

THEIAS AKADEMIA • MORNING EDITION • 08:00 IST

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

PART I • HEADLINES TO ECONOMY

Tuesday, 21 July 2026

"The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning."

§ SECTION INDEX — PART I

- 1 Top 10 Headlines
- 2 Polity & Governance — 2 News Cards
- 3 International Relations — 2 News Cards
- 4 Defence & Security — 1 News Card
- 5 Science & Technology — 1 News Card
- 6 Economy — 1 News Card
- ↓ Continued in Part II: Environment · Places in News · Ethics · MCQs · Mains · Direct Hit Tracker

§1 · TOP 10 HEADLINES — 21 JULY 2026

- GS2** Parliament Monsoon Session Day 2: Delimitation + Women's Reservation Bills on the floor; NCP-SP and Uddhav Sena signal support — NDA edges toward 2/3 majority for 131st CAB.
- GS3** India becomes 123rd member of WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies; Commerce Secy Rajesh Agarwal deposits Instrument of Acceptance in Geneva on July 20 — first WTO multilateral environmental deal.
- GS3** Cabinet approves MPMS (₹62,500 crore) + Semicon 2.0 (₹1.275 lakh crore) + NIPU-2026 — India's integrated electronics + semiconductor + urea self-sufficiency push.
- GS3** BITS Pilani (IBM Quantum) achieves quantum advantage on 120-qubit processor — SU(2) lattice gauge simulation in 20 sec vs 2 hours classical; first Indian lab with "active" QAT

status.

GS2 Delhi Cabinet approves PARIVARTAN scheme (July 20): 2.07 lakh old commercial vehicles to be replaced with BS-VI/EV fleet; 100% motor vehicle tax and registration fee waiver for 10 years.

ENV National CAMPA 7th Governing Body (Coimbatore, July 10): approves conservation projects for Snow Leopard, Gangetic Dolphin, Indian Rhinoceros & Wild Water Buffalo + Aastha Van Sanrakshan Yojana ₹3,000 crore.

DEF Exercise Pitch Black 2026 underway (RAAF Base Darwin, July 20–Aug 7): IAF deploys 4 Rafale + 2 C-17 + 120 Air Warriors — India's first Rafale overseas combat exercise; 19 nations participating.

GS3 ISRO GISAT-1A / EOS-05 (GSLV-F18) countdown underway at Sriharikota — NET July 31; GEO 35,786 km; 30-minute India revisit; CE20 cryogenic engine cleared for launch operations.

GS2 SC (May 27, 2026): upholds Tamil Nadu and Karnataka laws banning online games for money/stakes (rummy, poker, fantasy sports) — "no fundamental right in betting"; states empowered to regulate res extra commercium activities.

GS3 National Investment Policy for Urea 2026 (NIPU-2026) approved by CCEA: encourages new gas-based urea plants; targets Atmanirbhar Bharat in urea; ends chronic import dependence (India's annual urea import: ~7–8 MMT).

THEIAS AKADEMIA Today's edition spans 6 GS papers in one sitting. Navigating this volume in real-time is what **Sahyog Mentorship** prepares you for — visit theiasakademia.com for batch details.

§2 · POLITY & GOVERNANCE

GS2

Indian Constitution · Legislature

21 July 2026 · Monsoon Session Day 2

131st Constitutional Amendment Bill 2026: Delimitation + Women's Reservation — NDA Edges Toward 2/3 Majority

Why in News: NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) has signalled it will support the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill 2026 and the Delimitation Bill 2026 in the Monsoon Session. Subsequently, Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) has also "opened the door" — increasing NDA's prospects of achieving the constitutionally required 2/3 majority (Art. 368).

Background: The 131st Amendment Bill was first moved in April 2026 and failed in Lok Sabha with 298 votes in favour vs. 230 against, falling short of the 2/3 threshold. It seeks 33% seats for women in LS and state assemblies, tied to a post-delimitation exercise based on Census 2026 data, expanding LS to approximately 850 seats.

KEY FACTS

- Art. 368: Constitutional amendment requires 2/3 majority of members present and voting + majority of total membership of each House.
- The linked Delimitation Bill 2026 (ordinary legislation) proposes delimitation of constituencies based on Census 2026 population data.
- Southern states' concern: population-based delimitation may reduce their LS seats relative to northern states (higher population growth).
- Article 330A (after 131st CAB): mandates reservation of seats for women; 15-year sunset clause proposed.

