



DAILY U.P.S.C EDITION

THE HINDU

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

Current Affairs & Editorial

FRIDAY, 3 JULY 2026

COMPILED BY
SAPNA CHAUHAN

VEDANTA COACHING ACADEMY & LIBRARY

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DAILY THE HINDU ANALYSIS · FRIDAY, 3 JULY 2026



Contents

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 17 Edition Date: Friday, 3 July 2026  Compiled by: Sapna Chauhan

- 01 India–Japan: Free Indo-Pacific as Shared Priority**
GS2 · International Relations
- 02 Vikram-1: India's First Private Orbital Rocket**
GS3 · Science & Technology
- 03 NIMHANS iSLEEPS Sleep-Disorder Database**
GS2 · Health / GS3 · S&T
- 04 Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP)**
GS3 · Infrastructure & Environment
- 05 Right to Fair Trial, UAPA & Article 21**
GS2 · Polity & Governance
- 06 GST Surge & Imported Inflation**
GS3 · Economy
- 07 A Hold on AI — UN Scientific Panel Report**
GS3 · Science & Technology
- 08 Mandsaur HPV Vaccination Model**
GS2 · Health / Social Justice

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

Each topic pairs the original **Hindu** clipping and infographic with structured notes, a **Static / Syllabus Linkage** factbox, and prelims-ready value additions. The booklet closes with **2 fresh Mains questions** (8 & 12 marks) with answer-pointers, a **10-question Prelims MCQ set** with answer key, and one **Essay** prompt with a thought map.

01

Free Indo-Pacific a Priority for India & Japan

GS2 · IR

Page 1

The Hindu

Free Indo-Pacific a priority for India and Japan: Modi

During first visit to India as PM, Takaichi says both countries are 'perfectly aligned' and stresses the need for 'strategic cooperation'; both sides sealed 129 MoUs on technology, investment and AI

Saurabh Trivedi
Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

A "free and rules-based Indo-Pacific" is a common priority for India and Japan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday while welcoming his Japanese counterpart, Sanae Takaichi. Mr. Modi said India and Japan would jointly develop technologies that would help in maintaining maritime security and "regional peace".

"India and Japan are among the biggest economies of the world. A free, prosperous and rules-based Indo-Pacific is our shared priority. We will jointly pave the way for peace, stability and progress for the entire region," Mr. Modi said.



Boosting ties: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi in New Delhi. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

"In the field of defence, India and Japan have done the first agreement for co-development of projects. This agreement on naval radio antenna will open a new chapter of defence technology partnership. Now, we will jointly develop

such technologies that will help in maintaining regional peace, maritime security, and strengthen rules-based order," Mr. Modi added.

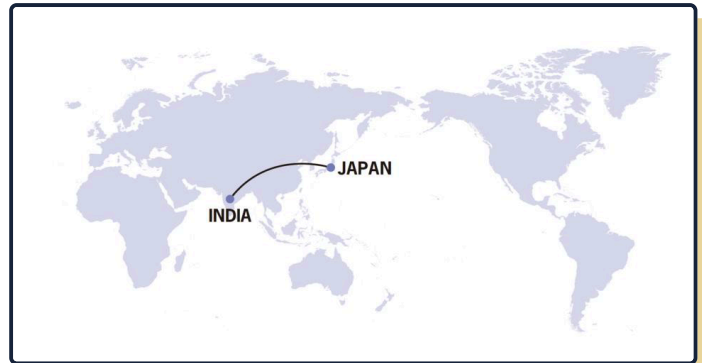
Ms. Takaichi, who arrived in New Delhi on July 1 for her first visit to India as

Prime Minister, renewed her call for an updated free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and emphasised the need for "strategic cooperation". She said the two countries were "perfectly aligned".

Mr. Modi and Ms. Takaichi attended an economic session in which Indian and Japanese companies sealed 129 memoranda of understanding on technology, investment, and artificial intelligence.

