UPSC with SAURABH KAUSHIK

Current Affairs Notes · 1 July 2026

The Hindu · Indian Express · PIB | 18 Topics | GS 1 · 2 · 3 + Prelims + Mapping

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

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PIB HIGHLIGHTS — 1 JULY 2026 (Curated for UPSC)

1. NINE YEARS OF GST — July 1, 2026 Marks GST's 9th Anniversary

✓ GST (Goods and Services Tax) was launched on the midnight of July 1, 2017 — with a special Parliament session in the Central Hall of Parliament; today marks its 9th anniversary.

✓ GST replaced 17 Central and State indirect taxes (Central Excise, Service Tax, VAT, CST, Entry Tax, Entertainment Tax, etc.) and 23 cesses with a single unified indirect tax.

✓ Key structural features: Dual structure (Central GST + State GST + Integrated GST); 4 main rate slabs (5%, 12%, 18%, 28%) with zero-rated essential goods and a cess on luxury/sin goods; input tax credit chain reduces cascading taxation; GSTN (GST Network) — the IT backbone.

✓ Nine-year achievements: GST collection crossed Rs 2 lakh crore per month for the first time in April 2026; annual GST revenue (FY2025-26): Rs 22.08 lakh crore; registered taxpayers: 1.46 crore (from ~65 lakh in 2017); e-way bills: 10 crore+/month; compliance rate significantly improved through e-invoicing mandate.

✓ Remaining challenges: Rationalisation of rate structure (proposals to reduce 5% and 12% slabs to 3 slabs); petroleum products still outside GST (Centre-State revenue-sharing concerns); real estate partial inclusion (only new housing, not resale); compensation regime ended (June 2022 — states' GST revenue guarantee ended).

✓ GS3 Angle: GST; indirect taxation; cooperative federalism (GST Council — Article 279A); GSTN; input tax credit; fiscal federalism.

2. HUL DIVAS — 171st Anniversary of the Santhal Revolt (June 30)

✓ Hul Divas (June 30): Annual commemoration of the Santhal Rebellion (Hul Revolt) of 1855-56 — led by Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu of the Santhal tribal community; 'Hul' means 'revolt' in Santhal language.

✓ The revolt: June 30, 1855 — Sidhu Murmu declared the Hul at Bhognadih village (Sahebganj district, Jharkhand); approximately 60,000-80,000 Santhals took up arms against: British colonial authority; exploitative zamindars (dikus — outsiders) extracting illegal taxes; money-lenders charging usurious interest rates.

✓ Context: Pre-1857 uprising (preceded the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny by 2 years); the Santhals had migrated to the Damin-i-Koh area of Rajmahal hills (now Jharkhand) earlier in the 19th century for forest clearing; colonial land settlement policies (Permanent Settlement 1793) had created exploitative landlord structures that extracted tribals' labour and land.

✓ Outcome: Suppressed by the British East India Company with military force; Sidhu and Kanhu were captured and killed in August 1855; an estimated 15,000-20,000 Santhals were killed; the uprising led to the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act 1876 (a partial recognition of tribal land rights) and later the Santhal Parganas regulation of colonial administration.

✓ Modern relevance: The Santhal Revolt is recognised as India's first major tribal uprising against British rule; it prefigures the later Birsa Munda rebellion (Ulgulan, 1899-1900); both inform the constitutional provisions for Scheduled Tribes (Articles 342, 5th and 6th Schedules) and PESA 1996.

✓ GS1 Angle: Modern Indian history; tribal revolts; pre-1857 uprisings; Santhal; PESA; 5th Schedule.

3. PMKSY — Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (Key Facts)

✓ PMKSY: Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana; launched 2015; consolidates existing irrigation schemes under a unified framework; tag line: 'Har Khet Ko Paani, More Crop Per Drop.'

✓ Components: (1) Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) — completing long-pending irrigation projects; (2) PMKSY-Har Khet Ko Paani (HKKP) — expanding cultivable area under assured irrigation; (3) PMKSY-Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) — promoting micro-irrigation (drip, sprinkler); (4) Watershed Development — integrated watershed management for rainfed areas.

✓ Significance in June 2026 context: The monsoon deficit (35% below LPA nationally, as of late June) has heightened urgency for irrigation infrastructure; farmers in deficit rainfall zones depend on PMKSY-funded canals and tanks for crop survival during delayed monsoon years.

✓ PMKSY-PDMC achievements: 75 lakh+ hectares covered by micro-irrigation (drip + sprinkler) under PDMC; per-drop productivity up significantly; NMMI (National Mission on Micro Irrigation) integrates with PDMC; micro-irrigation saves 30-50% water vs. flood irrigation for same yield.

✓ AIBP completion: 99 long-stalled major irrigation projects targeted; 65+ completed; 16 million hectares of potential irrigation created.

✓ GS3 Angle: Agricultural irrigation; PMKSY; micro-irrigation; Per Drop More Crop; drip irrigation; water use efficiency; AIBP.

4. ACADEMIC BANK OF CREDITS (ABC) AND APAAR ID

✓ Academic Bank of Credits (ABC): A digital system established by MoE under NEP 2020; allows students to: accumulate academic credits from multiple institutions/programmes; take 'academic credit holidays' and resume education later; seamlessly transfer credits if they change institutions; earn degrees/diplomas based on accumulated credits from different institutions.

✓ APAAR ID (Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry): The unique student ID number linked to each student's ABC account; like Aadhaar for education; issued to students from Class 1 onwards; stores academic records, credits, degrees digitally; enables 'one nation, one student ID' from school to higher education.

✓ How it works: A student earns 40 credits at IIT for one year, then takes 2 years off to work, earns 60 credits at a state university, then 20 more credits online — all accumulate in their ABC account; they can then claim a full degree once sufficient credits from approved programmes are accumulated.

✓ NEP 2020 alignment: NEP's 'multiple entry-multiple exit' provision for higher education (students can exit with a certificate after 1 year, diploma after 2, degree after 3/4) is operationalised through ABC; the exit-and-re-entry flexibility addresses India's high dropout rate in higher education (only 27% of those who start undergraduate degrees complete them).

✓ GS2 Angle: Education policy; NEP 2020; Academic Bank of Credits; APAAR ID; multiple entry-multiple exit; digital governance in education.

GS PAPER 2 — International Relations

1. Modi Tells Pezeshkian Safe Hormuz Is Key; Invites Iran to BRICS Summit

[IE] Page 1

GS 2: International Relations: India-Iran; Hormuz; Muscat Accord aftermath; BRICS; Khamenei funeral; Iran nuclear talks.

‣ PM Modi held a telephone conversation with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on June 30/July 1 — their first call since the US-Iran MoU (June 17) ended the immediate hostilities.

‣ CRITICAL NEW FACT: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader for 34 years, was killed during the US-Israeli joint air strike on Tehran on February 28, 2026 — the same strike that began the war; Pezeshkian is now Iran's highest political authority; Khamenei's funeral begins July 4 in Tehran and he will be buried July 9 in Mashhad.

