. Working capital bridges that interval. Disrupted shipping can lengthen the cycle: more money remains tied up in goods in transit, while higher input prices raise the amount needed for the same output. Smaller firms often have limited reserves and bargaining power. A temporary cash shortage can therefore damage production and employment even where demand remains viable.

What a guarantee actually does

A guarantee promises specified protection to a lender if covered conditions occur. Under the announced scheme, NCGTC provides cover to member lending institutions for the eligible additional facility. The borrower still owes the loan. Guarantee coverage is not the same as a loan waiver, an interest subsidy or direct equity. Eligibility, documentation and the scheme's operational terms determine access; a headline does not establish universal entitlement.

Liquidity is different from solvency

Liquidity concerns meeting payments when due; solvency concerns whether assets and future earning capacity can support obligations. Temporary support can preserve useful activity when the disruption is short-lived. If losses reflect an unviable business model, more debt may make recovery harder. Appraisal should examine orders, cash flow, leverage and recovery prospects rather than assume that every stressed borrower faces the same problem.

Instrument	What changes
Loan	Provides funds that must be repaid.
Guarantee	Shares a specified lender risk.
Grant	Transfers resources without ordinary loan repayment.
Equity	Provides risk capital with ownership implications.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

A supplier expects payment of 100 units next month but must pay wages of 30 today. A bridge loan can solve the timing gap if the receivable is credible. If the customer has permanently failed and each new order also loses money, the problem is not solved by repeatedly extending that loan.

Source notes: S12 | Full register at the back.

07 / ECONOMY / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

The case for intervention

During a common external shock, otherwise sound firms may all seek credit while lenders become more cautious. A public guarantee can reduce that coordination problem and prevent unnecessary closures. Preserving supplier networks and trained workers may have benefits beyond a single borrower. The justification is strongest where support is additional, timely and directed at viable activity affected by the shock.

Manage moral hazard and fiscal exposure

High guarantee coverage can weaken incentives for careful lending if institutions expect losses to be transferred. Verification, monitoring and clear treatment of recoveries remain necessary. A guarantee creates a contingent fiscal exposure even if no immediate budget payment occurs. Report defaults, claims and recoveries transparently, and avoid measuring success only through the amount of credit sanctioned.

Judge outcomes, not announcements

Useful indicators include continuity of operations, repayment performance and whether viable firms received support that was otherwise unavailable. Compare beneficiaries with their actual needs; simply refinancing already available credit adds little. A time-bound emergency scheme should have an exit path. The objective is to help firms regain normal financing, not create permanent dependence on crisis guarantees.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

100% guarantee coverage for eligible MSME facilities does not mean a 100% subsidy to the borrower or an automatic cancellation of repayment obligations.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Evaluate credit guarantees as a response to temporary external shocks affecting MSMEs. (250 words)

Answer route: Explain the cash-flow problem and additionality. Weigh employment and supply-chain protection against moral hazard and contingent liabilities. Recommend eligibility checks, monitoring, claim transparency and an exit strategy tied to recovery.

Source notes: S12 | Full register at the back.

08 / ECONOMY AND SECURITY / APRIL-MAY

Maritime insurance as economic infrastructure

Trade can stop when insurance disappears, even if a vessel and its cargo are ready.



Container ship at Fremantle, Western Australia, 2009. Archival trade context; not a shipment under the 2026 agreements. Liese Coulter, CSIRO / CC BY 3.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

The Cabinet approved the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool on 18 April with a ₹12,980 crore sovereign guarantee. The Department of Financial Services launched the USD 1.5 billion pool on 12 May, backed by a USD 1.4 billion guarantee, and handed over initial war-risk policies. GIC Re was named administrator. The launch addressed continuity of cover amid West Asia tensions; it did not remove the physical dangers of maritime conflict.

A shipping route is more than a line on a map. It also depends on finance, crews, ports, contracts and insurance. If insurers withdraw war-risk cover, a commercially necessary voyage may become difficult to undertake. This explains why an insurance decision can matter for energy security, industrial inputs and the price of everyday goods.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: infrastructure; external sector; risk management | GS II: international relations

Source notes: S13, S14 | Full register at the back.

08 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Different policies cover different losses

Hull and machinery cover concerns the vessel and its equipment; cargo insurance concerns the goods. Protection and indemnity addresses specified third-party liabilities, such as pollution or injury, while war-risk cover deals with defined conflict-related perils. Exact protection depends on policy wording and exclusions. A pool's intended scope does not prove that every product was already operational on its launch date. The May release identified initial war-risk policies specifically.

Pooling and reinsurance

Pooling combines capacity among participating insurers. Reinsurance transfers part of an insurer's risk to another insurer or reinsurer. These arrangements spread exposure, but losses can remain correlated when many vessels use the same threatened corridor. A sovereign backstop can support capacity when private markets withdraw, yet the underlying uncertainty has been redistributed rather than eliminated. Pricing and limits still need sound technical assessment.

Why risk premiums reach consumers

Higher shipping premiums increase the delivered cost of imports and exports. Delays and route changes also raise fuel use, inventory needs and working-capital costs. The effect is particularly relevant for energy and industrial inputs that feed into many other prices. Insurance continuity can reduce one source of disruption, while diplomacy, navigation safety and diversification address other parts of the problem.

Risk layer	Relevant concept
Ship itself	Hull and machinery.
Goods carried	Cargo insurance.
Third-party liability	Protection and indemnity, subject to cover.
Conflict-related peril	War-risk cover and specific exclusions.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative example: ten ships each face a small independent risk, so pooling can smooth losses. If all ten cross the same conflict zone at the same time, the risks are linked. The pool needs concentration limits and a severe-loss plan; adding more similar policies alone does not ensure diversification.

Source notes: S13, S14 | Full register at the back.

08 / ECONOMY AND SECURITY / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

The strategic rationale

Domestic underwriting capacity can preserve choices when foreign capacity becomes unavailable. It may also support expertise in a specialised financial service. But resilience does not require treating international reinsurance as undesirable in all circumstances. Diverse partners and transparent risk-sharing can complement domestic capability. The policy question is which dependence creates vulnerability and how much public support is justified to reduce it.

Protect the public balance sheet

A sovereign guarantee can generate a future obligation during a severe event. Decisions about vessel eligibility, voyage exposure, deductibles and concentration should be documented. Stress testing should consider simultaneous claims, not only average historical losses. Public support needs governance that separates commercial underwriting from pressure to insure any voyage at an artificially low price.

Insurance cannot substitute for prevention

Seafarer safety, information sharing, route assessment and diplomatic efforts remain necessary. Compensation after a loss cannot restore a life or prevent a supply interruption. A balanced strategy therefore combines financial protection with risk reduction and contingency planning. In an answer, place the pool within a wider resilience framework rather than calling it a complete solution to maritime insecurity.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

The guarantee amount is not money already spent. A pool’s broad design is also not evidence that every insurance product had been launched by 30 June.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Explain how maritime insurance contributes to trade resilience. What safeguards should accompany a sovereign-backed pool? (250 words)

Answer route: Trace cover withdrawal to shipping and supply-chain costs. Explain pooling and public support, then discuss correlated risk, pricing, claims, transparency and seafarer protection. End with insurance as one component of a broader security strategy.

Source notes: S13, S14 | Full register at the back.

09 / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND TRADE / APRIL

India-New Zealand FTA: from signature to use

Market access becomes valuable when firms can meet rules, standards and delivery requirements.



Piyush Goyal and Todd McClay at the India-New Zealand FTA signing, New Delhi, 27 April 2026. Official event photograph. Press Information Bureau, Government of India / PIB reproduction policy.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

India and New Zealand signed their FTA in New Delhi on 27 April. The Indian release described duty-free access for all Indian goods exports to New Zealand and Indian market-access offers covering 70% of tariff lines and 95% of bilateral trade, with sensitive exclusions including dairy. These were agreed commitments to operate through the agreement's legal process. At this issue's 30 June cutoff, signature should not be described as entry into force.

Removing a tariff can make an exporter's product cheaper at the border. It does not ensure that the product meets safety standards, arrives on time or finds a buyer. The difference between a negotiated opportunity and a usable opportunity is where much of the development debate around trade agreements belongs.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS II: bilateral agreements | GS III: external trade; agriculture; services

Source notes: S15, S16 | Full register at the back.

09 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Tariff lines are not trade value

A tariff line is a product category in a customs schedule. The share of tariff lines covered and the share of trade value covered answer different questions because some products account for much more trade than others. A deal can cover a high proportion of trade while retaining exclusions across many smaller product categories. Check whether a percentage concerns imports, exports, lines, value, immediate cuts or phased reductions before comparing agreements.

Rules of origin protect the preference

Preferential access generally requires a product to qualify as originating under the agreement's rules. Merely shipping a third country's product through a partner does not necessarily make it eligible. Origin criteria may examine production processes, changes in classification or value content. These requirements help prevent simple transshipment, but compliance creates paperwork and verification costs. Small firms need practical guidance to use preferences correctly.

Goods and services face different barriers

Goods trade involves customs duties, product standards, logistics and border procedures. Services may face licensing, qualification recognition, establishment or mobility requirements. A commitment on professional access is not an unrestricted immigration entitlement. Likewise, a published investment commitment is not evidence that the money has already arrived. Each provision must be read with its conditions, implementation arrangements and relevant domestic rules.

Stage or term	Meaning
Signature	Agreement signed; implementation steps may remain.
Entry into force	Treaty obligations become operative under its terms.
Rules of origin	Eligibility for preferential treatment.
Trade-value coverage	Economic weight, not the count of product categories.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative schedule: 90 of 100 tariff lines receive concessions, but those lines account for only 60% of trade value. Coverage is 90% by lines and 60% by value. Neither number is wrong; they answer different questions. This example is not the agreement's actual schedule.

Source notes: S15, S16 | Full register at the back.

09 / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND TRADE / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Potential gains for India

Labour-intensive exporters can benefit from better access if price advantages are matched by reliable quality and delivery. Cheaper suitable inputs can improve manufacturing competitiveness. Agricultural cooperation may strengthen productivity without requiring identical treatment for every farm product. Services links can deepen knowledge and business relationships. These are pathways to gains, not a guarantee of gains for all sectors.

Adjustment and distribution matter

Consumers, exporters and import-competing producers may experience different effects. Sensitive exclusions can protect vulnerable sectors but also limit potential benefits. Standards support, testing facilities, information desks and affordable trade finance can help smaller enterprises participate. A useful assessment asks whether gains reach firms beyond the largest established exporters and whether adjustment costs are recognised.

The correct evaluation sequence

Separate signature, domestic legal completion, entry into force and observed commercial outcomes. After implementation, examine preference use, export diversification and firm participation rather than attributing every change in trade to the agreement. Exchange rates, commodity prices and demand also matter. The strongest Mains answer explains both the negotiated design and the domestic capabilities needed to benefit from it.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

Do not equate signing on 27 April with tariff preferences already operating that day. Tariff-line coverage and trade-value coverage are also different denominators.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Trade agreements create opportunities; domestic capabilities determine their use. Discuss. (250 words)

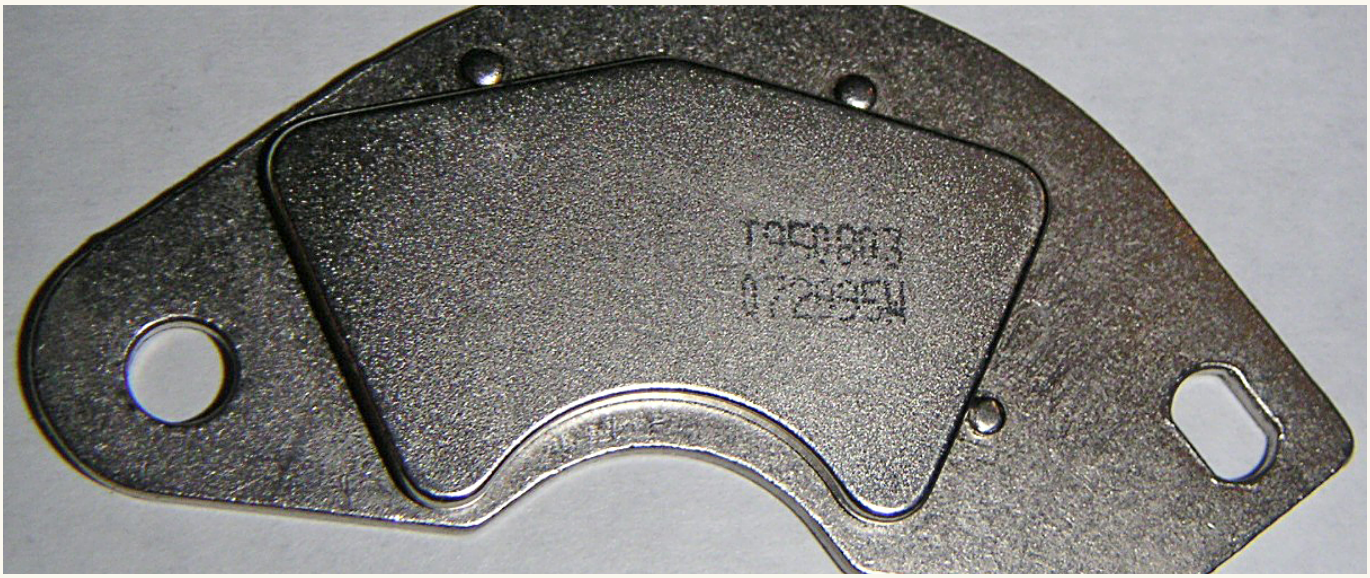
Answer route: Explain tariffs, origin and standards. Assess export and input opportunities alongside sensitive sectors and adjustment. Propose testing, logistics, trade finance, information and skills support, and distinguish legal milestones from measurable outcomes.

