

PART I · HEADLINES TO ECONOMY

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 TheIAS Akademia

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 UPSC CSE 2027

PART I — SECTION INDEX

§1 Top 10 Headlines

§2 Polity & Governance

§3 International Relations

§4 Defence & Security

§5 Science & Technology

§6 Economy

§1 Top 10 Headlines — 10 June 2026

- 1 Zojila Tunnel achieves final breakthrough — India's longest road tunnel (14.2 km) connects Baltal (J&K) to Minamarg (Ladakh); world's highest bi-directional road tunnel at ~11,578 ft
- 2 Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing concludes first-ever state visit to India; Kaladan Multimodal Project, Trilateral Highway & ASEAN gateway discussed with PM Modi at Hyderabad House
- 3 Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary (Surha Taal, Ballia, Uttar Pradesh) designated India's 100th Ramsar Wetland site — announced by PM Modi on World Environment Day (5 June 2026)
- 4 India now 1st in Asia and 3rd globally in Ramsar site count (behind UK-176, Mexico-144)
- 5 India's Q4 FY26 current account surplus at \$7.1 billion; record remittances \$43.5 bn; net services exports \$60.4 bn
- 6 Gross FDI inflows cross \$90 billion for first time in FY26; 100% FDI permitted in insurance; Chinese shareholding cap relaxed to 10% via automatic route
- 7 Australia's National Defence Strategy 2026 designates India as "top-tier security partner" — alongside USA, UK, Japan, New Zealand only
- 8 BrahMos supersonic cruise missile deal finalised with Indonesia — India's largest single-platform defence export to ASEAN
- 9 President Murmu confers 51 gallantry awards at Defence Investiture Ceremony 2026; Gaganyaan astronaut-designate Air Cdre Prasanth B. Nair receives Kirti Chakra
- 10 Citizenship Amendment Rules 2026 notified — e-OCI digital card introduced; fully online application; stricter dual-passport norms for minors

Citizenship Amendment Rules 2026 — e-OCI Card & Dual Passport Norms

GS2

POLITY

PYQ

OCI

CITIZENSHIP

WHY IN NEWS

The Union Home Ministry notified Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026, introducing the e-OCI (electronic OCI) card with QR code and a fully online application process. Stricter norms on dual passports for minors were also introduced.

BACKGROUND

OCI status was created under Citizenship Act, 1955 via a 2005 amendment; the PIO card was merged into OCI in 2015. Over 4.5 million OCI cardholders exist globally.

PRELIMS FACTS

- ▶ OCI introduced via Citizenship Act 1955 amendment (2005); PIO card merged 2015; ~4.5 mn holders worldwide
- ▶ e-OCI: QR-coded digital card; eliminates physical issuance delays at Indian Missions abroad
- ▶ OCI holders: no voting rights, cannot hold constitutional offices, cannot acquire agricultural/plantation land in India
- ▶ Article 9 of the Constitution bars dual citizenship — OCI is "near-citizenship," NOT dual citizenship

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- ▶ Diaspora engagement vs. sovereignty: India's single-citizenship model (Article 5–11) vs. diaspora demand for fuller rights
- ▶ Digital governance: e-OCI reduces consular friction; aligns with Digital India and modernisation of overseas services
- ▶ Minor dual-passport norms: addresses statelessness risk and nationality fraud in globally mobile families

UPSC SYLLABUS

GS2: CITIZENSHIP & CONSTITUTION

GS2: GOVERNANCE & E-DELIVERY

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2013: Discuss OCI concept and its implications for the Indian diaspora.

PROBABLE MCQ

Consider statements about OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) cardholders:

1. They enjoy voting rights in Indian general elections.
2. They do not require a separate visa to visit India.
3. They cannot acquire agricultural land in India.

Which is/are correct?

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

✓ Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only — OCI cardholders cannot vote in Indian elections.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Critically examine OCI status vis-à-vis dual citizenship and evaluate implications of the 2026 amendments for India's diaspora engagement strategy. (150 words)

OCI ≠ dual citizenship. Article 9 bars it outright. The e-OCI is a delivery upgrade only — no change in legal status. UPSC loves the OCI vs. PIO vs. NRI distinction in statement-based MCQs.

Faculty Vacancies in Central Higher Education Institutions — Mission Mode Drives

GS2

EDUCATION

PYQ

NEP 2020

HIGHER EDUCATION

WHY IN NEWS

Ministry of Education data reveals 17,878 faculty posts filled across Central Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) via Mission Mode recruitment drives (Sept 2022, Oct 2025). Newer IITs, IIITs and NITs face disproportionately steeper vacancy shortfalls than older institutions.