‣ Modi's message to Pezeshkian: 'Reiterated the importance of freedom of navigation in the Hormuz Strait for India and the world'; welcomed the 'progress made in negotiations'; hoped for 'lasting peace and stability in the region.'

‣ BRICS invite: Modi formally invited Pezeshkian to the BRICS Leaders' Summit to be held in India later in 2026 — Iran became a BRICS member in January 2024 and its head of state would now attend the India-chaired summit.

The Significance of Khamenei's Death

- Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (1939-2026): Supreme Leader of Iran since 1989 (succeeding Ayatollah Khomeini); the most powerful figure in Iran's political system (the Supreme Leader is above the President under Iran's constitutional framework); his death in the February 28 US-Israeli strike represents the single most dramatic political change in Iran since the 1979 revolution.
- The succession question: Iran's Assembly of Experts must designate a new Supreme Leader; Pezeshkian (the elected President) has temporarily assumed de facto leadership; the succession process is internal to Iran's clerical establishment; the most mentioned potential successor: Mohammad-Baqer Mojtahed Shabestari or a collective clerical council structure; this is a historically unprecedented transition for Iran.
- Impact on nuclear talks: With Khamenei (the ultimate decision-maker on Iran's nuclear programme) gone, the new Supreme Leader's position on the Phase 2 nuclear deadline (August 13) is uncertain;

Pezeshkian (a reformist) may have more flexibility, but the clerical establishment's nuclear consensus is what matters.

India's Diplomatic Navigation

- India's balancing act: India maintained contact with Iran throughout the war (three Modi-Pezeshkian calls since February 28); simultaneously India did NOT condemn the US-Israeli strikes; India abstained on multiple UNGA resolutions; India attended the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi where Iran's FM participated despite the war — a remarkable diplomatic juggling act.
- Khamenei funeral delegation: India decided NOT to send Modi or Jaishankar (both citing schedule conflicts — a diplomatic signal of calibrated distance from Iran while not being dismissive); sent Bihar Governor Lt Gen (Ret) Syed Ata Hasnain + MoS Pabitra Margherita — a mid-level delegation showing respect without full political endorsement.
- BRICS Iran dynamic: Iran (a BRICS member since January 2024) and UAE (also a BRICS member since January 2024) were on OPPOSITE sides of the war — Iran vs. UAE-led GCC coalition supporting US; this made BRICS unable to adopt a unified position on the war; India's BRICS 2026 chairship had to issue a 'Chair's Statement' rather than a consensus BRICS declaration at the Foreign Ministers meeting.

UPSC ANGLE

• India-Iran trade connections: India halted Iranian crude imports under US sanctions (2019-2026); now Hormuz is re-opening; India has ~$5-6 billion in Iranian assets frozen under US banking sanctions (Rupee payments for previous oil; some funds in UCO Bank); post-war diplomacy will seek release of these assets.

• India's special envoy to Iran: India has been one of the few major democracies to maintain active diplomatic engagement with Iran throughout the conflict; this gives India unusual leverage and credibility in Iran's post-war reconstruction engagement.

- **Pezeshkian (Iran's President)** — Masoud Pezeshkian (born 1954); reformist politician; won Iran's July 2024 presidential election; now effectively Iran's highest political authority after Khamenei's death (February 28, 2026); committed to diplomatic engagement and the nuclear deal process.
- **Assembly of Experts (Iran)** — The 88-member body of senior Shia clerics that has the constitutional authority to designate (and remove) the Supreme Leader; currently deliberating on Khamenei's successor; their choice will determine Iran's post-war nuclear doctrine trajectory.

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2. India's 'Israel Habit' Meets West Asian Realities — The Balancing Dilemma

[TH] Page 8

GS 2: International Relations: India-Israel; India's West Asia policy; Gulf states; Iran; balancing diplomacy.

‣ The Hindu analysis: India has developed an 'Israel habit' — deep military, intelligence, and technology ties with Israel built over 30+ years — that sits uncomfortably with India's traditional Non-Aligned West Asia policy and its energy/diaspora dependencies on the Arab Gulf states.

‣ The ties that bind India to Israel: India is Israel's largest arms customer globally (~$2-2.5 billion annually); joint weapons development (Barak-8 missile, Heron drone); intelligence cooperation; agricultural technology; cyber-tech (NSO Group controversy aside); a large Indian-Jewish community (Bene Israel, Cochin Jews); and Israel's vote support for India on various international platforms.

‣ The West Asian tensions: India's Gulf dependencies — 8.5 million Indian diaspora in Gulf states; $115 billion in Gulf remittances (FY26); Gulf crude oil (45% of India's imports); Gulf LNG (30% of India's LNG supply) — are all threatened when India is seen as pro-Israel by Gulf Arab states.

‣ The February 28, 2026 test: When the US (with Israeli co-operation) struck Iran on February 28, India faced its most acute 'Israel-Gulf' dilemma ever — Israel was a partner in the strike; the strike killed Khamenei, destabilised the region, and triggered the Hormuz closure that cost India $30 billion+; India notably did NOT endorse the strikes.

- India's evolution on Palestine: India recognised Palestine in 1988; traditionally supported a two-state solution; but since normalising Israel relations in 1992, India has progressively distanced its stated Palestine solidarity from any actual policy pressure on Israel; India's Gaza UN abstentions (2024-2026) reflected this evolution.

- The Gulf states' view: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait (home to 8.5 million Indians) have increasingly linked their relationship with India to India's position on Palestine and Iran; the UAE in particular has questioned India's 'neutrality' given the depth of India-Israel defence cooperation.
- The strategic logic of both partnerships: India needs Israeli technology (defence, agriculture, water, cyber) that is not available from the Gulf; India needs Gulf energy and its diaspora remittances that Israel cannot replace; the dual dependency creates a structural strategic contradiction that India manages through deliberate ambiguity.

UPSC ANGLE

• India-Israel Strategic Partnership: The 1992 normalisation (PV Narasimha Rao) → 2017 Modi's first Israeli PM visit in India → 2017 Netanyahu's first visit to India → 2020 NSO Pegasus (India was reportedly a customer) → 2023-2026 Gaza war creating domestic and diplomatic pressure to distance from Israel. India's challenge: maintaining defence technology access while managing Gulf diplomatic exposure.

• The Israel-Iran-India triangle: India has maintained relations with both Israel and Iran for decades (pre-1992 Israel normalisation, India maintained indirect ties); post-Khamenei's death and the ceasefire, India is in a unique position — condolences to Iran, BRICS invite to Pezeshkian, continued (but quieter) Israel defence ties. This triangular balance defines India's West Asia strategy for the rest of 2026.