Source notes: S15, S16 | Full register at the back.

10 / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS / JUNE

G7 and the politics of critical minerals

The strategic bottleneck may lie in processing rather than in the location of the ore.



Neodymium magnet from a computer hard drive, image uploaded in 2005. Archival illustration of a rare-earth application; not a G7 event photograph. Bloodshedder at en.wikipedia / Public domain.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

At the Evian summit, the G7 issued a critical-minerals declaration posted on 17 June, addressing concentrated supply chains, processing, recycling, finance and stockpiling. It established a non-binding Critical Minerals Resilience and Production Alliance. India also participated in summit diplomacy; the Indian account of the 17 June India-US meeting emphasised navigation and trade concerns. India's participation does not make it a G7 member or automatically bind it to every G7 commitment.

Owning mineral deposits is not the same as possessing a secure supply of usable components. Between a mine and an electric motor lie refining, separation, chemical processing, manufacturing and quality control. A disruption at one specialised stage can affect many countries even when the underlying mineral exists in several places.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS II: international groupings | GS III: resources; technology; supply chains

Source notes: S17, S18 | Full register at the back.

10 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

What makes a mineral critical

Criticality depends on economic importance and supply risk, not simply physical rarity. The relevant list can vary with a country's industries, available substitutes and import dependence. Rare earths are a particular group of elements; "critical minerals" is a policy category that can include other materials. Confusing the two hides the actual problem. The question is which material or processing step can interrupt an important activity and how quickly alternatives can be developed.

Read the whole value chain

Mining produces ore; processing separates and refines usable material; manufacturing turns it into components and products. Concentration may differ at each stage. A new mine does little for resilience if its output still relies on one external refinery. Recycling can provide secondary supply, but collection systems, recovery technology and sufficient end-of-life material are needed. Substitution may also change performance or cost rather than remove the problem entirely.

Why investment is difficult

Projects can require large upfront spending and long development periods while commodity prices fluctuate. Offtake agreements offer a buyer commitment; guarantees or public finance can share risk. Stockpiles provide a buffer during disruption but require decisions about size, quality, rotation and release. None is free. Policymakers must compare the cost of diversification with the economic damage caused by dependence during a crisis.

Stage	Typical resilience question
Mining	Can reliable, responsible supply be developed?
Processing	Where are separation and refining concentrated?
Components	Are technology and quality capabilities available?
Recycling	Can useful material be collected and recovered?

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Imagine a country with lithium deposits but no battery-grade processing. It exports ore and imports refined material. A mining expansion raises extraction without necessarily securing batteries. A fuller strategy examines refining, cathode production, cell manufacturing and recycling as separate capabilities.

Source notes: S17, S18 | Full register at the back.

10 / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

India’s strategic choices

India can combine domestic exploration and processing with overseas partnerships, recycling and research into substitutes. Skills and technology transfer matter alongside access to deposits. A partnership should be evaluated for durable capability, commercially viable supply and environmental responsibility. Aligning with a specific initiative is a policy decision; attending a summit does not establish membership in every mechanism announced there.

Avoid replacing one vulnerability with another

Diversification can become expensive if subsidies indefinitely support uncompetitive projects or simply shift dependence to another single supplier. Mining and refining also affect water, waste and local communities. Transparent contracts, traceability and credible environmental standards help prevent strategic urgency from becoming a reason to ignore social costs. Security and sustainability need to be assessed together.

The diplomatic significance

Minerals connect industrial policy with external relations because export restrictions, standards and financing influence who can produce advanced technologies. Cooperation can reduce duplication and support shared information, but may also produce competing blocs. A balanced Indian approach preserves multiple partnerships and focuses on identifiable vulnerabilities. Resilience means having workable alternatives, not merely adopting a slogan of self-sufficiency.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

Critical minerals and rare earths are not synonyms. The G7 alliance was described as non-binding; India’s summit participation is not proof of automatic membership or acceptance of every target.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Critical-mineral security requires a value-chain approach rather than a mining-only strategy. Examine for India. (250 words)

Answer route: Define criticality, identify processing and component bottlenecks, and discuss partnerships, finance, recycling and substitution. Balance resilience with cost, environmental safeguards and community interests. Avoid treating all minerals or all dependencies alike.

Source notes: S17, S18 | Full register at the back.

11 / AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY / MAY

Cotton productivity: the farm-to-fabric chain

Higher yield matters most when quality, farm economics and industrial needs improve together.



Cotton field, Raichur, Karnataka, December 2024. Archival crop context; not a verified beneficiary of the new mission. Nabina Chakraborty, WELL Labs / CC BY-SA 4.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 5 May, the Cabinet approved the Mission for Cotton Productivity for 2026-27 to 2030-31, with an outlay of ₹5,659.22 crore. The announcement linked improved seeds and production practices with cleaner cotton and textile competitiveness. The five-year outlay is an approved programme envelope, not proof that yields or exports had already increased. The mission's relevance extends from farm risk to the quality of fibre entering factories.

A farmer may harvest more cotton and still earn less if input costs rise sharply or poor quality attracts a discount. A textile mill may receive adequate quantities but face contamination that reduces usable output. Productivity policy works better when it follows the crop through harvesting, handling and processing rather than stopping at the field boundary.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: crop productivity; agricultural research; textiles; value chains

Source notes: S19 | Full register at the back.

11 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Production, yield and income

Production depends on the area cultivated and output per unit area. Yield improvements can raise production without expanding acreage, but farm income also depends on prices, input costs and losses. Comparing cotton statistics requires checking whether they refer to seed cotton, lint or bales and whether units are consistent. A programme should track net returns and risk alongside physical output, especially where farmers face variable rainfall and expensive inputs.

Research needs effective extension

Improved seed is useful only when suited to local conditions and supported by appropriate management. Pest resistance, sowing practices, soil conditions and water availability interact. Extension services translate research into decisions farmers can use, while local feedback helps researchers understand failures. A demonstration plot does not prove that every farmer will obtain the same result. Adoption depends on affordability, availability and confidence in the advice.

Quality continues after harvest

Fibre characteristics and contamination affect spinning and product quality. Handling, storage, transport and ginning can preserve or damage what the farmer has produced. If buyers reward only weight and not quality, the incentive to improve practices weakens. Transparent grading and traceability can help connect better production with better prices. The value chain therefore needs coordination among farmers, traders, processors and manufacturers.

Indicator	What it tells you
Yield	Output per unit area.
Production	Total output; also depends on area.
Quality	Suitability and value for the next user.
Net return	Revenue less relevant production costs.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative comparison: Farm A sells 20 units at 100 each with costs of 1,200, earning 800. Farm B sells 24 units at 95 with costs of 1,600, earning 680. Higher output alone has not improved income; price, quality and cost must be read together.

Source notes: S19 | Full register at the back.

11 / AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Productivity without excessive resource stress

Higher output should not depend on indiscriminate water or chemical use. Location-specific advice, integrated pest management and better soil practices can reduce avoidable costs and environmental damage. The appropriate package differs across rainfed and irrigated areas. A single national target must therefore be translated into local agronomic choices and monitored for unintended effects.

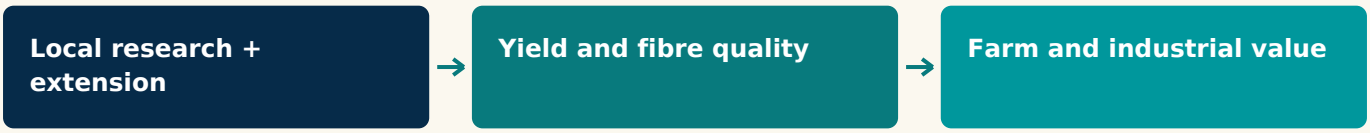
Strengthen bargaining and market links

Small producers may struggle to obtain reliable inputs, test quality or negotiate with buyers. Collective arrangements can reduce transaction costs if governance is sound and benefits reach members. Timely payments, transparent grading and credible market information matter as much as a new technology announcement. The key is to reward useful improvements rather than push farmers into higher expenditure without a dependable return.

What success should look like

Look for sustainable yield gains, lower avoidable contamination, stronger net returns and more reliable supply to industry. Disaggregate results by region and farm size. Explain disappointing outcomes rather than counting training sessions as final success. The mission offers a case study in linking agricultural research, extension and industrial policy while keeping farmer welfare at the centre.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



> **PRELIMS TRAP**
>
> An announced outlay is not a measured productivity gain. More cotton production does not necessarily mean higher yield or higher net farm income.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

How can cotton-productivity policy improve both farmer welfare and textile competitiveness? (250 words)

Answer route: Link local research and extension with pest, water and soil management. Follow quality through harvesting and ginning. Discuss grading, payments and market links, then propose outcome measures covering net returns, quality and resource use.

Source notes: S19 | Full register at the back.

12 / AGRICULTURE / APRIL-MAY

Farm support: inputs, prices and real incentives

Fertilizer subsidy and MSP act at different points in the farmer’s decision.



THE ISSUE BEHIND THE NEWS

Before sowing, a farmer considers expected yield, input costs, rainfall, labour and the chance of selling at a worthwhile price. A cheaper input changes one part of that calculation; a support price changes another. The combined incentive can influence crop choice, but the farmer’s actual outcome also depends on procurement access and production risk.

Farm work in East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, 2010. Archival context; the person is not identified as a scheme beneficiary. kiran kumar / Kiran Kumar G / CC BY-SA 2.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 8 April, the Cabinet approved NBS rates for phosphatic and potassic fertilizers for April-September 2026, with a tentative requirement of ₹41,533.81 crore. On 13 May, it approved MSPs for 14 Kharif crops for marketing season 2026-27; common paddy was set at ₹2,441 per quintal. These are distinct interventions: one supports specified inputs, while the other announces output support prices.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: farm subsidies; MSP; food security; cropping patterns

Source notes: S20, S21 | Full register at the back.

12 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

How nutrient-based subsidy differs

NBS supports notified phosphatic and potassic fertilizer products according to their nutrient content and approved rates. Nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur are nutrients in the framework, but that does not mean urea falls under the same NBS regime. Product coverage and nutrient coverage are different ideas. Subsidy can cushion international price pressure, while availability, distribution and relative prices influence what farmers actually buy.

MSP is not the same as realised price

MSP is an announced support price. Whether a farmer can sell at that price depends on procurement arrangements, crop, location, quality requirements and access. A market price can be above or below it. An announcement does not establish that every unit produced will be purchased by the government. This distinction is essential when judging who benefits and why procurement patterns influence cropping decisions.

Costs and margins need precise definitions

A support-price statement may report a margin over a specified measure of production cost. Paid-out costs, imputed family labour and a broader cost including owned resources are not identical. Always check the cost concept before saying a farmer receives a particular profit. National average cost estimates also differ from an individual farm's costs. Transport, quality deductions and payment delays can affect the return actually received.

Policy	Point of intervention
NBS for P&K products	Cost and availability of specified fertilizer inputs.
MSP	Announced support price for output.
Procurement	Actual purchasing operation.
Extension	Knowledge for better production and input use.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

A farmer's crop sells for 2,300 per quintal while its announced MSP is 2,441. If accessible procurement is unavailable, the announcement alone does not close the gap. Conversely, when the market offers 2,600, a farmer may sell commercially. This is an illustrative market example.

Source notes: S20, S21 | Full register at the back.

12 / AGRICULTURE / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

The case for support

Agriculture faces weather uncertainty, price volatility and the public importance of food supply. Input support can protect production when import prices rise, while procurement can offer an outlet in selected markets. These measures may stabilise expectations, but their effectiveness depends on timely delivery. A bag unavailable at sowing or a payment delayed beyond the next crop cycle weakens the intended benefit.

Watch the environmental signal

When relative prices encourage overuse of one nutrient or cultivation of water-intensive crops in unsuitable locations, fiscal support can create ecological costs. Balanced fertilization needs soil-based advice and access to appropriate products, not just exhortation. Crop diversification also requires buyers, processing and risk management. Farmers cannot be expected to shift crops on environmental advice alone if market access remains uncertain.

Build a more coherent package

Combine transparent price and subsidy policy with extension, storage, marketing, irrigation efficiency and reliable payments. Assess distribution across crops, regions and farm sizes. Procurement reforms and better input use should be designed together. The objective is resilient farm income and food security with responsible resource use, rather than maximising subsidy expenditure or announcing a higher price as an end in itself.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

NBS support for nutrients is not equivalent to bringing urea under that scheme. MSP announcement, market price and actual procurement are three different facts.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Discuss the need to align farm-support policies with income security and environmental sustainability. (250 words)

Answer route: Distinguish input subsidy, MSP and procurement. Explain food-security and risk-management benefits, then examine nutrient imbalance, water use and unequal access. Recommend market links, soil-based advice, timely payments and outcome-based evaluation.

Source notes: S20, S21 | Full register at the back.

13 / SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY / MAY

Semiconductors beyond the smallest chip

GaN displays and packaging show why an industry strategy needs several kinds of capability.