According to a document shared by the External Affairs Ministry, Japan is on track to invest \$1 trillion across States, including Haryana, Odisha, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and those in the northeastern region.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 14



India–Japan strategic axis in the Indo-Pacific

The Hindu — Modi & Takaichi in New Delhi; 129 MoUs signed

WHY IN NEWS

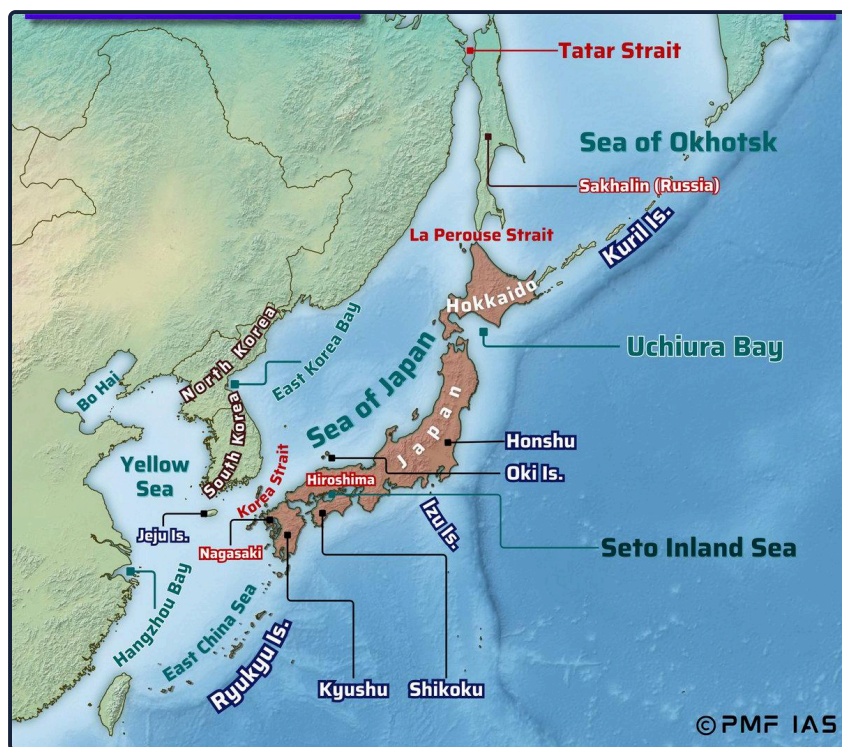
During Japanese PM **Sanae Takaichi's** first visit to India, PM Modi called a "free and rules-based Indo-Pacific" a shared priority. Both sides sealed **129 MoUs** on technology, investment and AI, and concluded their first defence **co-development** pact (naval radio antenna).

- ◆ India and Japan will **jointly develop technologies** to strengthen maritime security and "regional peace"; Takaichi termed the two nations "perfectly aligned".
- ◆ Japan is on track to invest **\$1 trillion** across Indian States — including Haryana, Odisha, Maharashtra, Gujarat and the North-East — per an MEA document.
- ◆ The naval radio-antenna agreement opens a new chapter in defence-technology partnership, moving ties beyond buyer-seller toward joint production.

01 | India–Japan · Strategic Architecture

GS2 · IR

Value Addition



Maritime geography of Japan — seas, straits & island chains

◆ DEFENCE & ECONOMIC PILLARS

- ◆ **Joint exercises:** JIMEX (Navy), Dharma Guardian (Army), Veer Guardian (Air Force) and the multilateral **Malabar** naval war games.
- ◆ **Supply chains:** Japan-India Economic Security Initiative and the trilateral **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** with Australia de-risk over-reliance on a single geography.
- ◆ **Act East Forum (2017):** drives NER development and connectivity to Southeast Asia; **JICA** funds road networks in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, including the **Dhubri–Phulbari bridge** over the Brahmaputra.

◆ THE "REALITY GAP" IN AFRICA

- ◆ The **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)** was launched to counter China's **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** — but delivery mechanisms lag.
- ◆ Japan's capital is tied up in slow JICA bureaucracy and a risk-averse private sector; India's African networks lack the reserves for heavy infrastructure — limiting joint work to minor initiatives.

02

Vikram-1: India's First Private Orbital Rocket

GS3 · S&T

Page 6

The Hindu

Vikram-1, India's first-ever privately developed orbital rocket, gears up for launch

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

India's first privately developed orbital-class rocket is all set for its maiden launch.

On Thursday, private space launch company Skyroot Aerospace, based in Hyderabad, announced that the launch window for Vikram-1's first test flight, named Mission Aagaman, is between July 12 and August 4.

It said that Test Flight-1 is targeted for no earlier than July 12, subject to the completion of assembly and testing operations at the launch site at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in



Vikram-1 sits on a launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

Sriharikota, as well as weather, safety and range clearance. The launch window extends till August 4.

