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Dr. GINDI'S IAS ACADEMY

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

COVER ALL IMPORTANT CURRENT UPDATES
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Dr. GINDI'S I.A.S. ACADEMY
Civils & Competitive Careers
TRANSFORMING ASPIRANTS INTO ACHIEVERS

JULY 29, 2026

A/C CAMPUS

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. Supreme Court Directs Immediate Release of Minors Held During Student Protests

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Immediate Release of Minors:** The Supreme Court directed the immediate release of all juveniles detained in connection with recent student demonstrations.
- **Protection Against Coercive Action:** The apex court restrained police from taking coercive steps against protesting students lacking prior criminal antecedents.
- **Proposal for Independent Inquiry:** The Court expressed intent to form a high-powered, independent team to ensure a fair, scientific, and evidence-based investigation into alleged police excesses.
- **Continuation of FIR Investigations:** State authorities were granted permission to continue investigations into existing FIRs registered during the protests.
- **Constitutional Right Preserved:** The Bench explicitly highlighted that peaceful protest is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Indian Constitution.
- **Concerns Over Order:** Civil society groups expressed concern over allowing ongoing FIR probes, alleging it contradicts political assurances of no punitive action.

Essential Definitions

- **Coercive Action:** Legal measures involving physical force, detention, arrest, or punitive actions taken by law enforcement agencies against individuals.
- **Juvenile/Minor:** Under Indian law (Juvenile Justice Act), any individual who has not completed 18 years of age.
- **Independent Investigation:** An impartial inquiry conducted by an autonomous body uninfluenced by local administration or political authorities.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 19(1)(a) & 19(1)(b):** Guarantees freedom of speech and expression and the right to assemble peaceably without arms, subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) and 19(3).
- **Article 21:** Protects the right to life and personal liberty, ensuring fair legal procedures and protection against arbitrary arrest or police violence.



- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015:** Mandates child-friendly procedures, prohibiting detention of minors in standard police stations or jails.
- **Section 41A, CrPC / Section 35, BNSS:** Outlines statutory safeguards and guidelines regarding notice of appearance before police arrest.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's intervention balances law enforcement imperatives with fundamental constitutional guarantees. By safeguarding juvenile rights and mandating an independent probe into state excess, the judiciary reinforces accountability while upholding the constitutional right to peaceful dissent.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance, Constitution & Polity):** Fundamental Rights (Articles 19 and 21), Judicial Oversight, Protection of Vulnerable Sections (Juveniles), and Police Reforms/Accountability.

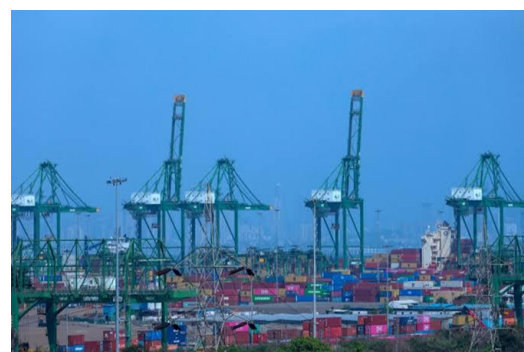
2. Industrial Growth Hits 23-Month High of 7.3%

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Peak Industrial Growth:** India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth surged to a 23-month high of 7.3% in June 2026, marking the fastest expansion since July 2024.
- **Sequential Acceleration:** The industrial output registered a notable uptick from the 5.1% growth recorded in May 2026.
- **Manufacturing Surge:** The manufacturing sector expanded by 7.8% in June 2026—a 23-month high—compared to 5.5% in May 2026 and 2.4% in June 2025.
- **Key Growth Drivers:** The surge was primarily propelled by robust output across manufacturing, electricity, and capital goods sectors.
- **Official Data Release:** The monthly IIP figures were published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- **Potential Downside Risks:** Analysts caution that growth momentum faces headwinds from lower-than-expected monsoon rainfall and ongoing geopolitical uncertainties in West Asia.