Semiconductor wafer being removed from processing equipment, from a Purdue Engineering video published in April 2026. General technology context; not the approved Gujarat facilities. YouTube — Purdue Engineering / CC BY 4.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 5 May, the Cabinet approved two Gujarat semiconductor projects with proposed investment of about ₹3,936 crore. Crystal Matrix's Dholera proposal covered GaN-based Mini/Micro-LED display manufacturing and related fabrication/ATMP, while Suchi Semicon's Surat proposal concerned outsourced assembly and testing. The announcement described planned facilities and capacities. It should not be read as proof that these newly approved projects had begun commercial production.

The word "chip" often brings a smartphone processor to mind. Yet modern electronics also need power devices, sensors, displays and reliable packaging. A country can build valuable capability in these areas without producing every kind of advanced processor. Understanding the different tasks makes industrial-policy announcements much easier to assess.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: semiconductor technology; industrial policy; strategic autonomy

Source notes: S22 | Full register at the back.

13 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Design, fabrication and packaging

Design specifies the circuit or device. Fabrication creates structures on a semiconductor wafer through tightly controlled processes. Assembly, packaging and testing connect and protect the device and check whether it performs as required. These stages require different equipment, skills and supplier networks. Packaging is not merely putting a finished chip in a box: electrical connections, heat removal and reliability can strongly influence product performance.

Why compound semiconductors matter

Silicon is an elemental semiconductor; gallium nitride combines gallium and nitrogen. Different materials have different electrical and optical properties. GaN's wide band gap is useful in relevant power and optoelectronic applications. A material suited to light emission or power conversion is not automatically the best choice for every digital logic circuit. Match the material to the application before making claims about technological superiority.

Mini-LED and Micro-LED

These terms relate to very small light-emitting devices used in display technologies, but should not be treated as interchangeable labels for the same architecture. Display performance depends on more than the emitter: manufacturing yield, colour, integration and control electronics also matter. The May approval identifies a particular industrial opportunity. It does not mean that all dependence on imported display components or semiconductor equipment has ended.

Stage	Core task
Design	Specify the device or circuit.
Fabrication	Create devices on semiconductor material.
ATMP	Assembly, testing, marking and packaging.
OSAT	Outsourced semiconductor assembly and test services.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

A well-designed chip can fail in a vehicle if its package cannot handle heat and vibration. Improving packaging and testing may therefore create substantial value even without changing the circuit's design. This illustrative example explains why the value chain cannot be ranked only by transistor size.

Source notes: S22 | Full register at the back.

13 / SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Build a connected ecosystem

A facility needs reliable electricity, suitable water, chemicals, precision equipment, maintenance and trained personnel. Suppliers and customers must qualify processes and products. Research institutions can contribute skills and problem-solving, while industrial experience improves yield over time. The policy challenge is to create working links among these activities rather than measure success only by the number of announced projects.

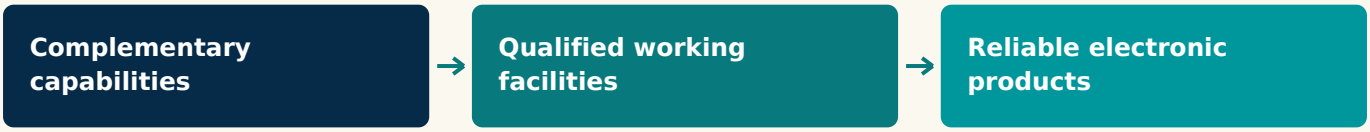
Public support needs milestones

Semiconductor facilities are capital intensive and exposed to technology cycles and global competition. Support should be tied to verifiable construction, equipment, qualification and production milestones. Proposed employment is not the same as jobs already created. Evaluate domestic value addition, capability development and commercial viability while being realistic about the international nature of the supply chain.

A practical meaning of self-reliance

Strategic capability can mean having dependable domestic strengths, diversified sourcing and the ability to repair or adapt important systems. It need not mean producing every input domestically at any cost. A balanced approach develops areas where capability can deepen while retaining productive international partnerships. In an exam answer, explain which bottleneck the policy addresses and what evidence would show that it is working.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

GaN is a compound semiconductor. ATMP/OSAT capability is different from a leading-edge silicon logic fabrication plant, and project approval is different from commercial output.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Explain why a semiconductor ecosystem requires more than fabrication plants alone. (150 words)

Answer route: Map design, materials, fabrication, packaging, testing and equipment support. Use the GaN/display and OSAT proposals as examples. Discuss skills, utilities, qualification and milestone-based support, avoiding claims of complete self-sufficiency.

Source notes: S22 | Full register at the back.

14 / SPACE SCIENCE / APRIL

Artemis II: what a crewed lunar flyby proves

The mission tested a human deep-space system; it was not a landing on the Moon.



Orion descending under parachutes at the Artemis II splashdown, 10 April 2026, off California. Official mission photograph. NASA/Joel Kowsky / Public domain.

THE ISSUE BEHIND THE NEWS

Sending people into deep space requires a chain of systems to work together: launch, propulsion, navigation, communications, life support, power, heat protection and recovery. A successful flight is therefore more than a distance record. The important scientific question is what was tested, what the evidence shows and what still needs further demonstration.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

Artemis II launched on 1 April and splashed down off California on 10 April, according to NASA's local-date reporting. Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen travelled around the Moon in Orion, launched by the Space Launch System. The mission was a crewed lunar flyby and systems test, not a lunar landing. Its completion supplied evidence for future planning rather than eliminating every remaining technical risk.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: space technology; scientific development; international cooperation

Source notes: S23, S24 | Full register at the back.

Build the foundation

Flyby, orbit and landing

A flyby passes a celestial body along a planned trajectory; entering orbit requires the appropriate change in motion to remain gravitationally bound in that orbit. Landing additionally requires controlled descent and surface operations. These are distinct mission profiles with different energy and hardware requirements. Do not infer a landing merely because astronauts travelled close to the Moon, or describe every path around it as a long-term lunar orbit.

Why human spaceflight is demanding

A crewed spacecraft must maintain a habitable environment and support people through normal operations and credible emergencies. Radiation exposure, isolation, equipment reliability and limited resupply become important beyond low Earth orbit. Redundancy and testing reduce risk but also add mass and complexity. The engineering task is to design a system whose components and procedures remain dependable when operated together in the actual mission environment.

Re-entry is part of the mission

Returning from a lunar journey involves managing high speed and heating as the spacecraft enters the atmosphere. A heat shield protects the crew module, while guidance and parachutes help deliver a recoverable landing or splashdown. Recovery teams and medical checks complete the operational chain. Reaching the Moon’s vicinity is not enough: mission success includes returning the crew and examining the vehicle and data afterward.

Item	Role in Artemis II
SLS	Launch vehicle.
Orion	Crew spacecraft.
Mission profile	Crewed lunar flyby; no lunar landing.
Return	Pacific splashdown on 10 April, local date.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Think of the launch vehicle as the system that supplies the initial energy and the crew spacecraft as the vehicle that sustains the astronauts during the journey and return. The analogy is simplified, but it helps prevent confusing SLS with Orion or treating a crew capsule as a lunar lander.

Source notes: S23, S24 | Full register at the back.

14 / SPACE SCIENCE / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

The value of flight evidence

Ground tests can reproduce selected conditions, but integrated flight reveals interactions difficult to capture separately. Crew operations provide evidence about interfaces, workload and procedures. Engineers compare measurements with predictions and investigate anomalies even after an overall successful mission. Scientific progress depends on that disciplined learning, not on declaring a system permanently proven after one flight.

Relevance to India's space ambitions

The general lessons apply to any human-spaceflight programme: qualification, life support, recovery, training and organisational coordination matter together. International cooperation can share knowledge and scientific opportunities while each programme retains its own mission design. Artemis II should not be presented as an Indian mission or as direct proof of the readiness of another country's spacecraft.

How to write a useful science answer

Explain mission type and the systems tested before listing names or records. Link human spaceflight with research, engineering capability and cooperation, while recognising cost and safety constraints. Avoid treating artist's concepts of future bases as completed infrastructure. The most durable knowledge is the distinction among launch vehicles, crew spacecraft, mission trajectories and operational stages.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

Artemis II did not land astronauts on the Moon. Dates in NASA's release use the stated local time; avoid silently converting the event into an Indian calendar date.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Why are integrated flight tests essential in human-spaceflight programmes? Explain with reference to Artemis II. (150 words)

Answer route: Identify the flyby mission and the linked systems. Explain why ground testing alone is insufficient, discuss crew interaction, re-entry and recovery, and conclude with post-flight analysis as the bridge to safer future missions.

Source notes: S23, S24 | Full register at the back.

15 / ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT / APRIL

Kalai-II: hydropower in a mountain basin

Electricity, river ecology, geology and community interests must be assessed together.



Bistra I small hydroelectric facility, 25 August 2024. Archival illustration; not an Indian scheme beneficiary. Ajznponar / CC0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 8 April, the CCEA approved ₹14,105.83 crore investment for the 1,200 MW Kalai-II hydroelectric project on the Lohit in Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh. The release gave an estimated completion period of 78 months and expected annual generation of 4,852.95 million units. It identified a THDC India-Arunachal Pradesh joint venture. These are project-design and approval figures, not electricity already supplied during the quarter.

A mountain river carries water, sediment and ecological connections. It also supports livelihoods and passes through terrain exposed to natural hazards. Hydropower can provide valuable electricity, but an assessment that looks only at installed megawatts misses much of the project's public significance. The basin, the grid and affected communities all belong in the analysis.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: energy infrastructure; environmental assessment; disaster risk | GS I: rivers

Source notes: S25 | Full register at the back.

15 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Capacity is not annual generation

A megawatt measures power: the rate at which energy can be produced. A megawatt-hour measures energy over time. Actual output depends on water availability, operating conditions and maintenance. A 1,200 MW installation does not produce 1,200 MW continuously throughout every hour of the year. Expected generation is a model-based project estimate and needs to be distinguished from future metered output.

Hydropower and grid flexibility

Hydroelectric plants convert the energy of moving or falling water into electricity. Depending on project design and water conditions, they can support peak demand and balancing. The usefulness of flexible generation grows when variable sources are added to a grid. But storage and dispatch characteristics differ among projects; do not assume that every hydro plant has identical ability to shift generation across seasons or hours.

The river-basin perspective

A project changes more than the point where a turbine stands. Flow regimes, sediment movement, aquatic habitats and downstream uses can be affected. Several projects in one basin may produce cumulative effects that individual assessments miss. Mountain geology and intense rainfall also influence construction and operational risk. Site-specific studies and credible monitoring are essential; general claims that hydropower is either harmless or always unacceptable are too broad.

Fact	Keep the distinction
Location	Lohit river; Anjaw, Arunachal Pradesh.
1,200 MW	Installed power capacity in the approved design.
4,852.95 million units	Expected annual energy generation.
78 months	Estimated completion period, not a guaranteed date.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative calculation using the announcement: 1,200 MW running at full power for 8,760 hours would generate 10,512 million units. Expected annual generation of 4,852.95 million units is about 46.2% of that amount. This is an implied design ratio, not an observed operating result.

Source notes: S25 | Full register at the back.

15 / ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Public benefits and local burdens

Electricity and infrastructure can benefit a wide area while land acquisition, disruption and ecological changes fall more directly on local communities. Compensation is only one part of a fair response. Consultation, livelihood restoration, benefit sharing and access to grievance mechanisms matter over the project's lifetime. Promised benefits should be tracked separately from actual delivery.

Plan for climate and disaster uncertainty

Historical flow records may not capture all future extremes. Project design and emergency planning should consider floods, slope instability, sediment and changes in water availability. Monitoring and communication with downstream communities can reduce consequences when conditions deteriorate. Resilience requires operational preparedness and maintenance, not just a design statement in an approval document.

A balanced appraisal

Compare dependable energy, flexibility and public benefits with financial cost, ecological effects and distributional consequences. Examine alternatives and mitigation rather than assuming the announced capacity settles the decision. A good answer recognises the strategic value of Northeast infrastructure while insisting that long-lived assets need scientifically credible appraisal and accountable local engagement.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

MW and million units are not interchangeable. Kalai-II's approved capacity and expected generation are plans; they do not establish that the project was operational in April.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Discuss the conditions under which Himalayan hydropower can support energy security sustainably. (250 words)

Answer route: Explain energy and flexibility benefits. Examine basin effects, geology, climate risk and local burdens. Recommend cumulative assessment, credible consultation, monitoring, emergency preparedness and benefit tracking with realistic financial appraisal.

Source notes: S25 | Full register at the back.

16 / ENERGY AND INDUSTRY / MAY

Coal gasification: security and carbon trade-offs

Changing coal into a different product does not automatically make the process low-carbon.



Coal mining at Singrauli, 2011. Archival feedstock context; not a gasification plant approved in May 2026. Dharmendragudia / CC BY-SA 3.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 13 May, the Cabinet approved a ₹37,500 crore scheme for surface coal/lignite gasification. The announcement linked it to a national goal of gasifying 100 million tonnes by 2030, while the scheme itself targeted approximately 75 million tonnes of coal/lignite. It provided milestone-linked incentives, with a maximum of 20% of plant-and-machinery cost subject to caps. The broader national goal and this scheme's target are different figures.

A country may seek to use domestic coal to make chemicals otherwise imported. That can address one vulnerability while creating costs in water use, emissions or public finance. Energy policy often involves such competing objectives. The task is to compare them explicitly rather than allow the term "clean" or "self-reliant" to settle the analysis.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: energy security; industrial policy; climate change; technology

Source notes: S26, S39 | Full register at the back.