The company said that Mission Aagaman, meaning 'the arrival', marks its

second mission following the successful suborbital flight of Vikram-S, the first private rocket to reach space from Indian soil, on November 18, 2022.

It said that this would be a partially commercial flight, with the company planning to commence full commercial flights after one or two successful demonstrations to orbit.

All stages of the Skyroot's Vikram-1 have been successfully integrated and stacked at the launch pad. The mission will gather critical data across propulsion, stage separation, guidance, navigation, control and overall vehicle performance.



Vikram-1 stacked on the pad at Sriharikota

The Hindu — Skyroot's Vikram-1 gears up for maiden launch

WHY IN NEWS

Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace announced that Vikram-1's first test flight — **Mission Aagaman** ("the arrival") — has a launch window of **July 12 to August 4** from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. It will be India's first privately developed **orbital-class** rocket.

- ◆ Follows the **Vikram-S** suborbital flight of **18 November 2022** — the first private rocket to reach space from Indian soil.
- ◆ A **partially commercial** flight; full commercial launches will begin after one or two successful demonstrations to orbit.
- ◆ All stages are integrated and stacked; the mission will gather data on propulsion, stage separation, guidance, navigation and control (GNC), and overall vehicle performance.
- ◆ **Orbital-class rocket**: a launch vehicle able to generate enough speed and thrust to place a payload into Earth orbit or beyond.

◆ STATIC LINKAGE — INDIA'S PRIVATE SPACE PUSH

- ◆ **IN-SPACE** (regulator/promoter) and **NSIL** (commercial arm) anchor private participation; the **Indian Space Policy 2023** opened the value chain to NGEs (Non-Govt Entities).
- ◆ Vikram-1 vs ISRO's SSLV: both target the small-satellite market, reflecting a growing commercial launch ecosystem.

03

NIMHANS iSLEEPS: Open Sleep-Disorder Database

GS2 · Health

GS3 · S&T

Page 6

NIMHANS opens 'database' to aid research on sleep disorders among stroke patients

Afshan Yasmeen

BENGALURU

A team of researchers from NIMHANS, Bengaluru, and the International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Hyderabad, has developed the first open-access Asian database of overnight sleep studies in patients with ischemic stroke.

The database, which has been made publicly available, is expected to support research on sleep disorders in stroke survivors and help improve post-stroke care.

The dataset, named iSLEEPS (Polysomnography Dataset for Sleep Analysis in Ischemic Stroke Patients), has been published in the Nature Portfolio



The database comprises 100 overnight polysomnography (PSG) recordings collected at the NIMHANS. SUDHAKARA JAIN

journal *Scientific Data*. It comprises 100 overnight polysomnography (PSG) recordings collected at the NIMHANS between September 2018 and December 2021.

Each recording includes manually scored sleep stages, respiratory events,

oxygen desaturation episodes, periodic limb movements and clinical information, all annotated, according to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine's 2017 guidelines.

Srijithesh P.R., professor of neurology at NIMHANS and one of the cor-

responding authors of the study, told *The Hindu* that the project was conceived to address a major gap in sleep medicine research. "Sleep-disordered breathing is extremely common after ischemic stroke, but researchers have had very limited access to large, well-annotated datasets from stroke patients... We wanted to create a high-quality resource that researchers across the world can use," he said.

"Sleep... plays an important role in brain repair, memory consolidation and functional recovery after stroke. If sleep disorders... are not recognised and treated, they can adversely affect rehabilitation and even increase the risk of recurrent stroke," he said.

The Hindu — NIMHANS opens a database to aid stroke-sleep research

WHY IN NEWS

Researchers from **NIMHANS, Bengaluru** and **IIIT-Hyderabad** developed the first open-access Asian database of overnight sleep studies in patients with **ischemic stroke** — to support post-stroke care.

- ◆ Named **iSLEEPS** (Polysomnography Dataset for Sleep Analysis in Ischemic Stroke Patients); published in Nature Portfolio's **Scientific Data**.
- ◆ Comprises **100 overnight polysomnography (PSG)** recordings collected at NIMHANS between **Sept 2018 – Dec 2021**, annotated per American Academy of Sleep Medicine 2017 guidelines.
- ◆ Sleep-disordered breathing is common after ischemic stroke; sleep supports brain repair, memory consolidation and functional recovery — untreated disorders raise recurrence risk.

