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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE HINDU ANALYSIS

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Curated from The Hindu — UPSC Prelims & Mains Focus

TOPICS COVERED TODAY

- 1 U.S.–Iran Negotiations — A Road to Nowhere **GS 2**
- 2 The ‘Harvest’ China Wants — Boundary Talks **GS 2**
- 3 Indigenous RudraM–II Missile **GS 3**
- 4 Mega Science Vision–2035 (MSV) Report **GS 3**
- 5 WPI to Producer Price Index (PPI) Shift **GS 3**
- 6 Project UDAYAK (BRO) **PRELIMS**
- ★ Prelims Practice — 13 Complex MCQs **MCQ**

1

U.S.–Iran Negotiations, Still a Road to Nowhere

GS 2 · International Relations

The Hindu, Pg 6

WHY IN NEWS

For nearly half a century, Iran–U.S. relations have oscillated between hostility and brief diplomatic openings. The current move is towards a **memorandum** that could lead to an indefinite ceasefire and buy time to address the thornier issues bedeviling the relationship.

The Cost of Conflict

- The high cost — political and economic — of renewed, drawn-out hostilities is what motivated both sides to enter serious negotiations.
- The U.S. attacked Iran alongside Israel, believing superior military force would compel Tehran to accept curbs on its nuclear and missile programmes.
- Iran retained enough capability to impose costs through **asymmetric means** — threatening the Strait of Hormuz, attacking allies, and unsettling the region via proxies — creating an unusual convergence of interests in de-escalation.

Three Hurdles to a Lasting Peace

- **Mutual distrust:** Iranian leaders remain convinced Washington ultimately seeks regime change and uses talks as a ruse; the U.S. suspects Tehran negotiates only to buy time and rebuild its capabilities.
- **Domestic opposition in both states:** U.S. critics warn against repeating the perceived weaknesses of the 2015 deal; in Tehran, hardliners in the **IRGC** portray any compromise as “surrender under pressure.”
- **Regional actors, especially Israel:** Israel views Iran’s missile and nuclear capabilities as the greatest threat to its regional dominance and may seek to shape peace terms in ways that make implementation impossible.

Hardliners in the Seat

- The lesson Tehran draws from the attack: **nuclear ambiguity does not assure security** — **nuclear weapons do** (the North Korea example).
- Power within Iran has shifted decisively to IRGC hardliners; Tehran is unlikely to give up the weapons option unless a nuclear-weapon-free zone covering Israel is created — an outcome unacceptable to Israel.

📌 MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

The prospects of a peace agreement between the United States and Iran have renewed discussions on stability in West Asia and the future of the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Examine how a durable U.S.–Iran rapprochement could influence regional geopolitics, energy security, and the implementation of IMEC. Also discuss the challenges that may continue to impede the corridor despite peace efforts.

(15 Marks · 250 Words)

★ BACKGROUND — JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION (JCPOA)

- Also known as the **2015 Iran Nuclear Deal**; the result of negotiations (2013–2015) between Iran and the **P5+1** (China, France, Russia, the UK, the U.S. + Germany).
- Iran agreed to sharply cut its stores of centrifuges, enriched uranium and heavy-water — all key components for nuclear weapons.
- Iran accepted a protocol allowing **IAEA** inspectors access to its nuclear sites to verify it could not develop weapons in secret.
- The West agreed to lift nuclear-related sanctions, while sanctions on human-rights abuses and Iran's ballistic-missile programme remained.
- After the U.S. abandoned the deal in **2018** and reinstated banking and oil sanctions, Iran ramped up enrichment — returning to roughly **97%** of its pre-2015 nuclear capabilities.

★ QUICK REVISION — KEY TERMS

- **IRGC** — Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps; the centre of power within Iran has shifted decisively in its favour.
- **IMEC** — India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor, whose viability depends heavily on West Asian stability.
- **Strait of Hormuz** — a critical chokepoint for global energy flows; Iran's key asymmetric leverage.

2

The ‘Harvest’ China Wants Is One India Cannot Afford

GS 2 · India–China Relations

The Hindu, Pg 6

WHY IN NEWS

China has revived the idea of an “early harvest” — settling the **Sikkim sector** boundary in isolation from the other three sectors. India has resisted it, as this asymmetric concession is dressed up in the language of progress.

New Delhi Must Be Cautious

- The MEA readout from the **24th round** of the Special Representatives’ Dialogue (NSA Ajit Doval & FM Wang Yi, **Aug 19, 2025**) recorded an agreement to set up an Expert Group to “explore an early harvest in boundary delimitation.”
- The cornerstone of SR negotiations is the **2005 Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles**, which envisages a **package settlement** covering all sectors — political parameters first, demarcation last.
- China’s proposal to begin demarcation in a single “ripe” sector inverts this sequence; India should decline.