16 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Gasification is not ordinary combustion

Gasification converts a carbon-containing feedstock under controlled conditions into a gas mixture, commonly called syngas. Carbon monoxide and hydrogen are important components. The gas can be processed into chemicals or fuels through additional steps. Combustion primarily releases heat by burning fuel. The processes differ, but gasification still involves carbon and energy use; the name does not imply the absence of greenhouse-gas emissions.

Products and dependence

Syngas can serve as an intermediate for products such as methanol, ammonia or synthetic natural gas, depending on the process chain. Import substitution depends on delivered cost, product quality, scale and reliable operation. Domestic feedstock reduces one external exposure but may leave dependence on equipment, catalysts or finance. Identify the specific product and supply-chain bottleneck before claiming a general reduction in strategic vulnerability.

Count emissions across the chain

Assess extraction, transport, conversion, energy inputs and use of the final product. Carbon capture may reduce some emissions if it is technically effective and accompanied by durable storage, but its cost and coverage matter. Hydrogen made from coal is not automatically green hydrogen. A lifecycle comparison is more informative than examining only the emissions at one selected point in the plant.

Term	Meaning
Syngas	A gas mixture with important CO and hydrogen content.
Surface gasification	Processing in an above-ground facility.
100 million tonnes	Broader national 2030 goal in the release.
About 75 million tonnes	Target associated with the newly approved scheme.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Illustrative comparison: a domestically produced chemical costs 120 units while an imported equivalent costs 100. Paying the difference may be justified for a clearly identified resilience benefit, but the benefit, duration and beneficiaries should be explicit. “Domestic” alone does not establish value for money.

Source notes: S26, S39 | Full register at the back.

16 / ENERGY AND INDUSTRY / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Why government support is proposed

Large projects can face technology, financing and market risks that discourage investment. Milestone-linked incentives can share some early costs and encourage execution. Long-term feedstock arrangements may improve planning. Yet public support needs a clear purpose: a project should deliver additional capability or resilience rather than simply transfer resources to an activity that would proceed anyway.

The danger of locking in costly assets

A plant may operate for decades while competing technologies, fuel prices and environmental requirements change. Subsidies can hide weak commercial fundamentals or delay better alternatives. Water requirements, waste management and local pollution also deserve scrutiny. Transparent appraisal should compare realistic scenarios, including lower-cost imports, alternative feedstocks and cleaner production pathways where feasible.

How to evaluate the scheme

Track completed and operating capacity, product cost, emissions intensity, water use and public expenditure per useful outcome. Distinguish applications and approvals from actual production. Competitive selection and milestone verification can help, but monitoring must continue after construction. The defensible policy position weighs security benefits against environmental and fiscal costs, rather than treating either objective as irrelevant.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER

Feedstock conversion → **Full cost and carbon assessment** → **Accountable industrial policy**

PRELIMS TRAP

Gasification is not automatically carbon-free. Do not confuse the scheme’s approximately 75 million tonne target with the broader 100 million tonne national goal.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Evaluate coal gasification as a strategy for industrial and energy security in India. (250 words)

Answer route: Explain the process and potential products. Assess import exposure and capability benefits, then examine lifecycle emissions, water, costs and lock-in. Recommend competitive appraisal, verified milestones and transparent operating outcomes.

Source notes: S26, S39 | Full register at the back.

17 / GEOGRAPHY AND AGRICULTURE / APRIL-MAY

Monsoon forecasts: probability, geography and decisions

A national seasonal forecast is a planning signal, not a prediction for every farm.



Monsoon landscape in Maharashtra, August 2016. Archival photograph; not observed rainfall during the 2026 season. Nikhil More / CC BY-SA 4.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

IMD’s first-stage outlook projected 2026 southwest monsoon rainfall at 92% of the long-period average, with a model error of ±5%. Its 29 May update projected 90% with ±4%, using an LPA of 87 cm for 1971-2020. The update also discussed likely El Niño development. These were forecasts for June-September, not observations of the completed season; this issue does not use post-June rainfall outcomes.

A farmer needs rain at the right stage of the crop, not merely an acceptable national total at the end of September. A city reservoir and a flood-prone district need different information again. Monsoon knowledge becomes useful when broad climate signals are translated into local, time-sensitive decisions without pretending that uncertainty has disappeared.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS I: monsoon; ocean-atmosphere processes | GS III: agriculture; disaster preparedness

Source notes: S27, S28 | Full register at the back.

17 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Why the monsoon is a coupled system

Seasonal circulation reflects interactions among land, ocean and atmosphere. Heating contrasts, winds, moisture transport and large-scale circulation all matter. ENSO describes linked changes in the equatorial Pacific Ocean and atmosphere; El Niño is its warm phase. The Indian Ocean Dipole concerns a different east-west pattern of sea-surface temperature anomalies in the Indian Ocean. Neither should be treated as a single switch determining every Indian rainfall event.

Read probability rather than certainty

A forecast combines information and models to describe likely outcomes. The LPA provides a reference, while the predicted percentage expresses rainfall relative to that baseline. A model-error range is not a promise that actual rainfall must fall within fixed limits. Probabilities for categories communicate risk. When new observations arrive, a revised outlook can be a rational update rather than evidence that forecasting has no value.

Distribution can matter more than the total

Rainfall varies across regions and weeks. Long dry spells can damage a crop even if intense later rain raises the seasonal total. Heavy rain can run off rapidly, cause erosion or flooding and fail to provide the same benefit as well-distributed rainfall. Onset over Kerala, nationwide advance, seasonal rainfall and local agricultural drought are related but distinct questions. Keep the scale of the forecast clear.

Expression	What to remember
LPA	Long-period average; the baseline matters.
92% to 90%	A revision between forecast vintages.
ENSO / IOD	Different ocean-atmosphere patterns.
National total	Does not specify local timing or distribution.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Using the May outlook purely as arithmetic, 90% of an 87 cm LPA equals 78.3 cm. That is a forecast-derived national seasonal amount. It does not mean each district will receive 78.3 cm, that rain will be evenly distributed or that this was the season’s final recorded rainfall.

Source notes: S27, S28 | Full register at the back.

17 / GEOGRAPHY AND AGRICULTURE / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Turn warnings into preparedness

Agriculture departments can prepare contingency crop plans, seed availability and extension support. Water managers can review storage, leakage and competing demands. A forecast indicating elevated risk justifies proportionate preparation before losses are certain. The response should be adjusted as district and short-range information improves, rather than locking every location into one national instruction.

Connect climate and the economy

Rainfall affects rainfed crops, rural demand, reservoirs and hydropower. Food supply pressures can also complicate inflation management. Irrigation and trade provide buffers, but they have costs and limits. Avoid presenting a rainfall shortfall as a fixed percentage reduction in GDP: the economic effect depends on timing, geography, adaptation and the sectors exposed.

Communicate uncertainty usefully

A good advisory explains the decision, available options and the evidence that would trigger a change. It should be understandable in local languages and reach those without continuous internet access. Evaluating forecast services requires checking whether people received and could use the advice, not just whether a bulletin was issued. The administrative goal is reduced vulnerability under uncertainty.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

A seasonal forecast is not realised rainfall. El Niño increases relevant risks but does not mechanically determine rainfall in every district or on every day.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Explain why monsoon preparedness must combine seasonal forecasts with local vulnerability and shorter-range information. (250 words)

Answer route: Describe scale and uncertainty, then distinguish rainfall total, distribution and crop stage. Connect advisories with seeds, water management and access. Recommend adaptive decisions and locally usable communication rather than deterministic national prescriptions.

Source notes: S27, S28 | Full register at the back.

18 / DISASTER MANAGEMENT / APRIL-JUNE

Extreme heat is also a labour-governance issue

A warning protects people only when workplaces and public services can respond.



Marine Drive skyline, Mumbai, 2016. Archival urban-development context. A.Savin / FAL.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

IMD’s 25 April guidance warned of heatwave, warm-night and hot-humid conditions in different regions. On 28 April, the Labour Ministry advised States, Union Territories and employers on worker protection, including adjusted hours, drinking water, rest areas and coordination with health authorities. These advisories provide a preparedness framework; their publication is not evidence that every workplace implemented effective protection.

A construction worker paid by the day may understand a heat warning but still be unable to stop working. An elderly person in a poorly ventilated room faces a different exposure. Heat risk therefore depends not only on temperature, but also on livelihoods, housing and the practical ability to reduce exposure.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: disaster risk; climate adaptation | GS II: labour welfare; public health

Source notes: S29, S30 | Full register at the back.

Build the foundation

Hazard, exposure and vulnerability

The hazard is the heat condition. Exposure concerns who is present and for how long; vulnerability concerns factors that make harm more likely. Outdoor workers, poorly ventilated homes and limited access to cooling create different risk profiles. Meteorological thresholds help issue warnings, while occupational and health planning must consider activity, humidity and local conditions. A single air-temperature figure cannot describe every person's risk.

Why humidity and warm nights matter

Evaporation of sweat is an important route for the body to lose heat. High humidity can make that process less effective. Warm nights also limit recovery from daytime exposure. In cities, built surfaces, limited vegetation and waste heat can worsen local conditions. This is why adaptation involves urban design and workplace practices as well as forecasts. Heatwave classification and the broader problem of heat stress should not be treated as identical.

An action plan needs assigned responsibilities

A useful plan identifies warning thresholds, vulnerable groups, responsible departments, communication channels and response resources. Employers need workable arrangements for water, rest and scheduling; local bodies need dependable services; health systems need preparedness and reporting. Informal and mobile workers can fall outside ordinary workplace supervision. Clear responsibility matters because a general advisory can otherwise leave each institution assuming another will act.

Risk component	Administrative response
Exposure at work	Scheduling, shade and usable rest arrangements.
Service gaps	Reliable water, power and communication.
Economic vulnerability	Protection that workers can afford to follow.
Weak evidence	Better reporting, review and targeted outreach.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

Two workers experience the same outdoor temperature. One has shade, water and flexible hours; the other works on a roof with piece-rate pay and no rest space. Their exposure and capacity to respond differ. This hypothetical comparison explains why temperature warnings need social and workplace measures.

Source notes: S29, S30 | Full register at the back.

18 / DISASTER MANAGEMENT / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Protection must be economically usable

If taking a rest means losing essential income, advice alone may fail. Enforcement and labour arrangements should make protective practices feasible. Contractors and principal employers need clear accountability, and workers need a way to report unsafe conditions without retaliation. A realistic heat policy considers productivity and livelihoods together instead of asking vulnerable people to bear the entire cost of adaptation.

Combine immediate and structural measures

Short-term scheduling and service continuity can reduce exposure during a warning. Longer-term measures include shade, suitable building design, reflective surfaces where appropriate, vegetation and reliable public water access. Air-conditioning can help some users but raises questions of affordability, electricity demand and waste heat. A city needs multiple measures suited to different neighbourhoods and occupations.

Measure whether protection reaches people

Track functioning water points, workplace compliance, outreach and the reliability of health surveillance. Aggregate figures can miss informal workers and people outside formal facilities. Review failures after the season and revise responsibilities and budgets. Heat adaptation should become a routine public-service function, with evidence of use and effectiveness rather than a yearly collection of awareness posters.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

Heat stress can be serious even when a location does not meet a particular meteorological heatwave definition. A warning issued is not the same as protection delivered.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Why should heat-action planning be treated as a question of labour rights and urban governance? (250 words)

Answer route: Explain differentiated exposure and vulnerability. Discuss informal work, housing, income constraints and service reliability. Combine workplace safeguards with urban adaptation, health preparedness, clear departmental duties and measurable implementation.

Source notes: S29, S30 | Full register at the back.

19 / ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE / MAY-JUNE

Biodiversity: who shares the benefits?

Certification can reward compliance, but conservation depends on institutions and local participation.



Patna Bird Sanctuary, Etah, Uttar Pradesh, January 2015. Archival photograph of the site announced in January 2026. Viragsharma / CC BY-SA 3.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 6 June, MoEFCC and the National Biodiversity Authority announced a voluntary certification scheme for incentivising access and benefit sharing, with QCI and UNDP India. The scheme offers a certificate and logo to qualifying entities already complying with applicable ABS requirements. The June biodiversity backgrounder also highlighted local Biodiversity Management Committees and People's Biodiversity Registers. Voluntary certification does not make underlying legal obligations voluntary.

A commercial product may draw value from a biological resource or associated knowledge maintained by a community. The question is not only whether the product sells, but who contributed to that value and who receives a fair share. Biodiversity governance links conservation with the distribution of benefits and the quality of local decision-making.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS III: biodiversity; conservation | GS II: local institutions | GS I: traditional knowledge

Source notes: S31, S32 | Full register at the back.

19 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

The logic of access and benefit sharing

ABS concerns the conditions under which relevant biological resources and associated knowledge are accessed and benefits are shared under the applicable framework. Benefits can be monetary or take other agreed forms, such as capacity building. It is not simply a charitable donation after a profitable product is developed. Clear identification of relevant actors, lawful access and credible arrangements help make the relationship accountable.

Institutions at different levels

India's framework involves the NBA nationally, State Biodiversity Boards or Union Territory councils at the intermediate level, and Biodiversity Management Committees locally. People's Biodiversity Registers document local biological resources and knowledge. A register is useful evidence and a planning resource; completing one is not proof that habitats are healthy or that every knowledge holder has received benefits. Local capacity and continued updating are important.

