UPSC with SAURABH KAUSHIK

Current Affairs Notes · 2 July 2026

The Hindu · Indian Express · PIB | 18 Topics | GS 2 · 3 + Prelims + Mapping

[TH] The Hindu | [IE] Indian Express | [PIB] Press Info Bureau

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PIB HIGHLIGHTS — 2 JULY 2026 (Curated for UPSC)

1. GAGAN — India's GPS-Aided Geo Augmented Navigation System

✓ PIB Backgrounder: GAGAN (GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation) — India's satellite-based navigation augmentation system, developed jointly by ISRO and Airports Authority of India (AAI), certified operational since 2015.

✓ What GAGAN does: GAGAN receives signals from the US GPS (Global Positioning System) constellation of satellites and augments them with India-specific correction signals (transmitted from Indian reference stations and geostationary satellites); improves GPS accuracy for aviation from ~10 metres to <1.5 metres — sufficient for precision instrument approach and landing in poor visibility.

✓ Coverage: GAGAN signal covers the entire Indian Flight Information Region (FIR) and extends to the surrounding region (covering approximately 40% of the world's air traffic volume); India's aircraft use GAGAN for approach, landing, and en-route navigation over Indian territory.

✓ Geostationary satellites used: GAGAN signal is broadcast through ISRO's GSAT-8 and GSAT-10 geostationary satellites; the signal is compatible with the US WAAS (Wide Area Augmentation System), Europe's EGNOS, Japan's MSAS — making GAGAN part of the global SBAS (Satellite-Based Augmentation System) ecosystem.

✓ Aviation significance: India's first PinS (Point in Space) instrument approach procedure for helicopter operations was approved using GAGAN signals (see next item); GAGAN enables precision approaches at smaller airports without expensive ground-based ILS (Instrument Landing Systems).

✓ GS3 Angle: Space technology; GPS augmentation; SBAS; GAGAN; ISRO commercial applications; aviation navigation; ATM (Air Traffic Management) modernisation.

2. PinS Helicopter Approach + eSARAS + AI at Kodaikanal Solar Observatory

✓ PinS APPROACH FOR HELICOPTERS: India approved its first Point in Space (PinS) Instrument Approach Procedure for helicopter operations — using GAGAN signals; PinS allows helicopters to navigate precisely to a defined point in space (not a traditional runway) using satellite navigation; critical for helicopter landing at helipads in hospitals, mountains, and disaster areas without expensive conventional navigation aids. This enables year-round medical evacuation and disaster relief helicopter operations in poor visibility (fog, rain, mountains).

✓ eSARAS: 'Electronic Saras' — digital marketplace platform for SHG (Self-Help Group) products under NRLM (National Rural Livelihoods Mission / DAY-NRLM); enables rural women artisans and SHG members to sell products directly to consumers across India; connects 1 crore+ SHG members to digital commerce; government procurement channel also integrated (government e-marketplace linkage). Sanjeevani SHGs from remote tribal areas can now reach urban consumers directly — a significant rural women empowerment and market access initiative.

✓ AI AT KODAIKANAL SOLAR OBSERVATORY: ISRO/DST used AI (convolutional neural networks) to analyse 100+ years of digitised solar images from the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (Tamil Nadu); AI tracked the evolution of 'faculae' (bright regions on the Sun associated with increased solar activity) over a century; reveals patterns in the Sun's 11-year activity cycle and long-term solar irradiance trends; important for space weather forecasting (solar storms affect GPS, power grids, satellites). Kodaikanal Solar Observatory: Established 1899 by the British Indian government; one of the oldest solar observatories in the world; currently under Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA).

✓ GS3 Angles: GAGAN application; helicopter operations; eSARAS rural SHG e-commerce; solar physics; space weather; Kodaikanal Observatory; AI in astronomy.

GS PAPER 3 — Defence · Economy

1. Army Chief Gen Dhiraj Seth Unveils 'VIJAY' Roadmap for a Future-Ready Army

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GS 3: Defence: Indian Army transformation; VIJAY doctrine; 'Decade of Transformation'; modernisation; Atmanirbharta.

- July 1, 2026 (his first full day as COAS): Gen Dhiraj Seth unveiled the 'VIJAY' roadmap — his comprehensive 5-priority vision for transforming the Indian Army into a technology-enabled, future-ready force capable of operating in multiple domains.
- VIJAY = Vigilance + Innovation and Transformation + Jointness and Integration + Atmanirbharta + Yodha First — each letter is a priority area.
- Gen Seth: 'Our aim is to forge a technology-enabled, future-ready army which is powerful in all forms, and capable of operating in multiple domains.'
- Context: VIJAY is built upon and extends the 'Decade of Transformation (2023-2032)' — Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's modernisation roadmap for the Indian Army; Seth is aligning his tenure's priorities within this larger framework.

VIJAY: Breaking Down Each Priority

- **V — Vigilance and Readiness:** 'We will maintain constant alertness regarding our borders and emerging threats.' Context: Two-front challenge (China LAC + Pakistan); IBGs (Integrated Battle Groups) becoming operational this month provide 48-hour deployment capability; the 17 Mountain Strike Corps IBGisation is the structural manifestation of this vigilance priority.
- **I — Innovation and Transformation:** Accelerating technology adoption — AI, unmanned systems (Bhairav loitering munitions), electronic warfare, directed energy; promoting an 'innovation culture' within the Army (ARIC — Army Research and Innovation Corps); integrating startups through the iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) DISC challenges.
- **J — Jointness and Integration:** Building on the CDS (Chief of Defence Staff) and Integrated Theatre Command (ITC) framework; under CDS Gen Anil Chauhan; ITCs are being developed (Theatre Command for North/China, West/Pakistan, Maritime); Seth's experience commanding two operational Army Commands (South Western + Southern) gives him direct understanding of the joint-ness imperative.
- **A — Atmanirbharta (Self-Reliance):** 'We will become a self-reliant Army through indigenous capabilities and technologies developed in the country.' Concrete manifestation: 75% defence capital procurement from domestic sources (DAP 2020); DRDO-developed systems (Kavach, Pinaka, Arjun Mk1A, ATAGS howitzer, Pralay ballistic missile, Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile); iDEX-funded startup weapons systems.
- **Y — Yodha First (Soldier First):** 'Boosting the technological threshold of the soldiers and enhancing the level of training will be my main priorities.' Focuses on: improving the technological interface between the soldier and the weapon system (digitalised C4I — Command, Control, Communications, Computers & Intelligence at the section/platoon level); quality of life improvements for the 1.3 million Army personnel; Agnipath scheme management and integration of Agniveers.

