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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE HINDU ANALYSIS

News Decoded for UPSC & State PCS

29 JULY 2026

PRELIMS · MAINS · EDITORIALS · PRACTICE MCQS
COMPILED BY

Sapna Chauhan

READ · ANALYSE · REVISE

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◆ HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Each topic pairs a **decoded analysis** with the **original Hindu scan / infographic** and a **Static-Syllabus linkage** box.
- **Mains practice questions** (bilingual) follow the topics, and a **10-question Prelims MCQ set** with answer key & explanations closes the edition.
- Gold factboxes carry **ready-to-revise static facts**; blue callouts flag **Why in News**.



01 Industrial Production Hits 23-Month High of 7.3%

GS 2

GS 3 · ECONOMY

The Hindu · Page 1

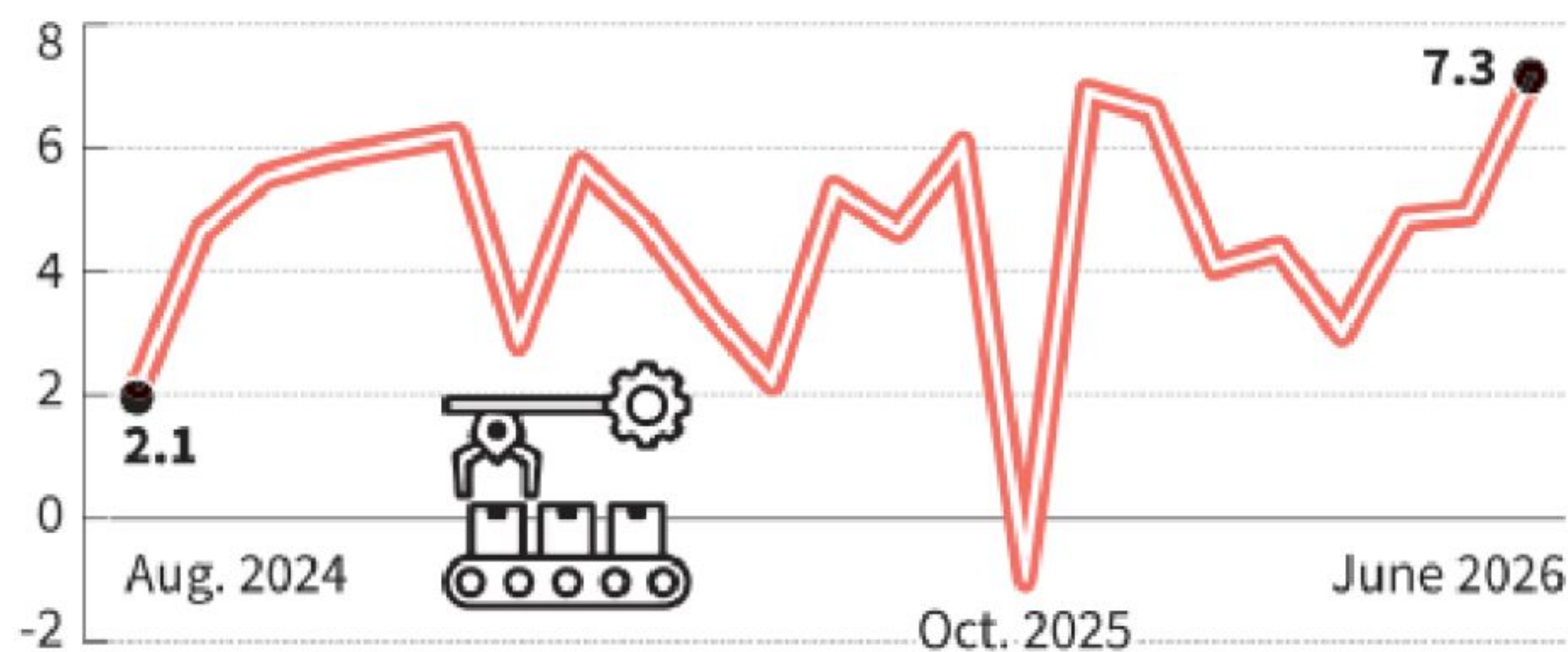
WHY IN NEWS

India's industrial growth hit a near two-year peak of **7.3% in June 2026**, the fastest since July 2024 — a 23-month high — fuelled by strong performance in manufacturing, electricity and capital goods, as per official IIP data released on Tuesday.

Industrial growth hits 23-month high of 7.3%

Good tidings

Strong performance in manufacturing, electricity, and capital goods has fuelled the growth in June 2026, official data show



SOURCE: MOSPI

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India's industrial growth hit a near two-year peak of 7.3% in June 2026, fuelled by strong performance in manufacturing, electricity, and capital goods, official data released on Tuesday showed.

Analysts, however, caution that this strong performance might not continue in the face of a lower-than-expected monsoon and continued uncertainty due to the war in West Asia.

The data on the Index of

Industrial Production (IIP), released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, showed that the index's growth in June was the fastest since July 2024, a 23-month high.

The index had grown 5.1% in May 2026.

Within the index, the manufacturing sector grew at a 23-month high of 7.8% in June 2026, compared with 5.5% in May, and 2.4% in June of last year.

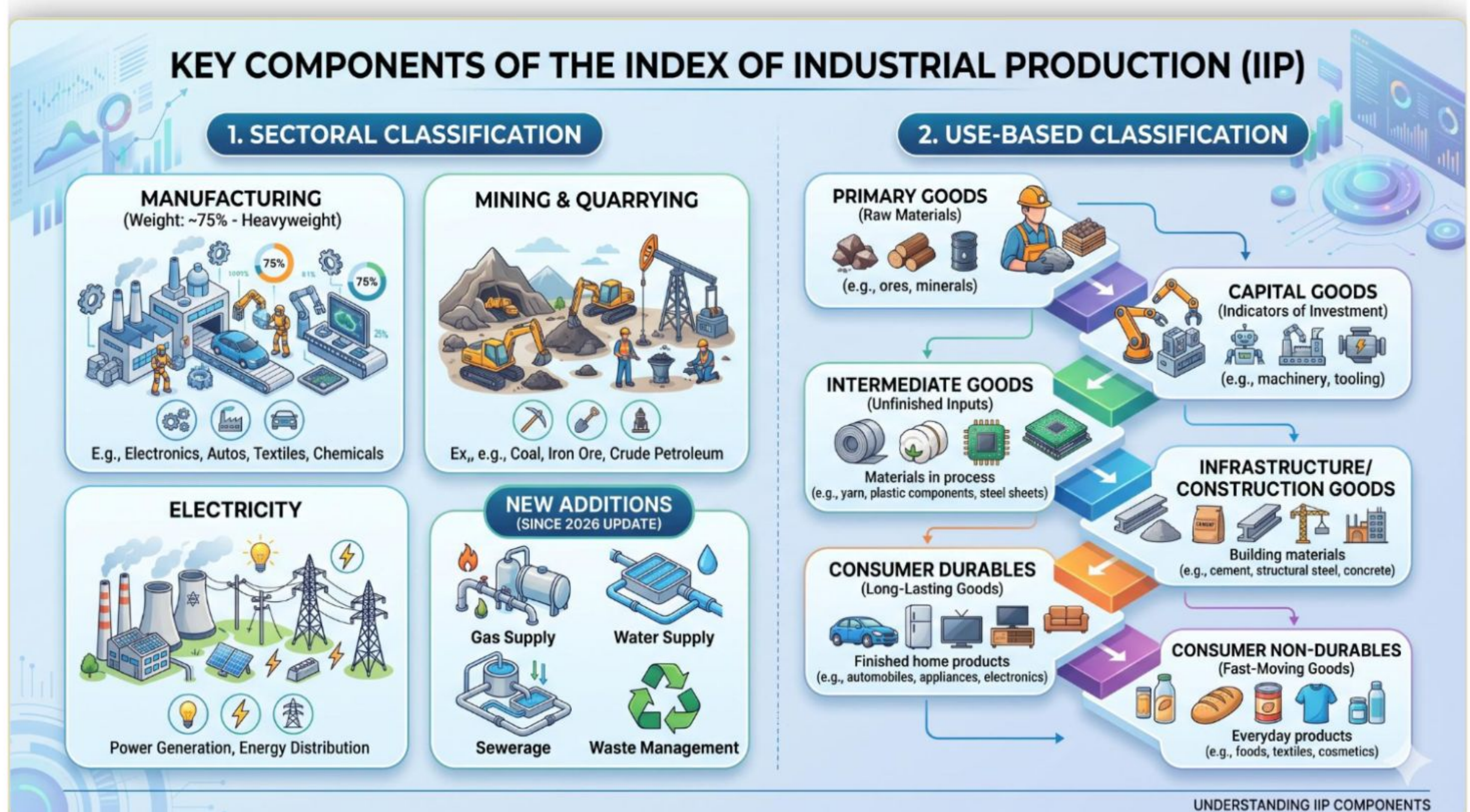
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The Hindu, Page 1: 'Industrial growth hits 23-month high of 7.3%' — IIP rose from 2.1% (Aug 2024) to 7.3% (June 2026). Source: MoSPI.