Essential Definitions

- **Index of Industrial Production (IIP):** A composite indicator measuring short-term changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products over a given period relative to a chosen base year (2011-12).
- **Capital Goods:** Physical assets such as heavy machinery, equipment, and tools used by industries to produce consumer goods or other capital goods, reflecting long-term investment demand.
- **Manufacturing Sector:** A primary sub-sector of the IIP accounting for the largest weightage (77.63%),



encompassing activities that transform raw materials into finished products.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Statutory Mandate:** Published monthly by the National Statistical Office (NSO), operating under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- **Collection of Statistics Act, 2008:** Provides the statutory backing for collecting industrial data across factories and industrial units in India.
- **Constitutional Provision:** Aligns with Entry 52 of the Union List (List I) in the Seventh Schedule, empowering Parliament to regulate industries of national importance.

Conclusion

The sharp uptick in IIP growth reflects underlying resilience in India's industrial activities, driven by strong manufacturing performance. However, sustaining this trajectory will depend on mitigating external economic shocks, mitigating monsoon deficits, and boosting domestic demand.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Indian Economy):** Industrial growth, IIP classification, core sector composition, manufacturing growth factors, and macroeconomic stability indicators.

3. Release Cauvery Water to Tamil Nadu, Panel Tells Karnataka

Key Highlights & Summary

- **CWRC Release Directive:** The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) directed Karnataka to release 4 tmcft of water to Tamil Nadu at 3,500 cusecs daily for 15 days.
- **Measuring Point:** The mandated discharge must be ensured at the Biligundlu inter-State measuring gauge on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu boundary.
- **Assessment Criteria:** The decision followed an examination of live reservoir storage across both states and anticipated worsening El Niño conditions.
- **Karnataka's Stance:** Karnataka Water Resources Minister stated the current reservoir storage meets only drinking water needs, prompting plans to appeal before the CWMA.
- **Tamil Nadu's Deficit:** Tamil Nadu reported receiving only 3.543 tmcft against the mandated 35.391 tmcft (10.01% of quota) by late July, creating a 9.46 tmcft backlog.
- **Distress-Sharing Conflict:** Tamil Nadu claimed it has not received its pro-rata share relative to actual inflows into Karnataka's reservoirs.

Essential Definitions

- **Cusec:** A unit of flow rate equal to one cubic foot per second, equivalent to approximately 28.317 liters per second.
- **TMCFT (TMC):** Thousand Million Cubic Feet, a standard measurement used for volume of water in large reservoirs (1 TMC $\approx$ 28.31 billion liters).
- **Pro-rata Share:** Proportional allocation of water released during distress or deficit years based on actual basin inflows rather than fixed normal allocations.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 262:** Empowers Parliament to enact laws for the adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers or river valleys.
- **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956:** Enacted under Article 262 to set up tribunals for resolving inter-State water conflicts.
- **Cauvery Water Management Scheme, 2018:** Formulated by the Centre under SC directions, constituting the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and CWRC.
- **Entry 17 (State List) & Entry 56 (Union List):** Seventh Schedule entries governing state authority over water supplies versus parliamentary regulation of inter-State rivers.

Conclusion

The dispute underscores the recurring challenges of water management in distress years during weak monsoons. Institutional mechanisms like CWRC and CWMA remain vital for establishing objective, data-backed distress-sharing formulas to balance downstream agricultural needs against upstream drinking water priorities.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Inter-State river disputes, Article 262, cooperative federalism, and statutory bodies (CWMA/CWRC).
- **GS Paper III (Environment & Agriculture):** Water resource management, distress sharing during droughts, and climate impacts like El Niño on river basins.

3A. Rare Amoebic Brain Infection Reported in Kerala

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Infection Reported:** Kasaragod district in Kerala reported a rare and life-threatening case of amoebic meningoencephalitis (amoebic brain infection).
- **Critical Condition:** An 18-year-old male tested positive for the severe infection and remains in critical condition at a hospital in Mangaluru.
- **Mode of Exposure:** Preliminary investigation reveals the teenager contracted the pathogen after bathing with friends in a local pond along the Kanhangad-Panathur State highway.

- **Rapid Onset:** The patient developed acute health complications shortly after exposure, with subsequent diagnostic tests confirming the amoebic infection.
- **Public Health Response:** State Health Department and local police issued immediate public warnings directing citizens to avoid bathing in the pond until further notice.
- **High Fatality Risk:** Amoebic meningoencephalitis is a rare primary central nervous system infection characterized by extremely high mortality rates if not detected early.