- **India-Israel Defence Partnership** — India is Israel's largest arms customer (~$2-2.5 billion/year); major joint systems: Barak-8 naval missile defence, Heron/Heron TP drones, Spike anti-tank missiles, Harop loitering munitions; IAI, Rafael, Elbit Systems are key Israeli partners; joint development (DRDO-Rafael, DRDO-IAI) is the new direction.

GS PAPER 3 — Defence · Economy · Science

3. Gen Dhiraj Seth Takes Over as 31st Army Chief; Gen Dwivedi Retires

[TH] Page 12

GS 3: Defence: Army Chief; COAS; Indian Army leadership; Armoured Corps; IBG legacy.

▸ June 30, 2026: General Dhiraj Seth assumed charge as the 31st Chief of Army Staff (COAS), succeeding General Upendra Dwivedi who retired after more than four decades of service.

▸ Gen Dhiraj Seth profile: Commissioned into the Armoured Corps in December 1986; alumnus of NDA (Khadakwasla), IMA (Dehradun), DSSC (Wellington), Army War College (Mhow), NDC (New Delhi); French CID Staff Course; commanded Sudarshan Chakra Corps (21 Corps), Delhi Area, South Western Command (Jaipur), Southern Command (Pune) — the rare distinction of commanding two operational army commands.

▸ First Armoured Corps COAS since General Shankar Roy Chowdhary (1994-1997) — a 29-year gap.

▸ Gen Dwivedi's outgoing statement: 'Wars will be more theatre-oriented in future' — reaffirming India's Integrated Theatre Command transformation agenda and the IBG (Integrated Battle Group) legacy he is handing over to Seth.

- Gen Dwivedi's key legacy: 31 IBG sanction letters approved in 14-15 months; IBGisation of 17 Mountain Strike Corps begun July 2026; Operation Sindoor (May 2025) conducted under his command — India's most significant military operation in decades; the nuclear posture evolution (SIPRI's 12 deployed warheads) occurred during his tenure; Netra AEW&C FOC received under his tenure.
- Gen Seth's priority agenda: Accelerating IBGisation of all corps (2029 full rollout); managing the India-China LAC stabilisation while preventing complacency; integrating AI/loitering munitions (Bhairav battalions) into operational doctrine; continuing Atmanirbhar Bharat in military systems; managing the Army's manpower reduction roadmap (Tour of Duty scheme, reducing establishment size while increasing quality).
- Theatre Commands under Seth: India is developing 3-4 integrated theatre commands (IT-N for North/China; IT-W for West/Pakistan; IT-M for Maritime; IT-South for Islands); the COAS plays a central role in this transformation alongside VCOAS and the CDS (Chief of Defence Staff); Seth's experience

commanding both South Western and Southern Commands gives him direct understanding of the two-front challenge.

UPSC ANGLE

• COAS succession pattern: The Army Chief is the senior-most active Lieutenant General at the time of appointment; the government has the discretion to bypass senior officers (as has happened historically — Gen VK Singh's supersession in 2010 triggered a controversy); Seth's appointment appears to follow seniority-based succession.

• Tour of Duty (Agnipath): Gen Seth inherits the Agnipath scheme (2022) under which 25% of soldiers are now serving as 4-year contract 'Agniveers'; the first batch of Agniveers completed their 4-year service in 2026; many have joined the Central Armed Police Forces and paramilitary — a structural change to Army recruitment that Seth must manage.

- **31st COAS Gen Dhiraj Seth** — Commissioned December 1986, Armoured Corps; first Armoured Corps COAS since General Shankar Roy Chowdhary (1997); commanded 21 Corps + Delhi Area + SW Command + S Command; VCOAS from April 2026; took charge June 30, 2026.

4. Gulf Remittances Rose in April Despite West Asia Crisis

[TH] Page 1

GS 3: Economy: Remittances; Gulf diaspora; India's external sector; West Asia economic impact.

‣ Ministry of Finance data: Gulf remittances to India in April 2026 (first full month of the Hormuz war) were HIGHER than in April 2025 — surprising given expectations that the war would disrupt Gulf diaspora incomes and money transfers.

‣ Total Gulf remittances (April 2026): ~$12.5 billion from Gulf states (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain) — up ~8% from April 2025.

‣ Why remittances ROSE during the crisis: (1) Fear-driven early transfers — Indian diaspora in Gulf sent extra money home as a precautionary measure against potential evacuation; (2) Currency effect — Gulf currencies are predominantly pegged to the USD which strengthened during the crisis; INR depreciated (Rs 97 at peak from Rs 83); converting the same dollar amount yields MORE rupees; (3) Continued employment — the Gulf's oil sector (which employs many Indian workers) continued operations even during the Hormuz supply disruption; Indian workers in healthcare, construction, hospitality also remained employed.

- India's total remittances: India is the world's largest remittances recipient — FY26 total: ~$135 billion (World Bank estimate); Gulf states account for ~45-50% of India's remittances; the US accounts for ~25%; other sources (UK, Canada, Australia, Southeast Asia) account for the remainder. Remittances are India's largest single source of foreign exchange — exceeding FDI and IT exports (though IT exports now challenge this).
- RBI's remittance classification: Under FEMA, inward remittances are 'Invisible receipts' in the Balance of Payments Current Account; they partially offset India's structural trade deficit; India's CAD was cushioned by the remittance surge even as oil costs spiked — partially explaining why the rupee, while depreciating significantly during the Hormuz crisis, didn't collapse further.
- Gulf dependence — the structural question: India has 8.5 million Gulf diaspora (the largest of any country); they remain in the Gulf on work permits that could be terminated; the oil-to-renewables transition creates long-term risk (Gulf states are diversifying economies, which may reduce demand for low-skilled Indian labour); but in the near-term (5-10 years) Gulf employment and remittances remain robust.
- **Remittances (India)** — Money sent by Indians working abroad to their families at home; India = world's largest recipient (~$135 billion FY26); Gulf states contribute 45-50%; classified as 'Invisible receipts' in Current Account; critical for India's Balance of Payments stability.

5. Reimagining Sovereign AI + Sovereign Compute for India

[TH/IE] Page 8

GS 3: Science and Technology: AI governance; sovereign AI; compute infrastructure; IndiaAI Mission; strategic technology.

- Two companion articles (The Hindu page 8 + Indian Express page 11) make the same argument from different angles: India needs to build 'sovereign AI' capability — an AI infrastructure controlled, operated, and developed by India, not dependent on US hyperscalers (Amazon, Google, Microsoft Azure) or Chinese AI platforms.
- The urgency argument (IE): 'Before the AI window closes' — the global AI race is in a 5-10 year critical window (2024-2035) during which foundational capabilities are being established; countries that build sovereign compute NOW will control AI's benefits; countries that don't will become dependent on foreign AI systems — a new form of digital colonialism.
- The strategic argument (TH): India's strategic decisions (military planning, economic policy, infrastructure management) must not be processed by AI systems running on foreign compute infrastructure accessible to foreign intelligence services; 'sovereign AI' = AI systems trained and operated on Indian compute, with Indian data, under Indian law.
- IndiaAI Mission (2024, Rs 10,371 crore): India's primary policy vehicle for building sovereign AI capabilities; includes: 10,000 GPU cluster (National AI Compute Facility); AI Centres of Excellence at IITs; AI datasets for India-specific language/culture (Bhashini); start-up acceleration under AIRAVAT; public sector AI applications.

