

THEIAS AKADEMIA PRESENTS

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning.

PART I · HEADLINES TO ECONOMY

Thursday, 10 September 2026

Morning Edition · 08:00 IST · theiasakademia.com

INSIDE PART I

1. Top 10 Headlines
2. Polity & Governance
3. International Relations
4. Defence & Security
5. Science & Technology
6. Economy

§1 • Top 10 Headlines

1. Rajnath Singh concludes historic three-day Sri Lanka visit — MoU signed to upgrade the Sri Lanka Air Force's six L70 air-defence guns. [\[GS2/GS3\]](#)
2. Supreme Court reaffirms arbitral tribunals' "competence-competence" under Section 16 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. [\[GS2\]](#)
3. Election Commission defers Special Intensive Revision of Tripura's electoral rolls to accommodate 28 September Village Committee polls. [\[GS2\]](#)
4. DRDO issues RfP for indigenous air-breathing electric propulsion to power satellites in Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO). [\[GS3\]](#)
5. India's forex reserves scale a fresh all-time high of \$740.80 billion for the week ended 28 August 2026. [\[GS3\]](#)
6. HSBC India Services PMI eases to 53.3 in August 2026; Composite PMI holds at 54.3. [\[GS3\]](#)
7. Paris International Space Summit concludes with ISRO Chairman's keynote on India's human-spaceflight roadmap. [\[GS2/GS3\]](#)
8. 18th BRICS Summit three days out — Business Forum set for 11 September; Xi Jinping's attendance still unconfirmed by Beijing. [\[GS2\]](#)
9. DRDO charts a roadmap to use ISRO's upcoming Kulasekharapatnam spaceport for future strategic missions. [\[GS3\]](#)
10. State of India's Environment 2026 report flags 7 of 9 planetary boundaries as breached — full analysis in Part II. [\[GS3\]](#)

THEIAS AKADEMIA A dense, cross-cutting news day like today — judiciary, elections, defence-diplomacy, space policy and macro data all in one 24-hour window — is exactly what Sahyog Mentorship is built for: a weekly one-on-one session to help you connect scattered headlines into answer-ready themes. Details at theiasakademia.com.

§2 • Polity & Governance

Supreme Court: Writ Courts Cannot Pre-Determine an Arbitral Tribunal's Jurisdiction

Why in News: A Supreme Court bench of Justices Pamidighantam Sri Narasimha and Alok Aradhe, ruling on 9 September 2026 in *M/s GVV Constructions Pvt Ltd v. Union of India*, held that a High Court exercising writ appellate jurisdiction cannot pre-determine or constrain an Arbitral Tribunal's authority under Section 16 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 to rule on its own jurisdiction. The Court set aside a Division Bench direction confining the arbitrator to decide claims "strictly in accordance with the terms of the contract," holding this improperly circumscribed the Tribunal's inquiry into the validity of contract termination — a matter squarely within the Tribunal's own competence.

Background: Section 16, modelled on Article 16 of the UNCITRAL Model Law, codifies the "competence-competence" (kompetenz-kompetenz) doctrine, empowering a Tribunal to rule on its own jurisdiction including objections to the arbitration agreement itself. Since the 1996 Act (and its 2015/2019 amendments), courts in *SBP & Co.* (2005) and *BALCO* (2012) have progressively narrowed the scope for judicial interference in arbitral proceedings, aiming to make India a more arbitration-friendly seat for commercial dispute resolution.

KEY FACTS

- Case: M/s GVV Constructions Pvt Ltd (Managing Director) vs Union of India.
- Provision at issue: Section 16, Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.
- Doctrine reaffirmed: "competence-competence," sourced from UNCITRAL Model Law Article 16.
- Struck down: a Division Bench direction confining the arbitrator to decide "strictly in accordance with the terms of the contract."
- "Excepted matters" like contract-termination validity held to lie within the Tribunal's own competence.
- Continues the restrictive-interference line from *SBP & Co.* (2005) and *BALCO* (2012).
- Reinforces India's arbitration-friendly-seat objective under the 2015/2019 amendments.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Judicial minimalism in arbitration underpins India's ease-of-doing-business and contract-enforcement rankings.
- Excessive writ-court intervention at the pre-reference stage defeats the purpose of choosing arbitration as a faster route.
- Highlights the recurring tension between Article 226 writ jurisdiction and statutory arbitration schemes in public-sector contracts.
- Directly relevant to infrastructure/PSU contract disputes, where termination clauses are frequently litigated up to writ courts.
- Way forward: specialised commercial/arbitration benches in High Courts to reduce inconsistent interference.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

"Let the arbitrator arbitrate first" — kompetenz-kompetenz means the Tribunal decides its own jurisdiction before anyone else; courts step in only at defined checkpoints (Sections 34/37), never to pre-write the arbitrator's terms of reference.