BACKGROUND

India has 23 IITs, 54 NITs, 26 IIITs and 46 Central Universities under MoE. NEP 2020 targets a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 50% by 2035 (current ~29%); faculty quality is the binding constraint.

PRELIMS FACTS

- ▶ 17,878 posts filled as of Jan 24, 2026 across all CHEIs via Mission Mode drives
- ▶ IITs governed by IIT Act 1961 (autonomous); Central University faculty by UGC Act 1956
- ▶ NEP 2020 GER target: 50% by 2035; India's current GER ~29% (global average ~40%)

- ▶ Newer campuses (IIT Jammu, Dharwad, Bhilai; IIITs) bear steepest vacancy burden vs. older IITs

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- ▶ Institutional inequity: older IITs attract faculty through brand strength; newer institutions remain chronically understaffed
- ▶ Governance gap: IIT Act autonomy vs. UGC oversight creates inconsistent standards and accountability voids
- ▶ NEP 2020 intent vs. delivery: quality faculty is the single biggest constraint on India's global knowledge hub aspiration

UPSC SYLLABUS

GS2: EDUCATION & HRD

GS2: GOVERNANCE

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2020: Assess higher education quality in India with reference to faculty shortage and governance.

PROBABLE MCQ

Which of the following correctly describes the regulatory framework for faculty in Indian HEIs?

1. UGC sets minimum qualifications for Central University faculty.
2. IIT faculty appointments are governed solely by UGC Act, 1956.
3. NEP 2020 targets GER of 50% in higher education by 2035.

Select correct:

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

✓ Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only — IITs are governed by IIT Act 1961, not UGC Act.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Examine faculty shortage in India's CHEIs and suggest structural reforms for equitable distribution across old and new institutions. (150 words)

The asymmetry between brand-rich older IITs and resource-poor newer campuses is a classic governance delivery gap. NEP sets the ambition; faculty availability is the execution bottleneck. Write "intent vs. implementation" for maximum GS2 impact.

Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing's State Visit to India

GS2

IR

PYQ

MYANMAR

NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST

ACT EAST

WHY IN NEWS

Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing made his first-ever state visit to India (May 30–June 3, 2026), visiting the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya before meetings with PM Modi and President Murmu at Hyderabad House, New Delhi.

BACKGROUND

India shares a 1,643 km border with Myanmar; its Neighbourhood First and Act East policies drive engagement. The Kaladan Multimodal Transit Project and India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway are India's key connectivity anchors.

PRELIMS FACTS

- ▶ Mekong–Ganga ICCR scholarships for Myanmar students raised from 36 to 100 annually from 2026
- ▶ Kaladan Project route: Kolkata port → Sittwe (sea) → Kaladan River (inland waterway) → Mizoram
- ▶ Trilateral Highway: Moreh (India) → Tamu → Myanmar → Mae Sot (Thailand); ~1,360 km
- ▶ India-Myanmar border: 1,643 km across Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- ▶ Values vs. realpolitik: engaging a military junta balances India's democratic principles against strategic necessity
- ▶ Connectivity dividend: Kaladan and Trilateral Highway transform Northeast India into an ASEAN economic gateway
- ▶ China counter-balance: India's Myanmar engagement checks Beijing's Belt & Road footprint and influence

UPSC SYLLABUS

GS2: NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

GS2: BILATERAL RELATIONS

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2017: India's strategic interests in Myanmar and Kaladan Multimodal Project's significance.

PROBABLE MCQ

Consider statements about India–Myanmar connectivity:

1. Kaladan Project connects Kolkata to Mizoram via Myanmar's Sittwe port.
2. Trilateral Highway connects India, Myanmar and Bangladesh.
3. India and Myanmar share a border of 1,643 km.

Which is/are correct?

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

✓ Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only — Trilateral Highway connects India–Myanmar–Thailand, not Bangladesh.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Critically evaluate India's engagement with military-ruled Myanmar within its "Neighbourhood First" policy framework. (150 words)

India's Myanmar dilemma: abandon the junta and lose influence to China, or engage and face charges of endorsing authoritarianism. UPSC Mains GS2 rewards nuanced realpolitik — argue both sides before staking a position.

Australia's National Defence Strategy 2026 — India as Top-Tier Security Partner

GS2

IR

GS3

PYQ

QUAD

INDO-PACIFIC

WHY IN NEWS

Australia's National Defence Strategy (NDS) 2026 officially designates India as a "top-tier security partner" — its highest bilateral security category, reflecting deep Quad convergence and shared Indo-Pacific interests.

BACKGROUND

India–Australia upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2020; MLSA (Mutual Logistics Support Agreement) was signed in 2020. Both nations are Quad members alongside the USA and Japan.