MEMORY TECHNIQUE — RETURNING TOPIC

Previously covered:	13 Jul 2026 (Part I, Polity — 131st CAB mechanics)
What's new today:	NCP-SP + Uddhav Sena both signal support — shifting political arithmetic during live Monsoon Session
UPSC relevance shift:	From "what the bill says" to "can it pass?" — now tests federal dynamics, coalition politics + Art. 368 constitutional threshold

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2023: "Women's representation in Parliament and State Legislatures has been low. What are the challenges? What measures are being proposed?" | GS2 2018: "The delimitation of constituencies has always been a contentious issue. Examine the issues involved."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. Consider: (1) A constitutional amendment bill requires only a simple majority. (2) Art. 368 requires 2/3 of members present and voting PLUS a majority of total membership. (3) The President can withhold assent to a constitutional amendment bill. Which are correct? **Answer: (2) only.** Statement 1 is wrong (requires special majority); Statement 3 is wrong (President cannot withhold assent to Art. 368 amendments after 42nd Amendment).

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

GS2: "The 131st Constitutional Amendment Bill 2026 seeks to address historic gender under-representation while triggering concerns about federal balance. Critically examine." (250 words)

GS2

Art 368

Delimitation

Women Reservation

Coalition Politics

PYQ 2023

GS2

Urban Governance · Environment Policy

20 July 2026 · Delhi Cabinet

Delhi PARIVARTAN Scheme: 2.07 Lakh Old Commercial Vehicles to be Replaced with BS-VI/EV Fleet

Why in News: Delhi Cabinet on July 20 approved PARIVARTAN — Programme for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivisation of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air Pollution and Network Emissions — targeting 2.07 lakh old trucks and buses with financial incentives to switch to BS-VI CNG or electric vehicles.

Background: Delhi's air quality is among the worst globally; transport contributes ~40% of PM2.5 in the NCR. The Supreme Court (in *M.C. Mehta v. UoI* and related cases) has repeatedly held that clean air is a fundamental right under Art. 21. The Vehicle Scrappage Policy 2021 (MoRTH) is the central framework; PARIVARTAN operationalises it at the state level.

KEY FACTS

- Full name: Programme for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivisation of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air Pollution and Network Emission.
- Scope: BS-IV or older LGVs (Light Goods Vehicles) scrapping → mandatory replacement with electric LGV; buses → BS-VI CNG or EV only.
- Incentive: 100% motor vehicle tax exemption (10 years) + 100% registration fee waiver for qualifying replacements.
- 74th Amendment Schedule XII, Item 13 (Regulation of land use) and Item 14 (Public health, sanitation) provide constitutional basis for urban clean-air initiatives by municipalities.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

Think PARIVARTAN = "Change" — changing OLD polluting vehicles to CLEAN ones. Link to GRAPP (Graded Response Action Plan) and GRAP stages — PARIVARTAN is a structural long-term solution while GRAP is emergency response. UPSC loves comparing structural vs. emergency environmental governance.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2018: "What is the significance of National Mission for Electric Mobility? Are there limitations in the EV policy in India? Discuss." | GS3 2022: "Discuss the role of PM-eBus Sewa in transforming urban mobility."

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. PARIVARTAN scheme (Delhi) targets replacement of BS-IV or older: (a) Private cars only (b) Light Goods Vehicles and buses (c) All motor vehicles (d) Two-wheelers only. **Answer: (b).** It specifically covers LGVs (electric mandatory) and buses (BS-VI CNG or EV).

👉 PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

GS3: "Urban air quality governance in India suffers from fragmented authority between states, municipalities and the Centre. Discuss with reference to Delhi PARIVARTAN and GRAP frameworks." (150 words)

GS2

GS3

Art 21

Urban Governance

74th Amendment

EV Policy

§3 · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

GS2

International Institutions · Fisheries

20 July 2026 · WTO, Geneva · Source: ANI/Tribune

India Joins WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies — Becomes 123rd Member; First Multilateral WTO Environmental Deal

Why in News: Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal formally deposited India's Instrument of Acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies on July 20, 2026, making India the 123rd member to join — a significant step reaffirming India's commitment to sustainable fisheries while protecting 16 million fisherfolk.