PYQ Linkage

GS2 2022: Discuss the role of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism in reducing the pendency of cases in the judicial system in India.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements about the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996: (1) Section 16 empowers an Arbitral Tribunal to rule on its own jurisdiction. (2) This principle is often called "kompetenz-kompetenz" and draws from the UNCITRAL Model Law. (3) A writ court under Article 226 is completely barred from ever examining an arbitral matter. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is wrong — Article 226/227 writ jurisdiction over arbitral tribunals is curtailed but not entirely barred; limited interference remains possible in exceptional cases.

#ArbitrationAct

#CompetenceCompetence

#JudicialReview

#EaseOfDoingBusiness

PYQ: GS2 2022

GS2

Election Commission · Electoral Reforms

09-10 September 2026 · Source: Election Commission of India

ECI Defers Tripura's Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls

Why in News: The Election Commission of India has revised the schedule for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Tripura, deferring the exercise in view of the 28 September 2026 Village Committee elections in the state's tribal areas. House-to-house enumeration by Booth Level Officers will now run from 6 November to 5 December 2026, with the final electoral roll due on 15 February 2027 and 1 January 2027 as the qualifying date. Karnataka's SIR schedule was separately revised, with 1 October 2026 fixed as its qualifying date.

Background: SIR is a more rigorous, door-to-door form of electoral-roll revision than the routine annual "summary revision," last undertaken at comparable intensity around 2002-04 and revived nationally from 2025 onward under Article 324's superintendence powers, read with the Representation of the People Act, 1950 (registration of electors). It requires enumeration forms with fresh supporting documents, and has separately drawn Supreme Court scrutiny over documentary-proof requirements and safeguards against wrongful deletion of genuine voters.

KEY FACTS

- Deferred state: Tripura; reason: Village Committee (tribal-area local body) elections on 28 September 2026.
- Revised Tripura SIR: BLO house visits 6 Nov–5 Dec 2026; qualifying date 1 January 2027; final rolls 15 February 2027.
- Karnataka's revised SIR qualifying date: 1 October 2026.
- Legal basis: Article 324 (ECI superintendence) with the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and 1951.
- SIR involves fresh door-to-door enumeration and documentary verification, unlike the routine annual summary revision.
- Tripura's Village Committees function under the state's Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council framework.
- The Supreme Court is separately monitoring SIR-linked litigation on eligible-document lists nationally through 2025-26.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- SIR embodies the classic trade-off between roll accuracy (purging bogus/duplicate entries) and inclusion (risk of disenfranchising the genuinely eligible).
- Sequencing SIR around local tribal-body elections shows the ECI balancing its Article 324 mandate with the ground-level electoral calendar.
- Document-heavy revision exercises disproportionately burden migrant, poor and tribal populations — a live equity concern in electoral-reform discourse.
- Illustrates Centre-State-tribal-council coordination in election administration within Sixth-Schedule-adjacent autonomous areas.
- Way forward: transparent, litigation-tested safeguards (as directed by the Supreme Court) so document verification does not become disenfranchisement by default.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Summary revision is light dusting done every year; SIR is deep-cleaning done once a generation — and the ECI always times the deep-clean around the local election calendar, not against it.

PYQ Linkage

GS2 2017: Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements: (1) The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is carried out under the superintendence of the Election Commission under Article 324. (2) SIR involves only updating the electoral roll based on the previous year's data, without any fresh door-to-door enumeration. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is wrong — SIR specifically involves fresh door-to-door enumeration with documentary verification, unlike routine summary revision.