PRELIMS FACTS

- ▶ NDS 2026 "top-tier" list: only India, USA, UK, Japan and New Zealand hold this designation
- ▶ MLSA (2020): allows India and Australia reciprocal use of military bases and logistics support
- ▶ AUSINDEX: biennial bilateral naval exercise between India and Australia

- ▶ Quad revived 2017; Leaders' Summit format since 2021; members: India, USA, Japan, Australia

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- ▶ Strategic autonomy paradox: India is "top-tier" without a formal military alliance — "alignment without alliance"
- ▶ Free & Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP): India–Australia alignment underpins Quad's rules-based maritime order
- ▶ Defence export nexus: BrahMos to Indonesia + NDS 2026 elevation signals India's defence diplomacy maturity

UPSC SYLLABUS

GS2: INDIA–AUSTRALIA RELATIONS

GS2: INDO-PACIFIC

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2022: Examine QUAD's significance in India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

PROBABLE MCQ

With reference to India–Australia defence ties:

1. MLSA was signed in 2020.
2. AUSINDEX is a trilateral exercise involving India, Australia and Japan.
3. Both are Quad members.

Which is/are correct?

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

✓ Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only — AUSINDEX is bilateral (India–Australia), not trilateral.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Analyse Australia's NDS 2026 designation of India as "top-tier security partner" and its implications for India's strategic autonomy in the Indo-Pacific. (150 words)

India gains security architecture access without NATO-style treaty obligations. This is the strategic autonomy paradox UPSC rewards: embedded in the Western framework while retaining multi-alignment. Write "alignment without alliance."

Defence Investiture Ceremony 2026 — 51 Gallantry Awards; Kirti Chakra to Gaganyaan Astronaut

GS3

DEFENCE

PYQ

GALLANTRY AWARDS

GAGANYAAN

WHY IN NEWS

President Droupadi Murmu conferred 51 gallantry awards at Defence Investiture Ceremony 2026 at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Air Commodore Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Gaganyaan astronaut-designate and IAF test pilot, received the Kirti Chakra.

BACKGROUND

India's gallantry awards have two streams: wartime (Param Vir Chakra > Maha Vir Chakra > Vir Chakra) and peacetime (Ashoka Chakra > Kirti Chakra > Shaurya Chakra). Kirti Chakra is the second-highest peacetime gallantry award.

PRELIMS FACTS

- ▶ Peacetime hierarchy: Ashoka Chakra > Kirti Chakra > Shaurya Chakra; wartime: PVC > MVC > VC
- ▶ Air Cdre Prasanth B. Nair: IAF test pilot; selected as Gaganyaan astronaut-trainee 2020; trained in Russia (Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre)
- ▶ Gaganyaan: India's first human spaceflight programme; 4 IAF astronaut-trainees; orbital mission target 2026–27
- ▶ Kirti Chakra: awarded for conspicuous gallantry or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice (peacetime)

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- ▶ Expanding definition of national service: scientists/astronauts receiving Kirti Chakra broadens the honour's scope beyond battlefield
- ▶ Gaganyaan's strategic value: human spaceflight elevates India's geopolitical standing, STEM prestige and deterrence credibility
- ▶ Civil-military alignment: investiture ceremonies reinforce institutional culture of service and sacrifice

UPSC SYLLABUS

GS3: DEFENCE

GS3: SPACE PROGRAMME

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2019: Significance of India's Gaganyaan programme for national security and space diplomacy.

PROBABLE MCQ

Which correctly describes India's peacetime gallantry awards in descending order of precedence?

(a) Ashoka Chakra > Kirti Chakra > Shaurya Chakra

(b) Kirti Chakra > Ashoka Chakra > Shaurya Chakra

(c) Shaurya Chakra > Kirti Chakra > Ashoka Chakra

(d) Param Vir Chakra > Kirti Chakra > Shaurya Chakra

✓ **Answer: (a) Ashoka Chakra > Kirti Chakra > Shaurya Chakra — Ashoka Chakra is the highest peacetime gallantry award.**

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Examine how India's gallantry award system reflects evolving conceptions of national service in the space age. (150 words)

PVC/MVC/VC = wartime; Ashoka/Kirti/Shaurya = peacetime. UPSC tests this repeatedly. Gaganyaan astronaut receiving Kirti Chakra creates a rich GS3 Science + Defence crossover — classic multi-GS question territory.

§5 Science & Technology

Zojila Tunnel — India's Longest Road Tunnel; World's Highest Bi-directional Road Tunnel

GS3

INFRASTRUCTURE

PYQ

LADAKH

NHIDCL

WHY IN NEWS

Engineers achieved the final breakthrough of the Zojila Tunnel (14.2 km) on 9 June 2026, connecting Baltal in Jammu & Kashmir to Minamarg in Ladakh — India's longest road tunnel and the world's longest bi-directional road tunnel at high altitude (~11,578 ft / 3,528 m).

