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THE HINDU ANALYSIS

16 JUNE 2026

Curated from The Hindu — UPSC Prelims & Mains Focus

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1 U.S. & Iran Reach Agreement to End War, Re-open Hormuz Strait

GS 2 · International Relations | West Asia · Strait of Hormuz | The Hindu · Page 1

WHY IN NEWS

The U.S. and Iran announced a preliminary agreement to end their war, lift blockades in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, and begin substantive talks on Tehran's nuclear programme and Western sanctions. PM Modi, attending the G7 in France, welcomed the deal.

- The deal was **signed digitally on Sunday**, said U.S. VP J.D. Vance; an in-person signing is to be held in **Geneva on June 19**, with Iran and Pakistan confirming the schedule.
- President Trump — in France for the G7 — authorised the **toll-free reopening of the Strait of Hormuz** and the immediate removal of the U.S. naval blockade.
- Tehran said the **release of frozen assets** and **war reparations** are "essential" parts of the deal. Iran will **not collect tolls** from ships but will charge fees for navigation services and environmental upkeep.
- However, Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz said the **IDF will remain indefinitely** in security zones in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza — signalling the truce remains fragile.

★ STRAIT OF HORMUZ — PRELIMS POINTER

- A narrow waterway connecting the **Persian Gulf** to the **Gulf of Oman** and onward to the Arabian Sea.
- Bordered by **Iran** (north) and **Oman's Musandam exclave / UAE** (south).
- A global chokepoint — roughly **one-fifth of the world's oil** transits through it; closure spikes energy prices.
- Gulf of Oman links Hormuz to the open Arabian Sea; the **Gulf of Aden** and **Bab-el-Mandeb** are separate chokepoints (do not confuse).

★ INDIA'S STAKE

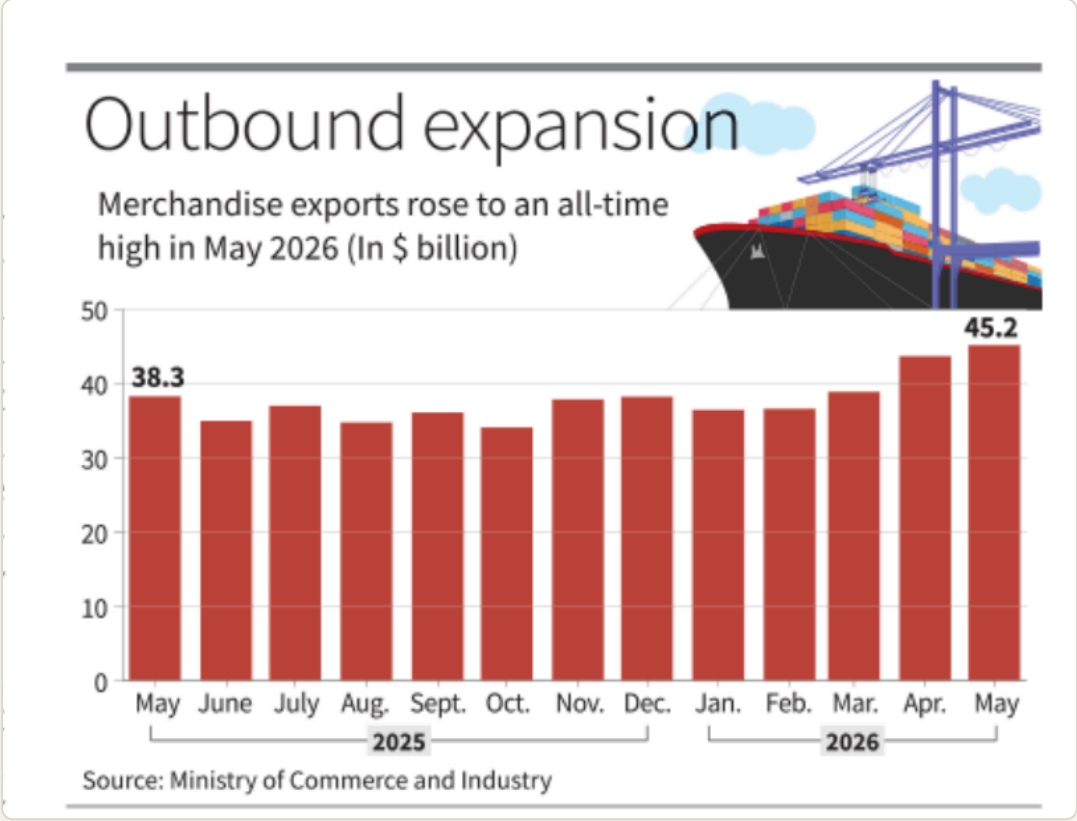
- India imports a large share of its crude via Hormuz; stability there directly affects **energy security & inflation** (note the WPI surge in Topic 8).
- Large **Indian diaspora** in the Gulf — remittances and worker safety are core interests.
- India backed a "sustainable final agreement" ensuring **freedom of navigation and commerce**.