The Sikkim Stakes

- **Article I of the 1890 Convention** names “Mount Gipmochi” as the start of the Sikkim–Tibet boundary, but the operative principle is the **watershed** separating waters flowing into the Teesta from those flowing into the Tibetan Mochu.
- China reads the trijunction at **Gipmochi**; India and Bhutan hold it lies at **Batang La**, some 6.5 km to the north on the watershed.
- The **Zompelri (Jampheri) Ridge** commands a direct view of the **Siliguri Corridor** — the narrow strip connecting mainland India to its northeastern states (India’s most acute territorial vulnerability).
- Since the **2017 Doklam** standoff, China has consolidated its position in western Bhutan — building roads, military facilities and villages (e.g., Pangda on the Amo Chu).

★ THREE PRINCIPLES INDIA SHOULD HOLD

- Do **not** turn the 2005 framework into a vehicle for an early harvest in Sikkim alone.
- Make peace and tranquillity on the LAC the **non-negotiable** condition of progress; reject unilateral “buffer zones” in eastern Ladakh.
- Press for a genuine, comprehensive **political** settlement — not paper over the lack of progress.

3

Indigenous RudraM–II Missile Clears Flight Trials

GS 3 · Defence Technology

The Hindu, Pg 12

WHY IN NEWS

The **DRDO** and the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** have successfully flight-tested the indigenous **RudraM–II** air-to-surface missile — a milestone for India’s precision-strike capability and self-reliance in defence.

About the Trials

- The missile was test-fired from an **airborne platform** under extreme release conditions, validating all critical subsystems and flight parameters.
- Data was captured by tracking and monitoring instruments of the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur**, confirming the missile’s performance.

★ KEY SPECIFICATIONS — PRELIMS POINTERS

- It is an **Anti-Radiation Missile (ARM)** — designed to detect, track and neutralise the adversary’s radar, communication assets and other RF sources (part of their Air Defence Systems).
- Peak speed: **Mach 5.5**; range: **~300 km**; warhead: up to **200 kg**.
- Deployable from aircraft such as **Sukhois** flying at altitudes of **3–15 km**.
- Intended to eventually **replace** the older Russian-origin **Kh-31** anti-radiation missiles.

✓ PRELIMS MCQ

With reference to the RudraM–II missile, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is an air-to-air missile.
2. It was tested in Rajasthan in May 2024.

- a Only 2
- b Neither 1 nor 2
- c Only 1
- d Both 1 and 2

Answer: (b) Neither 1 nor 2 — RudraM-II is an air-to-surface anti-radiation missile, not air-to-air.

4

India Losing Ability to Build Its Own Instruments — MSV-2035 Report

GS 3 · Science & Tech / Environment

The Hindu, Pg 14

WHY IN NEWS

The **Mega Science Vision–2035 (MSV)** report on Climate Research warns that India has almost lost the ability to build its own scientific instruments, leaving climate observations dependent on imported, often uncalibrated equipment — leading to “incorrect data” and questions over the credibility of Indian science.

About the Report

- A road map prepared by the Indian climate research community with the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru** as the nodal institution, submitted to the **Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)**.
- It also calls for long-term studies on the climate consequences of the “**uncontrolled**” growth of renewable energy installations, whose effects remain “poorly understood.”

The Atmanirbhar Challenge

- The mandatory use of the **GeM portal** (procurement from the lowest-bidding India-registered vendor) clashed with the need for customised, high-quality instruments.
- In **June 2025**, the Finance Ministry rolled back some rules amid complaints over sub-standard materials.

★ KEY RECOMMENDATIONS & FACTS

- Devise scientific methods to estimate the **social cost of carbon** and implement the “**polluter pays**” principle, while offsetting the carbon tax’s effects on the poor.
- Build an indigenous **Earth System Model** “from first principles,” distinct from adapted U.S./Europe models.
- India has pledged **500 GW** of non-fossil capacity by 2030 and crossed the halfway mark on installed non-fossil electricity capacity in **2025**.
- Proposed **eight “mega projects”** — observatories, satellites, in-situ networks, indigenous sensors, etc. — phased across three roughly five-year blocks until 2035.

5

Govt. to Replace WPI with Producer Price Index (PPI)

GS 3 · Economy

The Hindu, Pg 15

WHY IN NEWS

The Centre will phase out the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** over five years and introduce a more detailed **Producer Price Index (PPI)** covering output, input and services prices, for a more realistic assessment of inflationary trends. New series begin **June 15**.