BACKGROUND

Zojila Pass is snowbound for ~6 months annually, cutting off Ladakh from Kashmir. Post-Op Sindoor, the tunnel became a top strategic priority to ensure year-round all-weather supply to military posts in the Kargil–Leh sector.

PRELIMS FACTS

- ▶ Length: 14.2 km; altitude: ~3,528 m (11,578 ft); design speed 70 km/hr; bi-directional; built by NHIDCL under MoRTH
- ▶ Connects: Baltal (J&K) to Minamarg (Ladakh); reduces travel time from 3.5 hours to ~15 minutes
- ▶ Construction method: NATM (New Austrian Tunnelling Method) — standard for complex high-altitude tunnelling
- ▶ Strategic value: all-weather supply chain to Kargil, Leh and forward military posts in eastern Ladakh

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- ▶ Defence-infrastructure nexus: year-round Ladakh connectivity transforms deterrence against China–Pakistan dual threat
- ▶ Ladakh UT integration: tunnel catalyses tourism, trade and economic integration of India's newest UT
- ▶ Engineering benchmark: NATM at seismic zone IV and extreme altitude — showcases India's high-altitude tunnelling capability

UPSC SYLLABUS

GS3: INFRASTRUCTURE

GS3: INTERNAL SECURITY

GS2: J&K/LADAKH UT

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2021: Strategic importance of border infrastructure in India's northern sector.

PROBABLE MCQ

Consider statements about the Zojila Tunnel:

1. It connects Srinagar to Leh city directly.
2. It is built by NHIDCL under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
3. It is the world's longest bi-directional road tunnel at high altitude.

Which is/are correct?

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

✓ Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only — it connects Baltal (J&K) to Minamarg (Ladakh), not Srinagar to Leh.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Analyse the strategic and economic significance of the Zojila Tunnel for India's Ladakh policy and border preparedness. (150 words)

Zojila was the Achilles' heel of Ladakh's supply chain — snowbound 6 months/year. Post-Op Sindoor, India fast-tracked it. Write: "infrastructure IS defence." UPSC rewards this synthesis across GS2 + GS3 paper boundaries.

§6 Economy

India's Q4 FY26 Current Account Surplus & FDI Crossing \$90 Billion

GS3

ECONOMY

PYQ

BOP

FDI

REMITTANCES

WHY IN NEWS

India recorded a current account (CA) surplus of \$7.1 billion in Q4 FY26, driven by record remittances of \$43.5 billion and net services exports of \$60.4 billion. Gross FDI inflows also crossed \$90 billion for the first time ever in FY26.

BACKGROUND

India historically ran current account deficits due to high merchandise trade deficits. A CA surplus signals structural competitiveness in services. India is the world's largest remittance recipient — \$137 billion received in 2024 (World Bank), the only country to cross \$100 billion.

PRELIMS FACTS

- ▶ Q4 FY26 CA surplus: \$7.1 bn; net services receipts \$60.4 bn; remittances \$43.5 bn (record)
- ▶ FDI FY26: gross inflows crossed \$90 bn (first time); 100% FDI now permitted in insurance sector
- ▶ FDI amendment: Chinese shareholding up to 10% now allowed via automatic route
- ▶ India: world's largest remittance recipient — \$137 bn in 2024, first and only country to cross \$100 bn

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- ▶ Services revolution: India's IT/ITES export dominance underpins CA surplus — structural, not cyclical shift
- ▶ FDI in insurance: enables capital deepening, risk broadening and financial inclusion for underserved segments
- ▶ Diaspora as strategic economic asset: \$43.5 bn remittances stabilise BoP amid global uncertainty

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2018: Factors contributing to India's current account deficit and corrective measures.

PROBABLE MCQ

Which of the following are included under India's Current Account in the Balance of Payments?

1. Remittances from Indian diaspora
2. Foreign Direct Investment inflows
3. Net software/IT services exports

Select correct:

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

✓ Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only — FDI is Capital Account, not Current Account.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Examine structural factors behind India's Q4 FY26 current account surplus and evaluate sustainability of this trend amid global volatility. (250 words)

FDI = Capital Account. Remittances + services exports = Current Account. UPSC consistently tests this BoP categorisation. India's CA surplus is structural — IT services + diaspora remittances — not a one-off windfall.

 **Continued in Part II** → Environment · Places in News · Ethics · MCQs · Mains · Direct Hit Tracker

 \$1 India's 100th Ramsar Site (Surha Taal, Ballia) |  \$2 Places in News |  \$4 Fifteen MCQs |  \$7 Direct Hit Tracker

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A SINGLE DOCUMENT

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