- ◆ The data on the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**, released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, showed June growth was the fastest since July 2024.
- ◆ The index had grown **5.1% in May 2026**; within it, the **manufacturing sector** grew at a 23-month high of **7.8%** in June (vs 5.5% in May and 2.4% a year earlier).
- ◆ Analysts, however, caution that the strong performance **might not continue** in the face of a lower-than-expected monsoon and continued uncertainty due to the **war in West Asia**.

UNDERSTANDING THE IIP

- ◆ Published **monthly** by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under MoSPI, it is a reliable barometer of the overall health of the industrial sector.
- ◆ It is a **macroeconomic indicator** measuring short-term changes in the **volume of industrial production** over a specific period.
- ◆ **Base Year Revision:** the IIP base year has been officially updated from **2011-12 to 2022-23**, making it the latest major macro indicator revised in 2026 alongside GDP.
 - ◆ The revised index tracks a larger basket of **1,042 products** mapped to **463 item groups** (up from 839 items and 407 groups).
 - ◆ The new series expands scope by incorporating **gas supply, water supply, sewerage and waste management** alongside the existing core categories of mining & quarrying, manufacturing and electricity.



Key components of the IIP — Sectoral classification (Manufacturing ~75%, Mining & Quarrying, Electricity + new additions) and Use-based classification (Primary, Capital, Intermediate, Infrastructure, Consumer durables & non-durables).

◆ IIP — PRELIMS NUGGETS

- **Compiled & released by:** NSO under MoSPI (monthly).
- **Base year:** 2022-23 (revised from 2011-12 in 2026).
- **Sectoral weights:** Manufacturing ~77.6% (highest), Mining ~14.4%, Electricity ~8%.
- **Use-based categories:** Primary, Capital, Intermediate, Infrastructure/Construction, Consumer Durables, Consumer Non-Durables.
- **Capital goods** output is treated as a proxy indicator of **investment** in the economy.
- Eight **Core Industries** (ICI) — refinery, electricity, steel, coal, crude oil, natural gas, cement, fertilisers — carry ~40% weight in IIP.

STATIC / SYLLABUS LINKAGE

- **GS 3 — Indian Economy:** growth, development & employment; industrial policy; measurement of economic indicators.
- Link IIP with **GDP, WPI, CPI, PMI and Core Sector** data as leading/coincident indicators of the business cycle.
- **Prelims:** agency (NSO/MoSPI), base year, highest-weighted sector, use-based vs sectoral classification.

02 CWRC Directs Karnataka to Release Cauvery Water to Tamil Nadu

GS 3 · ENVIRONMENT

GS 2 · FEDERALISM

The Hindu · Page 3

WHY IN NEWS

The **Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC)**, which met in Delhi to review the drought-hit Cauvery basin, directed Karnataka to release **4 tmcft of water at 3,500 cusecs/day for 15 days** to Tamil Nadu at the Biligundlu gauge from 8 a.m. Wednesday. Karnataka is likely to appeal before the CWMA.

Release Cauvery water to T.N., panel tells Karnataka

CWRC orders Karnataka to release 3,500 cusecs of water daily for 15 days from today; State likely to appeal against order; Minister says present storage can only meet drinking water needs

B.S. Satish Kumar
BENGALURU

The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC), which met in Delhi on Tuesday to review the situation in the drought-hit Cauvery basin, has directed Karnataka to release 4 tmcft of water to Tamil Nadu at a rate of 3,500 cusecs a day for 15 days.

After examining the live storage in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu reservoirs and the anticipated worsening of El Nino conditions, the committee directed Karnataka to ensure a flow of 3,500 cusecs at the Biligundlu measuring gauge on the inter-State boundary, commencing from 8 a.m.



Interim relief: Tamil Nadu had received only 3,543 tmcft of water as against the prescribed 35,391 tmcft till July 26. K. MURALI KUMAR

on Wednesday. When contacted by *The Hindu*, Karnataka Water Resources Minister K. Ramalinga Reddy said the State would examine the possibility of filing an appeal against the order before the Cauvery

Water Management Authority (CWMA), which is the apex body that monitors implementation of Cauvery water release.

Mr. Reddy said he would hold a meeting with officials concerned in this re-

gard on Wednesday in Bengaluru and later consult Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar to arrive at a decision. He maintained that the storage in the four reservoirs of Cauvery basin in Karnataka was sufficient to take care of only the drinking water requirements of the State.

Till July 26, Tamil Nadu had received only 3,543 tmcft of water as against the prescribed 35,391 tmcft, which accounted for only 10.01% of the stipulated quantum, the State said.

Tamil Nadu contended that it had not received its pro-rata share in accordance with the inflows into Karnataka's reservoirs and there was a backlog of 9.46 tmcft.



Cauvery basin: **KRS dam** (Karnataka) → **Biligundlu** (inter-State gauge) → **Mettur dam** (Tamil Nadu) → Bay of Bengal.

The Hindu, Page 3: 'Release Cauvery water to T.N., panel tells Karnataka.'

- ◆ After examining live storage in both States' reservoirs and the anticipated worsening of **El Niño** conditions, CWRC fixed the flow at the **Biligundlu measuring gauge** on the inter-State boundary.
- ◆ Karnataka Water Resources Minister said the State may file an appeal before the **Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA)** — the apex body that monitors implementation of Cauvery water release.
- ◆ Till 26 July, Tamil Nadu had received only **3,543 tmcft** against the prescribed 35,391 tmcft (just **10.01%**), leaving a backlog of 9.46 tmcft; Karnataka argued its storage sufficed only for drinking-water needs.

EVOLUTION OF THE CAUVERY DISPUTE

- ◆ The Cauvery originates at **Talakaveri, Brahmagiri Hills** (Kodagu/Coorg, Karnataka), flows south-east through Karnataka & Tamil Nadu, descends the Eastern Ghats and drains into the **Bay of Bengal** via Puducherry; called '**Ponni**' in Tamil.
- ◆ **1892 & 1924 agreements:** disputes between Madras Presidency and Princely Mysore; the 1924 pact (50-yr duration) enabled the **Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) dam**; it lapsed in 1974.
- ◆ **1990:** Centre constituted the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal** under Section 4 of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 (Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry).
- ◆ **2007 Final Award → 2018 SC verdict:** the Supreme Court gave Karnataka an additional 14.75 TMC. Final allocation of **740 TMC**:
 - ◆ Tamil Nadu: **404.25 TMC** | Karnataka: **284.75 TMC**
 - ◆ Kerala: **30 TMC** | Puducherry: **7 TMC** — unchanged for 15 years.
- ◆ **2018 Scheme (Sec 6A):** Centre notified the Cauvery Water Management Scheme, constituting the **CWMA** and the **CWRC** to secure compliance with the Tribunal award as modified by the SC.

◆ CAUVERY — TRIBUTARIES & FACTS

- **Left-bank tributaries:** Arkavathi, Hemavathi, Shimsha, Harangi.
- **Right-bank tributaries:** Lakshmantirtha, Kabini, Suvarnavati, Bhavani, Noyyal, Amaravathi.
- **CWMA** = apex authority; **CWRC** = technical committee monitoring daily levels, inflows & storage.
- **Inter-State contact point:** Biligundlu gauge & discharge station on the Karnataka–Tamil Nadu border.
- **Key dams:** KRS & Kabini (Karnataka); Mettur (Tamil Nadu).