Certification is an information mechanism

A credible certificate can help buyers distinguish entities meeting specified requirements. Its value depends on the standard, independence of assessment, audit quality and action when claims are misleading. The June scheme is voluntary as an additional recognition mechanism; compliance with applicable law remains a separate matter. A logo cannot substitute for permissions, benefit-sharing arrangements or actual conservation performance.

Element	Function
NBA / SBBs / local BMCs	Different levels of biodiversity governance.
People's Biodiversity Register	Local documentation; not an automatic ownership patent.
ABS arrangement	Conditions and sharing under the applicable framework.
Voluntary certificate	Additional recognition; not a legal exemption.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

A hypothetical company obtains a biological resource under the relevant rules and agrees on benefit sharing. A certificate may communicate verified compliance to buyers. It does not itself prove that every supplier is sustainable or that future batches remain compliant; continuing checks and traceability are still needed.

Source notes: S31, S32 | Full register at the back.

19 / ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Make community participation meaningful

Local people should understand the resource use, the relevant rules and how benefits are determined. Representatives need accountability to the people whose knowledge or livelihoods are involved. Women and less powerful groups may be overlooked if participation is treated as a meeting with a few influential persons. Accessible records and grievance mechanisms can help turn formal consultation into a more equitable process.

Protect knowledge without freezing it

Traditional knowledge is living and can support innovation, but careless disclosure may expose it to appropriation. Documentation needs sensitivity to confidentiality and community interests. Conservation policy should also recognise local ecological practice, including the care of culturally valued landscapes, without assuming that every traditional practice is automatically sustainable. Evidence and respectful participation belong together.

Evaluate results beyond the certificate

Ask whether benefits reach relevant people, habitats are maintained and compliance claims remain verifiable. Commercial incentives may encourage participation, but weak auditing can create greenwashing. Public institutions need resources to support local bodies and investigate failures. The strongest policy design links fair benefit sharing with conservation and sustainable use rather than treating them as unrelated activities.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

Voluntary certification and mandatory legal compliance are different. A People’s Biodiversity Register is not automatically a patent or proof that conservation outcomes have been achieved.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

How can access and benefit sharing strengthen both biodiversity conservation and community interests? (250 words)

Answer route: Explain resource and knowledge contributions, then outline institutions and benefit mechanisms. Examine representation, disclosure and audit problems. Propose transparent agreements, local capacity, grievance redress and outcome tracking beyond certification counts.

Source notes: S31, S32 | Full register at the back.

20 / HEALTH AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE / MAY-JUNE

Ebola and the meaning of a global health emergency

The legal alert category, the virus involved and the response measures must be kept distinct.



THE ISSUE BEHIND THE NEWS

An emergency declaration is a call for coordinated action based on risk, not a statement that every country is experiencing the same outbreak. Public-health communication must explain what is known without encouraging panic or stigma. The useful study focus is the relationship between surveillance, international coordination and trusted local services.

Ebola virus electron micrograph, 1976. Archival scientific image; not a sample from the 2026 Bundibugyo outbreak. Photo Credit: Dr. Frederick Murphy Content Providers(s): CDC/ Dr. Frederick A. Murphy / Public domain.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

WHO determined on 17 May that the Bundibugyo-virus Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Its 22 May statement said the event did not meet the IHR criteria for a pandemic emergency. The Emergency Committee met on 19 May. WHO's contemporaneous assessment also stressed the lack of approved vaccines or specific therapeutics for this virus species; measures for another Ebola species cannot simply be assumed equivalent.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS II: health systems; international institutions | GS III: disease surveillance

Source notes: S33, S34, S38 | Full register at the back.

20 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Understand transmission before proposing control

Ebola disease can spread through direct contact with infected blood or body fluids and contaminated materials, including exposure during care and certain burial practices. Different viruses within the relevant group cause Ebola disease. Protection developed against one species cannot automatically be assumed effective against another. Scientific identification matters because it shapes diagnostics, research and the interpretation of available countermeasures.

PHEIC and pandemic emergency

The International Health Regulations provide a framework for addressing health risks that may cross borders. A PHEIC is a formal determination requiring international attention and coordination. “Pandemic emergency” is a distinct category under the amended framework. The May statement explicitly distinguished them for this event. Neither term should be used as a loose synonym for any worrying disease report, and an alert does not mean the same measures are appropriate everywhere.

Surveillance is a system, not a dashboard

Reliable surveillance requires recognition of possible cases, safe reporting, laboratory capacity, investigation and a response that people can trust. Data quality depends on access to care and willingness to report. Conflict, displacement and shortages can make both harder. Case numbers therefore need dates and definitions; suspected, probable and laboratory-confirmed cases are not interchangeable. This chapter avoids a rapidly changing numerical tally.

Distinction	Why it matters
Bundibugyo / other Ebola viruses	Countermeasures are not automatically interchangeable.
PHEIC / pandemic emergency	Different formal categories; WHO distinguished them.
Suspected / confirmed	Different evidentiary status in surveillance.
Alert / local transmission	An international alert does not prove spread everywhere.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

A laboratory-confirmed case and a person with similar symptoms awaiting testing should not be added to a table as if their evidentiary status were identical. Both may require attention, but the categories answer different surveillance questions. This illustrative distinction explains why outbreak figures need definitions and dates.

Source notes: S33, S34, S38 | Full register at the back.

20 / HEALTH AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Community trust is operational capacity

People may avoid services when they fear isolation, stigma or disrespectful treatment. Clear explanations and engagement with local leaders can improve cooperation. Safe and dignified care and burial arrangements need to respect people while reducing transmission risk. Blaming communities for non-compliance without examining access and trust can make an outbreak more difficult to control.

Protect the health system itself

Health workers need training, equipment and reliable infection-prevention practices. Routine services also need continuity: an outbreak response that completely displaces maternal care or vaccination can create additional harm. International support should strengthen local capacity and coordination rather than establish disconnected parallel systems. Preparedness before an emergency is usually more effective than improvising every component during it.

Lessons for Indian preparedness

India's relevant priorities include surveillance, laboratories, trained response teams, clear travel-health communication and coordination across institutions. Measures should be proportionate to evidence and avoid discrimination against people based on nationality or appearance. The broader lesson is that health security depends on functioning everyday systems, scientific specificity and credible communication as much as on the formal declaration of an emergency.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER

Detection and laboratory work → **Trusted coordinated response** → **Containment and system resilience**

PRELIMS TRAP

WHO's May determination was a PHEIC, not a pandemic emergency. Do not assume that an existing vaccine for another Ebola virus is automatically approved or effective for Bundibugyo.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

"Global health security rests on trusted local health systems." Discuss in the context of outbreak preparedness. (250 words)

Answer route: Connect early detection with laboratories, workforce safety, community trust and routine-service continuity. Explain international coordination and proportionality. Use the May emergency-category distinction accurately without relying on undated case totals.

Source notes: S33, S34, S38 | Full register at the back.

21 / RURAL DEVELOPMENT / APRIL

Rural roads: connectivity is a continuing service

The value of a road lies in dependable access to markets, schools and healthcare.



Rural road in Chhattisgarh, September 2022. Archival context; not a verified PMGSY-III project. Mettle30 / CC BY-SA 4.0.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 18 April, the Cabinet approved continuation of PMGSY-III with a revised outlay of ₹83,977 crore. The release extended completion to March 2028 for roads and bridges in plain areas and roads in hilly areas, with March 2029 for bridges in hilly areas. PMGSY-III concerns consolidation of through routes and major rural links to markets, higher secondary schools and hospitals. Its design should not be confused with every other PMGSY phase.

A village road that becomes impassable during the rains may appear complete in a construction register while failing the people who depend on it. A bridge missing from an otherwise good route can have the same effect. Infrastructure should therefore be assessed as a connected, maintained service rather than as isolated kilometres of pavement.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS II: welfare and service access | GS III: rural infrastructure; inclusive growth

Source notes: S35 | Full register at the back.

21 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Connectivity works through networks

The usefulness of a road depends on what it connects to and whether the whole route functions. A short missing link can prevent access to a market or hospital even when most of the distance is paved. Through routes and major rural links have a network role. Prioritisation should consider destinations, traffic, seasonal isolation and alternative routes rather than distributing projects solely by visible length.

Economic benefits have several channels

More reliable access can reduce travel time, spoilage and uncertainty. Farmers may reach more buyers; service providers may find a settlement easier to serve; workers may access additional opportunities. But transport alone does not create a functioning market, a staffed hospital or a good school. Complementary services determine how much of the infrastructure's potential becomes a real improvement in living conditions.

Construction and maintenance are different obligations

Initial construction creates an asset; maintenance preserves its service. Drainage, culverts, slopes and road surfaces need attention over time. Neglected drainage can damage an expensive road quickly, especially during intense rainfall. Lifecycle costing therefore includes operations and repairs rather than treating the construction budget as the entire public cost. Clear responsibility and predictable maintenance funds are essential.

PMGSY-III point	April decision
Purpose	Consolidate through routes and major rural links.
Revised outlay	₹83,977 crore.
March 2028	Plain-area roads/bridges and hilly-area roads.
March 2029	Hilly-area bridges; a distinct completion window.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

A 15-km route includes 14 km of sound road and a crossing that floods each monsoon. Treating the route as 93% successful hides its failure during the season when access is most difficult. This hypothetical example shows why network continuity can matter more than aggregate length.

Source notes: S35 | Full register at the back.

21 / RURAL DEVELOPMENT / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

Design for terrain and climate

Hilly areas face slope instability and more complex bridge and drainage requirements. Plain areas may face flooding, weak soils or waterlogging. Standardisation can improve quality, but designs must still reflect local conditions. Climate resilience means anticipating stresses and maintaining drainage and structures, not simply adding a label to a project report.

Make access inclusive and safe

Women, children, older people and persons with disabilities may experience a road differently from a freight operator. Safe crossings, suitable access to institutions and available transport services influence who benefits. Construction can also affect land and livelihoods. Consultation should identify practical needs and local impacts before design choices become difficult to change.

Measure the service people receive

Track seasonal passability, travel reliability, maintenance response and access to key destinations. Completion certificates and kilometres built remain useful outputs, but are incomplete outcome measures. Extension of a programme's timeline is an opportunity to finish network gaps and improve quality; it is not proof that all promised benefits have already arrived. Accountable delivery connects engineering records with users' experience.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

Do not give March 2028 as the deadline for every component. The April release specified a separate March 2029 window for bridges in hilly areas.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Why should rural-road programmes be evaluated through service reliability rather than construction length alone? (150 words)

Answer route: Explain network gaps, seasonality and access to destinations. Connect construction with maintenance, drainage, transport and public services. Recommend lifecycle finance, user feedback and outcome indicators while preserving engineering quality checks.

Source notes: S35 | Full register at the back.

22 / CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE / APRIL

The Constitution in Sindhi: language and citizenship

Access to constitutional ideas is also a question of culture, dignity and practical public service.



A classroom near Bengaluru, 2005. General education context; no claim about these students or this school's health facilities. Myself (Ambuj.Saxena),(cropped by Hidro) / Public domain.

WHAT CHANGED THIS QUARTER

On 10 April, the Vice-President released the Constitution in Sindhi in Devanagari and Persian scripts. The official account recalled Sindhi's inclusion in the Eighth Schedule through the 21st Amendment in 1967. The event offers a useful link between linguistic heritage and democratic access. Publication in a language should not be confused with giving that language a new constitutional status or making every translation an equally authoritative legal text.

A right is harder to exercise when the explanation is available only in unfamiliar language. Translation can help a citizen understand institutions and ask better questions, but words on a page are only the first step. Literacy, script familiarity, disability access and the availability of assistance shape whether the information can actually be used.

UPSC CONNECTION

GS I: language and cultural heritage | GS II: constitutional rights; inclusive governance

Source notes: S03, S36 | Full register at the back.

22 / CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

Build the foundation

Language and script are different

A language can be written in more than one script. Script choice affects access for communities whose education and reading practices differ. The Sindhi release's use of two scripts makes this distinction concrete. Cultural preservation therefore involves more than listing languages: it includes publishing, teaching, archives and everyday use. A change in script does not by itself create a different language or change the legal meaning of a provision.

Read constitutional categories carefully

The Eighth Schedule lists recognised languages for constitutional purposes; it is not a list of "national languages". Official-language arrangements operate through other constitutional provisions and laws. Article 29 protects the interests of sections of citizens with a distinct language, script or culture. These categories overlap in public discussion but answer different legal questions. Recognition, administrative use, educational support and the authority of a legal text should be distinguished.

Translation and legal precision

Constitutional terms carry specific meanings that may not map neatly into everyday vocabulary. Good translation needs subject expertise, linguistic review and consistency. Explanatory guides can simplify ideas while clearly distinguishing explanation from the operative text. Citizens also need version information so that an old edition is not mistaken for the current law. Wider access and legal accuracy should reinforce each other.

Category	Avoid the confusion
Language	A system of communication.
Script	The writing system used for it.
Eighth Schedule	Not a declaration of national languages.
Translation	Access tool; legal authority needs separate verification.

UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH AN EXAMPLE

A resident receives an accurate translation of a grievance procedure but cannot identify the office or deadline. A short explanation, accessible form and assistance desk may make the right usable. This hypothetical case shows why translating a document is necessary in some settings but rarely sufficient by itself.