What Is Changing

- The **DPIIT** will release a revised WPI series with new base year **2022-23** (replacing 2011-12) on June 15; WPI will be discontinued after five years.
- A new PPI series launches on June 15 with **three indices** — **Output PPI, Trial Input PPI** and **Services PPI**.
- The transition aligns with global best practices and **IMF** recommendations.

Coverage & Methodology

- Services PPI initially covers **seven services**: Banking, Securities Transaction, Insurance, Management of Pension Funds, Railways, Air (Passenger) and Telecom.
- WPI and Output PPI are compiled **monthly**; data for **May 2026 (Provisional)** plus the back series (Apr 2023–Apr 2026) will be available on June 15.
- WPI, Output PPI and Service PPI use **Basic Price** (excludes net tax and trade & transport margin), whereas **Input PPI** uses **Purchaser's Price**.

★ WPI VS PPI — WHY IT MATTERS

- Output + Input PPI together give a better understanding of price movements of output items vis-à-vis the inputs used in an industry.
- It captures how producer-level inflation is **passed through** to final output — a sharper inflation signal than WPI alone.

6

Project UDAYAK (Border Roads Organisation)

PRELIMS · Polity / Defence

The Hindu

WHY IN NEWS

The **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** celebrated the **37th Raising Day** of **Project UDAYAK** at Doomdooma, Assam.

★ ABOUT PROJECT UDAYAK

- A specialised territorial wing of the **BRO**, tasked with developing and maintaining roads in the most remote and challenging terrains of **Northeast India**; it manages over **1,457 km** of strategic roads.
- **Established:** 1989 (marking its 37th year of operation in 2026).
- **Parent body:** BRO, under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Defence**.

Geographic Coverage

- Responsible for the easternmost regions of **Arunachal Pradesh** and parts of **Assam**.
- Primary districts: **Anjaw, Lohit, Dibang Valley, Longding, Tirap** and **Changlang**.

Strategic Significance

- Manages road infrastructure along two sensitive boundaries — the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** with China and the **Indo-Myanmar border**.
- Currently executing major **border-fencing** infrastructure along the Indo-Myanmar border to curb insurgent movement and illegal cross-border activity.
- Enables faster movement of troops, equipment and supplies — strengthening frontier infrastructure.

✓ PRELIMS POINTER

Remember: BRO → Ministry of Defence (not Road Transport). Project UDAYAK guards the LAC (China) & Indo-Myanmar border in Arunachal Pradesh & Assam.

7 PRELIMS MCQ

The **Siliguri Corridor**, often called the ‘Chicken’s Neck’, connects:

- (a) The Jammu region with the Kashmir Valley
- (b) Mainland India with its northeastern states
- (c) India with Bangladesh
- (d) Sikkim with Bhutan

Answer: (b). The narrow corridor links mainland India to the Northeast; the Jampheri Ridge overlooking it is India’s key vulnerability.

8 PRELIMS MCQ

With reference to the **Doklam** region, consider the following statements:

1. It is an area disputed between China and Bhutan.
2. It lies close to the Chumbi Valley.
3. The 2017 standoff there was between Indian and Chinese troops.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (c) All three. Doklam is China–Bhutan disputed territory near the Chumbi Valley; the 2017 standoff involved Indian and Chinese forces.

9 PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the proposed **Producer Price Index (PPI)**:

1. The PPI will comprise three indices: Output PPI, Trial Input PPI and Services PPI.
2. The revised WPI series will adopt the base year 2022-23.
3. The Input PPI is being compiled using the Purchaser’s Price.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d). All correct; WPI will be phased out over five years and replaced by the PPI, aligned with IMF practice.

10 PRELIMS MCQ

Among **WPI, Output PPI, Service PPI and Input PPI**, which are compiled on the basis of the **Basic Price** (excluding net tax and trade & transport margin)?

- (a) WPI, Output PPI and Service PPI only (b) Output PPI and Input PPI only
(c) WPI and Input PPI only (d) All four

Answer: (a). WPI, Output PPI and Service PPI use Basic Price; only Input PPI uses Purchaser's Price, since industries buy inputs from the market.

11 PRELIMS MCQ

With reference to the **Mega Science Vision–2035 (MSV)** report, consider the following statements:

1. The Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru was the nodal institution.
2. It was submitted to the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser.
3. It recommends building an indigenous Earth System Model from first principles.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) All three (d) None

Answer: (c) All three. The report also flags India's loss of capacity to build its own scientific instruments.