STATIC / SYLLABUS LINKAGE

- **GS 2:** functions & responsibilities of the Union & States; inter-State relations; Article 262 & Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.
- **GS 3 / Geography:** peninsular drainage; El Niño–monsoon linkage; drought & water management.
- **Prelims map:** origin (Talakaveri), Biligundlu, KRS & Mettur dams; riparian States.

03 Centre Reissues Draft on Western Ghats Eco-Sensitive Area

GS 3 · ENVIRONMENT*The Hindu · Page 12*

WHY IN NEWS

The Union Environment Ministry has reissued — for the **seventh time in over a decade** — its draft notification proposing an **Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA)** across the Western Ghats, after the previous draft lapsed on 27 July without being finalised.

Centre reissues draft on Western Ghats eco-zone

Move comes amid the continuing differences with six States over the areas to be included in the ecologically sensitive area; States worried about notification's impact on farming, infrastructure

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Union Environment Ministry has reissued, for the seventh time in over a decade, its draft notification proposing an ecologically sensitive area (ESA) across the Western Ghats, after the previous draft lapsed on July 27 without being finalised.

The latest draft, issued on July 27, 2026, will remain open for public objections for 60 days before the Centre considers issuing a final notification. The notification reiterates that once finalised, it would prohibit mining, quarrying, sand mining, new thermal power plants, certain industries and large construction projects within the ESA, while regulating activities such as hydel power generation.

The fresh notification underscores the Centre's inability to resolve long-standing differences with the six Western Ghats States – Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu – over the precise villages



The latest notification retains the proposed ecologically sensitive area at 56,825.7 sq. km, spread across the six States. FILE PHOTO

and regions that should be included within the eco-sensitive zone. The States had raised concerns over the impact of the ESA declaration on agriculture, plantations, infrastructure, and development.

The notification itself notes that an expert committee constituted in 2022 is continuing to examine objections from the States regarding “the correct names and area of villages to be included in the ecologically sensitive area” as well as other suggestions submitted by the State governments.

The latest notification

retains the proposed ESA at 56,825.7 sq. km, spread across the six States, with Karnataka accounting for 20,668 sq. km, Maharashtra 17,340 sq. km, Kerala 9,993.7 sq. km, Tamil Nadu 6,914 sq. km, Goa 1,461 sq. km and Gujarat 449 sq. km.

No changes

A comparison of the latest draft with the previous notification issued in July 2024 shows no substantive changes in the notified area, State-wise extent or regulatory provisions. The list of villages proposed for inclusion also remains un-

changed in places highlighted during earlier consultations. For instance, the 13 villages in Kerala's Wayanad district across Mananthavady, Sulthan Bathery and Vythiri taluks that figured in the previous draft continue to be included in the 2026 notification.

The dispute over protecting the Western Ghats dates back to 2011, when a panel chaired by late ecologist Madhav Gadgil recommended that the entire 1,29,000 sq. km mountain chain be treated as ecologically sensitive, with graded levels of protection. Following objections from the States, a high-level working group chaired by K. Kasturirangan reviewed the proposal and recommended that about 37% of the Western Ghats, covering 59,940 sq. km of natural landscape, be designated an ESA. The notification records that Kerala subsequently carried out its own field verification exercise, reducing the proposed ESA within the State from 13,108 sq. km recommended by the high-level working group to 9,993.7 sq. km.

The Hindu, Page 12: ‘Centre reissues draft on Western Ghats eco-zone’ amid continuing differences with six States.

- ◆ The latest draft, issued **27 July 2026**, stays open for public objections for **60 days** before a final notification is considered.
- ◆ Once finalised, it would **prohibit** mining, quarrying, sand mining, new thermal power plants, certain industries and large construction within the ESA, while **regulating** activities such as hydel power.

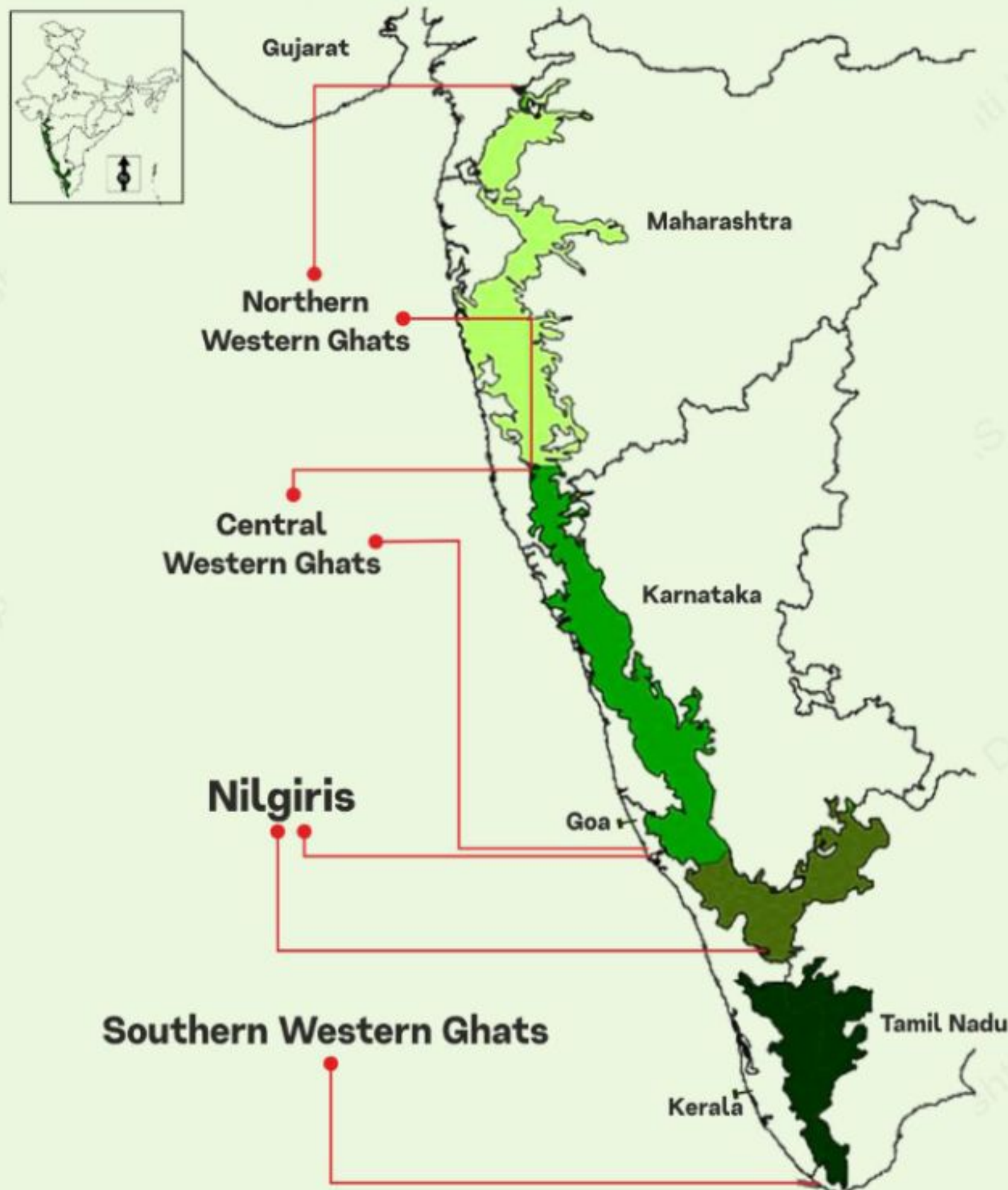
- ◆ It underscores the Centre's inability to resolve long-standing differences with the six Western Ghats States — **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu** — over the precise villages to be included; States fear impact on agriculture, plantations and infrastructure.
- ◆ The notification **retains the ESA at 56,825.7 sq. km** across the six States:
 - ◆ Karnataka **20,668** · Maharashtra **17,340** · Kerala **9,993.7** sq. km
 - ◆ Tamil Nadu **6,914** · Goa **1,461** · Gujarat **449** sq. km

GADGIL VS KASTURIRANGAN

- ◆ The dispute dates to **2011**, when the panel chaired by ecologist **Madhav Gadgil** recommended the entire **1,29,000 sq. km** mountain chain be treated as ecologically sensitive, with graded protection.
- ◆ Following State objections, a high-level working group chaired by **K. Kasturirangan** recommended that about **37%** of the Ghats (**59,940 sq. km** of natural landscape) be designated an ESA.
- ◆ Kerala later carried out its own field verification, reducing its proposed ESA from **13,108 sq. km** to **9,993.7 sq. km**.