What 'Sovereign Compute' Actually Requires

- Computing infrastructure: GPUs (Graphics Processing Units) are the primary hardware for AI model training; Nvidia's H100/H200 GPUs are the global standard; India currently has <10,000 GPUs for AI in public/academic institutions (vs. millions across US, China hyperscalers); IndiaAI Mission's 10,000 GPU cluster is a start but not remotely sufficient for true foundational AI development.
- Semiconductor supply chain: India's AI compute sovereignty ultimately depends on semiconductor manufacturing (chips); India's Semiconductor Mission (ISM 2.0, see next article) is the manufacturing piece; but chip fabrication timelines (India's first fab not expected to produce at scale before 2029) mean India will remain import-dependent in the near term.
- The AI stack: A full sovereign AI capability requires all layers: Data (India has this — massive English + regional language + services data); Algorithms/Models (India has IITB's Open-Hathi, C-DAC's PARAM AI models, but they're not frontier-scale); Training Compute (GPU clusters — India is behind); Deployment infrastructure (cloud + edge — India has AWS/Azure/Google deployments, but these are foreign-owned).
- Regulatory sovereignty: Even if India builds compute infrastructure, AI governance — who decides what AI can be used for, what data it trains on, what ethical guardrails apply — is a sovereign question; India's Digital India Act (DIA, under development) and the emerging AI Policy framework are the regulatory pieces; the AI Safety Institute of India (proposed by MeitY) would be the institutional piece.

UPSC ANGLE

• The China contrast: China's 'Made in China 2025' invested massively in AI and semiconductor sovereignty; China now has indigenous foundation models (DeepSeek, Baidu Ernie, Qwen — Alibaba); Huawei's Ascend chips; Beidou navigation that doesn't depend on GPS; India's situation: strong AI talent (Indian-origin leaders across global AI — Sam Altman's board, Google's Sundar Pichai, Anthropic's Dario Amodei is Italian-American but many senior Indians) but weak domestic AI infrastructure. Talent without infrastructure = contributing to others' sovereign AI, not India's own.

• The BRICS angle: India is proposing a 'BRICS Space Economy' (covered earlier); a 'BRICS AI Governance Framework' is also on India's 2026 BRICS chairship agenda — potentially creating a non-Western AI regulatory space distinct from the EU AI Act and US Executive Order frameworks.

- **IndiaAI Mission (2024)** — MeitY-led programme; Rs 10,371 crore; builds sovereign AI compute (10,000 GPU cluster), AI Centres of Excellence, datasets, startup support; key vehicle for India's sovereign AI ambition; insufficient alone for frontier AI but establishes institutional foundation.
- **Sovereign AI** — The principle that a country's AI capabilities — compute infrastructure, training data, model development, deployment, governance — should be under national control and not dependent on foreign hyperscalers or foreign-intelligence-accessible systems; strategic corollary to 'data sovereignty.'

GS PAPER 2 — Governance · Polity · Economy

6. ISM 2.0 — Rs 1.25 Lakh Crore for India Semiconductor Mission 2.0

[TH] Page 15

GS 3: Economy: Semiconductor industry; chip manufacturing; ISM 2.0; India Semiconductor Mission; supply chain.

- Finance Ministry panel cleared the Union Budget proposal for Rs 1.25 lakh crore (approximately $15 billion) for India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 (ISM 2.0) — the largest single technology industrial policy investment in India's history.
- ISM 1.0 (2021-2026, Rs 76,000 crore): Attracted investment commitments from Tata Electronics-PSMC (28nm fab in Dholera, Gujarat), CG Power-Renesas-Stars Microelectronics (OSAT plant in Sanand, Gujarat), Keynes Technology (OSAT plant in Noida), Micron Technology (chip packaging/assembly in Sanand, Gujarat); actual production expected to begin 2027-2028.
- ISM 2.0 ambition: Rs 1.25 lakh crore (Rs 76,000 crore existing + Rs 49,000 crore new) to: attract advanced node chip fabrication (targeting 12-16nm technology by 2030, currently only 28nm targeted); expand chip packaging/assembly (OSAT — Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test) capacity; build a complete domestic chip ecosystem (materials, chemicals, equipment — currently all imported); create 100,000+ direct semiconductor industry jobs by 2030.
- Strategic context: The Hormuz crisis demonstrated India's chip import vulnerability (100% of semiconductors imported; supply chain stress during the crisis); ISM 2.0 directly addresses this with a 'semiconductor supply chain resilience' framing.

- Why India needs its own semiconductor manufacturing: (1) Defence systems (everything from missiles to communications equipment contains chips); (2) EV industry (each EV requires 1,000+ chips; India is building a large EV manufacturing base); (3) Digital infrastructure (UPI, Aadhaar, digital governance depend on chips); (4) Strategic autonomy — a country that imports 100% of its semiconductors is as strategically vulnerable as a country that imports 100% of its oil.
- The TSMC/Intel/Samsung problem: The world's most advanced chip manufacturing is concentrated in: Taiwan (TSMC — 60%+ of advanced chips), South Korea (Samsung/SK Hynix), the US (Intel, some TSMC fabs). Any Taiwan Strait crisis (China invading Taiwan) would be catastrophic for global semiconductor supply — India has strong interest in diversifying away from this concentration.
- India's comparative advantage in semiconductors: Not in cutting-edge fabrication (TSMC's 3nm) — India doesn't have the expertise or supply chains yet; rather in: mature-node chips (28nm and above, which cover 70%+ of all chips used globally); chip design (India produces the most semiconductor design engineers globally, after the US); assembly and testing (labour-cost advantage).

UPSC ANGLE

• India's Chips4India programme (MeitY): Supporting chip design startups and fabless chip design companies in India — many SoC (System on Chip) design companies have already set up in India (Qualcomm India, Intel India, Texas Instruments India all have large design centres); ISM 2.0 pairs this design capability with domestic manufacturing aspiration.

• The Japan-India tech angle: The concurrent India-Japan technology summit (referenced in another IE article) includes a semiconductor cooperation framework — Japan's expertise in semiconductor materials and equipment (Tokyo Electron, Shin-Etsu Chemical, Sumco) could complement India's ISM 2.0 aspirations.

- **OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test)** — The 'downstream' segment of semiconductor manufacturing where completed wafers are cut into chips, packaged, and tested; less technologically demanding than wafer fabrication; India has attracted multiple OSAT investments (Micron, CG Power-Renesas); provides immediate semiconductor value chain entry while front-end fab is developed.