Essential Definitions

- **Amoebic Meningoencephalitis:** A severe, often fatal infection of the brain and surrounding meninges caused by free-living amoebae (such as *Naegleria fowleri*) found in warm freshwater bodies.
- **Brain-Eating Amoeba:** A microscopic single-celled organism that enters the human body through the nasal passage, travels to the brain, and destroys brain tissue.
- **Primary Pathogen Exposure:** Transmission occurring through direct contact with contaminated water sources like ponds, lakes, or unchlorinated swimming pools during recreational activities.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 21:** Guarantees the Right to Life, which the Supreme Court has interpreted to include the right to public health, sanitation, and clean environment.
- **Directive Principles (Article 47):** Mandates the State as a primary duty to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living, and improve public health.
- **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897:** Grants special powers to state governments to implement containment measures, issue advisories, and prevent the spread of dangerous disease outbreaks.
- **Public Health Act (State Level):** Empowers district health officials and police authorities to restrict access to hazardous natural water bodies during health emergencies.

Conclusion

The emergence of rare amoebic infections highlights the urgent need for heightened public health vigilance, water quality monitoring in rural water bodies, and rapid diagnostic infrastructure. Proactive community awareness and immediate advisories remain critical in curbing exposure to life-threatening water-borne pathogens.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance & Public Health):** Public health management, state response to rare disease outbreaks, and fundamental right to health under Article 21.
- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology):** Pathogens, infectious diseases, biological safety, and environmental biology related to water-borne pathogens.

4. Misuse of Copyright Strikes for Digital Extortion: Delhi High Court Issues Notice

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Court Notice to Meta & Centre:** The Delhi High Court issued notices to Meta Platforms and the Union Government on a PIL highlighting copyright strike abuse by bad-faith actors to extort money from digital creators.
- **Timestamp Exploitation Modus Operandi:** Scammers exploit a technical vulnerability in Facebook's desktop version by using "Edit Post" functionality on old posts to insert new videos while maintaining older publication dates.
- **Automated System Flaw:** Meta's automated Rights Manager tool relies on these backdated timestamps, incorrectly flagging original creators as copyright infringers and blocking their content.
- **Plea for Human Oversight:** The petitioner urged the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the extortion racket and requested directions for Meta to institute human-backed grievance redressal.
- **Judicial Observation:** A Division Bench observed that digital extortion poses a systemic challenge requiring proactive action from social media platforms rather than total reliance on automated filters.
- **Directions to Grievance Officer:** The Court directed Meta Platforms' grievance officer to expeditiously resolve individual creator complaints regarding fraudulent copyright strikes.

Delhi High Court Seeks Response From Centre, Meta Over Copyright Extortion Plea



Outlook Business Desk

Updated on: 28 July 2026 6:04 pm
Published at: 28 July 2026 6:05 pm

The PIL alleged that cyber criminals manipulate Meta's copyright complaint process by editing old posts with newly created content from original creators before filing copyright claims and then demand money



Essential Definitions

- **Copyright Strike:** A legal or administrative notice issued by a copyright holder to a platform requesting removal of unauthorized, copyrighted material.
- **Rights Manager:** An automated digital rights tool developed by social media platforms to help content owners identify, protect, and manage their copyrighted audio and video content.
- **Digital Extortion:** The criminal practice of coercing individuals or businesses to pay money by threatening content takedowns, reputational harm, or technological disruption.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 19(1)(g):** Guarantees the fundamental right to practice any profession or carry on any occupation, trade, or business, which includes digital content creation.
- **Copyright Act, 1957:** Section 51 defines copyright infringement, while Section 52 covers fair deal principles; Section 63 penalties address unauthorized infringement activities.
- **Information Technology Act, 2000:** Section 66D penalizes cheating by personation using computer resources, and Section 383 of IPC/Section 308 of BNS addresses extortion offense.
- **IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:** Mandates intermediaries to appoint Grievance Officers and establish transparent, human-reviewed mechanisms for content moderation appeal.