UPSC ANGLE

• The 'Decade of Transformation' (2023-2032): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's framework for the Indian Army; covers: IBGisation, Theatre Commands, technology adoption, Atmanirbharta, manpower restructuring; VIJAY aligns with this framework — Seth is adding his specific interpretation and emphasis without departing from the broader strategic direction.

• VIJAY vs. DRASTIC (Gen Dwivedi's acronym): Each COAS typically announces a vision acronym on assuming charge; Gen Dwivedi had 'DRASTIC' (Decisive, Responsive, Agile, Synergised, Technology Enabled, Integrated, Capable); Gen Seth's VIJAY takes forward similar themes with a distinctly Atmanirbharta and Yodha (soldier) focus.

- **VIJAY Roadmap** — Gen Dhiraj Seth's (31st COAS) 5-priority vision for Indian Army: V = Vigilance, I = Innovation & Transformation, J = Jointness & Integration, A = Atmanirbharta, Y = Yodha First; unveiled July 1, 2026; aligned with 'Decade of Transformation (2023-2032).'

2. GST Revenue Up 14% in June; Imports Component Soared 35%

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GS 3: Economy: GST; IGST; import tax; revenue buoyancy; economic growth indicator.

‣ GST collection for June 2026 (collected in July 2026 — GST is collected in the month following): Rs 1.98 lakh crore — up 14% year-on-year from June 2025.
‣ The 35% imports component jump: IGST (Integrated GST) on imports surged 35% year-on-year in June 2026 — reflecting India's higher import volumes post-Hormuz crisis resolution (goods that were delayed are now clearing customs in a burst).
‣ Revenue breakdown: CGST: Rs 38,000 crore; SGST: Rs 47,500 crore; IGST (domestic): Rs 85,000 crore; IGST (imports): Rs 22,000 crore; Cess: Rs 5,500 crore. Note: IGST is later apportioned between Centre and States through settlement.
‣ Why GST revenue growth matters: GST is the primary source of revenue for both Centre and States (replacing multiple taxes); consistent 14%+ growth signals economic activity expansion; it tracks closely with economic growth (IIP, PMI, freight volumes — all leading GDP indicators).

- The imports surge interpretation: Post-Hormuz war, India's import volumes are recovering from 4 months of supply chain disruption; crude oil, fertiliser, electronics, and industrial machinery imports are surging as both actual trade volumes increase AND deferred shipments arrive; the 35% IGST-on-imports growth reflects this recovery surge — it is a positive sign, not a concern about import dependence per se.
- The broader GST story at 9 years: June 2026 marks the 9th year of GST (launched July 1, 2017); GST buoyancy (ratio of GST growth rate to GDP growth rate) has consistently been above 1.0 in recent years, suggesting that the tax base is widening (more economic activity being captured in the formal/taxed economy) rather than just nominal inflation.
- Key problem: The composition of GST revenue is increasingly concentrated in a few sectors (services, automobiles, FMCG) while informal-sector activities remain undertaxed; the 2-5% rate slabs (covering essential goods) collect relatively little revenue, requiring higher rates on a narrower base of goods/services to generate adequate revenue.

UPSC ANGLE
• GST Council structural significance: The GST Council (Article 279A) is a constitutional body — the first-ever constitutional body with both Centre and States as members with weighted votes; it has become a model for cooperative federalism in tax policy; its unanimous/three-quarter majority decisions create legally binding GST rates and classifications.
• Petroleum products outside GST: India loses an estimated Rs 3-4 lakh crore annually in potential GST revenue from petroleum products remaining outside GST; the Centre's reluctance (petroleum taxes are a major Central revenue source through specific excise) and State governments' reluctance (VAT on petroleum is a major state revenue source) continue to prevent petroleum's GST inclusion.

- **IGST (Integrated GST)** — GST on inter-state supplies and imports; collected entirely by the Centre and then apportioned between Centre and States; the 35% growth in IGST-on-imports in June 2026 reflects post-Hormuz import volume surge.

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3. VB-G RAM G: Centre Fixes Minimum Wage at Rs 300/Day for Rural Jobs

[TH] Page 1

GS 2: Governance: MGNREGA; minimum wages; rural employment; VB-G RAM G Act; cooperative federalism.

‣ The Centre has fixed Rs 300/day as the minimum daily wage under the VB-G RAM G (Vikasit Bharat — Gram Rozgar Aur Maulik Gram Vikas) framework for rural employment programmes.
‣ Context: MGNREGA's current statutory minimum wage (set by the Ministry of Rural Development) is Rs 258/day (weighted national average); the Centre's Rs 300/day announcement under VB-G RAM G

represents an INCREASE in the effective minimum daily rural wage — potentially the most significant MGNREGA wage hike in 5 years.

‣ The political economy: Kharif 2026 is under stress (35% monsoon deficit); rural farm wages in deficit rainfall districts are falling as agricultural employment shrinks; a Rs 300/day guarantee under VB-G RAM G's convergence framework could provide crucial income support for rural households during the Kharif stress period.

‣ How Rs 300/day compares: Delhi's minimum wage (unskilled) = Rs 624/day; Punjab = Rs 415/day; Maharashtra = Rs 365/day; national rural MGNREGA average = Rs 258/day; the new Rs 300/day is an improvement but still well below urban wages, reflecting the rural-urban wage gap.

- MGNREGA wages and CPI-Rural: MGNREGA wages are supposed to be indexed to the Consumer Price Index (Rural) under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Act 2005's original framework; the indexation was weakened in the 2010s when Central Government revised the formula to use agricultural wage indices; the Rs 300/day announcement suggests the Centre may be recalibrating the wage-setting mechanism.
- VB-G RAM G connection: VB-G RAM G's Rs 300/day minimum wage provision is a NEW element in the convergence Act that wasn't in the original MGNREGA framework; it creates a higher floor wage for all rural employment under the VB-G RAM G umbrella, which also covers PMGSY, JJM, and other rural programmes.
- The states' concern: Some states (Kerala, Tamil Nadu) where rural wages are already above Rs 300/day see this as the Centre trying to set a NATIONAL cap (limiting their own higher wage commitments); other states (Bihar, UP, MP) where wages are at or below Rs 258/day welcome the Rs 300 minimum as a guaranteed increase.

4. Coal Chemistry — The Case for Building India's Capability

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GS 3: Economy: Coal gasification; coal chemistry; coal to chemicals; energy security; import substitution.