2 India's Goods Exports Hit Record $45.2 bn in May; Trade Deficit Widens

GS 3 · Economy | External Sector · Trade | The Hindu · Page 1

WHY IN NEWS

India's merchandise exports rose to an all-time high of **$45.2 billion in May 2026**, 18% higher than $38.3 bn a year earlier. Yet the overall trade deficit widened as imports grew faster.



Monthly merchandise exports ($ bn) — all-time high in May 2026. Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- **Services exports** rose 13.2% to $36.8 bn. Despite the record, the **overall trade deficit widened to $10.5 bn** (from $6.8 bn a year ago) on faster import growth.
- Growth was **broad-based** — higher shipments to Singapore, China, the U.K., Tanzania, Bangladesh, Germany and South Africa, across petroleum and non-petroleum sectors.
- Sectoral gains: **engineering goods +24.5%** ($12.3 bn), electronics +11.6% ($5.1 bn), chemicals +12.7% ($2.7 bn), gems & jewellery +6.7% ($2.5 bn).
- **Imports grew faster:** merchandise imports jumped 22.1% to $73.4 bn, pushing the **merchandise trade deficit to $28.2 bn** (25% higher YoY). Services imports rose 14.1% to $19.1 bn.

★ CONCEPTS — PRELIMS POINTER

- **Trade deficit:** imports > exports of goods/services (part of the current account).
- **Merchandise vs services trade:** India typically runs a goods deficit offset partly by a services & remittances surplus.
- **Non-petroleum exports** grew 10.5% to $70.7 bn in the first two months of FY — a gauge of underlying competitiveness.

3 India–Slovakia Expand Bilateral Ties — ‘Comprehensive Partnership’

GS 2 · IR / Bilateral | Places in News · Slovakia | The Hindu · Page 1

WHY IN NEWS

India and Slovakia signed MoUs across defence, labour mobility, education and digital tech, branding ties a **‘Comprehensive Partnership’**. PM Modi met PM Robert Fico in Bratislava — the first visit by an Indian PM since Slovakia’s founding in 1993.

- A **labour migration MoU** seeks to ease mobility and information exchange; both sides agreed to conclude a **social security agreement**.
- An MoU between the **Higher Education Ministries** will promote student/researcher mobility, especially in **STEM and humanities**.
- Cooperation spans automobiles, railways, advanced manufacturing and green tech; the **India–EU FTA** is expected to add momentum.
- A **Joint Working Group on Terrorism** was formed; both strongly condemned the April 2025 Pahalgam attack and called for action against UN-listed terrorists.

Slovakia — landlocked Central European state; capital Bratislava. Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

★ SLOVAKIA — MAP & FACTS (PRELIMS)

- **Landlocked** Central European nation; capital **Bratislava** (on the Danube).
- Borders: **Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Austria** (5 neighbours).
- Emerged after the peaceful split of **Czechoslovakia in 1993** (the "Velvet Divorce").
- Member of the **EU, NATO, Eurozone and Schengen**; rivers Danube & Váh; Carpathian (Tatra) mountains.

4 Heatwaves & Surface Ozone Raise Cardiac Death Risk

GS 3 · Environment & Health | Air Pollution | The Hindu · Page 14

WHY IN NEWS

A peer-reviewed study in *npj Clean Air* (June 12) finds **surface ozone reaches 85–110 µg/m³** in northern India during heatwaves — exceeding the WHO guideline of **70 µg/m³** in every region — adding to a large ozone-linked death toll.