Western Ghats

One of the four biodiversity hotspots of India; recognised as a UNESCO WHS (2012)



Names

- **Sahyadri** – northern Maharashtra; **Sahya Parvatham** – Kerala

Diverted views about Mt. type

- **View 1:** Block Mt. formed due to down warping of a part of land into Arabian Sea
- **View 2:** Not true mt. rather the faulted edge of **Deccan Plateau**

Major Rocks

- Basalt, granite gneiss, khondalites, metamorphic gneisses, crystalline limestone, iron ore

Geographical Extent

- Satpura (in north) to the end of TN at Kanyakumari (in south)

Mt. Ranges

- Nilgiri ranges, Shevaroy's and Tirumala range
- **Highest peak** – Anamudi (Kerala)

Rivers (originating)

- **West-flowing:** Periyar, Bharathappuzha, Netravati, Sharavathi, Mandovi
- **East-flowing:** Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Tunga, Bhadra, Bhima, Malaprabha, Ghataprabha, Hemavathi, Kabini

Endemic Species

- Nilgiri tahr (IUCN Status – EN)
- Lion-tailed macaque (IUCN Status – EN)

Imp Protected Areas

- **Biosphere Reserves** – Agasthyamala and Nilgiri
- **NP** – Silent Valley, Bandipur, Eravikulam, Wayanad–Mudumalai, Nagarhole
- **TR** – Kalakad–Mundanthurai, Periyar

Imp Passes

- Thal Ghat Pass (Kasara Ghat)
- Bhore Ghat Pass
- Palakkad Gap (Pal Ghat)
- Amba Ghat Pass
- Naneghat Pass
- Amboli Ghat Pass

Significance

- **Hydroelectricity** production
- Influences **Indian monsoon weather patterns**
- **Carbon sequestration** (neutralise ~4 MT of carbon every year)
- One of the 8 global **hottest hotspots** of biodiversity (due to richness in species and endemism)
- Rich in iron, manganese and bauxite ores, timber, pepper, cardamom, oil palm and rubber
- Sizeable indigenous population (including PVTGs)
- Important tourism/pilgrimage centres

Major Threats

- Mining, Industrialisation
- Massive extraction of forest produce
- Human-wildlife conflict, encroachment, illegal hunting
- Livestock grazing, deforestation
- Large hydropower projects
- Climate change

Imp Committees

- **Gadgil Committee (2011)** (Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel)
 - » **Recommendation:** All of WG be declared as Ecological Sensitive Area (ESA) with only limited development allowed in graded zones.
- **Kasturirangan Committee (2013)**
 - » **Recommendation:** Instead of whole, only 37% of the total area of WG be brought under ESA + complete ban on mining, quarrying and sand mining be imposed in ESA.

Western Ghats — one of India's four biodiversity hotspots; UNESCO WHS (2012); rivers, endemic species, passes, committees & threats.

WESTERN GHATS — STATIC FACTS

- **UNESCO World Heritage Site (2012);** one of the **8 hottest biodiversity hotspots** globally.
- **Names:** Sahyadri (Maharashtra); Sahya Parvatham (Kerala). **Highest peak:** Anamudi (Kerala).
- **Endemic species:** Nilgiri Tahr, Lion-tailed Macaque (both IUCN Endangered).
- **Rivers originating:** west-flowing Periyar, Sharavathi; east-flowing Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri.
- **Passes:** Thal Ghat, Bhore Ghat, Palakkad Gap, Amboli, Naneghat.
- **Committees:** Gadgil (2011) — entire range as ESA; Kasturirangan (2013) — ~37% as ESA.

STATIC / SYLLABUS LINKAGE

- **GS 3 — Environment:** conservation, ESAs/ESZs, Environment (Protection) Act 1986, biodiversity hotspots.
- **Federalism angle (GS 2):** Centre–State friction over environmental regulation vs development.
- **Prelims:** ESA extent, State-wise share, Gadgil vs Kasturirangan figures, hotspots & endemic fauna.

04 The Urban Nightmare — A Fire With No Escape

GS 1 · URBANISATION

GS 3 · DISASTER

*The Hindu · Editorial · Page 6***WHY IN NEWS**

On **22 June 2026**, 15 people died in a burning building in **Aliganj, Lucknow** — a commercial establishment in a residential area, an unauthorised structure with no viable fire escape. The editorial (Yashovardhan Azad) argues it was not a building but a **system** that failed.

The urban nightmare — a fire with no escape

On June 22, 2026, 15 people gasped to death in a burning building in Aliganj, Lucknow. Trapped behind smoke-filled corridors and sealed exits, they never had a chance. The commercial establishment operating from a residential neighbourhood was a veritable death trap – pigeonhole-sized workstations crammed into an unauthorised structure with no viable fire escape.

It was not merely a building that caught fire, but a system that failed. A tragedy waiting to happen, aided by those whose job it was to prevent it.

All this happened, while the TV channels discussed animatedly U.S.-Iran parleys, where India played no role, and analysts dissected the number of Members of Parliament defecting to the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena. Not aware if there was ever a mention of a collapse of political ethics and morality. But then, do ethics, morality and professionalism figure in urban governance today? Major fires have erupted in cities across India in 2026 on account of failures of urban regulation – signifying abject greed and mismanagement.

On June 3, a fire in a bed and breakfast facility, Malviya Nagar, Delhi, was also caused by illegal construction with no emergency exit. In February, a Bhiwadi garment plant, Rajasthan, which caught fire was an illegal firecracker-manufacturing unit behind closed doors; the fire in a cracker manufacturing unit in Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu, took place when the factory was running illegally on a Sunday.

Yet, amidst the horror, emerged stories of extraordinary courage. In Delhi's Malviya Nagar fire, a mattress shop owner reportedly emptied his entire stock onto the street to cushion those jumping from the burning building. Young residents rushed forward without waiting for instructions, while police personnel administered CPR, evacuated victims and continued rescue efforts despite injuries to themselves. Such acts of humanity stand in sharp contrast to the institutional failures.

Historical data trends suggest that India sees approximately 13,000-15,000 fire deaths annually, with the summer of 2026 projected to be one of the worst due to extreme heatwaves triggering electrical fires. In the first quarter of 2026, 39 people have died in fires in Delhi alone, even before the summer peak began.

Violations without consequences

The problem extends far beyond Aliganj and Malviya Nagar. Death traps of varying forms exist in countless urban settlements across India. They may differ in appearance but share a common characteristic: everyone knows the violations exist, yet they continue.

This is what makes the present crisis particularly troubling when India today possesses technological capabilities unimaginable even a decade ago. Satellite imagery can identify encroachments. Drones can map illegal



Yashovardhan Azad

Retired Indian Police Service officer, who has served as the Central Information Commissioner, Secretary – Security, Government of India, and Special Director, Intelligence Bureau

Urban neglect, political apathy, and corruption continue to claim lives across India

constructions. Geographic Information Systems can track land use changes. Digital property databases can identify violations. Artificial intelligence can flag anomalies and real-time dashboards can monitor compliance.

Is it really difficult for a municipal commissioner, a development authority official, a State government functionary or the Lieutenant Governor to call for a list of establishments operating without licences, fire clearances or in myriad violations of building norms?

The difficulty lies elsewhere. It lies in political pressure and vote-bank calculations and in the thriving informal economies that governments are reluctant to confront and where urban laws and regulations are routinely violated. But, most importantly, it lies in corruption.