‣ The Hindu article argues for building India's coal chemistry industrial capability — converting coal into chemicals (not just burning it for power) — as a strategic priority for energy security, import substitution, and economic value addition.

‣ What is coal chemistry: Coal can be converted into: hydrogen (via gasification); methanol (via gasification + synthesis); ammonia/urea (using hydrogen from coal); aromatics and other chemicals (via coal tar); synthetic fuels (Fischer-Tropsch process). China has massively built coal chemistry capacity — producing 70%+ of its methanol, 40%+ of its urea, and significant polymers from domestic coal.

‣ India's situation: India has 361 billion tonnes of proven coal reserves — the 4th largest globally (after USA, Russia, Australia); but India is paradoxically import-dependent for methanol, urea feedstock (LNG), and petrochemicals that could be made from domestic coal.

‣ Coal Gasification Mission: Rs 37,500 crore approved for coal gasification projects at Talcher (GAIL + FCI + BHEL), Ramagundam, Zawar (Hindustan Zinc), Bhilai (SAIL); targets 100 MMT of coal gasified annually by 2030; connected to green urea (if green hydrogen from renewables) or coal urea (if hydrogen from coal gasification).

- The methanol economy: India's Methanol Economy Programme (Niti Aayog): methanol can replace petrol (M15 blend — 15% methanol), LPG (DME — dimethyl ether blend), and fertiliser feedstock (if converted to ammonia); India could produce methanol domestically from coal gasification at ~$200/tonne vs. importing methanol at $400-450/tonne (pre-Hormuz crisis); post-Hormuz, import costs were even higher. Coal-to-methanol viability: India's low-rank (lignite and sub-bituminous) coals at Neyveli (Tamil Nadu) are well-suited for coal-to-methanol routes.
- Why coal chemistry is NOT just 'more coal burning': Coal chemistry involves converting coal into chemicals with much higher economic value per tonne than burning it for electricity; it avoids the downstream combustion step (the chemical products are burned later by end-users); it diversifies India's chemical industry feedstock away from imported petrochemicals (which are ultimately crude oil derivatives).

UPSC ANGLE

• South Africa model: Sasol's coal-to-liquids (CTL) technology (Fischer-Tropsch process) in South Africa has been operating since the 1950s — converting domestic coal to petrol, diesel, and chemicals; South Africa famously kept its fuel supply independent of oil price shocks through this route; India has consulted with Sasol on similar technology transfer.

• The carbon accounting question: Coal chemistry doesn't eliminate CO2 (the chemical processes still generate emissions); but with carbon capture and storage (CCS) — currently expensive — coal chemistry can be low-carbon; the full environmental accounting must include CCS costs for coal chemistry to be part of India's net-zero 2070 pathway.

- **Coal Gasification** — Converting coal into synthesis gas (syngas: CO + H_2) by reacting coal with steam and oxygen at high temperature; syngas can be further converted to hydrogen, methanol, ammonia, or synthetic fuels; India's Talcher and Ramagundam projects under Coal Gasification Mission.

5. A Unified Policy Architecture for India's Energy Future

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GS 3: Environment: Energy policy; energy security; clean energy; policy fragmentation; National Energy Policy.

‣ The Hindu analysis: India's energy policy is fragmented across ministries (MoPNG for oil/gas, MoP for electricity, MNRE for renewables, MoC for coal, DAE for nuclear, MoNRE for efficiency) — each pursuing siloed objectives without a unified strategic framework.

‣ The problem: Without a unified energy policy, India faces: conflicting signals to investors (petroleum expansion vs. renewables transition); sub-optimal capital allocation; regulatory overlaps (natural gas is regulated under both PNGRB — Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board — and electricity regulators for gas-based power); no single body accountable for India's energy security overall.

‣ Proposed solution (article): A 'National Energy Policy (NEP)' — an umbrella strategy covering all energy sources, consumption sectors, and transition pathways — with a National Energy Regulatory Commission (NERC) as the unified regulator (analogous to SEBI for securities or RBI for banking); India has had draft energy policies but no binding unified framework.

‣ Post-Hormuz lesson: The West Asia crisis exposed how oil vulnerability, LNG vulnerability, fertiliser vulnerability (connected to LNG), and electricity vulnerability (gas-based power) are all interconnected; a silo-based ministry approach cannot address these cross-cutting vulnerabilities.

- The NEP model: India's closest international reference: the US DOE (Department of Energy) which covers all energy sources under a single institution; the UK's DESNZ (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero); the EU's REPowerEU programme. India's MNRE (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy) and MoP (Ministry of Power) have been pursuing renewable targets with good coordination between them, but the oil, gas, coal, and nuclear sectors are separate policy siloes.
- India's existing planning frameworks: National Electricity Plan (NEP, CEA); Hydrocarbon Vision 2025; Integrated Energy Policy (Planning Commission, 2006 — now outdated); National Green Hydrogen Mission (2023); but none of these form a binding unified policy covering all sectors and all timescales simultaneously.
- **National Energy Policy (NEP)** — Proposed comprehensive energy framework covering all sectors (electricity, petroleum, gas, coal, nuclear, renewables, efficiency) under a single strategic document; India currently lacks such a binding unified framework; post-Hormuz crisis has renewed calls for one.

GS PAPER 2 — Governance · Polity · International Relations

6. US Supreme Court Upholds Birthright Citizenship — Trump v. Barbara (6-3)

[IE] Page 13

GS 2: Governance: Comparative Polity; US 14th Amendment; birthright citizenship; jus soli; SCOTUS; India-US comparison.

- June 30, 2026: The US Supreme Court (SCOTUS) ruled 6-3 in Trump v. Barbara that the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees birthright citizenship to ALL persons born on US soil, regardless of their parents' immigration status.
- The executive order struck down: President Trump signed Executive Order 14160 on his first day of his second term (January 20, 2025) seeking to deny citizenship to children born in the US if their mother was 'unlawfully present' AND their father was not a US citizen or LPR (Lawful Permanent Resident); it also targeted children of those on temporary visas.
- Chief Justice Roberts (majority, 6-3): 'Children born in the United States to parents unlawfully or temporarily present are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and are citizens at birth under the Fourteenth Amendment's Citizenship Clause.'
- The dissent (Thomas, Alito, Gorsuch): Justice Thomas wrote a 91-page dissent arguing the Citizenship Clause was intended only for former slaves and their descendants (race-specific, remedial); Justice Alito: 'The Court has made a serious mistake.' Justice Kavanaugh: Agreed the order violated federal statute (INA 1952) but didn't reach the constitutional question.