#ElectionCommission

#ElectoralRolls

#Article324

#SIR

PYQ: GS2 2017

§3 · International Relations

GS2/GS3

India & Neighbourhood · Defence Diplomacy

08-10 September 2026 · Source: PIB / Ministry of Defence; Sri Lankan Presidential Media Division

Rajnath Singh Concludes First Indian Defence Minister Visit to Sri Lanka in 38 Years

Why in News: Concluding a three-day visit — the first by an Indian Defence Minister to Sri Lanka in 38 years — Rajnath Singh met President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Colombo, with an MoU signed for a grant-funded upgrade of six L70 air-defence guns of the Sri Lanka Air Force. President Dissanayake, in turn, sought India's support in extraditing Sri Lankan drug-traffickers currently serving sentences in Indian prisons, as part of Colombo's national anti-narcotics programme.

Background: India-Sri Lanka defence ties have deepened since 2023 under the MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) framework and the Colombo Security Conclave, alongside a 2023 bilateral Defence MoU. Sri Lanka's position astride Indian Ocean sea lanes makes it central to India's Neighbourhood First policy and maritime-security doctrine, particularly given recurring Chinese research-vessel port calls at Sri Lankan ports in recent years.

KEY FACTS

- First visit by an Indian Defence Minister to Sri Lanka in 38 years.
- MoU: grant-funded upgrade of 6 L70 air-defence guns of the Sri Lanka Air Force.
- President Dissanayake sought India's support for extraditing convicted Sri Lankan drug traffickers held in India.
- MAHASAGAR framework reaffirmed as the umbrella for defence, economic, maritime and regional cooperation.
- Visit builds on the Colombo Security Conclave (India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, with observer states).
- Comes three days ahead of India hosting the 18th BRICS Summit, reinforcing neighbourhood-first optics before a major multilateral event.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Grant-funded defence-equipment upgrades are a low-cost, high-visibility instrument of India's Neighbourhood First policy.
- Sri Lanka's strategic location makes it a contested space between Indian security concerns and Chinese port/BRI investment (the Hambantota precedent).
- Extradition requests intersect with bilateral Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty mechanisms and transnational-crime cooperation.
- The "38-year gap" itself marks historic India-Sri Lanka mistrust (post-1987 IPKF era) now being actively bridged through institutionalised defence exchange.
- Way forward: converting one-off high-visibility visits into regular joint training/exercise cycles for durable trust-building.

MEMORY TECHNIQUE — RETURNING TOPIC

Previously covered:	9 September 2026 (Colombo meeting, MAHASAGAR reaffirmed)
What's new today:	Concrete MoU signed (L70 guns) plus a formal extradition request — the visit concludes with deliverables, not just optics
UPSC relevance shift:	From bilateral-relations framing to defence-diplomacy and extradition-law (MLAT) framing

PYQ Linkage

GS2 2016: "India's relations with her neighbours have been in the focus of national security concerns." In light of this statement, discuss steps taken by India for maintaining good relations with her neighbours.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements: (1) The Colombo Security Conclave is a maritime-security grouping of India, Sri Lanka and Maldives, with select observer states. (2) MAHASAGAR is a formal bilateral defence pact signed exclusively between India and Sri Lanka in 2026. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is wrong — MAHASAGAR is India's broader regional maritime-vision framework, not a Sri Lanka-specific bilateral pact.

#IndiaSriLanka

#MAHASAGAR

#NeighbourhoodFirst

#DefenceDiplomacy

PYQ: GS2 2016

GS2

International Groupings · BRICS

09-10 September 2026 · Source: PIB / Ministry of External Affairs

18th BRICS Summit: Pre-Summit Business Forum and Declaration Drafting Intensify

Why in News: With the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi three days away (12-13 September 2026, Bharat Mandapam), pre-Summit activity has intensified: the BRICS Business Forum is set for 11 September, sherpa-level teams are finalising the New Delhi Declaration, and Chinese President Xi Jinping's attendance is reported (with a delegation of roughly 400 officials) but remains formally unconfirmed by Beijing, while Russian President Vladimir Putin's participation stands confirmed.

Background: India holds the BRICS chairship for 2026 — its fourth time hosting/chairing the grouping — under the theme "Building Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability." BRICS expanded in 2024 to admit Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran

and the UAE alongside founding members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, making consensus-based declaration drafting considerably more complex than in earlier, smaller-format Summits.