Could the fire in Lucknow have been averted? Yes. In 2016, a notice for demolition was given but within two months was withdrawn. It was clearly a political decision. The property stood out as a symbol of political patronage under benign oversight of officials, right in the midst of a prominent locality of the capital. This sends out a message to the lower officials, the enforcers, who then entrench a system of their own beneficiaries, overlooking various violations for monetary benefits.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed to investigate the fire comprised two senior officers, from the IAS and the IPS from the State of Uttar Pradesh, with the report to be submitted to another IAS officer of the government. The head of Lucknow land development Authority is also an IAS officer. In such a situation, can the inquiry yield anything purposeful. If a calamity of this kind results only in a conversation between a closed loop of bureaucrats, can there ever be any meaningful reform? No. But it was certainly possible if the Minister of Urban Development and the head of the capital land development authority were indicted for this tragedy.

This pattern is visible across the country. In Noida, a young professional lost his life after falling into a waterlogged, poorly protected urban hazard. In Indore, celebrated nationally for cleanliness, deaths linked to contaminated water supply raise disturbing questions about basic civic safeguards. Bengaluru, India's technology capital, repeatedly grinds to a halt after heavy rains. Mumbai, India's financial capital, continues to struggle with flooding despite decades of investment and repeated expert recommendations.

A common thread

Different cities. Different governments. Different political parties, but the same outcome. The real concern is the absence of accountability and governance deficit. What happened after Delhi's basement coaching centre tragedy? Arrests were made. Committees were constituted. Headlines were generated. Yet, illegal and unsafe basement operations continue to flourish in many cities.

How many inquiry reports have fundamentally

altered urban governance? How many officials have faced meaningful consequences years after disasters? How many systemic reforms have followed repeated tragedies? India has actually become adept at managing outrage and far less effective in preventing a recurrence of man-made tragedies.

At the heart of the problem lies a governance structure that nobody wishes to discuss honestly. For over three decades, since the 74th Constitutional Amendment, India has spoken of empowering urban local bodies. Yet, most city governments remain weak. Every Chief Minister is the de facto mayor for all cities in his/her State and municipal corporations have responsibility without authority. Elected representatives have visibility without power. Important functions remain scattered across development authorities, municipal corporations, public works departments, water boards, transport agencies and numerous specialised bodies.

A flooded road belongs to one agency, a drain to another, land to a third and enforcement to a fourth. Citizens, meanwhile, simply see government. This fragmentation has created a dangerous accountability vacuum.

Fix governance first

The answer therefore is not another scheme. Indian cities are already overflowing with schemes, missions, projects and programmes. Every few years a new initiative comes up with a new acronym and fresh funding. The problem is not the absence of schemes, but the absence of governance. A number of well-meaning schemes lie buried under corruption and mismanagement. Cities require empowered local institutions, professional urban management, clear accountability and fearless enforcement. Technology must become an instrument of compliance rather than a showcase of modernisation. Most importantly, governments must find the political courage to dismantle entrenched systems of tolerated illegality. Officers, the enforcers, look away fearing a clash with political vested interests.

The victims of Lucknow and Delhi fires did not die because India lacks fire safety laws. They died despite those laws. That is the distinction policymakers must understand. Urban governance is ultimately measured not by the number of projects inaugurated, smart-city dashboards installed or schemes announced, but by the number of tragedies prevented. The real test of governance is whether an ordinary citizen can work, live, study, shop or sleep in a building without fear of dying because somebody chose to ignore the rules.

Will this tragedy become yet another file, another enquiry and another forgotten headline? Or will it finally compel us to confront the uncomfortable truth that India's cities are not merely growing beyond their capacity but are increasingly failing the very citizens they were meant to serve?

The Hindu Editorial, Page 6: 'The urban nightmare — a fire with no escape' by Yashovardhan Azad (former Central Information Commissioner & Special Director, IB).

- ◆ India sees roughly **13,000–15,000 fire deaths annually**; summer 2026 is projected to be among the worst due to heatwaves triggering electrical fires. In Q1 2026, **39 people died in Delhi fires alone** before the peak.
- ◆ Similar tragedies: a bed-and-breakfast fire in Malviya Nagar, Delhi (illegal construction, no emergency exit); a firecracker unit in Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu, running illegally on a Sunday.
- ◆ The crisis is troubling because India possesses unprecedented technology — **satellite imagery** (encroachments), **drones** (illegal constructions), **GIS** (land-use change), digital property databases and **AI dashboards** for compliance.

- ◆ The difficulty lies elsewhere — in **political pressure, vote-bank calculations, thriving informal economies** and, most importantly, **corruption**. Different cities, governments and parties, but the same outcome: an **accountability and governance deficit**.
- ◆ For over three decades since the **74th Constitutional Amendment**, India has spoken of empowering urban local bodies, yet most city governments remain **weak** — elected representatives have visibility without power, with functions scattered across authorities.

THE WAY FORWARD — 'FIX GOVERNANCE FIRST'

- ◆ The answer is **not another scheme** — Indian cities already overflow with missions and acronyms. The problem is the **absence of governance**, not of schemes.
- ◆ Urban governance must be measured **not by projects inaugurated or dashboards installed, but by the number of tragedies prevented**.
- ◆ The real test: whether an ordinary citizen can work, live, study, shop or sleep in a building **without fear of dying** because someone chose to ignore the rules.
- ◆ Governments must find the **political courage to dismantle entrenched systems of tolerated illegality**, where enforcers look away fearing a clash with vested interests.

◆ FIRE SAFETY & URBAN GOVERNANCE — FRAMEWORK

- **74th CAA, 1992**: constitutional status to ULBs; 12th Schedule lists 18 functions incl. fire services & urban planning.
- **National Building Code (NBC) 2016** (by BIS) prescribes fire & life-safety norms; enforcement rests with States/ULBs.
- **Model Bill on Maintenance of Fire & Emergency Services** circulated by MHA for State adoption.
- **NDMA** issues fire-safety guidelines; fire services are a **State subject** (State List).
- Enabling tech: GIS, remote sensing, drones, AI-based compliance dashboards.

STATIC / SYLLABUS LINKAGE

- **GS 1**: urbanisation — problems & remedies.
- **GS 2**: devolution to local bodies (73rd/74th Amendments); governance & accountability.
- **GS 3**: disaster management — man-made disasters, mitigation, role of technology.
- **Ethics (GS 4)**: corruption, tolerated illegality, administrative accountability.

05 Commonwealth Games — Diminishing Relevance

GS 2 · IR

GS 1 · SOCIETY

The Hindu · Editorial · Page 6

WHY IN NEWS

As **Mirabai Chanu** won her third consecutive Commonwealth Games gold in Glasgow — the first woman weightlifter to do so — the editorial reflects that the curtailed 2026 Games highlight the **diminishing relevance** of the erstwhile British Empire's sporting tradition.

Diminishing relevance

The Commonwealth Games look increasingly like a relic from the past

As Olympic and World Championships medalist Mirabai Chanu stood atop the podium in Glasgow on Sunday, tears rolling down her cheeks after becoming the first woman weightlifter to secure her third consecutive Commonwealth Games gold medal, she provided much-needed succour to a Games that had risked fading into oblivion a few years ago. With India set to host the centenary edition of the Games in Ahmedabad in 2030, there could not have been a better advertisement than Mirabai's golden triumph, which also ensured her fourth medal of any colour in a row in the women's 48kg category with a total of 190kg. The seasoned weightlifter's feat may not be the only glorious chapter written in the Scottish city, as other leading Indian athletes are expected to climb the podium in athletics and para-athletics, weightlifting and para-weightlifting, boxing, judo, and lawn bowls and para-bowls. According to an internal estimation by the Union Sports Ministry, India's athletes are expected to win around 30 medals even though several disciplines in which Indians have traditionally excelled – such as wrestling, badminton, table tennis, hockey and squash – were dropped from the scaled-down Glasgow event. Medals are expected from Neeraj Chopra, Murali Sreeshankar, Praveen Chithravel, and boxers Lovlina Borgohain and Jaismine Lamboria.