The 14th Amendment and Citizenship Clause

- 14th Amendment (1868): Section 1 — 'All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.' The key phrase is 'subject to the jurisdiction thereof' — Trump's order argued children of undocumented immigrants are NOT 'subject to jurisdiction'; the Court rejected this.
- Wong Kim Ark precedent (1898): US Supreme Court held that children born in the US to Chinese parents (who could not be citizens under the Chinese Exclusion Act) were still US citizens because they were born on US soil; this precedent has governed birthright citizenship for 128 years; Trump's order sought to overrule it; the 2026 Court majority upheld Wong Kim Ark.
- Jus soli vs. Jus sanguinis: Jus soli (right of the soil) — citizenship based on birthplace; jus sanguinis (right of blood) — citizenship based on parents' nationality; the US Constitution enshrines jus soli; India partially moved from jus soli to jus sanguinis in the Citizenship Act amendments (1986, 2003, 2004) — a rare case where India moved AWAY from the jus soli principle that the US retained.

India Comparison: Citizenship Act Parallel

- India's citizenship evolution: Originally (pre-1987), birth in India = citizenship (jus soli); amended in 1986 (one parent must be Indian); amended in 2003 (both parents must be Indian); this makes India's citizenship law much more restrictive than the US Constitution's birthright citizenship guarantee.
- Pakistan connection: Many NRC and SIR cases in India involve persons who cannot prove parentage documentation; the US debate on birthright citizenship (parents' status determining children's citizenship) mirrors debates in India about citizenship documentation requirements — illustrating how the jus soli vs. jus sanguinis distinction has profound practical implications.
- Trump's next move: After losing at the Supreme Court, Trump called on Congress to pass legislation to end birthright citizenship; this would require a Constitutional Amendment (requires 2/3 majority in both houses of Congress + ratification by 3/4 of states) — extremely unlikely given current political arithmetic.

UPSC ANGLE

• The India-US diaspora implication: Indian students and workers in the US on temporary visas (H-1B, F-1, L-1) have children born in the US; had Trump's order taken effect, those children would not have been US citizens — directly affecting millions in India's significant US diaspora community (4 million+) and their US-born children. The SCOTUS ruling protects their children's citizenship.

• Historical SCOTUS significance: The last time SCOTUS definitively addressed birthright citizenship was Wong Kim Ark (1898); the Trump v. Barbara decision is the first reaffirmation in 128 years — its significance lies not just in what it decided (birthright citizenship is constitutional) but in what it rejected (the 'original meaning' interpretation that would have been historically revisionist).

- **14th Amendment (US Constitution)** — Added 1868 post-Civil War; Section 1 guarantees citizenship to all persons born or naturalised in the US subject to its jurisdiction; the basis for birthright citizenship; the Court's 6-3 decision in Trump v. Barbara (June 30, 2026) upheld its broad application.

- 📌 **Trump v. Barbara (SCOTUS, 2026)** — Landmark 6-3 SCOTUS decision striking down Trump's Executive Order 14160 on birthright citizenship; Chief Justice Roberts wrote majority opinion upholding Wong Kim Ark (1898) and 14th Amendment's guarantee of birthright citizenship regardless of parents' immigration status.
- 📌 **Wong Kim Ark (1898 SCOTUS)** — Precedent case: Chinese-American born in San Francisco to parents ineligible for citizenship; SCOTUS ruled 6-2 that he was a US citizen by birth; governed birthright citizenship for 128 years; now confirmed and extended by Trump v. Barbara (2026).

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7. New Telecom Rules Notified — What Changes Under the Telecom Act 2023

[TH] Page 8

GS 2 / GS 3: Governance: Telecommunications Act 2023; TRAI; DoT; spectrum; SIM fraud; digital infrastructure; consumer protection.

‣ Department of Telecommunications notified a new set of telecom rules under the Telecommunications Act 2023 — covering: SIM card registration/verification; spectrum management; telecom infrastructure right-of-way; lawful interception; and consumer protection provisions.
‣ Telecom Act 2023: Replaced the Indian Telegraph Act 1885 (138 years old) and the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933; is the comprehensive modern legislation for India's telecom sector; three companion Bills originally (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act amendment, Telecom Bill, Spectrum Bill) were consolidated into one.
‣ Key new rules notified (July 2026): (1) SIM card verification — Aadhaar-based biometric authentication now mandatory for NEW SIM issuance (had been rolled out partially); SIM swap (getting a replacement SIM) requires a 24-hour cooling period + original number holder's OTP; (2) 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) for bulk SIM purchasers — businesses purchasing 10+ SIMs must register with DoT; (3) Right of Way — standardised rates for laying telecom infrastructure (optical fibre cables, mobile towers) across states/UTs, eliminating state-level discretionary approvals.
‣ Lawful interception: The new rules update Section 5 of the old Telegraph Act (government's interception power) with clearer procedural safeguards — required for civil court proceedings now (not just executive order) for certain categories of interception; privacy advocates argue this is insufficient.

- SIM swap fraud connection: SIM swap fraud — where criminals fraudulently get a replacement SIM for a victim's number and use it for banking OTP fraud — is one of India's fastest-growing cybercrime categories; the 24-hour cooling period + OTP verification requirement directly addresses this.
- The satellite spectrum rules: Under Telecom Act 2023, the rules now specifically address administrative allocation of spectrum for satellite-based internet services (Starlink by SpaceX, OneWeb now owned by Eutelsat, Amazon Kuiper); the rules allow 'administrative assignment' rather than auction for satellite spectrum — a departure from India's traditional spectrum auction approach; Jio (with its own satellite venture) and Starlink (which has been waiting for regulatory clearance) are the primary beneficiaries.
- Right of Way (RoW): A persistent bottleneck for telecom rollout — local bodies and state PWD departments charging arbitrary fees and causing delays for optical fibre and tower installation; the new standardised RoW rules cap fees and timescales, potentially accelerating rural broadband deployment (BharatNet's last-mile connectivity depends on RoW clearances).

UPSC ANGLE
• Telecom Act 2023 vs. IT Act 2000: The Telecom Act governs physical telecom infrastructure and services (networks, spectrum, towers); the IT Act (being replaced by the Digital India Act) governs digital content, platforms, and online services; they are complementary but distinct; the new telecom rules connect to cybercrime (SIM fraud) that straddles both acts.
• TRAI's role: TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) sets tariffs and quality of service standards but does NOT make rules under the Telecom Act — that is DoT's (Department of Telecommunications) role; TRAI's independence from DoT/government has been a long-standing governance debate.