KEY FACTS

- Summit dates/venue: 12-13 September 2026, Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- India's chairship: fourth time hosting/chairing BRICS.
- Business Forum scheduled for 11 September 2026, a day before the leaders' Summit.
- Confirmed attendee: Russian President Vladimir Putin.
- Reported but formally unconfirmed by Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping, with a reported ~400-strong delegation.
- Other expected leaders: heads of state/government of South Africa, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Ethiopia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Thailand.
- Summit theme: "Building Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- BRICS+ expansion (five to effectively ten-plus economies) complicates consensus-based declaration drafting, testing the grouping's institutional coherence.
- Hosting BRICS days after high-visibility bilateral defence diplomacy (Sri Lanka) signals India's simultaneous neighbourhood and great-power multilateral engagement.
- Xi Jinping's presence or absence carries signalling value for the India-China post-Galwan reset trajectory.
- The New Development Bank and local-currency-trade agenda remain BRICS's substantive economic pillars beyond summit optics.
- Way forward: India using its chairship to secure concrete deliverables (NDB expansion, reformed-multilateralism language) rather than declaratory statements alone.

MEMORY TECHNIQUE — RETURNING TOPIC

Previously covered:	9 September 2026 (general Summit preview, chairship, Xi/Putin attendance framing)
What's new today:	Business Forum's imminent 11 September date confirmed; sherpa-level declaration drafting now underway; fresh delegation-size reporting for Xi Jinping
UPSC relevance shift:	From "who is coming" to "what will actually be negotiated and declared" — the substantive multilateral-diplomacy angle

PYQ Linkage

GS2 2021: "Voice of Global South" summit was recently in the news. Give its main features and general challenges before it.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements about BRICS: (1) The New Development Bank is headquartered in Shanghai. (2) India is hosting/chairing the BRICS Summit for the fourth time in 2026. (3) Egypt and the UAE were admitted as BRICS members effective 2024. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d). All three are correct — NDB is headquartered in Shanghai; India's 2026 chairship is its fourth; Egypt and the UAE (along with Iran and Ethiopia) joined effective 1 January 2024.

#BRICS2026

#NewDelhiDeclaration

#NDB

#IndiaChairship

PYQ: GS2 2021

§4 · Defence & Security

GS3

Science & Technology in Defence

September 2026 · Source: DRDO (Request for Proposal notice)

DRDO Issues RfP for Indigenous Air-Breathing Electric Propulsion in VLEO

Why in News: DRDO has issued a Request for Proposal (RfP) to indigenously develop an air-breathing, space-based electric propulsion system for satellites operating in Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO) — roughly 150 to 450 km altitude. The technology aims to counter the atmospheric drag that would otherwise cause rapid orbital decay at such low altitudes, enabling sustained, long-duration missions without an onboard propellant reserve.

Background: VLEO offers major advantages for Earth-observation and communication satellites — higher-resolution imagery, lower signal latency, and cheaper launch costs — but the thicker residual atmosphere at these altitudes causes severe drag, historically limiting satellite lifetimes to weeks or months. Air-breathing electric propulsion (ABEP) ingests residual atmospheric molecules, chiefly atomic oxygen and nitrogen, ionises them, and expels them to generate thrust, potentially enabling near-indefinite station-keeping. Global efforts (ESA's GOCE-derived research, Japan's SLATS mission) have explored VLEO platforms; India's move builds indigenous capability in this frontier propulsion niche.

KEY FACTS

- Issuing agency: DRDO.
- Technology: air-breathing, space-based electric propulsion (ABEP).
- Target orbital regime: Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO), roughly 150-450 km altitude.
- Core problem addressed: atmospheric drag causing rapid orbital decay at VLEO altitudes.
- Propellant source: ingested residual atmospheric gases (atomic oxygen/nitrogen), ionised and expelled for thrust.
- Strategic use-cases: long-duration surveillance, high-resolution Earth observation, low-latency communication missions.
- Complements DRDO's parallel roadmap for ISRO's upcoming Kulasekharapatnam spaceport (see next card).