◆ STATIC LINKAGE — NIMHANS & MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

- ◆ NIMHANS established **27 Dec 1974** (merger of AIIMH 1954 & Mysore Mental Hospital 1847); the **NIMHANS Act 2012** declared it an Institute of National Importance.
- ◆ **Union Budget 2026-27**: provides for a **NIMHANS-2** and upgrades to institutes at Ranchi & Tezpur.
- ◆ **Tele MANAS** (24×7 tele-mental-health helpline); **NSPS 2022** targets a 10% cut in suicide mortality by 2030; mental illness is covered under **PM-JAY** (Rs 5 lakh/family) and recognised under the **RPwD Act**.

04

Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP)

GS3 · Infra/Env

Infographic



Course of the Siang — pre-feasibility survey sites in Arunachal Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

The proposed ₹1,13,000-crore SUMP remains in a tense standoff with indigenous **Adi and Galo** tribes in Arunachal Pradesh over displacement and a deep trust deficit.

- ◆ A mega hydro-electric and **flood-control** facility with an installed capacity of **11,000–11,200 MW**.
- ◆ Consolidates two earlier proposals into a single storage-type reservoir (**280–300 m** height), designed to generate **47 billion kWh/year** and hold a **9-billion-cubic-metre** reservoir.

◆ GEOGRAPHY — THE SIANG / BRAHMAPUTRA SYSTEM

- ◆ **Location:** near Geku village, Upper Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.
- ◆ **River:** the Siang enters India near **Gelling**; upstream in Tibet it is the **Yarlung Tsangpo** (rises at ~5,300 m in the Chemayungdung range near Mansarovar).
- ◆ **Confluences:** flows 197 km to meet the Shiyomi, then joins the Dibang and Lohit in Assam to form the **Brahmaputra**.
- ◆ **Risks:** fragile seismotectonic zone — landslides and quakes can trigger natural dams and sudden floods; downstream alluvial plains support kiwi, mandarin orange and large cardamom.

05

The Right to a Fair Trial at the Crossroads

GS2 · Polity

Page 10

Editorial

The right to a fair trial at the crossroads

When, earlier this year, the Supreme Court of India denied bail to Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the 2020 Delhi Riots cases (while granting bail to five other individuals in the same case), one key question that arose was this: "how long is too long" for people to be kept in jail without being found guilty of an offence? At the time of the Court's judgment, Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam had spent more than five years in jail without trial; at the time of writing, that period is approaching six years.

Bail, delay, and rights

In its own prior judgments, the Court had noted that an extended delay in trial would trigger an accused's right to personal liberty under Article 21. Thus, even though the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) has strict requirements for delay, these statutory restrictions could not override the constitutional (and indeed, human) right to personal liberty.

However, in denying bail to Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, another Bench of the Court noted that a delay in the trial could not create an iron-clad right to bail, but would have to be weighed against other factors such as the gravity of the offence and which of the parties was "responsible" for the delay. With respect, these observations appear to miss the point. Issues such as the gravity of an offence are factors used to determine, in the first instance, whether or not a case for bail is made out. To then invoke the gravity of the offence—which, at the stage of bail, is only an allegation made by the state—to override the question of delay essentially creates a sliding scale under which certain individuals can be kept in jail for decades simply because they have been "accused" of grave offences.

Indeed, this has happened: people accused under the UAPA have been kept in jail for more than two decades before eventually being acquitted, with the best years of their lives robbed from them. Indeed, the very fact that this has happened on more than one occasion ought to have given the Court pause.

Nor does the argument that the accused themselves might be responsible for delaying the trial hold any water. Whatever applications an accused (or, for that matter, the state) may make,



Gautam Bhatia
Delhi-based lawyer

ultimately it is the judge who controls the courtroom and the pace of the trial, and it is the judge upon whom the ultimate responsibility rests to ensure that trials are completed within a reasonable timeframe.

Indeed, it was clear that the Court itself recognised some of these issues when, in a rare move, another two-judge Bench recently openly criticised the Delhi Riots bail rejection as being contrary to established precedent and reiterated the fundamental principle that, under a Constitution committed to the rule of law, individuals cannot be incarcerated indefinitely without a trial.