- 📌 **Telecom Act 2023** — Replaced Indian Telegraph Act 1885 and Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933; comprehensive modern telecom legislation; empowers DoT to frame rules on SIM KYC, spectrum, RoW, lawful interception; enabled satellite spectrum administrative allocation (benefiting Starlink, OneWeb, Amazon Kuiper).

8. Centre's Demography Panel Sends Questionnaire to States

[TH] Page 10

GS 2: Governance: Demography; population policy; delimitation; High Level Committee; NRC context.

‣ The 'High Level Committee on Demographic Changes' (constituted under Union Home Ministry, May 2026) has sent a detailed questionnaire to all state governments seeking data on: birth rates, death rates, migration patterns, religion-wise population growth, district-level demographic shifts.
‣ Committee mandate: Established May 2026; chaired by a senior government official; tasked with: assessing India's demographic transition; analysing implications for delimitation of parliamentary and assembly constituencies; examining religion-wise and community-wise population growth trends; making policy recommendations.
‣ The political context: Opposition parties (Congress, TMC, SP) have termed the committee a 'demographic scare' exercise ahead of delimitation (currently frozen under the 91st Amendment until 2026 Census data is available); they argue the committee's focus on 'religion-wise growth' is a politically motivated exercise to stoke communal fears.
‣ The delimitation connection: India's Lok Sabha constituency boundaries were last revised on the basis of the 1971 Census (frozen by the 42nd Amendment for 25 years, then extended again); the next delimitation will be based on the 2021 Census (delayed to 2026 due to COVID and West Asia crisis impacts on resources); states with slower population growth (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, AP, Telangana) will lose seats to faster-growing states (UP, Bihar, Rajasthan) — a major political concern for Southern states.

- Why Southern states are worried: The population growth differential between Southern and Northern states has been significant since the 1970s; Southern states, which implemented family planning more effectively, may be 'punished' in delimitation by losing Lok Sabha seats; the 91st Amendment froze seat numbers until the 2026 Census precisely to avoid this; the new demography panel's questionnaire signals the government is actively assessing the data before the delimitation exercise.
- Religion-wise data controversy: India's Census collects religion-wise data; the 2011 Census showed Muslim population growth (24.6% decadal) outpacing Hindu growth (16.8%); critics argue the committee is designed to use religion-wise population data to justify political positions about 'demographic imbalance' rather than objectively assess policy needs.

UPSC ANGLE
• NRC connection: The committee's questionnaire overlaps with demographic data relevant to a potential nationwide NRC exercise (the 'High Level Committee on Demographic Changes' is sometimes described in context with the NRC); demographic data by district/block would be essential input for identifying 'unusual' population changes (potential illegal migration).

- **Delimitation** — The process of fixing the boundaries of electoral constituencies (Lok Sabha + Assembly seats); based on Census data; performed by the Delimitation Commission under the Delimitation Act; next delimitation will be based on the 2026 Census; Southern states fear losing seats to Northern states due to differential population growth.

9. Ireland Hopeful of EU-India FTA by December 2026

[TH] Page 13

GS 2: International Relations: EU-India FTA; trade negotiations; Ireland's EU Presidency; India-EU CEPA.

‣ Ireland's Minister for Enterprise Peter Kelly (Dublin): 'Ireland is hopeful of delivering on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement by the end of this year' — the first significant public optimism from the EU side about meeting the December 2026 target.

▸ Context: Ireland currently holds the EU Council's rotating presidency (July-December 2026) — making Ireland the chair of EU Council meetings, including Trade Council meetings; Ireland's presidency thus directly influences the pace of the EU-India FTA finalisation.
▸ EU-India FTA status: Negotiations resumed in 2022 (after a decade-long pause); 28 rounds of negotiations have been completed as of June 2026; the most sensitive remaining issues: (a) EU market access for Indian dairy/cheese/agricultural products (India wants restrictions maintained); (b) India's IP (Intellectual Property) standards on pharmaceutical patents (India wants 'TRIPS flexibilities' — ability to issue compulsory licences; EU wants higher IP standards); (c) Government procurement (India reluctant to open procurement for EU companies).
▸ India's FTA architecture pressure: With India-UK CETA now effective (July 15, 2026) and India-US BTA under negotiation (August 15 deadline), the EU-India FTA completes India's 'developed market FTA arc' — a critical strategic objective.

- Why Ireland matters specifically: Ireland is economically closest to India's interests among EU countries — a large Indian diaspora (100,000+); home to many Indian IT companies' European headquarters (TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL all have large Ireland operations; use Ireland's favourable corporate tax environment); Indian pharma companies also use Ireland for European manufacturing (Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's). Ireland thus has strong commercial incentives to see the EU-India FTA concluded.
- TRIPS flexibilities and pharma: India is the world's pharmacy ('pharmacy of the developing world') — largely because India has used TRIPS flexibilities (compulsory licences for domestic use/public health) and a strict interpretation of patent law (Section 3(d) of Patents Act — prevents 'evergreening'); the EU FTA is expected to require India to strengthen patent protection, potentially limiting India's ability to produce affordable generic medicines — a major concern for Indian pharma and global public health advocates.

UPSC ANGLE
• EU-India trade: EU collectively is India's largest trading partner ($150 billion bilateral trade); but India's relationship is with individual EU member states (Germany is India's largest EU trade partner, followed by Belgium, Netherlands, UK — which is now outside EU). A single EU-India FTA would create a unified framework replacing India's separate bilateral relationships.
• Ireland's rotating EU Presidency: Each EU member state holds the Council Presidency for 6 months in rotation; Ireland (July-December 2026) chairs EU Council meetings, sets agenda priorities, and acts as 'honest broker' among EU members on Commission proposals; Ireland prioritising EU-India FTA is significant.

- **EU-India FTA (CEPA)** — Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement under negotiation since 2022 (resumed after decade-long pause); 28 rounds completed by June 2026; sensitive issues: dairy, pharmaceutical IP, government procurement; December 2026 target; Ireland's EU Council presidency (July-December 2026) is pushing for conclusion.

10. UN Panel Warns Unchecked AI May Pose Grave Risks to Humanity

[TH] Page 14

GS 3: Science and Technology: AI governance; UN High-Level AI Advisory Body; AI risks; existential risks; regulation.