- Surface ozone is a **secondary pollutant**: it forms when sunlight drives reactions among other pollutants (NO_x, VOCs); the process **speeds up in heat**.
- During 2024 heatwave days, the study links ~**26,500 deaths** from ischaemic heart disease and COPD to ozone; the heatwave's marginal contribution was ~**830 additional deaths**.
- Estimates were **modelled** (continuous ground measurements were unavailable), relying on assumed ozone–disease relationships rather than direct observation.
- The **Western Himalayas** recorded the steepest long-term rise; severe years tracked strong **El Niño** episodes (2010, 2016, 2019, 2024).

★ GROUND-LEVEL VS STRATOSPHERIC OZONE

- **Tropospheric (ground-level) ozone:** a harmful pollutant & greenhouse gas; damages heart, lungs and crops.
- **Stratospheric ozone:** the protective "ozone layer" shielding Earth from UV (the "good" ozone).

★ **CLIMATE CHANGE & OLDER PERSONS (HELPAGE INDIA STUDY)**

- Report *Climate Resilient Ageing* surveyed **2,224 elderly** across 20 districts in 10 States (released on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day).
- **78%** faced at least one climate hazard in 3 years — heatwave (45%), flood (27%), drought (20%).
- Heat stress: ~60% felt homes unsafe in extreme heat; 74% fell ill; 52% could not afford essential medicines.
- Pension was the main income for 49%; **16% had no income source** — flagging vulnerability of the ageing rural poor.

5 India's Demographic Governance — 'Politics over People'

GS 1,2 · Society / Polity | Population & Migration | The Hindu · Editorial, Page 8

WHY IN NEWS

An editorial critiques the Centre's panel (chaired by retired SC judge Justice P.P. Naolekar) to study "unnatural demographic change," warning that securitising demographic trends risks communal profiling and a stateless population over genuine population governance.

- The committee is to assess abnormal population shifts among religious/social communities and propose a **time-bound solution**, including a system for custody and deportation of "infiltrators."
- The editorial cautions that **population management is not only about illegal infiltration**; over-securitisation could do more harm than good.
- A large **stateless population** — with no country willing to accept them — could create a demographic deadlock; fear of **communal profiling** is real.
- India's real challenges: **rising life expectancy, falling birth rates**, risk of losing the **demographic dividend** if education/health lag. Contrast: Switzerland (June 14) rejected a referendum to cap its population at 10 million.

★ **KEY TERMS**

- **Demographic dividend:** growth potential from a rising working-age share of the population.
- **Statelessness:** a person not recognised as a national by any state under its law.

6 Preventive Detention — ‘Peace with Peace’

GS 2 · Polity / Rights | Article 22 | The Hindu · Editorial, Page 8

WHY IN NEWS

In *Chander Pal Singh*, the Allahabad High Court flagged the routine misuse of preventive detention by the state, terming it a “highly irresponsible” deprivation of liberty, and issued guidelines requiring magistrates to justify such orders.

- The state may act before a crime if it reasonably apprehends a threat to public order — but the court found this power exercised **routinely, without substantive charges**.
- Between **May 2025 and April 2026, ~2,500 people** reportedly faced preventive-detention proceedings in Ghaziabad alone, despite a 2021 State policy.
- The Court’s guidelines: magistrates must justify decisions, curb misuse in property/neighbourhood disputes, and face **appellate scrutiny on compensation** (recoverable from the magistrate/officer’s salary).
- It cautioned against citing vague “communal tensions” to jail protesters and imposing unaffordable bonds; ruling may apply to detentions under BNSS Sections 126 / 170.

★ PREVENTIVE DETENTION — CONSTITUTIONAL SCHEME

- **Article 22** protects arrested/detained persons; Part I covers ordinary law, Part II covers preventive detention law.
- Preventive detention is **without trial/conviction**, to prevent a future offence — distinct from **punitive** detention (after an offence).
- Maximum **3 months** without an Advisory Board (qualified to be HC judges) reporting sufficient cause.
- Detainee’s rights: to know grounds (state may withhold in public interest) & to challenge detention.
- **Union List Entry 9** — Parliament: defence/foreign affairs/security; **Concurrent List Entry 3** — Parliament & States: public order & essential supplies.