The curtailed Commonwealth Games highlights the diminishing relevance of the erstwhile British Empire's sporting tradition. The 2026 edition, originally allotted to Victoria, faced an existential threat after the Australian State withdrew as a host three years ago due to spiralling costs. Glasgow, the host in 2014, saved the Games from embarrassment by proposing a scaled-down version – with 10 integrated disciplines, across four venues within an eight-mile corridor. Even though the Commonwealth Games do not match the global or regional excellence of the Olympics or the Asian Games, the platform still holds a strong appeal for Indian sportspersons and administrators. While India's success at the elite world level across different sports has been sporadic, it has the dubious distinction of topping the global doping charts for three successive years. Multiple athletes across disciplines have been caught for consuming banned substances even in the run-up to Glasgow 2026. Either they have been withdrawn from the Indian contingent or have failed to qualify due to this, impacting the nation's medal chances and bringing it shameful international headlines. As the country prepares to organise a bigger Commonwealth Games – especially against the backdrop of the corruption-tainted Delhi 2010 edition – it would do well to enhance its vigilance to curb financial malpractices and promote clean sport over the next four years.

The Hindu Editorial, Page 6: 'Diminishing relevance — the Commonwealth Games look increasingly like a relic from the past.'

- ◆ Mirabai's golden triumph — her fourth medal of any colour in a row in the women's **48 kg** category (total **190 kg**) — is a strong advertisement ahead of India hosting the **centenary edition at Ahmedabad in 2030**.
- ◆ Per an internal Union Sports Ministry estimate, India's athletes are expected to win around **30 medals**, even though disciplines Indians traditionally excel in — **wrestling, badminton, table tennis, hockey and squash** — were dropped from the scaled-down Glasgow event.
- ◆ The **2026 edition**, originally allotted to **Victoria (Australia)**, faced an existential threat after the State withdrew three years ago over spiralling costs; **Glasgow** (2014 host) saved the Games with a scaled-down version — **10 integrated disciplines across four venues within an eight-mile corridor**.
- ◆ Though the CWG do not match the excellence of the Olympics or Asian Games, the platform still holds strong appeal for Indian sportspersons. However, India has the **dubious distinction of topping global doping charts for three successive years**, with athletes caught even in the run-up to Glasgow 2026.

◆ COMMONWEALTH GAMES — STATIC FACTS

- **World's 2nd largest multi-sport event** (after the Olympics); ~71 nations & territories.
- **First held:** 1930, Hamilton (Canada) as the British Empire Games → renamed Commonwealth Games from 1978.
- **Governing body:** Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF); held every 4 years — the 'Friendly Games'.
- **Values:** Humanity, Equality, Destiny. India last hosted in **Delhi 2010**; finished 4th at Birmingham 2022.
- **2026:** Glasgow, Scotland · **2030 centenary:** Ahmedabad, India.

◆ THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

- Voluntary association of **56 independent, equal countries**; ~2.7 billion people; most former British colonies.
- **Imperial Conference (1926)** — UK & Dominions as equal members; **London Declaration (1949)** — modern Commonwealth, allowing republics.
- **Gabon & Togo** joined in 2022; guided by the **Commonwealth Charter**; Secretariat in London.
- India is the **largest member by population** and 4th-largest financial contributor; hosted the 1983 Summit & 2010 Games in New Delhi.

STATIC / SYLLABUS LINKAGE

- **GS 2 — IR:** India & groupings/associations; the Commonwealth's relevance & India's soft power.
- **GS 1 / Society:** sports, gender (women in sport), doping & institutional integrity.
- **Prelims:** CGF, host cities (2026 Glasgow, 2030 Ahmedabad), Commonwealth membership facts.

06 Iran's Afghan Balancing Act Amid Regional Upheaval

GS 2 · IR*The Hindu · Editorial · Page 6*

WHY IN NEWS

Amid war and internal turmoil in Iran, delegations from both the **Taliban** and the opposition **Northern Alliance** visited Tehran — underscoring the delicate geopolitics on Iran's eastern front and its careful balancing act over Afghanistan.

Iran's Afghan balancing act amid regional upheaval

The funeral proceedings of Iran's late Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, that stretched over a week amid a spiralling war and significant internal turmoil at the seat of power for Shiism, saw multiple personalities visit Tehran. Almost unnoticed, however, was the presence of delegations from both the Taliban and the opposition Northern Alliance. The two have been fighting each other, in various iterations, over Afghanistan since the 1990s.

Complex equations

The presence of the Taliban's Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar along with Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on the one hand and the Northern Alliance's Ahmed Massoud, son of the group's founder Ahmed Shah Massoud on the other, highlighted the delicate game of geopolitics that continues to persist on Tehran's eastern front. While Iran is the one country which has built the strongest influence with Kabul since the collapse of the government of President Ashraf Ghani (August 2021), it still does not officially recognise the Taliban government. This is hardly surprising, considering that until the 1990s, Iran, along with India, Russia, Tajikistan and other neighbouring and foreign states, supported the Northern Alliance.

The chaotic withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan, in August 2021, two decades after a post-9/11 war launched against al Qaeda was a critical moment in Tehran. The consistent and massive deployment of western military power on its borders was a perpetual nightmare that had to be factored into its calculations. Pakistan's support for and incubation of the Afghan Taliban, while simultaneously backing the U.S.-led 'war on terror', created a sinkhole of competing interests, where the Venn diagram of who was supporting whom became so



Kabir Taneja

Executive Director
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Middle East

The events of
2021 on Iran's
eastern front
continue to
influence
Tehran's choices
amid the war
in 2026

convoluted that foreign powers often ceded the upper hand to regional players. The fact that al Qaeda founder Osama Bin Laden was eventually found in Abbottabad, Pakistan (May 2011), in a large house – and not a cave in the infamous Tora Bora – was not a coincidence.

The Afghan chessboard

The Iranian viewpoint on the Taliban and the Afghan landscape changed significantly after 9/11. While Tehran remains sceptical of the Taliban and the future of its rule to this day, it simultaneously recognises that an insurgency-turned-government will always carry a question mark over its long-term stability. The ideological and tribal fissures that persist also require micromanagement, which means creating enemies along volatile borders is not in anyone's long-term interests.

Following 2021, the Taliban was in search of both power and patronage. Iran could offer some of the power, but only a limited amount of the patronage. The calculation behind this was to free up a major front from as much conflict as possible. The Northern Alliance, largely concentrated in the mountainous northern province of Panjshir, was both weak and disorganised, with infighting having hollowed out any possibility of cohesion and structure. In fact, since February, as clouds of war gathered, the Taliban reiterated that it would support Iran should the country come under attack. Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman close to Taliban emir Hibatullah Akhundzada, said in an interview with Iranian state radio that they would support Iran if need be. The nature and extent of such support, of course, remain subjects of debate. Diplomatic support from Kabul has been robust over the past year, including access to the country's civilian airports.

But the Iranians hosting Masood and the Northern Alliance delegation in Tehran shows

that, despite the war in West Asia, Iran is not willing to put all its eggs in one basket when it comes to Afghanistan. The country, and its intricacies, remain a problem that needs strategic management. The fact that the Taliban is still prioritising solidifying its own power and structure, especially between Kabul, the political capital, and Kandahar, the ideological one, highlights that homogeneously supporting the group is still not seen as being wise. For Tehran, this geography remains critical. For example, Quds Force, the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) elite external operations branch, has been run by Esmail Qaani since the assassination of Qasem Soleimani in 2020 by the U.S. Qaani, is known to be a Khorasan hand (Iran's north/eastern neighbours such as Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, among others). Qaani's operational history goes back to the Taliban versus Northern Alliance era of the 1990s.

Ties with Pakistan

The war currently engulfing West Asia is expected to remain a constant for at least a few months to come. Pakistan's role as a mediator between Tehran and Washington DC, has given a new lease of 'brotherhood' between the two. Nonetheless, their aims are divergent. For Pakistan, the objective is to get back into the good books of both the U.S. and Gulf partners (Islamabad now has troops stationed in Saudi Arabia). For Iran, it is about reaching out to the U.S. through a neighbour it knows, if not trusts, better than most. The Iran-Pakistan bilateral relationship is incidental to everything else.