▸ UN High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence (appointed 2023) released an interim assessment warning that 'unchecked progress in AI may pose grave risks' — including: large-scale labour displacement without adequate social safety nets; AI-enabled autonomous weapons systems that violate international humanitarian law; concentration of AI power in a few corporations; and theoretical 'existential' risks from misaligned advanced AI systems.
▸ The body's composition: 39 experts from governments, academia, civil society, and industry; includes AI researchers, policymakers, and ethicists from multiple countries (US, China, India, EU, Brazil, etc.); advisory to the UN Secretary-General.
▸ Key recommendations: (1) An International Scientific Panel on AI (modelled on the IPCC for climate) to assess AI risks and capabilities systematically; (2) A 'Global Dialogue on AI Governance' — bringing countries together under UNGA auspices; (3) Minimum common standards for AI systems used in 'high-

risk' contexts (criminal justice, healthcare, weapons systems); (4) AI capacity building for Global South countries (to prevent AI governance being shaped exclusively by developed countries).
‣ India's position: India has welcomed the UN's engagement but has cautioned against 'techno-utopian' overregulation; India's position — AI governance must be balanced ('risk-aware but not risk-averse'); India's AI Safety Institute (proposed by MeitY) represents India's domestic framework.

- The AI governance landscape: Three major existing frameworks: EU AI Act (2024, risk-based regulation — prohibitions, obligations, transparency requirements by risk category); US Executive Order on AI (October 2023, safety testing, watermarking); UK's 'principles-based' approach (voluntary for now); China's AI regulatory measures (generative AI governance, December 2023). India lacks a comparable enacted AI governance law — the Digital India Act (under development) is expected to address AI within its broader digital regulation framework.
- The 'existential risk' debate: A subset of AI researchers (often called 'AI safety researchers') argue that sufficiently advanced AI systems could pose an existential risk to humanity if not properly aligned with human values; the majority view is more prosaic — near-term AI risks (bias, disinformation, surveillance, labour displacement) are more pressing than speculative long-term risks; the UN panel attempts to balance both.

UPSC ANGLE
• GPAI (Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence): India is a founding member (2020) of GPAI — a multi-stakeholder international initiative to guide responsible development of AI; India chairs the GPAI Council in 2026; connects to India's BRICS AI Governance Framework proposal. GPAI complements the UN Advisory Body's work.
• India's AI comparative advantage: India has ~5 million+ AI practitioners (developers, researchers, data scientists) — the world's 2nd largest pool after the US; India produces 1.5 million engineering graduates annually (many specialising in data science and ML); this talent base is the foundation for India's sovereign AI ambitions.

- **UN High-Level Advisory Body on AI** — 39-member expert body established 2023 by UN Secretary-General; released interim assessment July 2026 warning of 'grave risks'; recommends International Scientific Panel on AI (IPCC-like), Global Dialogue on AI Governance, minimum safety standards for high-risk AI.

11. Tokyo-Delhi: Japan-India Strategic Ties Deepen Amid Global Disruptions

[IE] Page 1

GS 2: International Relations: India-Japan; Special Strategic and Global Partnership; Takaichi; tech cooperation; semiconductor; defence.

‣ Japanese PM Sanae Takaichi visited Delhi (July 1-2, 2026) for the India-Japan Annual Summit — her first visit to India since becoming Japan's first female Prime Minister (October 2025).
‣ Takaichi's framing: 'Global uncertainty — from the US-Iran conflict to the Ukraine war to tech competition — is precisely why Japan and India must deepen their partnership.' Reflects Japan's strategic calculation that with the US under Trump being less reliably multilateral, Japan needs stronger bilateral partnerships with like-minded Indo-Pacific democracies.
‣ Key deliverables: (1) Rs 5 lakh crore (5 trillion yen) Japan investment pledge for India over 5 years (expanded from previous 5 trillion yen over 5 years); (2) Semiconductor cooperation framework — Japan's Tokyo Electron and Shin-Etsu Chemical as technology partners for India's ISM 2.0; (3) Defence: Japan's participation in iDEX joint development; Japan's US-2 flying boat to India deal finalised (India gets 6 aircraft); (4) High-speed rail: Bullet train (Ahmedabad-Mumbai, Japan-funded) construction accelerating with new tunnel milestones.

- Sanae Takaichi's profile: Born 1961; LDP MP since 1993; Communications Minister (2021-22); Minister for Economic Security (2022-23); became LDP's first female leader and Japan's first female PM in October 2025; strong defence hawk; advocates 'constitutional pacifism revision' (Article 9 amendment); warm India ties align with her 'proactive pacifism' foreign policy doctrine (Japan plays an active security role without being militaristic).

- Japan-India relationship trajectory: India and Japan established a 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' in 2014 (PM Modi-PM Abe relationship); they share: Quad membership; democratic values; rule-of-law Indo-Pacific vision; technology cooperation (Semiconductor, 5G, Space); the relationship has deepened steadily under successive Japanese PMs since Abe.
- Bullet train project (MAHSR — Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail): 508 km; Japan providing Rs 1.08 lakh crore in loans (0.1% interest, 50-year repayment — extremely concessional); technology: Shinkansen E5 series; land acquisition challenges have been the primary delay (Maharashtra and Gujarat governments both involved); Takaichi's visit included a bullet train project review meeting in Ahmedabad.

UPSC ANGLE

• Japan-India semiconductor cooperation: Tokyo Electron (TEL) — Japan's largest semiconductor equipment maker — is expected to partner with HCL and Indian chip design firms; Shin-Etsu Chemical — Japan's largest semiconductor materials company (silicon wafers) — could supply to India's Dholera fab; this Japan-India semiconductor link is a key enabler for ISM 2.0.

• US-2 flying boat deal: Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's ShinMaywa US-2 flying boat is a maritime reconnaissance/SAR (Search and Rescue) aircraft; India has been negotiating to purchase 6; deal finalised July 2026; makes India only the 2nd country to receive the US-2 after Japan; relevant for India's maritime surveillance in the Indian Ocean.

- **Special Strategic and Global Partnership** — India-Japan's highest level of bilateral relationship designation (established 2014); covers political, economic, defence, tech, and cultural dimensions; annual PM summits; India and Japan are Quad partners, ISA founding members, and now semiconductor/defence technology partners.
- **US-2 Flying Boat (ShinMaywa)** — Japan's maritime patrol and search-and-rescue aircraft; STOL (short take-off and landing) capability allows it to land on rough seas; India to receive 6 units; expands India's maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.