Source notes: S03, S36 | Full register at the back.

22 / CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE / ANALYSIS

Think beyond the announcement

From symbolic recognition to useful access

A publication reaches more people when libraries, schools and public-service centres can use it. Audio, accessible digital text and guided explanations can support users with different needs. Public institutions should examine whether people understand procedures and know where to seek assistance. Counting copies printed is an output; improved ability to use public services is a more meaningful outcome.

Respect diversity without exclusion

Support for one language need not diminish another. Multilingual institutions can recognise identity while maintaining clear communication across communities. Smaller language groups may need deliberate support because commercial publishing alone may not sustain their resources. Consultation with teachers, scholars and users helps avoid treating a community as linguistically uniform.

The administrative lesson

Inclusive governance requires information that citizens can understand and act on. Translation should be linked to assistance, accessible formats and feedback about confusing terms. At the same time, officials must be clear about which text has legal authority in a given setting. The quarter's cultural event therefore supports a wider argument: democratic participation depends on practical access to constitutional knowledge.

MECHANISM TO REMEMBER



PRELIMS TRAP

Sindhi entered the Eighth Schedule in 1967, not in April 2026. The 2026 event concerned a publication in two scripts, not a new constitutional language amendment.

MAINS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTION

Discuss the relationship between linguistic inclusion and substantive access to citizenship. (150 words)

Answer route: Connect cultural dignity with understandable rights and procedures. Distinguish recognition from service access. Propose quality translation, accessible formats, assistance and community feedback while preserving clarity about authoritative legal texts.

Source notes: S03, S36 | Full register at the back.

CROSS-TOPIC REVISION

Four ideas that connect the quarter

Use these connections to turn individual facts into a coherent Mains answer.

Do not collapse the stages

Women's reservation, judge strength, trade, chips and infrastructure

A proposal, approval, law, operational service and measured result are different events. The quarter contains examples of each. Good answers identify the stage supported by the evidence and explain what must happen next. This is especially useful when a press release contains both a present decision and expectations for several future years. Use the date and operative verb rather than copying the headline's tone.

Evidence	Safe interpretation
Bill not passed	Its proposals did not become law.
Investment approved	A planned project has authorisation.
Agreement signed	Entry into force may still be pending.
Service launched	Reach and outcomes still need measurement.

Uncertainty can improve a decision

Monsoon, monetary policy, GDP estimates and space testing

Uncertainty is not a reason to avoid action. It is a reason to choose proportionate steps, preserve options and define what evidence would trigger a change. A forecast may justify contingency preparation; an early estimate may later be revised; a successful test may still reveal weaknesses. The quality of an institution can be judged by how openly it updates its assessment and learns.

Setting	Useful response
Seasonal rainfall outlook	Prepare local options and update advice.
Supply shock	Watch persistence and competing risks.
Statistical revision	Label the vintage and explain methods.
Flight-test evidence	Investigate anomalies and verify corrections.

CROSS-TOPIC REVISION

Numbers, capability and resilience

Use these connections to turn individual facts into a coherent Mains answer.

Find the missing link in the chain

Cotton, semiconductors, critical minerals, roads and maritime trade

A system can fail at a small but essential link. Ore without processing, a chip without reliable packaging, a road without a usable crossing or a ship without cover may deliver less value than its headline capacity suggests. Map the complete journey from input to user. That identifies where public action can help and prevents excessive attention to the most visible asset.

Visible asset	Possible missing link
Cotton harvest	Grading, clean handling and payment.
Semiconductor facility	Qualification, suppliers and skilled maintenance.
Mineral deposit	Refining and component capability.
Rural road	Drainage, bridge and onward service.

Formal access must become usable access

Census, language, heat protection, justice and biodiversity

People can be formally included while practical barriers prevent participation. A digital form may exclude a person who needs assistance; a heat warning may be unusable for a worker afraid of losing wages; a benefit-sharing meeting may overlook quieter community members. Analyse the actual barrier and assign responsibility for removing it. Inclusion is an administrative task with observable results.

Barrier	Practical response
Language or script	Accurate translation and assistance.
Device or literacy	Supported field and offline channels.
Income pressure	Work arrangements that make protection feasible.
Unequal voice	Accessible consultation and grievance processes.

GS IV / ORIGINAL HYPOTHETICAL CASE

The project deadline and the heat warning

Practise a reasoned decision, not a list of ethical vocabulary.

THE SITUATION

You are the executive officer supervising a municipal construction project. A heat warning is active. The contractor says slowing work will miss a public inauguration deadline and insists that workers have voluntarily agreed to continue. Several workers privately explain that they are paid by output and cannot afford a reduced day's income. The site's water container is empty and its rest shelter is being used to store materials. A senior official asks you to avoid "unnecessary disruption".

Identify the ethical issues. What would you do immediately, and what changes would you make to prevent recurrence?

Recognise the unequal freedom to choose

The workers' apparent consent is shaped by economic pressure. Their safety, dignity and livelihood must be considered together. The contractor has commercial obligations, the municipality owes a duty of care, and the public has an interest in both timely infrastructure and responsible expenditure. A ceremonial deadline cannot justify ignoring foreseeable harm. At the same time, simply sending everyone home without addressing pay may shift the entire cost onto the least powerful group.

Take a proportionate immediate decision

Inspect and document the conditions, arrange functioning water and rest facilities, and require work practices consistent with the official warning and applicable requirements. Pause unsafe activities where necessary and obtain appropriate health or safety assistance. Record the decision and explain it to the contractor and senior officer in terms of evidence and public duty. Do not reveal the identities of workers who raised concerns unnecessarily.

Address the incentive and the contract

Review scheduling, payment arrangements and responsibility for protective measures using the contract and applicable rules. Seek a lawful arrangement that makes rest and safer timing usable without penalising workers for reporting risks. Require a revised completion plan and document any justified schedule adjustment. Verify contractor compliance rather than accepting a photograph of a water container as sufficient evidence.

Create a repeatable system

Introduce warning-triggered site checks, worker feedback without retaliation and clear escalation responsibilities. Track whether basic facilities actually function throughout the day. Review procurement and contract provisions for future heat periods. The ethical objective is not merely to avoid criticism after an incident, but to make safe work and honest reporting part of normal delivery.

GS IV / ORIGINAL HYPOTHETICAL CASE

A request for identifiable census information

Practise a reasoned decision, not a list of ethical vocabulary.

THE SITUATION

During census fieldwork, you supervise a local team. An influential official asks for household-level responses to help select beneficiaries for another programme and says the request is “in the public interest”. A team member suggests sending the spreadsheet informally because a formal request may take time. Another warns that sharing could undermine residents’ trust. The welfare department genuinely needs better information about service gaps.

How would you balance confidentiality, legitimate welfare planning and pressure from a senior authority?

Separate the purpose from the proposed method

Improving welfare targeting is a legitimate objective, but it does not automatically authorise access to identifiable census responses. Residents supplied information within a particular legal and institutional framework. An informal spreadsheet transfer can create uncontrolled copies, expose people and damage future cooperation. The ethical conflict involves public benefit, confidentiality, lawful authority, accountability and professional integrity.

Protect records while clarifying authority

Do not make the informal disclosure. Preserve the records securely and seek written clarification through the authorised census and departmental channels. Explain the confidentiality concern respectfully, without assuming bad motives. Review the permitted uses and applicable rules with the responsible authority. Record the request and the response so that a later review can understand the decision.

Offer a lawful route to the genuine need

Explore appropriately aggregated information or approved statistical products that identify service gaps without exposing households. The welfare department may also use its own lawfully collected administrative records or conduct an authorised assessment with suitable safeguards. The alternative should meet the planning purpose rather than merely obstruct it. Check that small-area tables do not indirectly identify vulnerable households.

Make the lesson institutional

Train staff on permitted access, secure handling and escalation. Establish a clear protocol for interdepartmental requests and prohibit untracked informal transfers. Communicate confidentiality honestly to residents. The defensible approach combines a firm boundary around protected records with active help in finding an authorised, proportionate way to improve public services.

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 01-05

50 questions · suggested time 60 minutes · +2 correct, −2/3 incorrect, 0 unattempted.

01. A House has 400 members in total; 300 are present and voting. What is the minimum affirmative vote satisfying both Article 368 majority conditions?

(A) 300
(B) 267
(C) 200
(D) 201

02. Pooling many ships exposed to the same conflict corridor:

(A) Guarantees that no public claim will arise
(B) May still leave concentrated, correlated losses
(C) Makes underwriting unnecessary
(D) Necessarily eliminates correlated risk

03. An adverse oil-supply shock can create a monetary-policy dilemma because it may:

(A) Make the interest rate irrelevant to every economic decision
(B) Raise inflationary pressure while weakening growth
(C) Remove uncertainty about future demand
(D) Lower costs and raise output simultaneously

04. The May 2026 proposal to raise Supreme Court judges from 33 to 37 excluded the CJI. The proposed total including the CJI was:

(A) 36
(B) 38
(C) 34
(D) 37

05. Which maritime-insurance pairing is correct?

(A) Cargo cover - only crew injury
(B) Hull cover - only goods in containers
(C) P&I - specified third-party liabilities
(D) War-risk cover - elimination of physical conflict

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 06-10

Choose the single best answer. Statements use the quarter's dated context.

06. Which accurately describes Artemis II?

(A) A crewed lunar flyby using Orion launched by SLS
(B) An uncrewed Mars landing
(C) A lunar surface settlement
(D) An Indian satellite-repair mission

07. Which statement is correct?

(A) The Eighth Schedule declares India's national languages
(B) Every language has exactly one script
(C) Every translation automatically has identical legal authority
(D) Language, script and official-language status are distinct concepts

08. Syngas from gasification commonly contains significant amounts of:

(A) Only oxygen and nitrogen
(B) Only helium
(C) Carbon monoxide and hydrogen
(D) Only water vapour with no combustible component

09. A neutral monetary-policy stance is best interpreted as:

(A) A guarantee that inflation is zero
(B) A binding promise to cut rates next
(C) A ban on future rate increases
(D) Flexibility to respond to incoming evidence

10. Why is post-flight inspection necessary after a successful crewed mission?

(A) Ground tests become permanently unnecessary
(B) It supplies evidence about wear, anomalies and model predictions
(C) It replaces every need for operational training
(D) Success proves all future missions risk-free

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 11-15

Choose the single best answer. Statements use the quarter's dated context.

11. People's Biodiversity Registers are best understood as:

(A) Proof that every habitat is healthy
(B) Local documentation of biological resources and associated knowledge
(C) Automatic patents over every listed species
(D) A substitute for every environmental assessment

12. Consider: 1. A national seasonal rainfall total specifies every district's weekly rainfall. 2. El Niño and the Indian Ocean Dipole are distinct patterns. Which is correct?

(A) Both
(B) Neither
(C) 1 only
(D) 2 only

13. Which is the strongest outcome indicator for a rural-road link?

(A) Reliable seasonal access to relevant destinations
(B) Only the number of foundation stones
(C) Only the length shown in a sanction order
(D) The number of photographs of construction

14. The common-paddy MSP approved for Kharif marketing season 2026-27 was:

(A) ₹2,369 per quintal
(B) ₹2,441 per quintal
(C) ₹2,461 per kilogram
(D) ₹3,000 per tonne

15. According to the ECI's May publication note, the final primary election data are in:

(A) Social-media result graphics
(B) Opinion polls
(C) Statutory forms maintained by Returning Officers
(D) Statistical summaries alone

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 16-20

Choose the single best answer. Statements use the quarter’s dated context.

16. Output volume rises by 10% and its price rises by 10%. Nominal value rises by:

(A) 20%
(B) 100%
(C) 10%
(D) 21%

17. Which sequence best reflects the implementation condition in Article 334A?

(A) Election, then census, then assent
(B) Immediate reservation in every sitting House upon publication of any census notice
(C) Publication of relevant post-commencement census figures, followed by the specified delimitation exercise
(D) Cabinet approval alone

18. The May gasification announcement distinguished:

(A) A target in MW from a target in rupees only
(B) A completed output figure from a lunar mission target
(C) Two identical targets of 100 billion tonnes
(D) A 75 million tonne scheme target from a 100 million tonne national 2030 goal

19. In first-past-the-post elections, which is necessarily true?

(A) Non-voters are counted as supporting the winner
(B) Every winner receives over half of all electors’ votes
(C) The candidate with the highest valid-vote total wins the constituency
(D) Statewide vote share equals seat share

20. Gallium nitride is:

(A) A synonym for silicon
(B) A software architecture
(C) A compound semiconductor
(D) An elemental metal used only as packaging

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 21-25

Choose the single best answer. Statements use the quarter's dated context.

21. An announced MSP establishes that:

(A) A support price has been announced; actual procurement and market prices must be checked separately
(B) The market price can never exceed it
(C) Input costs are identical on every farm
(D) Every farmer necessarily sells all output at that price

22. April-June 2026 is:

(A) Q2 of calendar 2026 and Q1 of FY 2026-27
(B) Q1 of calendar 2026 and Q2 of FY 2026-27
(C) Q3 under both calendars
(D) Q4 of FY 2025-26

23. Which case most clearly illustrates a liquidity problem rather than established insolvency?

(A) Every new order creates an unavoidable loss
(B) A firm has no customers and no viable product
(C) A firm's assets and viable future earnings cannot cover its liabilities
(D) A viable firm awaits a credible receivable but must pay wages today

24. A 100 MW plant operates at full output for three hours. It produces:

(A) 300 MWh of energy
(B) 100 MWh regardless of time
(C) 300 MW of energy
(D) 33.3 MWh

25. Kalai-II was approved on which river and in which state?

(A) Teesta, Sikkim
(B) Lohit, Arunachal Pradesh
(C) Narmada, Gujarat
(D) Mahanadi, Odisha

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 26-30

Choose the single best answer. Statements use the quarter's dated context.