Background: The Agreement was adopted at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) in Geneva in June 2022 — the first-ever WTO multilateral agreement focused on environmental sustainability. It prohibits trade-distorting subsidies for Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and for fishing overfished stocks. India's aquaculture (shrimp exports ~\$7B annually) is unaffected as the Agreement covers only wild-capture marine fisheries.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Agreement adopted: MC12, Geneva, June 2022 — first WTO multilateral deal on environmental sustainability.
- IUU = Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated fishing — estimated to account for 11–26 million tonnes globally/year (~\$23 billion).
- India: 123rd member; needs 2/3 of WTO membership (108 of 164) for the Agreement to enter into force.
- Aquaculture and inland fisheries are explicitly outside the Agreement's scope — India's shrimp exports unaffected.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

Mnemonic for IUU: Illegal (piracy, false flags), Unreported (underreporting catch), Unregulated (outside national jurisdiction). WTO Fisheries = UNCLOS + WTO rules intersecting — a rare environmental-trade nexus. UPSC loves this kind of institutional overlap.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2022: "WTO is an important international institution. Describe the significance of WTO for India, especially in the context of trade disputes." | GS3 2019: "India's fisheries sector has immense potential but faces numerous challenges. Examine."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies was adopted at which Ministerial Conference? (a) MC11 Buenos Aires (b) MC12 Geneva (c) MC13 Abu Dhabi (d) MC10 Nairobi. **Answer: (b) MC12 Geneva, 2022.** It is the first multilateral WTO agreement focused on environmental sustainability.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

GS2/GS3: "India's acceptance of the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement is both a global responsibility and a domestic policy challenge. Analyse." (250 words)

GS2

GS3

WTO

IUU Fishing

MC12 Geneva

Fisheries

PYQ 2022

GS2

India's Defence Diplomacy · Indo-Pacific

20 Jul – 7 Aug 2026 · RAAF Base Darwin, Australia

Exercise Pitch Black 2026: IAF Rafale Jets in India's First Southern Hemisphere Combat Exercise — Australia-India CSP Deepens

Why in News: Exercise Pitch Black 2026 commenced July 20 at RAAF Base Darwin with India fielding 4 Rafale fighters — the first time the Rafale has been deployed for overseas combat exercises since India's induction in 2020. Day 2 (July 21) sees live intercept and beyond-visual-range (BVR) drills with partner air forces including the QUAD members USA, Japan, and Australia.

Background: Exercise Pitch Black is Australia's largest biennial air combat exercise. India joined for the first time in 2018. India-Australia relations have been elevated to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2020; the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) of 2020 facilitates joint exercises and base access. India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) doctrine underpins its Indo-Pacific engagement.

KEY FACTS

- India contingent: 4 Rafale (MRFA role), 2 C-17 Globemaster III (logistics), 120 Air Warriors.
- 19 nations participating including QUAD members (India, USA, Japan, Australia) + France, UK, Germany, Singapore.
- India-Australia MLSA (2020): enables logistical support at each other's military facilities — underpins Darwin deployment.
- SAGAR Doctrine (PM Modi, 2015, Mauritius): India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean — security, connectivity, sustainability.

MEMORY TECHNIQUE — RETURNING TOPIC

Previously covered:	19 Jul 2026 (Part I — Exercise Pitch Black deployment announced)
What's new today:	Exercise commenced (Day 1 July 20); IAF Rafale conducting live BVR drills Day 2 — India's first Rafale overseas combat sortie
UPSC relevance shift:	From "what is Pitch Black" to "why Rafale abroad matters" — tests India-Australia CSP depth, QUAD military interoperability

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2022: "India-Australia bilateral relations have recently acquired strategic depth. Comment." |
GS2 2020: "What is the significance of QUAD for India's Indo-Pacific strategy?"

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. Exercise Pitch Black is hosted by: (a) India (b) United States (c) Australia (d) France. **Answer: (c) Australia.** It is Australia's largest biennial air combat exercise, typically hosted at RAAF Base Darwin.