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12. PPP 2.0: Matching Capital to Risk — Infrastructure Finance Reform

[IE] Page 10

GS 3: Economy: Public-Private Partnership; infrastructure finance; Viability Gap Funding; risk sharing; NIIF.

▸ Indian Express op-ed: India's PPP (Public-Private Partnership) infrastructure model — which built highways, airports, ports, and power plants in the 1990s-2010s — needs a fundamental redesign for the next generation of infrastructure (green energy, data centres, smart cities, water infrastructure).

▸ PPP 1.0 legacy: India's first PPP generation built: NH highway projects (BOT Toll model — Build Operate Transfer, with private party earning toll revenues); JNPT/Mundra port expansion; DIAL (Delhi International Airport Limited, GMR Group); airport privatisation (GMR Delhi, GVK Mumbai); power generation (independent power producers — Adani Power, Torrent Power, Tata Power).

▸ PPP 1.0 failures: Many highway projects became 'stressed assets' when traffic estimates were overoptimistic; infrastructure debt crisis (Rs 8 lakh crore+ in stressed infrastructure loans at banks by 2018); legal disputes in arbitration (India lost several international arbitration cases — Devas-ISRO, Cairn Energy, Vodafone); regulatory uncertainty.

- PPP 2.0 principles (the article's argument): (1) Risk allocation: Risks should be borne by the party best placed to manage them — construction risk → developer; demand risk → government (not private); regulatory risk → government; force majeure → shared; (2) Hybrid annuity model (HAM) as default: Government pays fixed annuity to private party eliminating demand risk while private party still constructs and maintains efficiently; (3) Infrastructure as asset class: Enabling pension funds, insurance companies, and sovereign wealth funds (NIIF) to invest in infrastructure through listed infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs); (4) Greenfield vs. brownfield: Greenfield (new construction) PPPs need more government risk assumption; brownfield (upgrading existing assets) PPPs can take more commercial risk.
- Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM): Introduced for NHAI highway projects in 2016 as a fix for BOT Toll failures; government pays 40% of project cost during construction and then pays 60% as annuity (fixed semi-annual payments) over 15 years; private party builds and maintains but doesn't take traffic/toll collection risk; eliminates the demand risk problem; 50+ HAM projects now underway.

UPSC ANGLE

• InvITs (Infrastructure Investment Trusts): SEBI-regulated vehicles that allow retail and institutional investors to invest in infrastructure assets (highways, power transmission, gas pipelines); listed on NSE/BSE; distribute 90%+ of distributable cash flow to unitholders; India has 20+ registered InvITs; IRB Infrastructure InvIT, PowerGrid InvIT, Indinfravit Trust are major examples; InvITs connect infrastructure with public capital markets.

- **Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM)** — PPP highway construction model where: government pays 40% during construction + fixed annuity (60% + financing cost) over 15 years; private party constructs and maintains but doesn't bear traffic/demand risk; now India's primary NHAI highway construction model; addresses PPP 1.0's demand risk overestimation problem.

13. IRDAI Curbs Dark Patterns in Insurance + RBI Reinstates Public Funds Clause

[IE] Page 14

GS 3: Economy: Insurance regulation; IRDAI; dark patterns; consumer protection; RBI NBFC rules; public funds.

‣ IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) issued guidelines prohibiting 'dark patterns' in digital insurance sales — specific deceptive UX/UI practices used to trick consumers into buying insurance they didn't intend to purchase.

‣ Dark patterns in insurance: Examples include: 'Pre-checked add-ons' (travel insurance or gadget protection automatically checked during online checkout; consumers must actively uncheck to opt out); 'Urgency traps' ('This offer expires in 4:59' countdown timers that reset on every visit — creating false urgency); 'Forced continuity' (free trial that auto-converts to paid policy without clear notification); 'Roach motel' (very easy to start insurance, very difficult to cancel — complex cancellation process); 'Misdirection' (attention drawn to 'low premium' while obscuring high exclusions or poor claim settlement ratios).

‣ RBI reinstates public funds clause: The RBI's revised NBFC upper layer rules (Tata Sons controversy, covered June 27) have reinstated a 'public funds' clause — defining that NBFCs which hold or manage public funds (deposits from public, insurance funds, pension funds) are subject to the more stringent upper layer regulation regardless of their formal ownership structure; this specifically targets holding companies like Tata Sons which hold subsidiary-level insurance and financial services operations that technically pool public funds.

- IRDAI's context: Insurance penetration in India was 4.2% of GDP (2024-25) — well below the global average of 7%; growth in insurance is crucial for financial security but has been hindered by mis-selling and consumer distrust; IRDAI's 'Insurance For All by 2047' vision requires cleaning up the distribution practices that generate consumer complaints.
- The Tata Sons NBFC resolution: With the 'public funds' clause reinstated, Tata Sons (holding company for Tata Capital, Tata AIA Life Insurance, Tata AIG General Insurance — all of which pool public funds) would still fall within the Upper Layer category that may require stock market listing; the 2026 revised rules may provide an exemption pathway for holding companies that are not DIRECTLY pooling public funds — Tata Sons itself doesn't issue insurance or take deposits, only its subsidiaries do; the legal interpretation of whether subsidiary-level public fund pooling 'taints' the parent remains to be settled.
- **Dark Patterns** — Deceptive user interface/experience design techniques used to manipulate consumer choices; examples: pre-ticked boxes, roach motel (easy in, hard out), false urgency timers, hidden costs; IRDAI now prohibits these in digital insurance sales; CCPA also has jurisdiction over dark patterns in general consumer products.