Increasingly, no binaries exist in international diplomacy. Neither do brotherhoods. Every hug is exchanged with one eye always open. These realities predate contemporary politics in South Asia and West Asia, long before the disintegration of western power began to take the shape we are witnessing today.

The Hindu Editorial, Page 6: 'Iran's Afghan balancing act amid regional upheaval' by Kabir Taneja (ORF Middle East).

- While Iran has built the **strongest influence with Kabul** since the collapse of the Ashraf Ghani government (August 2021), it still does **not officially recognise** the Taliban government.
- This is unsurprising: until the 1990s, Iran — along with **India, Russia, Tajikistan** and others — supported the **Northern Alliance** against the Taliban.
- The **chaotic U.S. withdrawal** from Afghanistan (August 2021) was a critical moment for Tehran; massive Western military deployment on its borders had been a perpetual strategic nightmare.
- Post-2021, the Taliban sought both **power and patronage**; Iran could offer some power but only limited patronage — the calculation being to **free up a major front** from as much conflict as possible.
- For Tehran, geography remains critical: the **Quds Force** of the IRGC's external operations has been run by **Esmail Qaani** since the 2020 assassination of Qasem Soleimani; Qaani is a 'Khorasan hand' with roots in the Northern Alliance era.
- Ties with Pakistan:** Islamabad's role as a mediator between Tehran and Washington has given a new lease of 'brotherhood', though aims diverge — in international diplomacy, 'no binaries' exist and 'every hug is exchanged with one eye open'.

◆ INDIA–AFGHANISTAN / IRAN — CONTEXT

- India historically backed the **Northern Alliance**; has developmental stakes (Salma/Afghan-India Friendship Dam, Parliament building, Zaranj-Delaram highway).
- **Chabahar Port** (Iran) is India's strategic gateway to Afghanistan & Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan.
- **Quds Force** = elite external-operations arm of Iran's IRGC; led by Esmail Qaani.
- India runs a '**technical mission**' in Kabul without formally recognising the Taliban regime.

STATIC / SYLLABUS LINKAGE

- **GS 2 — IR:** India's neighbourhood; Iran, Afghanistan & Pakistan; effect of policies of developed & developing countries on India's interests.
- **Connectivity:** Chabahar, INSTC, and West Asia's impact on energy security.
- **Prelims:** Quds Force/IRGC, Northern Alliance, Chabahar, key India-built projects in Afghanistan.

07 Co-existing With Tigers Outside Reserves (TOTR)

GS 3 · ENVIRONMENT*The Hindu · Op-Ed · Page 6*

WHY IN NEWS

With **35–40% of India's tigers now living outside designated Tiger Reserves**, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has launched the **Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves (TOTR)** initiative — a shift from reactive crisis management to proactive, science-driven coexistence (op-ed by Supriya Sahu).

Co-existing with tigers outside reserves

India's tiger conservation story is widely regarded as one of the world's most extraordinary wildlife recoveries – a species brought back from near extinction through sustained political commitment, scientific management, and decades of on-ground protection. Since the launch of Project Tiger in 1973, the country's network of protected areas has expanded from nine reserves covering 18,278 sq km to 58 reserves spanning 84,488 sq km, accounting for nearly 2.6% of India's landmass. India's tiger population has risen from 1,411 in 2006 to 3,682 in 2022, firmly establishing the country as home to over 70% of the world's wild tigers. This success has now created a new conservation frontier – the growing proportion of tigers living outside protected areas.

Although national datasets do not conclusively link rising tiger numbers with increasing human-tiger conflict, forest departments across several landscapes report a steady escalation in such incidents. As territorial carnivores require extensive home ranges, tigers disperse naturally when core habitats reach saturation. Consequently, more tigers are moving beyond protected boundaries into human-dominated fringes. According to the National Tiger Conservation Authority, 35-40% of India's tiger population now lives outside designated Tiger Reserves. This reality has prompted the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to launch the Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves (TOTR) initiative.

Beyond protected boundaries

The growing tiger population reflects healthy breeding groups, functional habitats, and well-connected forest corridors. However, when tigers move beyond protected areas into landscapes interwoven with villages, farms, roads and other human infrastructure, interactions



Supriya Sahu

is a senior administrator currently serving in the Government of Tamil Nadu. She has worked extensively on environmental policy, ecosystem restoration, wildlife and biodiversity conservation, climate action and human-wildlife coexistence. She is the recipient of the UNEP Champions of the Earth Award 2025.

The objective of the Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves initiative is to establish a scientifically grounded, landscape-based framework for conserving tigers outside protected areas while safeguarding human lives

with people become inevitable, leading to human fatalities, livestock depredation, accidental encounters, prolonged rescue operations, and heightened public anxiety. Each incident carries ecological, social, and political consequences, placing enormous pressure on forest departments and district administrations.

The objective of the TOTR is to establish a scientifically grounded, landscape-based framework for conserving tigers outside protected areas while safeguarding human lives and livelihoods. Rather than responding to conflict only after it occurs, the initiative seeks to shift the approach from reactive crisis management to proactive, science-driven governance built on technology, preparedness, and community participation.

The TOTR is being launched as a targeted pilot rather than a nationwide rollout, recognising that long-term policy must be anchored in evidence generated under real field conditions.

The All-India Tiger Estimation (2022) recorded tiger presence across 212 forest divisions. Based on this assessment, 40 forest divisions across nine States have been selected for the first phase of the TOTR implementation. The participating States include Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Assam.

The TOTR rests on two complementary pillars. The first focuses on reducing human-tiger conflict and strengthening field protection. This includes upgrading communication systems, deploying rapid response teams, improving rescue infrastructure, and ensuring coordinated action during emergencies. The second pillar emphasises long-term coexistence. Conservation outside protected areas cannot succeed without the trust and participation of local communities. Awareness programmes, community engagement, timely compensation

and treating villagers as partners are central to the initiative. Tigers and people now co-occur across vast shared landscapes, making structured coexistence essential for long-term stability.

Among these, streamlined and timely compensation mechanisms are critical. Although States have their own frameworks, delays often erode public trust and fuel resentment. States must simplify procedures and invest in sustained outreach to build confidence among rural families living alongside tigers.

The role of States

Participating States will also need to invest strategically in both technology and institutional capacity. The programme rightly emphasises the use of modern conservation tools such as camera traps, GPS-enabled monitoring systems, drones and AI to strengthen surveillance, improve early warning systems and enable evidence-based decision-making. However, technology alone cannot resolve human-tiger conflict. Its effectiveness will ultimately depend on the strength of the institutions that support it. Building public confidence requires well-trained forest staff, veterinarians, and rescue teams capable of responding rapidly in conflict situations.

The TOTR underscores a broader national imperative: strengthening the governance of shared landscapes where ecological processes and human livelihoods intersect daily. The initiative signals a shift from viewing tiger conservation solely through the lens of protected areas to recognising the wider mosaic of reserve forests and other lands that now support dispersing tigers.

If executed with the same determination that made Project Tiger a global benchmark, the TOTR could become India's defining conservation initiative of the century proving that people and large carnivores can share space safely.

The Hindu Op-Ed, Page 6: 'Co-existing with tigers outside reserves' by Supriya Sahu, recipient of the UNEP Champions of the Earth 2025.

- ◆ Since **Project Tiger (1973)**, India's protected-area network has expanded from **9 reserves (18,278 sq km)** to **58 reserves (84,488 sq km)** — nearly **2.6%** of India's landmass.
- ◆ India's tiger population rose from **1,411 (2006)** to **3,682 (2022)**, home to over **70% of the world's wild tigers**.
- ◆ As territorial carnivores need extensive home ranges, tigers **disperse naturally** when core habitats saturate, moving into human-dominated fringes — leading to fatalities, livestock depredation, accidental encounters, prolonged rescues and public anxiety.
- ◆ The **TOTR objective**: a scientifically grounded, landscape-based framework for conserving tigers outside protected areas while safeguarding human lives & livelihoods.
- ◆ It is launched as a **targeted pilot**, not a nationwide rollout — long-term policy must be anchored in evidence from real field conditions.
- ◆ Based on the **All-India Tiger Estimation (2022)** (tiger presence across 212 forest divisions), **40 forest divisions across 9 States** are selected for Phase 1:
 - ◆ Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Assam.