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- VLEO capability would give India a dual-use edge in persistent, high-resolution surveillance relevant to border and maritime-domain awareness.
- Indigenous propulsion R&D reduces dependence on imported satellite-bus/propulsion technology, aligning with Atmanirbhar Bharat in strategic sectors.
- Successful ABEP development could reposition India as a technology provider, not merely a user, in the emerging VLEO commercial-satellite market.
- Illustrates growing DRDO-ISRO institutional convergence, as historically distinct defence-R&D and civil-space mandates increasingly overlap in the space domain.
- Way forward: embedding technology-transfer pathways to private space start-ups, consistent with India's 2020 space-sector reforms.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

"VLEO eats air to fly forever" — air-breathing electric propulsion literally breathes the wisp of atmosphere still present below 450 km and turns it into thrust, so the satellite never runs out of "fuel" the way a conventional thruster would.

PYQ Linkage

GS3 2023: Discuss India's achievements in the field of Space Technology. How has the application of this technology helped India in its socio-economic development?

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements about Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO): (1) Satellites in VLEO typically orbit above 1,000 km altitude. (2) Air-breathing electric propulsion uses residual atmospheric gases as propellant to counter orbital decay. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b). Statement 1 is wrong — VLEO is roughly 150-450 km altitude, well below 1,000 km.

#DRDO

#VLEO

#SpacePropulsion

#AtmanirbharBharat

PYQ: GS3 2023

GS3

Border Management · Static Topic

Static Topic — not tied to a current event · Source: PIB / Ministry of Defence; MP-IDSA

Static Feature: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

Why in this edition: No fresh, verified, non-blocked Defence news story cleared today's freshness bar beyond the DRDO-VLEO item above — Agni-V, border-guarding forces, NIA and Mission Sudarshan Chakra all remain within their 30-day rotation blocks. Per the workspace's pre-approved Defence static-fallback protocol, this profile of the Border Roads Organisation is used, rotating to a category not used in recent editions.

Background: BRO was raised in 1960 under the Ministry of Defence to build and maintain strategic road infrastructure along India's border areas, initially to support the Army's operational needs. It now also builds tunnels, bridges and airfields, and supports the last-mile connectivity component of the Vibrant Villages Programme in Himalayan border settlements.

KEY FACTS

- Established: 1960, under the Ministry of Defence.
- Core mandate: construction/maintenance of roads, bridges and tunnels in border and high-altitude areas for both military mobility and civilian connectivity.
- FY 2024-25 expenditure: ₹16,690 crore (its highest-ever), with an FY 2025-26 target of ₹17,900 crore.
- Flagship projects: the Atal Tunnel (Rohtang) and the Sela Tunnel (Arunachal Pradesh).
- Dual mandate: military logistics/mobilisation support and all-weather civilian connectivity to remote border villages.
- Coordinates with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police for security along construction routes in sensitive Himalayan stretches.
- Integrated with the Vibrant Villages Programme (2023) to develop the "last village" as the "first village" along the northern border.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Border infrastructure is a force-multiplier for rapid troop mobilisation, a priority sharpened by the post-2020 Galwan-era emphasis on matching China's border-road capacity.
- BRO's civilian-connectivity role helps check outmigration from border villages, addressing the demographic-security concern behind the Vibrant Villages Programme.

- Himalayan terrain, weather-window constraints and ecological sensitivity make BRO's execution uniquely challenging compared to plains infrastructure.
- Institutional overlap between BRO, state PWDs and the Ministry of Road Transport occasionally raises coordination and accountability questions.
- Way forward: wider adoption of rapid-bridging and all-weather construction techniques to compress project timelines within a narrowing climate-linked working season.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Think of BRO as "the border's own PWD in uniform" — it builds the road first, so the Army can move, and then the village can follow.

PYQ Linkage

No direct past UPSC question names BRO specifically; treat as foundational conceptual reading for border-infrastructure and border-management questions (a recurring GS3 theme).

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements about the Border Roads Organisation (BRO): (1) It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs. (2) It was established in 1960. (3) The Atal Tunnel and Sela Tunnel are among its flagship projects. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c). Statement 1 is wrong — BRO functions under the Ministry of Defence, not the Ministry of Home Affairs.

#BRO

#BorderInfrastructure

#VibrantVillages

#StaticTopic

THEIAS AKADEMIA

Static-topic days like today's BRO feature are where EMP (Ethics & Moral Philosophy) students often gain the most — converting a plain institutional profile into a values-linked GS4 case study on service-before-self in hostile terrain. Explore EMP at theiasakademia.com.