Conclusion

The misuse of copyright enforcement mechanisms on social media highlights critical gaps in automated algorithmic moderation. Balancing intellectual property protection with intermediary accountability is essential to safeguarding digital livelihoods against emerging forms of cyber extortion.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance & Regulatory Frameworks):** Intermediary liability, digital governance, IT Rules 2021, and protection of constitutional rights in cyberspace.
- **GS Paper III (Cybersecurity & Intellectual Property Rights):** Cyber threats, digital extortion, flaws in automated AI enforcement systems, and IPR management on digital platforms.

5. Proposed Amendment to Penalise Disrespect to Vande Mataram and Analysis of National Honour Act Data

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Legislative Proposal:** The Central Government introduced an amendment to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, in the Rajya Sabha to criminalize insults to the national song "Vande Mataram," offering it statutory protection equivalent to the national anthem "Jana Gana Mana".
- **NCRB Case Trends:** National Crime Records Bureau data indicates 699 cases under the Act between 2014 and 2024 (averaging 64 cases per year), peaking at 87 cases in 2022 and recording 57 cases in 2024.
- **Arrests vs. Chargesheets:** Police arrested 1,102 persons between 2014 and 2024, but chargesheets were filed against only 962 individuals, with the chargesheeting rate dropping from 53.6% in 2024 to 36.5% in 2024.
- **Low Conviction Numbers:** Out of cases completing trial between 2014 and 2024, only 60 individuals were convicted while 153 were acquitted or discharged, with acquittals consistently outnumbering convictions annually.
- **High Judicial Pendency:** Cases pending trial rose four-fold from 85 in 2014 to 358 in 2024, with the annual pendency rate crossing 90% in most years and reaching 95.2% in 2024.
- **Prosecutorial Bottlenecks:** On average, only 43 cases per year were sent to trial, and no more than 16% of trial-bound cases yielded a conviction in any single year over the 11-year period.



Essential Definitions

- **National Song vs. National Anthem:** "Jana Gana Mana" is India's officially adopted National Anthem; "Vande Mataram" holds the status of National Song, declared by the Constituent Assembly in 1950 to share equal honor historically.

- **Pendency Rate:** The percentage of criminal cases awaiting investigation by law enforcement or trial resolution by courts at the end of a given statistical year.
- **Chargesheeting Rate:** The proportion of total reported cases in which investigating authorities formally file a chargesheet in court after establishing prima facie evidence.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 51A(a):** Fundamental Duty of every Indian citizen to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals, institutions, the National Flag, and the National Anthem.
- **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971:** Statutory framework penalizing intentional disrespect to the National Flag, Constitution, and National Anthem; currently undergoing amendments regarding the National Song.
- **Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala (1986):** Landmark SC ruling holding that fundamental rights (freedom of speech/expression under Article 19(1)(a) and religious freedom under Article 25) protect non-participation in singing the National Anthem provided proper respect is shown by standing.

Conclusion

Expanding the statutory umbrella of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act to cover "Vande Mataram" reflects legislative intent to safeguard national symbols. However, persistent high pendency rates and low conviction ratios emphasize the critical necessity of police reforms and judicial capacity-building to ensure effective enforcement.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Fundamental Duties (Article 51A), statutory protections for national symbols, criminal justice system pendency, police accountability, and judicial administration issues.

6. ICMR's Oral Therapy SHetA2 Shows Promise Against Cervical Cancer

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Oral Pill Breakthrough:** An oral small-molecule therapy named SHetA2 has shown significant potential in stopping persistent Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infections from progressing into cervical cancer.
- **Mechanism of Action:** The therapy disrupts the bond between the HPV-E7 viral protein and specific human host proteins (mortalin, hsc70, and Grp78), allowing the body's natural immune defences to destroy the cancer-causing protein while sparing healthy cells.
- **High Disease Burden:** Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women in India, affecting over 79,000 women and causing 36,319 deaths in 2024, accounting for over 10% of female cancer cases.
- **Institutional Collaboration:** Discovered at Stephenson Cancer Center (University of Oklahoma), the therapy's efficacy was evaluated and validated by ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR), with both institutions holding joint intellectual property rights.