26. The June ABS certification scheme was voluntary. This means:

(A) Every certified product received a patent
(B) All biodiversity law became optional
(C) Certification was an additional recognition mechanism, distinct from applicable legal obligations
(D) No verification was needed

27. Under the April PMGSY-III extension, the separate March 2029 completion window concerned:

(A) Bridges in hilly areas
(B) Every project under every PMGSY phase
(C) All rural roads everywhere
(D) Only urban flyovers

28. Which pair is correctly matched for Artemis II?

(A) Orion - crew spacecraft
(B) SLS - ocean recovery ship
(C) SLS - lunar surface habitat
(D) Orion - Indian launch vehicle

29. A court begins with 800 pending cases, receives 500 and disposes of 550. Ignoring other adjustments, year-end pendency is:

(A) 1,300
(B) 750
(C) 250
(D) 850

30. WHO's May 2026 Bundibugyo Ebola determination was:

(A) A PHEIC, but not a pandemic emergency under the stated IHR assessment
(B) A declaration of identical transmission in every country
(C) A cancellation of all national health laws
(D) A finding that every Ebola vaccine was interchangeable

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 31-35

Choose the single best answer. Statements use the quarter's dated context.

31. A deal covers 80% of tariff lines and 60% of trade value. These figures:

(A) Show that tariffs are already zero everywhere
(B) Prove that 140% of trade is covered
(C) Use different denominators and can both be correct
(D) Must be contradictory

32. Which statement about critical minerals is most accurate?

(A) They are exactly the same set as rare-earth elements
(B) Criticality depends on economic importance and supply risk
(C) They are always physically scarce everywhere
(D) Their security depends only on owning mines

33. Which measure most directly addresses the economic barrier faced by a piece-rate worker during extreme heat?

(A) Publishing only the city's average temperature
(B) Issuing a warning without changing work arrangements
(C) Assuming all workers own cooling equipment
(D) Making protective rest and scheduling practically usable without forcing unsafe income trade-offs

34. Sindhi was included in the Eighth Schedule through the:

(A) First Amendment, 1951
(B) 106th Amendment, 2023
(C) 131st Amendment Bill, 2026
(D) 21st Amendment, 1967

35. A revision from an April forecast to a May forecast is most reasonably interpreted as follows:

(A) The entire season has already occurred
(B) New information may have changed the estimated outlook
(C) Forecasting has no value
(D) Every model's uncertainty has disappeared

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 36-40

Choose the single best answer. Statements use the quarter's dated context.

36. The May monsoon outlook of 90% of an 87 cm LPA implies a forecast-derived national amount of:

(A) 90 cm
(B) 87.9 cm
(C) 96.7 cm
(D) 78.3 cm

37. The April 2026 failure of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill implies that:

(A) The proposed changes did not become law through that Bill
(B) The existing 106th Amendment was repealed
(C) Every constitutional amendment requires a referendum
(D) Its proposed changes became law automatically

38. The 7.8% real GDP growth figure in the 5 June 2026 release referred to:

(A) The entire FY 2026-27
(B) Calendar year 2025
(C) April-June 2026
(D) January-March 2026

39. Under a credit-guarantee arrangement, the borrower's loan is generally:

(A) Still repayable under its terms
(B) Automatically converted into a grant
(C) Replaced by tax revenue paid to the borrower
(D) Cancelled when the guarantee is approved

40. High humidity can worsen heat stress because it can:

(A) Make sweat evaporation less effective
(B) Guarantee lower body temperature
(C) Eliminate exposure risk for outdoor workers
(D) Make workplace conditions irrelevant

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 41-45

Choose the single best answer. Statements use the quarter's dated context.

41. A country mines a mineral but relies on one foreign processor. Its main remaining vulnerability may be:

(A) The impossibility of international cooperation
(B) A processing bottleneck despite domestic extraction
(C) Too much statistical transparency
(D) The absence of any mineral resource

42. Why must Ebola countermeasures be considered in relation to the virus species?

(A) Protection against one species cannot automatically be assumed for another
(B) Laboratory identification has no public-health relevance
(C) All virus species are scientifically identical
(D) Species affects only the spelling of a disease name

43. Which pair correctly describes the June 2026 MPC decision?

(A) Repo 5.00%; accommodative stance
(B) Repo 5.50%; tightening commitment
(C) Repo 5.25%; neutral stance
(D) Repo 4.25%; fixed future path

44. Consider: 1. Digital validation eliminates all census errors. 2. Self-enumeration is one channel within the wider census process. Which is correct?

(A) Neither
(B) Both
(C) 2 only
(D) 1 only

45. In an FTA, rules of origin primarily determine:

(A) A country's exchange-rate regime
(B) Whether an agreement has been signed
(C) Eligibility of goods for preferential treatment
(D) The birthplace of every consumer

PRELIMS PRACTICE / ORIGINAL QUESTIONS

Practice set · 46-50

Choose the single best answer. Statements use the quarter’s dated context.

46. A building contains six separately managed households. Counting only its single postal address primarily risks:

(A) Changing the constitutional status of the census
(B) Overstating the number of buildings
(C) Undercounting households through a unit-definition error
(D) A sampling error in a random survey only

47. Cotton production increases while cultivated area rises even faster. Yield:

(A) Must be unchanged
(B) Has decreased
(C) Cannot ever be calculated from production and area
(D) Must have increased

48. Which distinction about NBS is correct?

(A) Nutrient coverage and fertilizer-product coverage are identical
(B) NBS is an output procurement price
(C) Including nitrogen as a nutrient means urea is automatically under NBS
(D) NBS for notified P&K products is distinct from the urea regime

49. OSAT primarily refers to:

(A) Orbital satellite atmospheric testing
(B) Outsourced semiconductor assembly and test
(C) Only advanced transistor design
(D) Open-source agricultural technology

50. Which combination is most useful for assessing a cotton-productivity programme?

(A) Yield, quality, net returns and resource use
(B) Only the area named in publicity
(C) Only training attendance
(D) Only expenditure sanctioned

PRELIMS PRACTICE

Answer key

Check the key only after attempting the set.

Questions	Answers
01-05	01 D 02 B 03 B 04 B 05 C
06-10	06 A 07 D 08 C 09 D 10 B
11-15	11 B 12 D 13 A 14 B 15 C
16-20	16 D 17 C 18 D 19 C 20 C
21-25	21 A 22 A 23 D 24 A 25 B
26-30	26 C 27 A 28 A 29 B 30 A
31-35	31 C 32 B 33 D 34 D 35 B
36-40	36 D 37 A 38 D 39 A 40 A
41-45	41 B 42 A 43 C 44 C 45 C
46-50	46 C 47 B 48 D 49 B 50 A

TURN A SCORE INTO A DIAGNOSIS

For each error, record whether it came from a missing fact, a confused concept, a date/status mistake or an avoidable reading error. Revisit the linked chapter and explain the correct reasoning aloud before another attempt.

Practice score = 2 × correct answers − (2/3) × incorrect answers. Maximum: 100. This is an original learning set, not a prediction of the examination or an official UPSC paper.

PRELIMS PRACTICE

Why the answers are correct

Questions 01-10 · Use the chapter links to repair the underlying concept.

01 / D Two-thirds of 300 is 200, but a majority of the total membership of 400 requires 201. Both tests must be met. [Chapter 01]

02 / B Diversification is weaker when many insured risks are affected by the same event. Concentration limits, stress tests and severe-loss planning remain necessary. [Chapter 08]

03 / B Higher input costs can push prices upward while reducing real purchasing power and production. Monetary policy faces competing risks rather than a simple demand-boom problem. [Chapter 05]

04 / B Adding the Chief Justice to the proposed 37 other judges gives 38. The release concerned a proposal, not proof of an enacted increase. [Chapter 03]

05 / C Protection and indemnity concerns specified third-party liabilities. Hull and machinery relate to the vessel, while cargo cover relates to goods, subject to policy terms. [Chapter 08]

06 / A Artemis II carried a four-person crew around the Moon and back. Orion was the crew spacecraft and SLS the launch vehicle; no lunar landing occurred. [Chapter 14]

07 / D A language can use more than one script. Scheduled recognition, official use and legal authority of a text are separate questions requiring the relevant constitutional or statutory basis. [Chapter 22]

08 / C Carbon monoxide and hydrogen are important syngas components. Further processing can produce different fuels or chemicals; gasification is not automatically carbon-free. [Chapter 16]

09 / D A neutral stance does not commit the MPC to a predetermined direction. Policy decisions depend on the evolving growth-inflation outlook and other relevant evidence. [Chapter 05]

10 / B A successful overall outcome still produces data about system behaviour and margins. Inspection and analysis support corrections and future qualification. [Chapter 14]

PRELIMS PRACTICE

Why the answers are correct

Questions 11-20 · Use the chapter links to repair the underlying concept.

11 / B Registers support documentation and planning. Their completion does not by itself establish ownership rights, benefit delivery or conservation outcomes. [Chapter 19]

12 / D National seasonal totals do not specify local distribution. ENSO concerns the Pacific system; the IOD concerns an Indian Ocean temperature-anomaly pattern. [Chapter 17]

13 / A Service reliability, connectivity and access to markets or institutions capture public value more directly than announcements or construction activity alone. [Chapter 21]

14 / B The May release placed common paddy at ₹2,441 per quintal. Grade A was a different figure; units and crop grade must be retained. [Chapter 12]

15 / C The release distinguishes statistical reports compiled from Index Cards from statutory primary records maintained by the concerned Returning Officers. [Chapter 04]

16 / D The effects compound: 1.10 × 1.10 = 1.21. The nominal increase is 21%, not the simple sum of 20%. [Chapter 06]

17 / C Article 334A links operation to the specified delimitation after publication of the relevant figures of the first census taken after commencement. A notice or Cabinet decision is not that sequence. [Chapter 01]

18 / D The release associated approximately 75 million tonnes with the scheme and 100 million tonnes by 2030 with the broader national goal. They should not be conflated. [Chapter 16]

19 / C The rule selects the constituency candidate with the most valid votes. Geographic distribution means aggregate vote share and seat share can differ considerably. [Chapter 04]

20 / C GaN combines gallium and nitrogen and has electrical and optical properties useful in relevant applications. It is not elemental silicon. [Chapter 13]

PRELIMS PRACTICE

Why the answers are correct

Questions 21-30 · Use the chapter links to repair the underlying concept.

21 / A MSP, procurement and realised prices are different. Access, quality, location and market conditions affect what the farmer actually receives. [Chapter 12]

22 / A India’s financial year begins in April, while the calendar year begins in January. April-June is therefore calendar Q2 and financial-year Q1. [Chapter 06]

23 / D A timing gap between payments and credible receipts can justify temporary liquidity support. Persistent inability to support obligations is a different problem. [Chapter 07]

24 / A Energy equals power multiplied by time: 100 MW × 3 hours = 300 MWh. MW measures power, not energy over a period. [Chapter 15]

25 / B The April approval places Kalai-II on the Lohit in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh. Its planned capacity is 1,200 MW. [Chapter 15]

26 / C Voluntary certification does not cancel underlying legal duties. Its value depends on compliance verification and credible continuing oversight. [Chapter 19]

27 / A The release specified March 2028 for plain-area roads and bridges and hilly-area roads, with March 2029 for hilly-area bridges. [Chapter 21]

28 / A Orion carried the astronauts. SLS provided launch capability. Mission roles should be distinguished from trajectories and recovery operations. [Chapter 14]

29 / B Pendency is a stock: 800 + 500 - 550 = 750. Disposal figures should be read alongside new filings and changes in the stock. [Chapter 03]

30 / A The 22 May statement explicitly distinguishes the PHEIC determination from pandemic emergency criteria. It also requires attention to the specific virus and context. [Chapter 20]

PRELIMS PRACTICE

Why the answers are correct

Questions 31-40 · Use the chapter links to repair the underlying concept.

31 / C Product categories have unequal trade weights. Line coverage and value coverage are different measures, neither of which alone establishes implementation status. [Chapter 09]

32 / B Criticality is a policy assessment involving importance and vulnerability. Processing, components, substitutes and recycling matter alongside extraction. [Chapter 10]

33 / D Workers may be unable to follow advice when it threatens essential income. Effective protection needs feasible workplace and labour arrangements as well as information. [Chapter 18]

34 / D The April publication event recalled inclusion through the 21st Amendment in 1967. It did not newly add Sindhi to the Schedule. [Chapter 22]

35 / B Forecasts can be updated rationally as information changes. Revisions should be interpreted with their date, baseline, uncertainty and spatial scale. [Chapter 17]

36 / D 0.90 × 87 = 78.3 cm. This arithmetic does not make it observed rainfall or a forecast for every district. [Chapter 17]

37 / A A failed amending Bill does not enact its proposals and does not by itself repeal existing constitutional provisions. [Chapter 01]

38 / D The release covered provisional FY 2025-26 estimates and its fourth quarter, January-March 2026. Publication date and reference period are different. [Chapter 06]

39 / A A guarantee shares specified lender risk; it does not by itself waive the borrower’s repayment obligation. Exact coverage and eligibility depend on the scheme. [Chapter 07]

40 / A Humidity can limit evaporative cooling. Activity, exposure duration, housing, warm nights and access to protection also influence risk. [Chapter 18]

PRELIMS PRACTICE

Why the answers are correct

Questions 41-50 · Use the chapter links to repair the underlying concept.