§5 · Science & Technology

GS2/GS3

Space Diplomacy · Human Spaceflight

09-10 September 2026 · Source: France Diplomatie; ISRO

Paris International Space Summit Concludes with ISRO Chairman's Keynote

Why in News: The first-ever International Space Summit, hosted by France in Paris on 9-10 September 2026 and drawing nearly 120 delegations, concludes today with the ISRO Chairman's keynote address on India's human-spaceflight roadmap in Low Earth Orbit, alongside a video message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the gathering.

Background: India-France space cooperation spans nearly six decades, anchored in ISRO-CNES joint missions such as Megha-Tropiques (tropical-weather and climate monitoring) and SARAL (ocean altimetry). 2026 has been designated the India-France Year of Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability, with the Paris Summit conceived around the theme of "coming together to take action for the planet" through space-based climate and Earth-observation cooperation.

KEY FACTS

- Venue and dates: Paris, 9-10 September 2026; nearly 120 foreign delegations.

- India's keynote: ISRO Chairman/Secretary, Department of Space, on India's human-spaceflight roadmap in LEO.
- A video message from PM Modi was proposed for the Summit.
- Legacy joint missions: Megha-Tropiques and SARAL (ISRO-CNES).
- 2026 designated the India-France Year of Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability.
- Indian delegation also engaged on design/manufacturing technologies in space, space-based connectivity, and exploration beyond the ISS.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Space diplomacy is emerging as a soft-power and technology-cooperation vector distinct from traditional strategic partnerships.
- India's Gaganyaan-linked human-spaceflight ambitions benefit from international showcase platforms to attract partnership and investment.
- The Summit's climate/Earth-observation framing ties space policy directly to global climate-governance discourse.
- Long-standing bilateral scientific cooperation (Megha-Tropiques/SARAL) shows how space partnerships can outlast shifts in broader geopolitical alignment.
- Way forward: translating Summit-level goodwill into concrete joint-mission commitments rather than symbolic participation alone.

MEMORY TECHNIQUE — RETURNING TOPIC

Previously covered:	9 September 2026 (Summit's opening, India-France cooperation context)
What's new today:	The Summit concludes with the ISRO Chairman's actual keynote delivered, plus PM Modi's video message
UPSC relevance shift:	From "India is attending" to "what India specifically showcased" — the human-spaceflight roadmap content

PYQ Linkage

GS3 2019: What is the significance of Simulated Space Environment Technology and physiological Trans-lunar Injection in the context of Chandrayaan-2?

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements: (1) Megha-Tropiques is a joint India-France satellite mission for tropical-weather and climate monitoring. (2) SARAL is a joint India-France ocean-altimetry mission. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c). Both are genuine joint ISRO-CNES missions.

#IndiaFrance

#SpaceDiplomacy

#Gaganyaan

#ISROCNES

PYQ: GS3 2019

GS3

Space Infrastructure

September 2026 · Source: Indian defence/space trade press; DRDO

DRDO Charts Roadmap to Use ISRO's Upcoming Kulasekharapatnam Spaceport

Why in News: DRDO is drawing up a strategic roadmap to leverage ISRO's upcoming spaceport at Kulasekharapatnam (Tamil Nadu), slated for partial commissioning by late 2026 or early 2027, positioning the new launch facility to also support DRDO's next generation of high-stakes missile and space-technology test missions.

Background: India's existing satellite launch infrastructure is concentrated at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, which faces trajectory constraints for southward polar/high-inclination launches over inhabited areas. Kulasekharapatnam, on Tamil Nadu's southern coast, was selected to enable safer southward launch corridors over open ocean, part of India's plan to scale up launch cadence for both ISRO's civil missions and rising small-satellite/commercial demand.