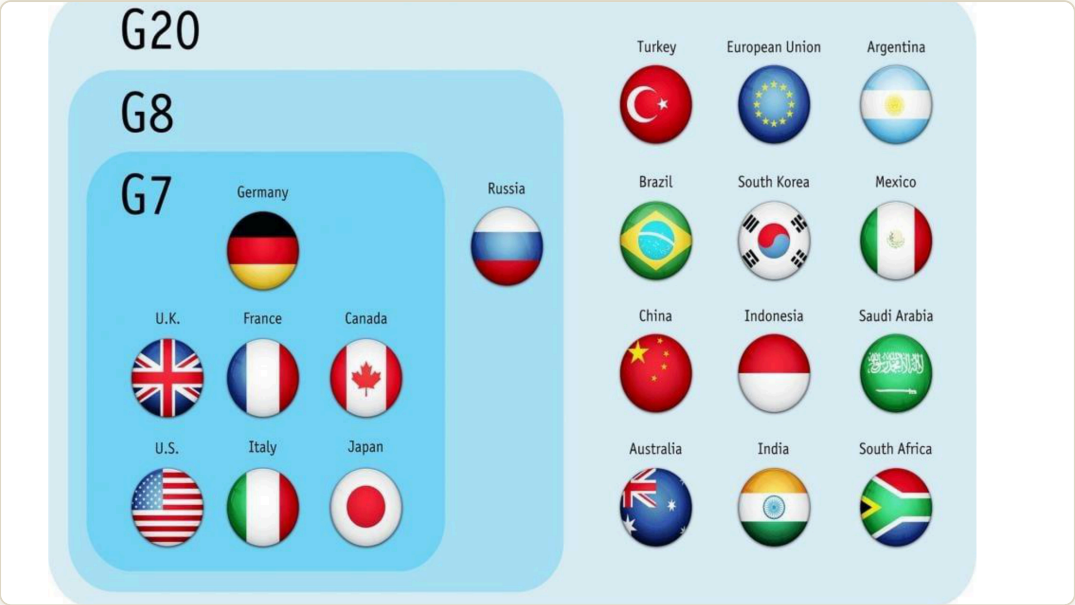
7 India–France Strategic Convergence · G7, D10 & Refugee Trends

GS 2 · International Relations | G7 · UNHCR | The Hindu · Page 8/9/12

WHY IN NEWS

PM Modi met President Macron on the sidelines of the **G7 Summit in Evian (June 15–17)**, deepening the India–France "Special Global Strategic Partnership," now anchored increasingly in technology and innovation.

- The relationship now spans **cyberspace, AI, healthcare, sustainable development and research**, alongside traditional defence, nuclear and space ties; "Bharat Innovates" & "Vivatech" link start-ups.
- Modi's Europe visit (June 13–18) included a **first-ever Indian PM visit to Slovakia** (Topic 3).
- France, the current G7 chair, hosts the summit; India's participation is significant amid geopolitical turbulence. Discussions have revived expanding the G7 into a **"D10" (10 major democracies)**.



Nested groupings: the G7 within the G8 (with Russia, 1997–2014) within the G20.

★ G7 — PRELIMS POINTER

- Members: **France, Germany, Italy, UK, Japan, U.S., Canada**; the EU is a non-enumerated member.
- Formed as **G6 in 1975** (after the 1973 oil crisis); Canada joined 1976. Became G8 with Russia (1997), reverted to G7 in 2014 after Russia's expulsion over Crimea.
- **Informal** forum — no treaty, no permanent secretariat; rotating presidency; decisions by consensus.

7B Refugees Are Returning Home — But Not for the Right Reasons (UNHCR 2025)

GS 2 · International Issues | UNHCR · Refugees | The Hindu · Data Point, Page 9

- The estimated number of refugees **fell ~3% in 2025 to 4.16 crore**; about **60 lakh (15%) are Palestinian refugees**.
- The drop was driven by **1.47 crore returning home** — the second-highest since UNHCR began reporting in 1965 — but many returned to **fragile, adverse conditions**.
- **Iran and Pakistan** introduced restrictive policies toward Afghans; ~19.5 lakh returned to Afghanistan. Venezuela saw the sharpest rise in displacement (governance & economic crises).
- The number of **stateless people** who confirmed nationality / acquired citizenship **declined in 2025**.