GS2

Defence Diplomacy

QUAD

Indo-Pacific

India-Australia CSP

Rafale

§4 · DEFENCE & SECURITY

GS3

Space Technology · Security · Science

July 2026 · Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh

GISAT-1A / EOS-05 / GSLV-F18: India's Geostationary Earth Observation Satellite — NET July 31, T-10 Countdown Ops Active

Why in News: ISRO's GSLV-F18 carrying GISAT-1A (Earth Observation Satellite-05 / EOS-05) has entered T-10 day countdown operations at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. Targeted for NET July 31, this will be India's first geostationary Earth observation satellite since GISAT-1 was lost in August 2021 due to a launch failure.

Background: Geostationary EO satellites offer persistent coverage over a fixed geographic region — unlike LEO/MEO satellites that revisit every few days. At 35,786 km altitude, GISAT-1A will provide a 30-minute revisit cycle over the Indian subcontinent (vs. 26-day for Landsat 8). The CE20 cryogenic engine (LOX/LH2, 20-tonne thrust) is ISRO's indigenous high-energy upper stage.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Orbit: Geostationary (GEO) at 35,786 km; stationery over ~83°E; 30-min India revisit; 5-min targeted area revisit.
- Payloads: Multi-spectral (VNIR + SWIR) + Hyper-spectral (400–900 nm) + Thermal Infrared (TIR) bands; 42m resolution VNIR.
- Launch vehicle: GSLV-F18; CE20 cryogenic engine in upper stage (LOX/LH2; 20-tonne thrust; ISRO-developed).
- Mission significance: Dual-use — disaster monitoring, agricultural assessment, military ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance).

GEO = Geostationary = always watching the same place. Think of it as a security camera vs. a drone (LEO) that flies over periodically. GISAT-1A is India's "always-on eye" — critical for kharif crop monitoring AND military surveillance simultaneously. UPSC frequently asks about dual-use space assets.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2022: "India's ISRO has been a global success in satellite launches. Discuss the significance of geostationary satellites for India's strategic and developmental needs." | GS3 2015: "What is the importance of IRNSS in India's security infrastructure?"

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. GISAT-1A is significant because: (1) It is India's first geostationary Earth observation satellite. (2) It uses CE20 cryogenic engine. (3) It provides 30-min revisit over India. (a) 1 and 3 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1, 2 and 3 (d) 1 and 2 only. **Answer: (c) — All three are correct.**

GS3

Space Technology

ISRO

GSLV-F18

CE20

GEO Orbit

Dual Use

THEIAS AKADEMIA Space technology — ISRO missions, dual-use satellites, CE20 engine specs — is a high-frequency Prelims topic. **EMP (Ethics & Mission Preparation)** integrates strategic S&T analysis with answer writing. Details at theiasakademia.com.

§5 · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

GS3

Science & Technology · Quantum Computing

July 2026 · BITS Pilani / IBM Quantum

BITS Pilani Achieves Quantum Advantage on 120-Qubit IBM Processor — First Indian Lab with Active QAT Status

Why in News: Scientists from BITS Pilani, in collaboration with IBM Quantum, demonstrated quantum advantage by simulating SU(2) lattice gauge dynamics on a 120-qubit quantum processor in 20 seconds — a task that took a classical supercomputer approximately 2 hours. The achievement received "active" status on the Quantum Advantage Tracker (QAT), making it the first Indian laboratory to achieve this milestone.

Background: The National Quantum Mission (NQM), approved in 2023 (₹6,003 crore, 6 years), aims to develop 50-1,000 qubit quantum computers and quantum communication by 2031. Quantum advantage occurs when a quantum computer solves a specific problem more efficiently than any classical computer. India's NQM targets 4 thematic Hubs at IITs and IISc.

KEY FACTS

- 120-qubit simulation: SU(2) lattice gauge dynamics — models subatomic particle interactions relevant to nuclear physics.
- Performance: 20 seconds (quantum) vs. ~2 hours (classical supercomputer) — demonstrable computational advantage.
- Quantum Advantage Tracker (QAT): international academic registry of verified quantum advantage claims; "active" status is highest recognition.
- National Quantum Mission (NQM): ₹6,003 crore; 2023–2031; 4 Technology Innovation Hubs; 50–1,000 qubit target; quantum communication + sensing + metrology.