KEY FACTS

- New spaceport location: Kulasekharapatnam, Tamil Nadu.
- Commissioning timeline: partial commissioning by late 2026 or early 2027.
- Purpose: enable safer southward/polar-orbit launch trajectories over open ocean, distinct from Sriharikota's constraints.
- DRDO's interest: leveraging the new spaceport for its own high-stakes missile/space-technology test missions, not only ISRO civil launches.
- Reflects a broader trend of DRDO and ISRO transferring mature technologies to private industry while deepening inter-agency infrastructure sharing.
- Complements the VLEO propulsion RfP (previous card) as part of a coordinated indigenous space-technology push.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- A second major spaceport reduces single-point-of-failure risk and supports India's rising launch-cadence ambitions.
- DRDO-ISRO convergence at shared launch infrastructure blurs the traditional civil-military space-programme boundary, raising dual-use governance questions.
- Launch-site selection illustrates how orbital mechanics and population-safety considerations, not just politics, drive infrastructure geography.
- Private-sector technology transfer of mature ISRO/DRDO systems is central to India's 2020 space-sector reforms and its ambition for a much larger space economy by 2033.
- Way forward: clear inter-agency protocols on scheduling, safety and security clearances as Kulasekharapatnam moves from single-user to shared-use spaceport.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Two spaceports, two jobs: Sriharikota looks north/east for most missions; Kulasekharapatnam looks south, over open ocean, for the polar launches Sriharikota cannot safely do.

PYQ Linkage

Emerging topic — no direct past UPSC question yet names Kulasekharapatnam; flagged honestly as a strong candidate for a future Prelims/Mains question given the spaceport's imminent commissioning.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

The upcoming Indian spaceport at Kulasekharapatnam, intended to enable southward polar-orbit launches, is located in which State?

(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Odisha (d) Kerala

Answer: (b) Tamil Nadu.

#Kulasekharapatnam

#ISRO

#DRDO

#SpaceInfrastructure

§6 • Economy

GS3

External Sector • Reserves Management

Week ended 28 August 2026 (released 4 September 2026) • Source: Reserve Bank of India

India's Forex Reserves Scale a Fresh All-Time High of \$740.80 Billion

Why in News: India's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$11.47 billion in the week ended 28 August 2026 to touch a fresh all-time high of \$740.80 billion, according to RBI data released on 4 September 2026 — now \$49.7 billion above end-March 2026 levels and \$46.57 billion higher year-on-year.

Background: Forex reserves, held by the RBI, buffer the economy against external shocks and cover import bills and short-term external debt; they comprise Foreign Currency Assets, gold, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), and India's reserve position in the IMF. The 2026 accretion has been aided by RBI measures introduced in June 2026, including a special deposit scheme for NRIs, alongside sustained capital inflows and prudent current-account management.

KEY FACTS

- New record: \$740.80 billion (week ended 28 August 2026), up \$11.47 billion week-on-week.
- Composition: Foreign Currency Assets \$600.67 bn; Gold \$116.409 bn; SDRs \$18.81 bn; IMF reserve position roughly \$4.9 bn.
- Gold reserves alone rose \$2.19 billion in the same week, reflecting both fresh accumulation and global gold-price gains.
- Reserves are up \$49.696 billion from end-March 2026 and \$46.574 billion year-on-year.
- Accretion aided by the RBI's June 2026 special deposit programme for NRIs/non-resident customers.
- Reserves remain comfortably above the traditional import-cover adequacy benchmark used to assess external-sector resilience.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Record reserves strengthen India's external-sector resilience against global oil-price or capital-flow shocks — a core GS3 economic-security theme.
- Rising gold share within reserves reflects a wider global central-bank trend of gold accumulation amid de-dollarisation debates.
- Reserve adequacy must be read alongside India's managed-float exchange-rate regime, since reserves also serve as an intervention buffer, not merely a safety cushion.
- Large reserves carry an opportunity cost (low-yielding safe assets) versus deploying capital domestically, a recurring macro-policy debate.
- Way forward: continued diversification of reserve assets and prudent, rules-based use of accretion to manage rupee volatility without eroding the buffer.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

"\$740.8 billion and climbing" — think of it as a cushion built gold-brick by gold-brick and dollar by dollar, comfortably covering India's external obligations.

PYQ Linkage

GS3 2021: How far do you agree that the behaviour of the Indian economy in the pre- and post-reform period has been different in terms of macroeconomic aggregates?

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements about India's foreign exchange reserves: (1) They comprise Foreign Currency Assets, Gold, Special Drawing Rights, and India's Reserve Tranche Position in the IMF. (2) The Reserve Bank of India is the custodian of India's forex reserves. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c). Both statements are correct.