- **Commercialization & Clinical Trials:** Technology has been transferred to Emcure Pharmaceuticals for larger human trials and market development, which may take up to five years.
- **Accessibility Advantages:** As a chemically manufactured, low-weight oral drug, it promises higher affordability than biologics or immunotherapies and lowers hospitalization burdens.

Essential Definitions

- **SHetA2:** A synthetic small-molecule compound designed to selectively target viral oncoproteins without harming healthy surrounding tissues.
- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV):** A viral infection responsible for approximately 85% of cervical cancer cases through persistent oncogenic infection.
- **Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN):** Pre-cancerous lesions on the surface of the cervix that have the potential to turn into invasive cervical cancer if left untreated.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 21:** Guarantees the Right to Life and Personal Liberty, which includes access to affordable, quality healthcare and life-saving medical innovations.
- **Article 47 (Directive Principles):** Places a fundamental duty on the State to improve public health, secure nutrition, and raise standard of living for all citizens.
- **National Health Policy, 2017:** Focuses on preventive and curative healthcare for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including early screening for female-specific cancers (cervical, breast, and oral).
- **Patents Act, 1970 & Technology Transfer Rules:** Framework enabling public research institutes like ICMR to partner with private pharmaceutical firms for drug development, clinical trials, and commercialization.

Conclusion

The development of SHetA2 represents a significant advancement in non-invasive, affordable oncological care in India. Integrating non-vaccine oral therapies alongside early screening methods (Pap smear, HPV DNA testing) and HPV vaccination can drastically reduce India's cervical cancer burden.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance & Social Justice):** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, public health initiatives, and healthcare accessibility.
- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology):** Recent developments and applications in biotechnology, indigenization of technology, intellectual property rights (IPR), and management of non-communicable diseases.

7. Urban Governance Deficit and Fire Safety In India

Key Highlights & Summary

- Recent tragic incidents, including the June 2026 Aliganj fire in Lucknow and earlier disasters in Delhi, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu, highlight systemic failures in urban safety regulations and enforcement across India.
- Despite widespread availability of advanced surveillance technologies such as satellite imagery, drones, and GIS mapping, urban hazards persist due to deep-rooted corruption, political patronage, and vote-bank pressures.
- Fragmentation of administrative authority among multiple uncoordinated bodies creates an accountability vacuum, preventing effective local governance and proactive disaster mitigation.
- Bureaucratic self-inquiries often shield higher-level political and administrative functionaries, replacing genuine systemic reform with superficial outrage management.
- Empowering urban local bodies, ensuring fearless enforcement of building norms, and prioritizing human safety over political expediency are critical steps for sustainable urban development.



Essential Definitions

- **Urban Governance Deficit:** The failure of municipal and state institutions to deliver basic civic services, enforce safety regulations, and maintain accountability in urban areas.
- **Accountability Vacuum:** A regulatory void caused by overlapping jurisdictions among multiple agencies, making it difficult to assign responsibility for systemic failures.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Seventy-Fourth Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992:** Conferred constitutional status to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to strengthen grassroots democracy, though effective devolution of financial and administrative powers remains incomplete.
- **National Building Code (NBC) of India:** Provides comprehensive guidelines for fire safety, structural design, and hazard prevention in buildings, which are routinely flouted due to corrupt enforcement practices.
- **State Municipal Corporation Acts & Fire Safety Laws:** Empower local authorities to inspect buildings, issue safety clearances, and penalize unauthorized constructions.

Conclusion

Urban safety crises in India are symptoms of a deeper structural malady characterized by fragmented authority, regulatory apathy, and compromised enforcement. True urban reform requires moving beyond ornamental smart city schemes to establish empowered, transparent, and strictly accountable local institutions capable of safeguarding human lives.