In response, and in another case, the Delhi Riots Bench "referred" this question to the Chief Justice to constitute a larger Bench to resolve. With respect, the very fact that the Supreme Court is effectively debating whether people who have spent more than half a decade in jail (the amount of time that another famous political prisoner, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, did) should or should not be released, is a cause for consternation.

Bail and legal inconsistency

In the meantime, at the level of the trial court and the High Courts, conflict and inconsistency in judicial decisions continue to persist. Recently, the High Court of Delhi (correctly) granted bail to the Kashmiri human rights activist, Khurram Parvez, who had been incarcerated for more than four years without trial. This length of time in prison without trial weighed heavily with the High Court in deciding to grant bail. What is curious, however, is that the judge who (correctly) granted Khurram Parvez bail had denied bail in the Delhi Riots cases the previous year, when the accused in that case had already spent more than four years in jail. Nor is this the only instance of the same judge speaking with different judicial voices: in the Delhi Riots cases themselves, on the same underlying facts, the same judge delivered opposing bail judgments a year apart.

It is trite to say that no case is identical to the other. On an issue as basic as pre-trial incarceration, repeated inconsistencies across cases and courts undermine the rule of law and, ultimately, damage the cause of fundamental

rights and individual liberty. These questions assume particular significance because laws such as the UAPA, in particular, have an undeniably political character, and it has been demonstrated across the world that states are only too happy to interpret these laws in a way that blurs the line between political dissent and what the law defines as "terrorism". Recent attempts in the United Kingdom and the United States around dissent linked to Israel's genocide in Palestine are examples of this.

What the judiciary must ensure

In such a context, it becomes particularly important for the judiciary to ensure that such laws are not weaponised. While legal interpretation is subjective, one thing is—and should be—crystal clear: that the state cannot keep people behind bars for years without trial. It makes a mockery of having a system based on the rule of law, and one that—to use the old adage—entrenches the process as the punishment.

It is unclear whether—or when—the Court's larger Bench will opine on the issue. In the meantime, however, there remain contentious UAPA cases, where individuals continue to be imprisoned without trial, and their time spent in custody continues to increase with no resolution in sight. Indeed, one such case is that of Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, the last two individuals among the accused student activists who remain in custody in the "Delhi Riots cases". After the denial of bail by the Supreme Court, the case is once again coming up before the trial court this week; in the meantime, five years in prison have turned into six, and the cost—both to the lives of the imprisoned individuals and to the rule of law—has continued to become steeper.

Ultimately, therefore, this issue is both about individual human lives and about our commitment as a society to human and democratic values. As these cases continue to arise, the courts will once again have an opportunity to reaffirm these values, whether in individual bail cases before trial courts or when it comes to laying down the law before the Court. It is to be hoped that this happens, and that the cycle of endless imprisonment without trial is broken.

The Hindu — Gautam Bhatia on bail, delay and Article 21

WHY IN NEWS

After the Supreme Court denied bail to two accused in the 2020 Delhi Riots cases (who have spent nearly **six years** in jail without trial), the question resurfaced: "**how long is too long**" to detain a person not yet found guilty?

- ◆ Prior judgments held that extended trial delay triggers the **right to personal liberty** under **Article 21**; even **UAPA's** strict bail conditions cannot override it.
- ◆ A conflicting Bench weighed delay against the "gravity of the offence"—but gravity is what a case is *for*, so using it to defeat delay risks indefinite detention of the merely accused.
- ◆ The issue has been referred to a **larger Bench**; meanwhile judicial inconsistency across courts persists (e.g. divergent bail outcomes on similar facts).

◆ **STATIC LINKAGE — UAPA, 1967**

- ◆ Aims to prevent unlawful activities; the Centre can declare an activity unlawful via Official Gazette. Highest punishments: death and life imprisonment.
- ◆ Applies to Indian and foreign nationals, even for offences committed abroad; charge-sheet window is up to **180 days** (extendable).