TEACHING HOOK

Quantum advantage = the moment quantum stops being "potential" and becomes "proven."
SU(2) = Special Unitary group of degree 2 — fundamental to particle physics (Standard Model).
BITS Pilani just showed India can run Standard Model simulations on a quantum chip. For UPSC: link to NQM, IN-SPACe, and semiconductor indigenisation — India's triple technology bet.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2023: "What is quantum computing? Discuss its potential applications and implications for national security." | GS3 2022: "Explain the significance of the National Quantum Mission for India."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to quantum computing, which statement is correct? (a) Qubits can only be 0 or 1 at any time (b) Quantum advantage means a quantum computer is always faster than classical computers (c) The National Quantum Mission targets 50–1,000 qubit computers by 2031 (d) BITS Pilani used a 200-qubit processor in its recent achievement. **Answer: (c).** Option (a) is wrong — qubits exist in superposition; (b) is wrong — quantum advantage is problem-specific; (d) is wrong — it was 120 qubits.

GS3

Quantum Computing

NQM

BITS Pilani

IBM Quantum

PYQ 2023

THEIAS AKADEMIA

Quantum computing is on a 3-year UPSC Prelims trend of repetition.

LAKSHYAM AIR1 covers S&T from basics to advanced applications — details at theiasakademia.com.

§6 · ECONOMY

GS3

Industry · Manufacturing · Technology

15 July 2026 · Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs

MPMS (₹62,500 cr) + Semicon 2.0 (₹1.275 lakh cr) + NIPU-2026: India's Integrated Electronics, Semiconductor & Urea Manufacturing Push

Why in News: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by PM Modi, approved three landmark industrial policies on July 15, 2026: (i) Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) — ₹62,500 crore (FY2027–31); (ii) Semicon 2.0 — ₹1.275 lakh crore, the second phase of India Semiconductor Mission; and (iii) National Investment Policy for Urea 2026 (NIPU-2026) — encouraging new domestic gas-based urea plants.

Background: India is the world's 2nd largest mobile phone manufacturer but a net importer of semiconductors (~\$30B/year). ISM 1.0 facilitated India's first chip packaging plant (CG Semi, Sanand, Gujarat). NIPU-2026 addresses India's structural urea import dependence (~7–8 MMT/year from Russia, China, Middle East).

 **KEY FACTS**

- MPMS: incentives 2.25–5% on eligible sales + 1.5% for domestic components + 3% for R&D; total production target ₹39 lakh crore; 60,000 direct jobs; FY2027–31.
- Semicon 2.0 (₹1.275 lakh crore): covers design + fabrication + ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking, Packaging) + R&D supply chain; builds on ISM 1.0 (₹76,000 crore).
- NIPU-2026: new gas-based urea units eligible for capital investment incentive; reduces fertiliser import bill (currently ~₹50,000 crore/year); CCEA approved; MoC&F coordination.
- ISM 1.0 achievement: CG Semi OSAT (Sanand, Gujarat) — India's first chip packaging plant, operational 2025.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

Remember ISM as ISM 1.0 (packaging/OSAT focus) → Semicon 2.0 (full stack: design + fab + packaging + R&D). The chip supply chain: Design → Fabrication (FAB) → Packaging (ATMP) → Testing. India is at ATMP stage — Semicon 2.0 pushes into FAB. NIPU-2026 plugs the urea vulnerability similarly. Both address strategic supply-chain self-sufficiency.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2023: "India's semiconductor industry is nascent but growing. Discuss the strategic importance of semiconductors and the steps taken by India to develop the sector." | GS3 2021: "Describe the significance of Make in India in the context of electronics manufacturing."

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) provides an additional incentive of ____% for domestic component procurement: (a) 1% (b) 1.5% (c) 3% (d) 5%. **Answer: (b) 1.5%.** An additional 3% is provided for design and R&D. Base incentive: 2.25–5% on eligible sales.

GS3

MPMS

Semicon 2.0

ISM

NIPU-2026

Make in India

PYQ 2023

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Semiconductor and electronics manufacturing policy is a high-probability GS3 Mains theme for 2026–27. **NEEB 300+ Live PYQ Writing** covers economy answer frameworks — enrol at theiasakademia.com.

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7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

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QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

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