UPSC Relevance

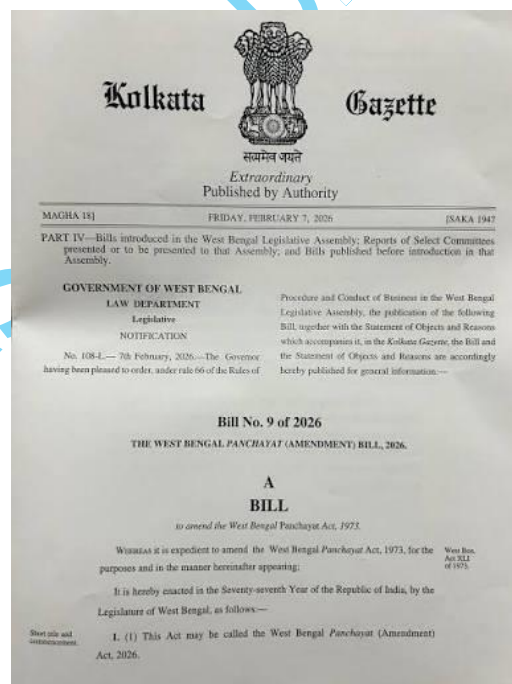
- **General Studies Paper II:** Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, challenges pertaining to federalism, devolution of powers up to local levels, and challenges in governance.

- **General Studies Paper III:** Disaster management, urban planning, challenges of rapid urbanization, infrastructure management, and internal security challenges linked to institutional corruption.

8. Decentralization vs. Bureaucracy: The West Bengal Panchayat Amendment Crisis

Key Highlights & Summary

- In July 2026, the West Bengal government stripped elected panchayat pradhans and municipal chairpersons of key administrative and financial powers, shifting birth and death registrations to dedicated government officers.
- The West Bengal Panchayat (Second Amendment) Bill, 2026, transferred cheque-signing and financial disbursement rights from elected heads to bureaucrats like panchayat secretaries and block development officers.
- The state government justified the changes as a necessary measure to curb widespread corruption, illegal commissions, and irregularities tied to local resource management.
- The administrative shift follows a special intensive revision (SIR) and is intended to tighten scrutiny over vital records, amid heightened political focus on identifying illegal immigrants.
- Because nearly 90% of local tier representatives belong to the opposition, critics view the centralization of power as a strategic political maneuver to bypass grassroots leadership ahead of the 2028 elections.



Essential Definitions

- **Grassroots Democracy:** A system of governance that emphasizes popular participation and decentralized decision-making through local self-government institutions.
- **Bureaucratic Centralization:** The concentration of administrative and financial authority within state-appointed government officials rather than elected representatives.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Seventy-Third Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992:** Granted constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), establishing a mandatory three-tier structure and devolving powers to local bodies for economic development and social justice.
- **West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973:** A pioneering state legislation enacted prior to the central amendment that laid the foundation for rural local self-governance in West Bengal.
- **West Bengal Panchayat (Second Amendment) Bill, 2026:** Recent state legislation that modifies the 1973 Act by reallocating financial disbursement and statutory registration duties from elected pradhans to bureaucrats.

Conclusion

The curtailment of panchayat powers in West Bengal highlights the ongoing tension between administrative efficiency and grassroots democracy. While combating corruption and ensuring transparent service delivery are critical governance objectives, undermining elected local leadership risks compromising the core constitutional intent of decentralized self-governance.

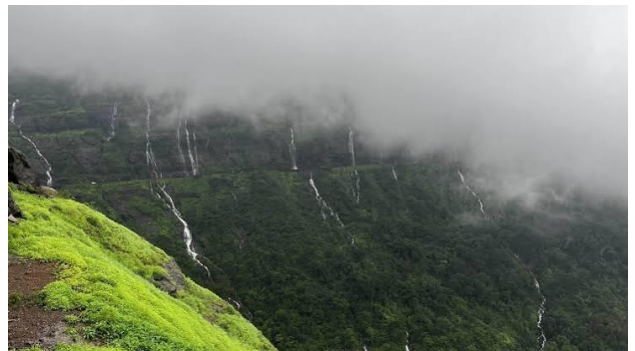
UPSC Relevance

- **General Studies Paper II:** Structure, organization, and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Ministries and Departments of the Government; Devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.
- **General Studies Paper III:** Inclusive growth and issues arising from it, challenges of governance, transparency, and accountability in public administration.