PRELIMS IN FOCUS

VIJAY Roadmap — Army Chief Gen Dhiraj Seth	Full form: V = Vigilance and Readiness; I = Innovation and Transformation; J = Jointness and Integration; A = Atmanirbharta (Self-Reliance); Y = Yodha First (Soldier First). Announced: July 1, 2026 (first full day as COAS). Framework: Built upon 'Decade of

	Transformation (2023-2032)' — Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's Army modernisation roadmap. Previous COAS vision: Gen Upendra Dwivedi had DRASTIC (Decisive, Responsive, Agile, Synergised, Technology-Enabled, Integrated, Capable). Key IBG connection: 'V' (Vigilance) is operationalised through IBGs going operational in July 2026 (17 Mountain Strike Corps). Atomnirbharta connection: 75% defence procurement from domestic sources under DAP 2020; DRDO systems (Kavach, Pinaka, Pralay, ATAGS) as examples of 'A' priority. Yodha First: Soldier-centric approach — technological training, quality of life, Agnipath/Agniveer management.
Trump v. Barbara (SCOTUS, June 30, 2026) — Birthright Citizenship	Case: Trump v. Barbara; 609 U.S. ___ (2026). Decision: 6-3 (majority: Roberts CJ + Kagan + Sotomayor + Barrett + K.B. Jackson; Kavanaugh concurred on statutory grounds). Ruling: 14th Amendment guarantees birthright citizenship to all persons born on US soil regardless of parents' immigration status. Executive Order struck down: EO 14160 (Trump's Day 1, Jan 20, 2025) — sought to deny citizenship to children of undocumented parents AND temporary visa holders. Key phrase: '...subject to the jurisdiction thereof' in the 14th Amendment; Court interpreted broadly to include all persons born on US soil. Precedent upheld: Wong Kim Ark (1898). Dissent: Thomas (91-page dissent arguing Citizenship Clause only for freed slaves); Alito + Gorsuch also dissented. Jus soli vs. India: US retains jus soli; India moved from jus soli to increasingly jus sanguinis (1986, 2003 amendments).
GAGAN + PinS + Kodaikanal Observatory	GAGAN (GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation): Joint ISRO + AAI system; certified operational since 2015; improves GPS accuracy from ~10m to <1.5m for aviation; compatible with WAAS (US), EGNOS (EU), MSAS (Japan) = global SBAS interoperability; broadcast through GSAT-8 and GSAT-10 geostationary satellites; part of global SBAS ecosystem. PinS (Point in Space): Helicopter instrument approach procedure using GAGAN; approved July 2026 (first in India); enables helicopter landing at helipads without conventional ILS; critical for medical evacuation, disaster relief, mountain operations. Kodaikanal Solar Observatory: Established 1899; one of world's oldest solar observatories; Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu; under Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA); 100+ years of solar images digitised; AI (CNNs) used to analyse faculae (bright solar regions) evolution; reveals 11-year solar activity cycle patterns.
GST Revenue + IGST + June 2026 Data	GST June 2026 collection: Rs 1.98 lakh crore (+14% YoY). IGST on imports: surged 35% (post-Hormuz import volume recovery surge). Breakdown: CGST Rs 38,000 cr; SGST Rs 47,500 cr; IGST domestic Rs 85,000 cr; IGST imports Rs 22,000 cr; Cess Rs 5,500 cr. GST buoyancy: Ratio of GST growth to GDP growth; consistently above 1.0 (base-widening). GSTN: IT backbone; jointly owned by Centre 50% + States 50%. GST Council: Article 279A; constitutional body; Centre = 1/3 votes; States = 2/3 votes; 3/4 majority needed for decisions. Still outside GST: Petroleum products (crude, NG, petrol, diesel, ATF), alcohol. 9th Anniversary: July 1, 2026 marks 9 years since GST launch (July 1, 2017). Monthly collection record: April 2026 crossed Rs 2 lakh crore for first time.
EU-India FTA + Ireland EU Presidency	EU-India FTA (CEPA): Negotiations resumed 2022 after decade-long pause; 28 rounds completed by June 2026; December 2026 target. Sensitive issues: (1) Dairy — India wants to exclude dairy; EU wants market access for cheese/dairy; (2) Pharma IP — India wants TRIPS flexibilities (compulsory licences, Section 3(d) patent law); EU wants higher IP standards; (3) Government procurement — India reluctant to open to EU companies. Ireland: EU Council Presidency July-December 2026; Ireland chair of EU Trade Council meetings; Irish PM Peter Kelly expressed optimism for December 2026 conclusion. India-EU trade: $150 billion total; EU = India's largest trading partner collectively. Ireland-India connection: 100,000+ Indian diaspora in Ireland; TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL all have large Ireland operations; makes Ireland a commercially interested party in FTA conclusion.

MAPPING — PLACES IN NEWS

Place	Why in News / Key Facts
Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu	Kodaikanal Solar Observatory: Established 1899; one of world's oldest solar observatories; currently under Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA); 100+ years of digitised solar images used by AI to track solar faculae evolution; Kodaikanal hill station in Dindigul district, Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu; elevation 2,133 m.
Ahmedabad / Dholera, Gujarat	Bullet train (MAHSR) project progress reviewed during Japan PM Takaichi's India visit; Sanand Industrial Estate = ISM 1.0 OSAT plants (Micron + CG Power-Renesas); Dholera SIR = Tata Electronics-PSMC 28nm semiconductor fab under ISM 2.0; Takaichi visited Dholera site during India visit.
Dublin, Ireland	Ireland holding EU Council Presidency (July-December 2026); Irish Enterprise Minister Peter Kelly expressed optimism for EU-India FTA by December 2026; Dublin has largest concentration of Indian IT companies' EU headquarters (TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL); Financial Services District (IFSC) is a global hub that will benefit from the EU-India FTA services chapter.
Washington DC (US Supreme Court)	SCOTUS ruled 6-3 in Trump v. Barbara (June 30, 2026) striking down Trump's birthright citizenship executive order; 1 First Street NE, Washington DC; the Supreme Court of the United States; Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the majority opinion reaffirming Wong Kim Ark (1898) and the 14th Amendment.
Talcher, Odisha	Site of India's first commercial coal gasification plant (Coal Gasification Mission); GAIL + FCI (Fertiliser Corporation of India) + BHEL project; will produce ammonia → urea using domestic coal; reduces LNG import dependence for fertiliser production; coal gasification is the central example in the 'case for coal chemistry' debate.
New Delhi (National War Memorial)	Gen Dhiraj Seth's first official act as COAS — laid a wreath at the National War Memorial on July 1, 2026; then unveiled 'VIJAY' roadmap at South Block; National War Memorial located near India Gate, inaugurated 2019 (PM Modi); honours soldiers who died in wars post-independence (1947 onwards).
Bonn, Germany (Climate Talks)	Bonn climate talks (SB56) continuing; India sought clarity on 'tipping points' accountability; US stance on World Bank climate finance creating friction (US objecting to climate-dedicated multilateral lending); preparing ground for COP30 (Belém, Brazil, November 2026).
Tokyo, Japan	Japan PM Sanae Takaichi's home base; she visited Delhi (July 1-2); Japan-India annual summit; semiconductor cooperation framework (Tokyo Electron, Shin-Etsu Chemical); US-2 flying boat deal finalised; 5 trillion yen Japan investment pledge for India; Japan = India's 5th largest trade partner.

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