Page No.9 , GS 2

Refugees are returning home but not for the right reasons

Data from the UN says that more refugees went back to their countries due to adverse conditions, while citizenship confirmations reduced

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

Despite the fact that the estimated number of refugees fell marginally by 3% in 2025 to 4.16 crore, the recent report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for 2025 shows that certain groups continue to be affected. Of these, about 60 lakh (15%) are Palestinian refugees.

The drop was mainly driven by 1.47 crore returning to their countries, which is the second highest number of people returning since the UNHCR first reported the figures in 1965. This is reflected in the increase in the number of refugees attaining "solutions" for their predicaments **(Chart 4)**.

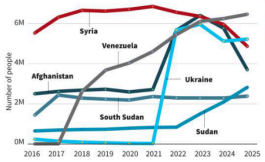
However, the report noted that they returned to fragile situations due to adverse conditions and mounting pressures in the asylum countries. For instance, Iran and Pakistan had granted asylum to people from Afghanistan, who had been forced to escape war, violence and persecution. However, both countries have now introduced restrictive policies towards Afghans, due to which the two nations saw a notable decline in the number of people needing protection in 2025 **(Chart 2)**. Nearly 19.5 lakh refugees from these two countries returned to Afghanistan.

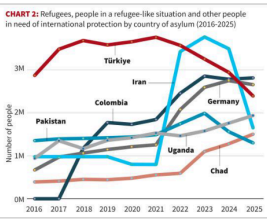
Owing to governance and economic crises, Venezuela recorded the sharpest increase in refugees, people in refugee-like situations, and others in need of international protection, at 3%. Other countries that saw increases include South Sudan and Ukraine **(Chart 1)**.

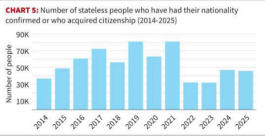
Chart 3 shows the flows of asylum applications. More than nine lakh persons applied for asylum in the U.S. Ukraine remains the country of origin for most applications (7 lakh). The number of stateless people who have had their nationality confirmed or who acquired citizenship declined in 2025.

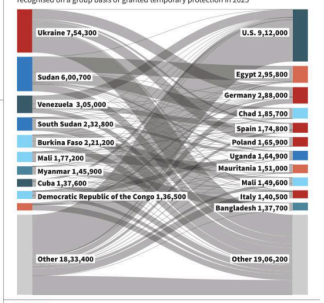
No way home

The data for the charts were sourced from the Global Trends Report by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)









UNHCR Global Trends 2025 — origins, asylum countries, and "solutions" (returns, resettlement, naturalisation).

★ UNHCR & REFUGEE LAW — PRELIMS POINTER

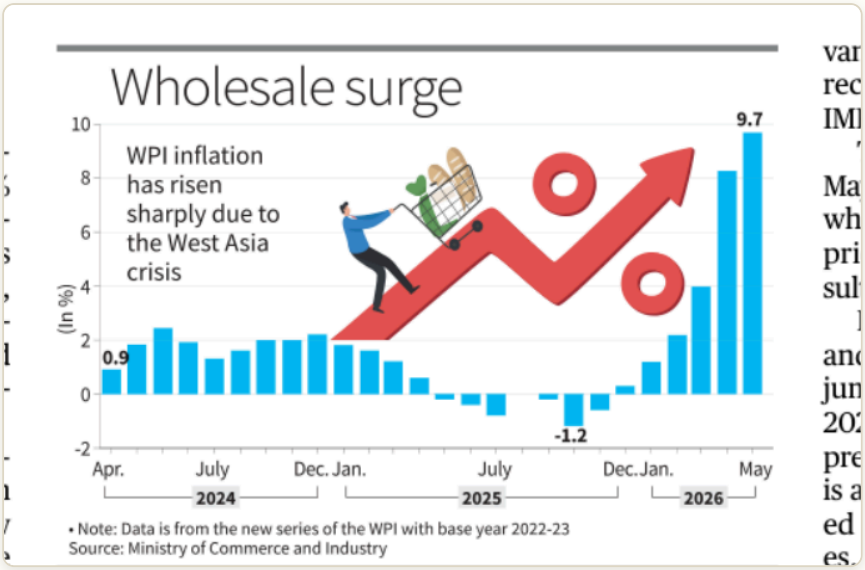
- **UNHCR** (UN Refugee Agency): est. 1950, HQ **Geneva**; operates in 137 countries.
- Guided by the **1951 Refugee Convention** & **1967 Protocol**; core principle of **non-refoulement** (no return to danger).
- **India is NOT a signatory** to the 1951 Convention/1967 Protocol; refugees are handled under general immigration laws.