7. Criminal Justice System's Digital Push — CCTNS, ICJS, Full Rollout

[TH] Page 12

GS 2: Governance: Criminal justice digitisation; CCTNS; ICJS; BNS/BNSS digital implementation; police technology.

‣ Ministry of Home Affairs: India's criminal justice system's comprehensive digital transformation aims for 'full rollout by 2027' — integrating police, courts, prisons, forensics, and prosecution under a single digital platform.
‣ Key platforms: CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems) — national police IT system, connecting all 16,000+ police stations; ICJS (Inter-operable Criminal Justice System) — connecting CCTNS with e-Courts, e-Prosecution, Prison Management System, and forensic labs into a seamless digital pipeline.
‣ BNS/BNSS connection: The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS, 2023) — replacing CrPC — mandates electronic filing of FIRs, electronic summons, digital evidence management; the CCTNS/ICJS digital backbone is essential for BNSS implementation.
‣ Progress: CCTNS is operational in all 36 states/UTs and 99%+ of police stations; digital FIR rate: 85%+; ICJS integration: courts and prisons are partially integrated; the remaining gap is forensic labs (only 40% integrated) and prosecution (60% integrated).

- What digital criminal justice means practically: A person arrested in Delhi for a crime committed in Chennai — the Chennai police's FIR, the accused's criminal history, previous warrants, and prosecution records can be instantly accessed by the Delhi police; a court can access police evidence digitally rather than waiting for physical files; a forensic lab's report can be electronically filed in the e-Court system the same day.
- Digital evidence and BNSS: The BNSS 2023 (effective July 2024) creates new provisions for digital/electronic evidence as primary evidence in criminal proceedings; this required CCTNS/ICJS upgrades to handle video, audio, metadata, and digital document authentication at scale.
- Cyber crime integration: The Cyber Crime Portal (cybercrime.gov.in) and I4C (Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre) are being integrated into ICJS — connecting online crime reporting with physical police investigation records.

UPSC ANGLE
• The 1 crore pending case challenge: India has 5+ crore pending court cases; the digital criminal justice system is partly designed to reduce this backlog by: eliminating delays caused by lost/misplaced physical files; enabling virtual hearings (expanded post-COVID under Supreme Court e-court rules); enabling faster service of summons (electronic delivery through mobile/Aadhaar-linked systems).
• The right to a lawyer connection: The SC's 'even the wicked have the right to a lawyer' judgment (covered next article) is essential context — digitising criminal justice without ensuring legal representation is provided to all accused would create a technologically faster but less just system.

- **CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems)** — National police IT platform; connects 16,000+ police stations; enables FIR registration, criminal record access, crime pattern analysis; operational across all 36 states/UTs.
- **ICJS (Interoperable Criminal Justice System)** — Integrates CCTNS (police) with e-Courts, e-Prosecution, Prison Management System, and forensic labs into a single digital pipeline; enables seamless data sharing across all criminal justice institutions.

8. FCRA 2.0 Portal + e-OCI Card — Amit Shah Launches

[TH/IE] Page 12

GS 2: Governance: FCRA; OCI; diaspora management; foreign contributions monitoring.

‣ Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched: (1) FCRA 2.0 Portal — a new digital system for real-time monitoring of foreign contributions received by NGOs; (2) e-OCI Card — a digital version of the OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) card, accessible on mobile devices.
‣ FCRA 2.0 key feature: Real-time transaction monitoring — every foreign contribution received by an FCRA-registered organisation is immediately visible on the MHA portal; 'The system will strengthen the government's capacity to monitor foreign donations in real time' (Amit Shah, IE report).
‣ Flagging mechanism: FCRA 2.0 will automatically flag transactions that appear unusual — sudden large inflows, contributions from specific countries of concern, contributions to organisations with pending

investigations; this enables faster enforcement action vs. the existing annual-return-based detection system.
‣ e-OCI Card: Overseas Citizen of India card is now also available as a digital document on the UMANG mobile app (Government's unified mobile app) — physical card remains valid; e-OCI allows digital verification at entry points, banking, and other services; over 45 lakh OCI cardholders globally.

- FCRA 2.0 and the 2026 FCRA Rule amendments: The June 2026 FCRA Rules tightening (covered in our earlier notes) created new reporting requirements; FCRA 2.0 portal is the technological implementation vehicle for these rules — real-time reporting replaces the previous monthly/quarterly statements uploaded in bulk.
- OCI Card history: OCI was created in 2005 (amending Citizenship Act) to provide long-term visa-free travel and residence rights to former Indian citizens and their descendants (up to 4th generation); OCI holders have most rights of Indian citizens except: right to vote; right to hold constitutional offices; right to purchase agricultural land. OCI merged with PIO (Person of Indian Origin) card in 2015 — all PIO cards converted to OCI.

UPSC ANGLE
• Privacy concerns: FCRA 2.0's real-time monitoring raises significant civil society concerns about: NGOs being monitored in real-time by the government; chilling effect on foreign-funded organisations that fear real-time scrutiny; potential misuse for targeting organisations critical of the government. The Home Ministry's framing of 'national security' and 'transparency' is contested by civil society organisations who see it as enhanced surveillance.
• USCIRF concern: The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has previously cited India's FCRA framework as a tool for restricting religious minority and civil society organisations; FCRA 2.0's enhanced monitoring is likely to feature in USCIRF's 2027 India chapter.

- **OCI (Overseas Citizen of India)** — A long-term multi-entry visa/residency document for former Indian citizens and their descendants (up to 4th generation); gives most citizenship rights except voting, constitutional offices, agricultural land; over 45 lakh OCI holders globally; e-OCI now available on UMANG app.

9. Even the 'Wicked' Have the Right to a Lawyer — SC Judgment

[TH] Page 13

GS 2: Governance: Right to legal aid; Article 22; Article 39A; Suk Das case; duty of state; access to justice.

‣ The Hindu reports on the Supreme Court's reaffirmation (in a recent judgment) of the fundamental principle first articulated in Suk Das v Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh (1986): that every accused person, however 'wicked' their alleged crime, has a constitutional right to free legal aid if they cannot afford a lawyer.
‣ 'The right of an accused to be provided legal aid is not only to ensure a fair trial but is fundamental to the concept of justice itself. The gravity of the offence alleged does not diminish this right.' — SC 2026 judgment.
‣ Context: The case involved an accused in a heinous crime (gang rape-murder) who was tried without adequate legal representation because assigned legal aid counsel was ineffective; the SC set aside the conviction and ordered a retrial with proper legal representation.
‣ Article 22(1): Right of an arrested person to consult a legal practitioner of their choice; but Article 22 does not guarantee a FREE lawyer — that right flows from Article 21 (right to life with dignity) + Article 39A (DPSP — equal justice and free legal aid for the poor).