9. Centre Reissues Draft Notification on Western Ghats Eco-Zone

Key Highlights & Summary

- The Union Environment Ministry reissued for the seventh time its draft notification proposing an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) of 56825.7 sq km across six Western Ghats states after previous drafts lapsed.
- The latest draft maintains an open 60-day window for public objections and reiterates strict prohibitions on mining, quarrying, sand mining, new thermal power plants, and large construction projects within the ESA.
- The persistent stalemate stems from long-standing disagreements between the Centre and six states—Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu—regarding specific village boundaries and developmental impacts.
- Historical context traces the conservation debate back to the 2011 Madhav Gadgil Committee report, which recommended treating the entire mountain chain as sensitive, and the 2013 Kasturirangan Committee report, which advocated protecting 37% or 59940 sq km of the region.
- State governments remain deeply concerned that the ESA declaration will severely restrict local agriculture, existing plantations, vital infrastructure, and rural economic development.



Essential Definitions

- **Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA):** A region notified under environmental protection laws to regulate development activities, safeguard fragile ecosystems, and prevent ecological degradation.
- **Carrying Capacity:** The maximum population or level of industrial and agricultural activity that an ecosystem can sustainably support without permanent environmental damage.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986:** Empowers the Central Government to restrict industrial operations, mining, and other developmental activities in areas declared as ecologically sensitive.
- **Article 48A and Article 51A(g):** Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties under the Constitution of India that mandate the state and citizens to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests and wildlife.

Conclusion

The repeated reissuance of the Western Ghats draft notification underscores the delicate balancing act between ecological preservation and developmental imperatives in India. Resolving this prolonged impasse requires inclusive consensus-building, scientific reassessment of ground realities, and participatory planning that addresses state concerns while safeguarding a critical global biodiversity hotspot.

UPSC Relevance

- **General Studies Paper III:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment, and disaster management challenges linked to ecologically fragile zones.
- **General Studies Paper II:** Inter-state coordination, federal dynamics, and challenges in implementing central environmental policies across states.

10. Study Finds Multiple Dengue Virus Strains Circulating Together in India

Key Highlights & Summary

- A recent two-year nationwide surveillance study (2023-2025) by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) revealed that all four dengue virus serotypes are circulating simultaneously across multiple parts of India.
- The study analysed 6,889 laboratory-confirmed samples from 45 laboratories across 25 States and Union Territories, identifying DENV-2 as the predominant strain accounting for over half of all infections.
- Approximately 7% or nearly 1 in 14 patients were infected with two or more dengue serotypes concurrently, a condition strongly linked to severe disease manifestations such as dangerously low platelet counts and bleeding complications.
- Eight States and Union Territories reported the presence of all four serotypes, while 15 reported three circulating simultaneously, signaling the emergence of hyper-endemicity in the country.
- The findings pose fresh challenges for public health authorities, vaccine rollouts, and vector control strategies, emphasizing the urgent need for continuous serotype surveillance and integrated disease management.

Essential Definitions

- **Hyper-Endemicity:** A condition where multiple strains or serotypes of a pathogen circulate simultaneously within a region at high and constant levels.

- **Serotype:** A distinct variation within a species of bacteria or virus or among immune cells of different individuals, classified on the basis of their surface antigens.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897:** Empowers central and state governments to take special measures and prescribe regulations to contain the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases.
- **Article 21 and Article 47:** The Right to Life under Article 21 includes the right to health, while Article 47 of the Directive Principles of State Policy directs the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.



Conclusion

The simultaneous circulation of multiple dengue virus strains and the emergence of hyper-endemicity in India represent a critical public health challenge. Addressing this evolving threat requires bolstering genomic surveillance, accelerating indigenous vaccine development, and strengthening vector control infrastructure to prevent severe morbidity and mortality.

UPSC Relevance

- **General Studies Paper II:** Issues relating to development and management of social sector or services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources, and issues arising out of disease management.
- **General Studies Paper III:** Science and Technology-developments and their applications and effects in everyday life, health security, and management of public health crises.