8 WPI Inflation Jumps to 9.7% in May; New Series & WPI→PPI Transition

GS 3 · Economy | Inflation & Indices | The Hindu · Page 15

WHY IN NEWS

Wholesale inflation rose to **9.7% in May 2026**, driven by surging crude oil, natural gas and mineral oil prices amid the West Asia crisis. The Commerce Ministry also released a **new WPI series (base 2022-23)** and the first Producer Price Indices.



WPI inflation (% YoY) rose sharply. Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry (new series, base 2022-23).

- Crude oil & natural gas inflation jumped to **61.5%** (from 56.3%); mineral oils to 49.8% — partly a low-base effect, as the new series shows these contracted in May 2025.
- Alongside WPI, the Ministry released **Output PPI, trial Input PPI**, and a **Service PPI** for seven services (banking, insurance, railways, telecom, etc.).
- The **PPI will replace the WPI in five years** — WPI continues meanwhile (widely used in price-escalation clauses) to allow a smooth switch, in line with IMF/global best practice.
- **PPI** measures the average change over time in prices **received by domestic producers** — tracking inflation from the seller's side before it reaches consumers.

Parameter	Consumer Price Index (CPI)	Wholesale Price Index (WPI)	Producer Price Index (PPI)
Measures	Prices paid by consumers	Wholesale prices of goods	Prices received by producers
Level	Retail level	Wholesale level	Factory-gate level
Services Included	Yes	No	Yes
Imports Covered	Yes	Yes	No (Domestic output only)
Published By	National Statistical Office (NSO), MoSPI.	Office of Economic Adviser (OEA), DPIIT.	Office of Economic Adviser (OEA), DPIIT.
Key Use	RBI's inflation targeting	GDP deflator, contract escalation	Supply-side inflation tracking

CPI vs WPI vs PPI — what each measures, level captured, services/imports coverage, publishing body, and key use.

MAINS PRACTICE

Answer-writing questions drawn from today's analysis (English & Hindi)

Q1 · GS 3 ECONOMY · 15 MARKS · 250 WORDS

"India's growing import dependence in critical sectors poses challenges to economic security and strategic autonomy." Discuss the causes behind India's import dependence and suggest measures to promote self-reliance while remaining integrated with the global economy.

"महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रों में भारत की बढ़ती आयात निर्भरता आर्थिक सुरक्षा और रणनीतिक स्वायत्तता के लिए चुनौती उत्पन्न करती है।" भारत की आयात निर्भरता के कारणों की चर्चा करते हुए आत्मनिर्भरता को बढ़ावा देने के उपाय सुझाइए, साथ ही वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था से जुड़े रहने की आवश्यकता का विश्लेषण कीजिए।

Q2 · GS 1/2 SOCIETY · 15 MARKS · 250 WORDS

"India's population challenge has shifted from controlling numbers to ensuring quality of human capital." Discuss the changing dimensions of population governance in India and suggest measures to align demographic trends with sustainable development goals.

"भारत की जनसंख्या चुनौती अब केवल संख्या नियंत्रण तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि गुणवत्तापूर्ण मानव पूंजी निर्माण से जुड़ गई है।" भारत में जनसंख्या शासन के बदलते आयामों की चर्चा करते हुए सतत विकास लक्ष्यों के अनुरूप जनसांख्यिकीय प्रवृत्तियों को दिशा देने के उपाय सुझाइए।

★ ANSWER-WRITING TIP

- **Q1:** link to today's data — record exports yet a widening trade deficit; cite critical minerals, electronics, crude (Hormuz). Balance PLI/self-reliance with FTAs (India–EU).
- **Q2:** use the demographic-dividend angle, ageing (HelpAge study), and the 'Politics over People' caution against securitisation.