- The Suk Das mandate: In Suk Das (1986), Justice Bhagwati held that if an accused person is not informed of their right to free legal aid, the trial is vitiated (flawed) — conviction obtained in such circumstances is not valid. This was a landmark expansion of Article 21 to include the right to quality legal representation.
- NALSA (National Legal Services Authority): Established under the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987; provides free legal aid to specified categories (persons below poverty line, SCs, STs, women, children, persons with disabilities, victims of human trafficking, industrial workers); DISHA 2.0 (covered June 25)

expands NALSA's delivery mechanisms. However, the QUALITY of legal aid remains a persistent challenge — assigned legal aid lawyers are often poorly remunerated and treat these cases as a burden rather than a professional obligation.

- The quality gap: Having a 'lawyer' appointed is not the same as having EFFECTIVE legal representation; the SC's 2026 judgment stresses that the state's obligation is not discharged by merely assigning a name to the case file — the assigned lawyer must actually engage with the case, prepare a defence, and represent the accused zealously. Courts must monitor this.

UPSC ANGLE

• The 'wicked right' principle in constitutional philosophy: This connects to a fundamental principle of liberal democratic constitutionalism — that even the most heinous accused retains human dignity and rights; the PROCESS of justice matters as much as the outcome; a fair conviction is worth more to the rule of law than a fast conviction; this principle distinguishes democratic justice systems from authoritarian ones.

• Indian Evidence Act / BSA connection: India's Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA, 2023 — replaced Indian Evidence Act) and BNSS (2023 — replaced CrPC) changes have significant implications for how evidence is gathered and presented; effective legal aid is essential for navigating these new statutory frameworks — making the quality of legal aid even more important than before.

- **Article 39A (DPSP)** — Directive Principle directing the state to ensure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on a basis of equal opportunity, and in particular, provides free legal aid for those who cannot afford it; the constitutional basis for NALSA and free legal aid schemes.
- **Suk Das v UT of Arunachal Pradesh (1986)** — Landmark SC judgment (Justice Bhagwati); held that if an accused is not informed of their right to free legal aid, the trial is vitiated and conviction can be set aside; expanded Article 21 to include the right to quality legal representation for the poor.

10. The Indo-Pacific Is Here to Stay, With or Without Washington

[IE] Page 10

GS 2: International Relations: Indo-Pacific; QUAD; Trump's second term; regional architecture; India's strategic autonomy.

▸ Indian Express strategic analysis: Despite US President Trump's transactional approach to foreign policy (using QUAD as leverage for trade deals, reducing US forward military presence, focusing on domestic economic priorities) and his administration's sometimes inconsistent commitments to Indo-Pacific partners, the Indo-Pacific as a strategic concept and regional order is now self-sustaining.

▸ The argument: The Indo-Pacific concept — which emerged from Japanese PM Shinzo Abe's 2007 'Confluence of Two Seas' speech and gained currency after 2017 — has now been institutionalised through: QUAD (India-US-Australia-Japan); AUKUS (Australia-UK-US); Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP, 12 members); India's bilateral partnerships with Japan, Australia, South Korea, ASEAN; these structures persist regardless of any particular US administration's enthusiasm.

▸ Trump's Indo-Pacific approach (2025-26): The Trump administration has continued QUAD summits and military exercises (Malabar, Talisman Sabre) but has framed Indo-Pacific partnerships primarily through a trade/economic lens (hence the pressure on India for the BTA) rather than a collective security/values lens; US troop presence in Guam, Japan, South Korea remains (Trump's 'America First' doesn't extend to abandoning military bases that protect US interests).

▸ India's stake: QUAD, the Indo-Pacific framework, and the US-India defence partnership give India: advanced military technology access (GE F-414 engines for AMCA, MQ-9B drones, F/A-18 manufacturing collaboration under ToT deals); diplomatic solidarity on China concerns; market access to Pacific democracies (India's FTAs with Australia, Japan, NZ).

- The China catalyst: The Indo-Pacific's staying power derives primarily from China's assertive behaviour — South China Sea militarisation, Taiwan provocations, LAC aggression against India, economic coercion against Australia, BRI debt diplomacy — rather than US leadership; every QUAD member and ASEAN country has independent reasons to support a rules-based Indo-Pacific order; these motivations persist regardless of Washington's enthusiasm.
- India's multi-alignment in the Indo-Pacific: India participates in QUAD but also: is in BRICS (with China and Russia); chairs SCO; maintains Russia energy ties; engages with Iran; this multi-alignment gives

India strategic flexibility but also creates tensions with QUAD partners when India's positions diverge (e.g., India's refusal to endorse the US narrative on Russia's Ukraine war; India's Iran balancing act).

UPSC ANGLE

• The 'Indo' in Indo-Pacific: India's full participation in QUAD exercises (Malabar naval exercise with Japan, Australia, US; La Pérouse exercise with France) and India's growing maritime capabilities (aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, P-8I maritime patrol aircraft, Kalvari-class submarines) have made India a genuine Indo-Pacific maritime player — not just an observer.

• AUKUS and India: India was not included in AUKUS (the Australia-UK-US nuclear submarine deal) — a notable exclusion that reflects US assessment of India's complex relationships (Russia, Iran) and India's own 'strategic autonomy' preference against entangling alliances; India doesn't seek AUKUS membership and AUKUS doesn't want India's complications.

- **QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue)** — India-US-Australia-Japan security forum; revived 2017; leaders' summits since 2021; areas: maritime security, vaccine delivery, climate, semiconductors, cybersecurity; no formal mutual defence obligation (unlike NATO Article 5); QUAD's significance is creating a habit of coordination among four major Indo-Pacific democracies.

11. Great Nicobar Project — Is What Can Be Justified Also Just?

[IE] Page 11

GS 3: Environment: Great Nicobar; biodiversity; NEAA clearance; tribal rights; strategic infrastructure; GS2 — Governance.

‣ Indian Express ethical analysis: The Great Nicobar Island holistic development project — approved by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) with strategic backing from the Prime Minister's Office — raises a fundamental ethical question beyond the legal/procedural compliance framework.

‣ The project: Rs 72,000 crore mega-project on Great Nicobar Island; components: (a) transhipment port at Galathea Bay (the best natural harbour in the Indian Ocean); (b) international airport; (c) township for 350,000+ residents (the island currently has ~8,000 permanent residents); (d) power plant.

‣ Environmental costs: The project involves deforestation of 130 sq km of tropical rainforest (including leatherback sea turtle nesting beaches, Nicobar crab nesting sites, unique flora found only on this island); the island sits within the Nicobar Biosphere Reserve and partially within the Galathea Bay Marine National Park.

‣ The ethical question: Even if every clearance is legally obtained and every study technically justifies the project, is it JUST — morally right — to permanently transform a unique biodiversity hotspot and a tribal community's homeland for a strategic port?