41 / B A value-chain analysis locates dependence at each stage. More ore production alone may not resolve concentration in refining or separation. [Chapter 10]

42 / A Different Ebola viruses require scientific specificity. Availability, approval and effectiveness of a countermeasure must be checked rather than inferred across species. [Chapter 20]

43 / C The June resolution retained the repo rate at 5.25% and the neutral stance. Neutrality preserved flexibility rather than promising a fixed next move. [Chapter 05]

44 / C Digital rules can detect some errors but not every omission or plausible wrong entry. Self-enumeration complements field operations rather than replacing the whole exercise. [Chapter 02]

45 / C Origin rules determine whether goods qualify under the agreement. Simple transshipment through a partner does not necessarily create originating status. [Chapter 09]

46 / C Buildings and households are different statistical units. The enumeration must follow the relevant definitions rather than treating a common address as one household. [Chapter 02]

47 / B Yield equals production divided by area. If area grows faster than production, output per unit area falls. [Chapter 11]

48 / D Nutrients contained in notified P&K fertilizers should not be confused with coverage of all nitrogenous products. Urea is not brought into NBS by that fact. [Chapter 12]

49 / B OSAT is outsourced semiconductor assembly and test. It is a distinct value-chain capability rather than a synonym for a leading-edge logic fabrication plant. [Chapter 13]

50 / A Physical productivity, fibre quality, farmer economics and sustainability together reveal useful outcomes. Inputs and activities do not establish final benefits. [Chapter 11]

REVISION GLOSSARY

The terms behind the headlines

Compact definitions; return to the chapters for context and limitations.

ATMP. Assembly, testing, marking and packaging in the semiconductor value chain.

Contingent liability. An obligation that may arise if specified conditions occur, such as a guarantee claim.

Criticality. Economic importance combined with vulnerability to supply disruption.

Delimitation. Determination or readjustment of constituencies under the applicable legal framework.

First-past-the-post. The candidate with the most valid votes wins the constituency.

GVA. Gross value added: output less intermediate consumption.

Liquidity. Ability to meet payments when due; distinct from longer-term solvency.

LPA. Long-period average used as a reference, with a specified period and geography.

MW / MWh. Power capacity or rate / energy over time.

Offtake agreement. An arrangement for a buyer to purchase output under agreed terms.

OSAT. Outsourced semiconductor assembly and test.

PHEIC. Public Health Emergency of International Concern under the IHR framework.

Reinsurance. Insurance through which an insurer transfers some risk to another insurer.

Rules of origin. Criteria for qualifying as originating for trade preferences.

Syngas. A gas mixture produced by processes such as gasification, with important CO and hydrogen content.

Vintage. The dated version of a statistic or estimate, before or after later revisions.

SOURCE REGISTER

Read the primary material

Part 1 of 6 · Tap a title to open the source.

S01

Budget Session 2026: the constitutional amendment did not pass

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs / PIB, 18 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S02

Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023

Legislative Department, Gazette, 28 September 2023

www.legislative.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S03

Constitution of India, consolidated text

Legislative Department, as on 1 May 2024; background provisions

www.legislative.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S04

Census Phase I field operations in Karnataka

Registrar General / PIB, 15 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S05

Census 2027: phases, digital process and state schedules

Registrar General / PIB, 30 March 2026; background to April fieldwork

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S06

Proposal to increase Supreme Court judge strength

Cabinet / PIB, 5 May 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S07

Assembly elections: Index Cards and Statistical Reports

Election Commission / PIB, 8 May 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

SOURCE REGISTER

Read the primary material

Part 2 of 6 · Tap a title to open the source.

S08

Minutes of MPC meeting, 6-8 April 2026

Reserve Bank of India, 22 April 2026

www.rbi.org.in · Click title for the full document

S09

MPC resolution, 3-5 June 2026

Reserve Bank of India, 5 June 2026

www.rbi.org.in · Click title for the full document

S10

Provisional annual GDP 2025-26 and Q4 estimates

MoSPI / PIB, 5 June 2026; June vintage

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S11

Revision of annual provisional GDP release date

MoSPI / PIB, 12 May 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S12

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0

Cabinet / PIB, 5 May 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S13

Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool: Cabinet approval

Cabinet / PIB, 18 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S14

Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool: operational launch

Department of Financial Services / PIB, 12 May 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

SOURCE REGISTER

Read the primary material

Part 3 of 6 · Tap a title to open the source.

S15

India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement signing

Ministry of Commerce and Industry / PIB, 27 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S16

New Zealand-India FTA: signing and tariff context

New Zealand MFAT, Weekly Global Economic Report, 28 April 2026

www.mfat.govt.nz · Click title for the full document

S17

G7 declaration on critical-minerals supply chains

French G7 Presidency, posted 17 June 2026

www.elysee.fr · Click title for the full document

S18

India-US meeting at the G7 summit in Evian

PMO / PIB, 18 June 2026; meeting on 17 June

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S19

Mission for Cotton Productivity

Cabinet / PIB, 5 May 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S20

Nutrient Based Subsidy for Kharif 2026

Cabinet / PIB, 8 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S21

Minimum Support Prices for Kharif 2026-27

CCEA / PIB, 13 May 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

SOURCE REGISTER

Read the primary material

Part 4 of 6 · Tap a title to open the source.

S22

Two semiconductor projects: GaN displays and packaging

Cabinet / PIB, 5 May 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S23

Artemis II crew returns to Earth

NASA, 10 April 2026; distance correction 7 May 2026

www.nasa.gov · Click title for the full document

S24

Artemis II splashdown and recovery

NASA, April 2026 mission gallery

www.nasa.gov · Click title for the full document

S25

Kalai-II hydroelectric project investment approval

CCEA / PIB, 8 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S26

Surface coal/lignite gasification scheme

Cabinet / PIB, 13 May 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S27

Updated southwest monsoon outlook

IMD / PIB, 29 May 2026; forecast, not realised rainfall

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S28

First-stage southwest monsoon forecast

India Meteorological Department, April 2026

internal.imd.gov.in · Click title for the full document

SOURCE REGISTER

Read the primary material

Part 5 of 6 · Tap a title to open the source.

S29

Heatwave advisory for workers and labourers

Ministry of Labour and Employment / PIB, 28 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S30

Heatwave guidance and seasonal risk

IMD / PIB, 25 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S31

Voluntary certification for access and benefit sharing

MoEFCC and NBA / PIB, 6 June 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S32

Biodiversity institutions, community action and ABS tools

PIB backgrounder, 5 June 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S33

Bundibugyo Ebola emergency: temporary recommendations

World Health Organization, 22 May 2026

www.who.int · Click title for the full document

S34

Ebola disease: transmission and prevention background

World Health Organization, fact sheet

www.who.int · Click title for the full document

S35

PMGSY-III continuation and completion windows

Cabinet / PIB, 18 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

SOURCE REGISTER

Read the primary material

Part 6 of 6 · Tap a title to open the source.

S36

Constitution released in Sindhi in two scripts

Vice-President Secretariat / PIB, 10 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S37

Session-end account of the constitutional amendment debate

Lok Sabha Secretariat / PIB, 18 April 2026

www.pib.gov.in · Click title for the full document

S38

WHO assessment at the World Health Assembly

WHO Director-General, 19 May 2026

www.who.int · Click title for the full document

S39

Gasification technology and syngas: background

US Department of Energy / NETL, technical overview

www.netl.doe.gov · Click title for the full document

S40

Constitutional amendments: enforcement entry for 106th Amendment

Bombay High Court library; Gazette cross-reference

bombayhighcourt.gov.in · Click title for the full document

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Real places. Clear provenance.

Event photographs and archival context are distinguished in every caption.



Earthset (art002e009288).jpg

NASA · Taken on 6 April 2026

Original file / publication · Public domain

Used on pages: 1



Patna Bird sanctury.jpg

Viragsharma · 2015-01-16

Original file / publication · CC BY-SA 3.0

Used on pages: 62



Glimpses of the new Parliament Building, in New Delhi (2).jpg

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs · 2023-05-27 16:00:13

Original file / publication · GODL-India

Used on pages: 8, 17



Census 2027 digital tools launch

Press Information Bureau, Government of India · 5 March 2026 release

Original file / publication · PIB reproduction policy

Used on pages: 11

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Real places. Clear provenance.

Event photographs and archival context are distinguished in every caption.



Supreme Court of India, inside buildings 02.jpg

Pinakpani · 2019-09-06 11:53:48

Original file / publication · CC BY-SA 4.0

Used on pages: 14



North Block New Delhi

Mukulfaiz · 26 February 2012

Original file / publication · CC BY-SA 3.0

Used on pages: 20



Mumbai 03-2016 27 skyline at Marine Drive.jpg

A.Savin · 2016-03-13

Original file / publication · FAL

Used on pages: 23, 59



Textile manufacturing in Meerut, India.jpg

Ravi Dwivedi · 2022-04-07 20:39:56

Original file / publication · CC BY-SA 4.0

Used on pages: 26

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Real places. Clear provenance.

Event photographs and archival context are distinguished in every caption.

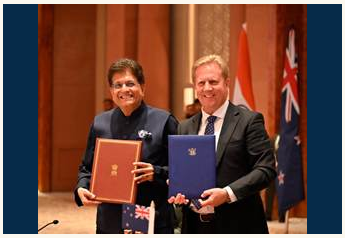


CSIRO ScienceImage 11456 Container ship.jpg

Liese Coulter, CSIRO · 2009-10-25

Original file / publication · CC BY 3.0

Used on pages: 29



India-New Zealand FTA signing

Press Information Bureau, Government of India · 27 April 2026

Original file / publication · PIB reproduction policy

Used on pages: 32



Neodymag.jpg

Bloodshedder at en.wikipedia · 14 March 2005 (original upload date)

Original file / publication · Public domain

Used on pages: 35



Closeup image of a cotton field in Raichur Karnataka.jpg

Nabina Chakraborty, WELL Labs · 2024-12-16 09:50:09

Original file / publication · CC BY-SA 4.0

Used on pages: 38

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Real places. Clear provenance.

Event photographs and archival context are distinguished in every caption.



An Indian farmer spreading fertilizer over a crop

kiran kumar / Kiran Kumar G · 18 February 2010

Original file / publication · CC BY-SA 2.0

Used on pages: 41

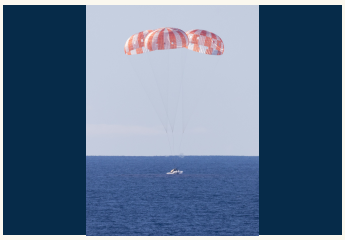


A semiconductor wafer being removed from processing equipment.jpg

YouTube — Purdue Engineering · 2026-04-06

Original file / publication · CC BY 4.0

Used on pages: 44



Artemis II splashdown

NASA/Joel Kowsky · 10 April 2026

Original file / publication · Public domain

Used on pages: 47



Small hydroelectric power plant Bistra I.jpg

Ajznponar · 2024-08-25 08:52:38

Original file / publication · CC0

Used on pages: 50

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Real places. Clear provenance.

Event photographs and archival context are distinguished in every caption.



Coal mines in singrauli.jpg

Dharmendragudia · 2011-02-11

Original file / publication · CC BY-SA 3.0

Used on pages: 53

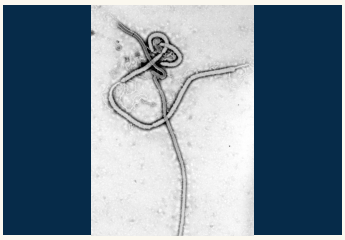


Monsoon Maharashtra India Rain Landscape (1) 14.jpg

Nikhil More · 2016-08-16 17:29:54

Original file / publication · CC BY-SA 4.0

Used on pages: 56



Ebola virus em.jpg

Photo Credit: Dr. Frederick Murphy Content Providers(s): CDC/ Dr. Frederick A. Murphy · 1976

Original file / publication · Public domain

Used on pages: 65



Rural Roads in India (Chhattisgarh).jpg

Mettle30 · 2022-09-30 17:37:06

Original file / publication · CC BY-SA 4.0

Used on pages: 68

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Real places. Clear provenance.

Event photographs and archival context are distinguished in every caption.



Classroom in India.jpg

Myself (Ambuj.Saxena),(cropped by Hidro) · 2005-06-18

Original file / publication · Public domain

Used on pages: 71

IMAGE-USE NOTE

Photographs are scaled and, where needed, cropped to fit the layout. Original image licences and attribution are retained; archival images do not represent new events or identified scheme beneficiaries. PIB-owned photographs are reproduced under its published policy. The supplied UPSC Point logo is used as provided.



UPSC POINT.com

PREPARE. PERSEVERE. PREVAIL.

Prepare with purpose. Revise with clarity.

April · May · June 2026

An independent UPSC Point study publication.
News cutoff: 30 June 2026 · upscpoint.com

Back-cover photograph: Patna Bird Sanctuary, 2015 · Viragsharma / CC BY-SA 3.0