PRELIMS PRACTICE

10 multi-statement MCQs from today's analysis — with answer key & explanations

1 **With reference to the Strait of Hormuz, consider the following statements:**

1. It connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman.
2. It lies between Iran and the Musandam exclave of Oman.
3. It opens directly into the Mediterranean Sea.

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only
Hormuz links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman (then the Arabian Sea), not the Mediterranean. Statement 3 is wrong.

2 **Consider the following statements about surface (ground-level) ozone:**

1. It is emitted directly from vehicle tailpipes as a primary pollutant.
2. It forms when sunlight drives reactions among other pollutants and the process speeds up in heat.
3. The WHO guideline referenced in the study is 70 micrograms per cubic metre.

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

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only
Surface ozone is a secondary pollutant (not directly emitted), so 1 is wrong. It forms photochemically and the WHO guideline cited is 70 microgram/m3.

3 **With reference to Slovakia, consider the following statements:**

1. It is a landlocked country with Bratislava as its capital.
2. It shares a border with Ukraine.
3. It came into existence after the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993.

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3
All correct. Slovakia is landlocked (capital Bratislava), borders Ukraine (among five neighbours), and emerged from the 1993 split of Czechoslovakia.

4 **Consider the following statements regarding the G7:**

1. It currently includes Russia as a full member.
2. It was formed in 1975 in response to the 1973 oil crisis.
3. It has a permanent secretariat that frames binding rules for members.

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

Answer: (a) 2 only
Russia was expelled in 2014 (so 1 is wrong); the G7 is an informal forum with no permanent secretariat or binding laws (3 wrong). It originated in 1975.

5 **With reference to India's May 2026 trade data, consider the following:**

1. Merchandise exports touched an all-time high of $45.2 billion.
2. The overall trade deficit narrowed compared with a year earlier.
3. Engineering goods recorded the highest percentage growth among the listed sectors.

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only
Exports hit a record $45.2 bn and engineering goods grew the most (+24.5%). The overall trade deficit WIDENED (to $10.5 bn), so 2 is wrong.

6 **Consider the following statements about preventive detention in India:**

1. It is detention without trial and conviction to prevent a future offence.
2. Detention beyond three months requires the report of an Advisory Board.
3. Article 22 provides safeguards to persons under preventive detention.

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3
All correct. Preventive detention is without trial, capped at three months absent an Advisory Board's report, and Article 22 contains its safeguards.

7 **With reference to legislative power over preventive detention, consider the following:**

1. Parliament has exclusive power to legislate on preventive detention connected with the security of India.
2. Both Parliament and State Legislatures can legislate on preventive detention related to the maintenance of public order.

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

Answer: (c) Both 1 and 2
Union List Entry 9 gives Parliament exclusive power (defence/foreign affairs/security); Concurrent List Entry 3 covers public order & essential supplies for both.

8 **Consider the following statements about the UNHCR and refugee law:**

1. UNHCR is headquartered in Geneva.
2. The principle of non-refoulement bars returning refugees to places where they face danger.
3. India is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only
UNHCR is in Geneva and upholds non-refoulement. India is NOT a signatory to the 1951 Convention or 1967 Protocol, so 3 is wrong.

9 **Consider the following statements about price indices in India:**

1. The Producer Price Index (PPI) measures prices received by domestic producers.
2. The new Wholesale Price Index series uses a base year of 2022-23.
3. The government has announced that the PPI will replace the WPI immediately.

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only
PPI tracks prices received by producers and the new WPI base is 2022-23. The PPI is to replace the WPI in five years, not immediately, so 3 is wrong.

10 **Match the index with a correct attribute (as per today's comparison):**

1. CPI — includes services and is used for RBI's inflation targeting.
2. WPI — covers wholesale prices of goods but excludes services.
3. PPI — covers imports in addition to domestic output.

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only
CPI includes services (RBI's target) and WPI excludes services. PPI covers domestic output only (imports NOT covered), so 3 is wrong.

"Self-reliance is the only road to true independence."

— A guiding thought for today's economy & demography themes