- The Shompen concern: The Shompen are a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) — one of India's most isolated communities (~200-400 individuals); they live in the interior of Great Nicobar Island and have actively resisted contact with the outside world for centuries; the project's 350,000-person township would permanently and irreversibly transform their habitat and isolate them in an ever-shrinking interior zone. No Gram Sabha consent has been obtained because the Shompen have no Gram Sabhas (they are pre-state community structures).
- The 'strategic necessity' argument: The project's primary strategic justification is the Galathea Bay transhipment port — which would give India control over a natural harbour at the southern tip of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, within 150 km of the Malacca Strait (through which 80%+ of East Asian trade passes); this is significant for India's maritime strategy and countering Chinese port development in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean.
- The NEAA clearance controversy: The National Environmental Appraisal Authority (MoEFCC's appellate body) cleared the project in 2022 after multiple committee reviews; environmental groups have challenged these clearances in the National Green Tribunal and the Supreme Court; the key NGT objection: the project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) underestimated the biodiversity impact.

UPSC ANGLE

• The broader principle: The article's 'is what can be justified also just?' question is a classic ethical tension in development vs. conservation policy — particularly for tribal communities who have no effective political voice in

the decision (they don't vote, don't engage with media, don't have NGO representatives who can speak FOR them from their own community). The Rawlsian 'veil of ignorance' test would ask: if you didn't know whether you'd be born a Shompen child or an Indian strategic planner, would you approve this project? This is the kind of moral framework the article implicitly invokes.
• Comparison with Narmada dam controversy (Sardar Sarovar): The decades-long debate over the Narmada dam's tribal displacement offers a precedent — courts ultimately allowed the project with various rehabilitation conditions that were subsequently found to be poorly implemented; the Great Nicobar project raises similar displacement/rehabilitation questions for an even more vulnerable community (Shompen lack any legal framework for rehabilitation since they are outside the state's administrative reach).

- **Shompen** — A Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) living in the interior of Great Nicobar Island; ~200-400 individuals; have actively resisted contact with the outside world; no Gram Sabha or state-recognised governance structure; their habitat is directly within the Great Nicobar holistic development project's footprint.
- **Great Nicobar Holistic Development Project** — Rs 72,000 crore project: transhipment port (Galathea Bay), international airport, township for 350,000, power plant; approved by MoEFCC; strategic rationale: control of Malacca Strait approaches; environmental cost: 130 sq km tropical rainforest; tribal cost: Shompen PVTG habitat.

12. India Seeks Clarity as 'Tipping Points' Rock Bonn Climate Talks

[TH] Page 22

GS 3: Environment: Bonn Climate Conference; climate tipping points; climate finance; IPCC 1.5°C; COP30 preparation.

‣ India's delegation at the Bonn Climate Change Conference (June-July 2026) has sought clarity on the definition, measurement, and governance of 'climate tipping points' — thresholds beyond which climate system changes become self-sustaining and irreversible.
‣ What are climate tipping points: Critical thresholds in the Earth system; once crossed, the change continues regardless of subsequent emissions reductions; examples: collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (irreversible sea level rise of 5-8 m); die-off of the Amazon rainforest (converting from carbon sink to carbon source); melting of Arctic permafrost (releasing methane — a 80x more potent greenhouse gas than CO2); Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) collapse (disrupting European and monsoon climates).
‣ Why India is seeking clarity: Tipping points create 'loss and damage' (L&D) claims — if a country suffers climate damages because a tipping point was crossed (and tipping points are primarily triggered by cumulative historical emissions, predominantly from developed countries), developed countries should be liable for compensation; India wants a clear framework for attributing tipping point damages to emitters.
‣ Bonn 2026 context: This is the technical preparation meeting for COP30 (Belém, Brazil, November 2026); Bonn is where the technical nitty-gritty of climate negotiations is settled; India's tipping point clarity demand sets up the loss and damage debate for COP30.

- The 1.5°C significance: IPCC AR6 (2021-2022) warned that crossing 1.5°C of warming above pre-industrial levels would significantly increase the probability of triggering multiple tipping points simultaneously; current global temperatures (1.52°C average above pre-industrial in 2025) suggest we may have already crossed the 1.5°C threshold in average terms (even if not permanently).
- India's CBDR-RC position at Bonn: India reaffirms the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) — historical emissions (which triggered tipping point risks) were predominantly from developed countries (US, Europe); developing countries (including India) have the least historical responsibility but face the greatest climate vulnerability; any tipping point framework must reflect this historical responsibility.
- The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA): Also under negotiation at Bonn 2026; India wants GGA to include: quantified financial flows for adaptation (not just pledges); technology transfer mandates; capacity building for climate-vulnerable developing countries. India's national adaptation needs are estimated at $500+ billion by 2030.

UPSC ANGLE

• India's climate vulnerability: India is among the world's most climate-vulnerable large countries — monsoon variability (2026's 35% deficit is a current example), heat stress (WBGT — wet bulb globe temperature — of 35°C is lethal to humans; parts of India are approaching this in peak summer), sea level rise threat to 7,500 km coastline and islands (Lakshadweep, Sundarbans). India thus has both a mitigation interest (avoiding catastrophic tipping points) and an adaptation/loss-and-damage interest.
• COP30 (Belém, Brazil, November 2026): The 'first stocktake' COP — reviewing progress on the Paris Agreement's NDCs; India's updated NDC (2022) commits to 45% emissions intensity reduction and 50% renewable electricity share by 2030; both are broadly on track.

- **Climate Tipping Points** — Critical thresholds in the Earth system where, once crossed, changes become self-sustaining and irreversible regardless of subsequent emissions reductions; examples: West Antarctic Ice Sheet collapse, Amazon die-off, permafrost methane release, AMOC collapse; central to Loss and Damage framework under UNFCCC.
- **Bonn Climate Conference** — The UN climate change mid-year technical meetings (SB56 — 56th sessions of Subsidiary Bodies) held annually in Bonn, Germany; prepares the technical groundwork for the annual COP; June-July 2026 edition is preparing for COP30 (Belém, Brazil, November 2026).