#ForexReserves

#RBI

#ExternalSector

#Gold

PYQ: GS3 2021

GS3

Growth Indicators · Services Sector

August 2026 reading, released early September 2026 · Source: S&P Global / HSBC PMI release

HSBC India Services PMI Eases to 53.3 in August 2026

Why in News: The HSBC India Services PMI final reading for August 2026 came in at 53.3, easing from the flash estimate and from July's reading, even as the Composite PMI (manufacturing plus services) held at 54.3, above the 50-mark expansion threshold. This is distinct from the Manufacturing PMI (52.9, a five-year low in output growth) already flagged in an earlier edition.

Background: The Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by S&P Global for HSBC from a monthly survey of private-sector firms, is a diffusion index where a reading above 50 signals expansion and below 50 signals contraction. It is a widely tracked leading indicator, released well ahead of official government GDP/IIP data, capturing new orders, output, employment, and input/output prices.

KEY FACTS

- HSBC India Services PMI (final, August 2026): 53.3, still in expansion territory but softer than earlier readings.
- Composite PMI (manufacturing plus services): 54.3 (final).
- Services remain the larger, faster-growing component of India's PMI basket versus manufacturing's 52.9.
- PMI is compiled by S&P Global and sponsored by HSBC, based on a monthly private-sector survey panel.
- A sub-50 reading would signal contraction; both indices remain above 50, indicating continued, if slower, expansion.
- Employment and new-export-orders sub-indices are typically tracked alongside the headline number for underlying momentum.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Services-sector resilience (above manufacturing) reflects India's structurally services-led growth model, distinct from the East Asian manufacturing-led path.
- PMI softening alongside slowing manufacturing output signals a coordinated growth-momentum concern ahead of the next RBI Monetary Policy Committee review.
- Being survey-based and monthly, PMI offers a faster read on the economy than quarterly GDP data, useful for real-time policy calibration.
- Employment sub-index trends in services PMI carry distributive implications given services' outsized share of urban formal-sector job creation.

- Way forward: targeted policy support (credit access, export facilitation) for labour-intensive services sub-segments if the softening trend persists.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

PMI above 50 means "sailing," below 50 means "sinking" — 53.3 means services are still sailing, just with a little less wind than before.

PYQ Linkage

GS3 2020: What are the salient features of "inclusive growth" and how far has it been achieved through the recent monetary policy of the RBI?

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements about the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI): (1) A PMI reading above 50 indicates expansion in that sector. (2) In India, the PMI survey is officially conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is wrong — India's PMI is compiled by S&P Global (sponsored by HSBC), a private agency, not MoSPI.

#PMI

#ServicesSector

#SPGlobal

#Economy

PYQ: GS3 2020

This edition continues in **Part II • Environment to Direct Hit Tracker**, covering Environment & Ecology, Places in News, Ethics & Integrity Cases, Prelims MCQs, Mains Questions, Answer-Writing Value Addition, the AKADEmia Direct Hit Tracker and Proof of Precision.

★ THEIAS AKADEmia — PROOF OF PRECISION

UPSC CSE Prelims 2026 Results

In what critics called the most unpredictable Prelims paper in a decade —

48

QUESTIONS FROM
ANTIM ASSURED 100+

7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

Our students had seen 48 questions before the paper was opened.

This is not luck. This is TheIAS Akademia.

JOIN ANTIM ASSURED 100+ →

VERIFIED · PART I

Proof of Precision — Part I

Every item mapped. Every claim verified.

10

NEWS ITEMS

2

GS PAPERS COVERED

10

PYQ LINKAGES

10

PRELIMS QS GENERATED

0

REPEATED TOPICS

Polity

International Relations

Defence

Science & Technology

Economy

✓ All news sourced from Supreme Court records, PIB/Ministry releases, RBI data, and primary international/press sources.

✓ Every topic cross-checked against a 25-year UPSC question bank for genuine syllabus linkage.

✓ News Freshness Rule applied — two returning topics (Sri Lanka visit, BRICS Summit) each carry an explicit Memory Technique box; one Defence static fallback is clearly labelled.

ANTIM ASSURED 100+ is a TheIAS Akademia daily flagship.

Programs: EMP · ANTIM 2027 · Sahyog Mentorship · LAKSHYAM AIR1 · NEEB 300+ · Philosophy Target 300+
theiasakademia.com