TWO PILLARS OF THE TOTR

- ◆ **Pillar 1 — Reducing conflict & strengthening field protection**: upgrading communication systems, rapid-response teams, rescue infrastructure and coordinated emergency action.
- ◆ **Pillar 2 — Long-term coexistence**: awareness programmes, community engagement, timely compensation and treating villagers as **partners**; delays in compensation erode trust and fuel resentment.
- ◆ Technology alone cannot resolve conflict — effectiveness depends on **trained forest staff, veterinarians and rescue teams**; camera traps, GPS collars, drones & AI strengthen surveillance and early warning.

PROJECT TIGER & NTCA — FACTS

- **Project Tiger**: launched 1973; centrally sponsored scheme under MoEFCC.
- **NTCA**: statutory body under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** (2006 amendment); conducts quadrennial tiger census.
- **Tiger census 2022**: 3,682 tigers; India hosts >70% of the world's wild tigers.
- **M-StrIPES** app & camera-trap based estimation used in the All-India Tiger Estimation.
- Tiger — **IUCN: Endangered; CITES Appendix I; WPA 1972 Schedule I**.

STATIC / SYLLABUS LINKAGE

- **GS 3 — Environment**: conservation, human-wildlife conflict, wildlife institutions (NTCA, Project Tiger).
- **Governance**: community participation, landscape-level conservation beyond protected areas.
- **Prelims**: Project Tiger year, NTCA statutory basis, tiger numbers, TOTR States, IUCN/CITES status.

Mains Practice Questions

Attempt within the word limit · मुख्य परीक्षा अभ्यास प्रश्न

GS 3 · Economy

15 Marks / 250 words

The Index of Industrial Production is a vital, yet limited, barometer of the industrial economy. In light of its 2022-23 rebasing, examine how the IIP complements other macroeconomic indicators in gauging the health of Indian industry.

औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक (IIP) औद्योगिक अर्थव्यवस्था का एक महत्वपूर्ण किंतु सीमित मापक है। इसके 2022-23 आधार-वर्ष संशोधन के आलोक में इसका मूल्यांकन कीजिए।

GS 2 · Federalism

15 Marks / 250 words

‘Inter-State river water disputes reflect the tension between hydrological reality and political federalism.’ Critically analyse in the context of the Cauvery dispute and the institutional mechanism created after the 2018 Supreme Court verdict.

‘अंतर-राज्य नदी जल विवाद जलविज्ञानीय यथार्थ और राजनीतिक संघवाद के बीच तनाव को दर्शाते हैं।’ कावेरी विवाद के संदर्भ में आलोचना कीजिए।

GS 3 · Disaster / Governance

10 Marks / 150 words

Recurrent urban fires in India are less a failure of technology and more a failure of governance. Discuss, suggesting institutional reforms to strengthen accountability in urban local bodies.

भारत में बार-बार होने वाली शहरी आग तकनीक की नहीं, बल्कि शासन की विफलता है। चर्चा कीजिए।

GS 3 · Environment

10 Marks / 150 words

The Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves (TOTR) initiative marks a paradigm shift in Indian conservation. Explain how landscape-level, community-driven approaches can secure both wildlife and human livelihoods.

रिजर्व के बाहर बाघ (TOTR) पहल भारतीय संरक्षण में एक पैराडाइम बदलाव है। समझाइए।

Prelims Practice — 10 MCQs

Based on today's edition · Answer key & explanations follow

Q1. With reference to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), consider the following statements:

1. It is compiled and released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
2. It measures short-term changes in the volume of production in the industrial sector.
3. The current base year of the IIP is 2011-12.
4. The Manufacturing sector has the highest weight in the IIP.

Which are correct?

- A)** 1, 2 and 4 only
- B)** 1, 3 and 4 only
- C)** 2 and 3 only
- D)** 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q2. Which of the following are ‘use-based’ classifications of the IIP?

- 1. Primary Goods 2. Capital Goods 3. Infrastructure/Construction Goods 4. Consumer Non-Durables**

- A)** 1 and 2 only
- B)** 2, 3 and 4 only
- C)** 1, 2 and 4 only
- D)** 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q3. The 'Biligundlu' gauge and discharge station, often in news, is located on the border of:

- A)** Kerala and Tamil Nadu
- B)** Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
- C)** Karnataka and Kerala
- D)** Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

Q4. Consider the following about the Cauvery river:

- 1. It originates at Talakaveri in the Western Ghats.**
- 2. The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) was constituted under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.**
- 3. Bhavani and Kabini are its left-bank tributaries.**

Which are correct?

- A)** 1 and 2 only **B)** 2 and 3 only
C) 1 and 3 only **D)** 1, 2 and 3

Q5. With reference to the Western Ghats, consider the following:

1. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012.
2. The Gadgil Committee recommended that about 37% of the Ghats be an ESA.
3. Anamudi is its highest peak.

Which are correct?

- A)** 1 and 3 only **B)** 2 and 3 only
C) 1 and 2 only **D)** 1, 2 and 3

Q6. The latest draft ESA notification retains the maximum ESA area in which State?

- A) Kerala
B) Maharashtra
C) Karnataka
D) Tamil Nadu

Q7. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act is associated with:

- A) Panchayati Raj Institutions
B) Urban Local Bodies
C) Cooperative Societies
D) Anti-defection provisions

Q8. With reference to the Commonwealth Games, consider the following:

1. It was first held in 1930 at Hamilton, Canada.
2. It is governed by the Commonwealth Games Federation.
3. The 2030 centenary edition will be hosted by Ahmedabad, India.

Which are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
B) 2 and 3 only
C) 1 and 3 only
D) 1, 2 and 3

Q9. The ‘Quds Force’, sometimes in news, is the external-operations arm of the:

- A) Regular Iranian Army
B) Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)
C) Afghan Northern Alliance
D) Pakistan’s ISI

Q10. With reference to the Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves (TOTR) initiative, consider the following:

1. It is launched by the National Tiger Conservation Authority as a nationwide rollout.
2. As per NTCA, 35-40% of India’s tigers live outside designated reserves.
3. Phase 1 covers forest divisions across nine States.

Which are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
B) 2 and 3 only
C) 1 and 3 only
D) 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER KEY & EXPLANATIONS

Q1 → A**Q2** → D**Q3** → B**Q4** → A**Q5** → A**Q6** → C**Q7** → B**Q8** → D**Q9** → B**Q10** → B

Q1 (a): IIP is released monthly by the NSO under MoSPI and measures the volume of industrial production. The base year was revised to **2022-23** (not 2011-12), so statement 3 is wrong. Manufacturing carries the highest weight.

Q2 (d): All four — Primary, Capital, Intermediate, Infrastructure/Construction, Consumer Durables and Non-Durables — are use-based categories of the IIP.

Q3 (b): Biligundlu lies on the Karnataka–Tamil Nadu border and is the notified inter-State contact point for Cauvery releases.

Q4 (a): The Cauvery rises at Talakaveri; CWMA was constituted under Section 6A of the ISRWD Act, 1956. Bhavani & Kabini are **right-bank** tributaries, so 3 is wrong.

Q5 (a): The Western Ghats is a UNESCO WHS (2012) and Anamudi is its highest peak. The **~37%** ESA recommendation was by the **Kasturirangan** committee, not Gadgil, so 2 is wrong.

Q6 (c): Karnataka accounts for the largest share — **20,668 sq. km** of the 56,825.7 sq. km ESA.

Q7 (b): The 74th CAA (1992) gave constitutional status to Urban Local Bodies; the 73rd deals with Panchayati Raj.

Q8 (d): All three are correct — first held 1930 (Hamilton), governed by the CGF, with Ahmedabad hosting the 2030 centenary edition.

Q9 (b): The Quds Force is the elite external-operations branch of Iran's IRGC, led by Esmail Qaani.

Q10 (b): TOTR is launched by the MoEFCC/NTCA as a **targeted pilot** (not nationwide), covering 40 divisions across nine States; 35-40% of tigers live outside reserves.