11. India Curtailed Solar Power to Maintain Grid Security

Key Highlights & Summary

- India curtailed 8,133 gigawatt-hour (GWh) of solar power during the April-June quarter to maintain grid security and stability.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy informed Parliament that the restriction was driven by a mismatch between the commissioning of transmission lines and renewable energy projects.
- Monthly curtailment figures stood at 2,417 GWh in April, 3,235 GWh in May, and 2,481 GWh in June.
- As of June 30, India's total installed solar capacity reached 162.15 GW, comprising 125.6 GW of utility-scale projects, 30.11 GW of rooftop projects, and 6.43 GW of off-grid projects.

- Under the PM Surya Ghar scheme launched in February 2024, over 39.7 lakh rooftop solar systems have been installed, with ₹27,343.9 crore disbursed as Central Financial Assistance until June 27.

Essential Definitions

- Power Curtailment:** The deliberate reduction of output from renewable energy generators by grid operators below what could have otherwise been produced, in order to balance supply and demand.
- Grid Stability:** The ability of an electric power system to maintain a state of equilibrium and continuous operation during normal conditions and sudden disturbances.

Wasted energy

Restriction due to mismatch between commissioning of transmission lines and renewable energy projects, MoS tells House



■ Curtailment is when power-grid operators limit output from generating sources

■ 2,417 GWh of solar energy curtailment was carried out in April this year

■ 3,235 GWh of solar energy was restricted in May and 2,481 GWh in June

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- Electricity Act, 2003:** The principal legal framework governing the power sector in India, promoting grid integration, renewable energy generation, and power trading under regulatory oversight.
- National Electricity Policy & Tariff Policy:** Direct central and state regulators to facilitate renewable energy integration, grid modernization, and optimal transmission planning.

Conclusion

The large-scale curtailment of solar power underscores critical bottlenecks in transmission infrastructure and grid management amidst rapidly expanding renewable capacities. Overcoming these challenges requires accelerating transmission line commissioning, deploying advanced energy storage systems, and enhancing grid flexibility to fully harness India's green energy potential.

UPSC Relevance

- General Studies Paper III:** Infrastructure: Energy, ports, roads, airports, railways, etc.; and environmental conservation, renewable energy targets, and climate change mitigation challenges.
- General Studies Paper II:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

12. Tamil Nadu CM Urges Review of Centre's Mekedatu Dam Stand

Key Highlights & Summary

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging the Union government to withdraw a recent parliamentary reply by the Ministry of Jal Shakti regarding the Mekedatu dam project.
- The controversial Centre's reply in the Rajya Sabha stated that the Supreme Court's 2018 judgment does not expressly require Karnataka to obtain the consent of lower riparian states before building structures across the Cauvery.

- CM Vijay contended that the Centre's stance overlooks settled legal principles, citing the Supreme Court Constitution Bench ruling in the Alamatti dam case which mandates downstream consent.
- He emphasized that the Mekedatu project cannot be evaluated merely as an engineering proposal and must be strictly tested against the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) final award.
- The letter highlights specific clauses of the CWDT award, including Clause XI and Clause XX, which prohibit upper riparian states from altering scheduled water deliveries without mutual agreement.

Essential Definitions

- **Riparian States:** States through which or along which a natural watercourse, such as an interstate river, flows, carrying shared rights and obligations regarding water use.
- **Lower Riparian State:** A downstream state situated closer to the mouth of a river, which is heavily dependent on the upstream flow regulated by upper riparian jurisdictions.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 262 of the Constitution:** Empowers Parliament to provide by law for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution, or control of waters of any interstate river.
- **Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act, 1956:** Provides the legal framework for the constitution of ad hoc tribunals to resolve water-sharing disputes between states.
- **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal Final Award:** Affirmed and modified by the Supreme Court in its 2018 judgment, outlining precise water allocations, regulated flow regimes, and mandatory consultation protocols.

Conclusion

The dispute over the proposed Mekedatu balancing reservoir highlights the persistent friction in interstate river water governance in India. Protecting the sanctity of judicial pronouncements and tribunal awards is vital to ensuring cooperative federalism and safeguarding the livelihood rights of lower riparian populations.

UPSC Relevance

- **General Studies Paper II:** Inter-state relations, mechanisms for dispute redressal, separation of powers, and the role of the judiciary and tribunals in federal governance.
- **General Studies Paper III:** Conservation, environmental impact management, and water resource planning across river basins.

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