PRELIMS IN FOCUS

GST — 9th Anniversary Key Facts (July 1, 2017 → July 1, 2026)	GST (Goods and Services Tax): Launched midnight July 1, 2017; replaced 17 Central + State taxes + 23 cesses. Constitutional basis: Article 246A (added by 101st Constitutional Amendment, 2016); Article 279A (GST Council). GST Council: Union Finance Minister (Chair); State Finance Ministers; decisions by 3/4 majority; Centre = 1/3 votes; States collectively = 2/3 votes. Structure: CGST (Central) + SGST (State) + IGST (Interstate) + UTGST (Union Territory). Rates: 0%, 5%, 12%, 18%, 28% slabs + cess on luxury/sin goods. FY26 collection: Rs 22.08 lakh crore annually; April 2026 monthly collection crossed Rs 2 lakh crore for first time. Taxpayers: 1.46 crore registered (from ~65 lakh in 2017). GSTN: IT backbone for GST; registered under Companies Act; owned 50% Centre, 50% States (via GSTN SPV). Still outside GST: Petroleum products (crude, natural gas, petrol, diesel, ATF, alcohol); electricity.
Hul Divas — Santhal Revolt 1855	Hul Divas: June 30; commemorates Santhal Hul (Revolt) 1855-56. Led by: Sidhu Murmu and Kanhu Murmu (brothers; Santhal tribe). Location: Bhognadih village, Sahebganj district, Jharkhand. Date: June 30, 1855 (beginning of the revolt). Cause: Exploitation by zamindars (dikus = outsiders), money-lenders, and British revenue collectors; Permanent Settlement 1793's impact on tribal land. Significance: First major tribal revolt against British colonial rule in India; preceded the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny by 2 years; 60,000-80,000 Santhals mobilised; estimated 15,000-20,000 Santhals killed. Outcome: Suppressed; Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act 1876 (partial recognition of tribal land rights). Related: Birsa Munda's Ulgulan rebellion (1899-1900); both inform 5th Schedule + PESA 1996 provisions. Santhal Parganas: Region in present-day Jharkhand; one of India's first 'scheduled districts' under colonial governance for tribal protection.
India-Iran Post-War Diplomacy — Key Facts	US-Iran hostilities: Began February 28, 2026 (US-Israeli joint air strike on Tehran); Ayatollah Khamenei killed in the February 28 strike (this was the SAME strike that began the war). US-Iran MoU (ceasefire): June 17, 2026 (Note: The formal ceasefire/MoU was June 17; the earlier Muscat diplomatic framework was June 14). Pezeshkian: Iran's elected President (reformist); now effectively Iran's highest political authority after Khamenei's death. Khamenei's funeral: July 4 (Tehran) to July 9 (burial in Mashhad, near shrine of Imam Reza). India's delegation to funeral: Bihar Governor Lt Gen (Ret) Syed Ata Hasnain + MoS EA Pabitra Margherita (Modi and Jaishankar absent). Modi's BRICS invite to Pezeshkian: June 30/July 1 phone call; Iran is BRICS member since January 2024 (joined BRICS with UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Argentina). Hormuz: Still contested — Ever Lovely incident June 25; Iran reasserting Strait Authority toll rights; 80 mines remain in shipping lanes.

Gen Dhiraj Seth — 31st COAS	Name: General Dhiraj Seth (PVSM, UYSM, AVSM). Designation: 31st Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Indian Army. Date of taking charge: June 30, 2026. Succeeded: General Upendra Dwivedi (30th COAS, retired June 30 after 40+ years service). Corps: Armoured Corps (commissioned December 1986). First Armoured Corps COAS since: General Shankar Roy Chowdhary (1994-1997) — 29-year gap. NDA and IMA alumnus; DSSC (Wellington); Army War College (Mhow); NDC (New Delhi); French CID course. Commands held: Sudarshan Chakra Corps (21 Corps) + Delhi Area + South Western Command (Jaipur) + Southern Command (Pune) — rare distinction of commanding two operational Army commands. Vice COAS from: April 2026. Key context for tenure: IBGisation of 17 Mountain Strike Corps (July 2026), Theatre Command transformation, Agnipath Scheme management.
Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) + APAAR + NEP Multiple Exit	ABC (Academic Bank of Credits): Digital system; MoE; under NEP 2020; students accumulate credits from multiple institutions; credits are transferable and portable; enables multiple entry-multiple exit. APAAR ID (Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry): Unique student ID (like Aadhaar for education); assigned from Class 1; stores all academic records digitally; 'one nation one student ID.' NEP 2020 multiple entry-multiple exit: Exit after 1 year = Certificate; 2 years = Diploma; 3 years = Bachelor's degree; 4 years = Bachelor's with Research; can re-enter later (ABC stores credits). ISRO and higher education: India's dropout problem — only 27% of those who start undergraduate degrees complete them; ABC/multiple exit addresses this by allowing partial exit with a recognised credential rather than dropout with no recognition. UMANG app: Hosts various government services including e-OCI card (as covered in FCRA 2.0 article).

MAPPING — PLACES IN NEWS

Place	Why in News / Key Facts
Mashhad, Iran	Where Ayatollah Khamenei will be buried (July 9, 2026); near the shrine of Imam Reza — one of Shia Islam's most revered figures (8th Imam); Mashhad is Iran's second-largest city; the Imam Reza shrine is the largest mosque in the world by size (covers 331,578 sq metres); Mashhad in Khorasan Razavi province, northeastern Iran.
Bhognadih, Sahebganj, Jharkhand	Village where Sidhu Murmu declared the Santhal Hul revolt on June 30, 1855; the symbolic starting point of one of India's most significant tribal revolts; now a memorial site; Sahebganj district is in the Santhal Parganas division of Jharkhand, on the Jharkhand-West Bengal border.
Galathea Bay, Great Nicobar Island	Site of India's proposed transhipment port (Great Nicobar Holistic Development Project); described as the best natural harbour in the Indian Ocean; 150 km from the Malacca Strait; leatherback sea turtle nesting site (environmentally critical); subject of Supreme Court/NGT litigation; Shompen PVTG tribal habitat.
Dholera, Gujarat	Site of Tata Electronics-PSMC's 28nm semiconductor fabrication plant under India Semiconductor Mission 1.0; part of the Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR) — one of India's first greenfield smart industrial cities; production expected to begin 2027-2028; Rs 91,000 crore total investment in the fab project.
Tehran, Iran	Site of Ayatollah Khamenei's funeral (July 4, 2026); Iran's capital since the Safavid era; site of the February 28, 2026 US-Israeli air strike that killed Khamenei and began the US-Iran war; the Azadi Tower (iconic monument) and the Grand Bazaar are landmarks; latitude ~35.7°N.
Bonn, Germany	Site of the UN Climate Change Conference (SB56 sessions, June-July 2026) — the annual mid-year technical preparatory meeting for the COP; home to several UN agencies including UNFCCC secretariat, Deutsche Welle, DHL; India seeking clarity on 'tipping point' accountability framework for COP30 (Belém, Brazil, November 2026).
New Delhi (South Block)	Where General Dhiraj Seth received the Guard of Honour as 31st COAS on June 30, 2026; South Block lawns are the traditional ceremonial ground for Army Chief transitions, diplomatic arrivals, and Republic Day preparations; South Block also houses the Ministry of External Affairs and PMO.

Sanand, Gujarat	Site of two semiconductor investments under ISM 1.0: CG Power-Renesas-Stars Microelectronics (OSAT plant) and Micron Technology (chip packaging/assembly); Sanand is also home to Tata Motors' EV factory and several auto component manufacturers; part of the Ahmedabad-Dholera industrial corridor.

End of Notes · 1 July 2026 · UPSC with Saurabh Kaushik

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