06

Unwelcome Surge: GST Buoyancy & Imported Inflation

GS3 · Economy

Page 10

Editorial

Unwelcome surge

The buoyancy in GST collections is spurred by imported inflation

India's June GST collections rose 13.9% year-on-year to ₹1.95 lakh crore, driven largely by import IGST, which surged 34.6% compared with June 2025, up from 17.2% growth in May. Domestic GST collections grew by a more modest 6.5%, suggesting that the sharp increase in overall collections owes less to a broad-based improvement in domestic value addition. Some economists have argued that this reflects stronger imports of capital goods and industrial inputs. However, May petroleum products' trade data and Q1 FY27 data on the performance of the eight core industries, point to a rather different explanation. June GST collections reflect economic activity during May. While crude and petroleum products constituted a 54% rise this May (YoY) in merchandise imports by value, the other chunk was gold, which constituted another 34% rise. The surge in gold price, by nearly 60% between last May and this May, suggests hedging during difficult times, rather than broad-based economic activity. To stem gold imports, the government hiked its import duty from 6% to 15% on May 13, which likely added to the May import GST kitty. This period also coincided with the rupee depreciating by almost 6% against the U.S. dollar since late February. This coupled with a spike in freight charges, and a 14.5% rise on non-oil imports in May at elevated global prices me-

spike in freight charges, and a 14.5% rise on non-oil imports in May at elevated global prices mechanically raised the June tax base. This suggests that much of the import GST rise is driven by imported inflation and currency depreciation rather than domestic production growth, indicating an unwelcome increase due to higher prices.

Read alongside the performance of India's eight core industries, which expanded by only about 2.8% in Q1 FY27 compared with around 6% in the corresponding period last year, the domestic economy appears more subdued. Growth has been expectedly weak in crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilizers and electricity. The latest HSBC Manufacturing PMI reading of 54.2 likewise points to steady but moderating factory activity, marking the second-lowest expansion in 13 months. These figures come as India marks nine years of GST as a unified destination-based indirect tax. The government can point to the expansion of the tax base from about 66 lakh taxpayers in 2017 to over 1.65 crore today, reflecting better compliance, greater formalisation, and faster refunds, though input tax credit, litigation and federal balance in revenue sharing issues remain unresolved. GST has strengthened India's indirect tax architecture. Yet, the June numbers are a reminder that a growing share of the recent buoyancy appears to have been underwritten by imported inflation and a depreciating rupee rather than stronger domestic value addition.

GST buoyancy & imported inflation

WHY IN NEWS

India's June GST collections rose **13.9% YoY** to **₹1.95 lakh crore** — but the rise was driven largely by **import IGST** (up 34.6%), suggesting the buoyancy owes more to **imported inflation** than to broad-based domestic value addition.

The Hindu editorial —
"Unwelcome surge"

- ◆ Domestic GST grew a modest **6.5%**; June collections reflect May's economic activity.
- ◆ In May imports, crude/petroleum products rose 54% (YoY) and **gold ~34%**; gold prices jumped nearly 60% YoY — signalling **hedging**, not broad demand.
- ◆ Import duty on gold was hiked **6% → 15%** (May 13); the rupee depreciated ~6% vs the USD since late February, mechanically enlarging the tax base.

◆ READ ALONGSIDE — CORE-SECTOR SIGNALS

- ◆ Eight core industries grew only **~2.8% in Q1 FY27** (vs ~6% a year earlier); HSBC Manufacturing **PMI at 54.2** — second-lowest expansion in 13 months.
- ◆ GST turns **nine years** old: taxpayer base up from ~66 lakh (2017) to over **1.65 crore**, but ITC friction, litigation and revenue-sharing balance remain unresolved.
- ◆ **Takeaway:** a growing share of recent buoyancy is underwritten by imported inflation and a weaker rupee, not stronger domestic production.

07

A Hold on AI: UN Scientific Panel Report

GS3 · S&T

Page 10

Editorial

A hold on AI

AI holds scientific promise, but it should not unfold unchecked

The UN's Preliminary Report of the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI drives at a few fault lines in the rapid investment into and proliferation of AI technologies: the Global South-Global North divide, with the latter poised to take the lion's share of the benefits of the diffusion of advanced AI models in different industries; and the challenge poorer countries face in regulating models far more advanced than what their own AI ecosystems can develop. These divides force emerging countries to choose between capital-intensive undertakings to get a seat at the table, or to accept the hand dealt to them by the half-dozen companies whose decisions shape AI access and use. These divisions are all the more urgent when seen in the light of what makes a country a voice that matters in AI: abundant electricity, highly capitalised firms that employ scarce talent with high salaries, and a drive to plow through policy resistance with a competitive zeal to outdo last month's capabilities. While the report highlights AI technologies' transformative potential in scientific research, its development is far more rapid than that of social media — an industry that had time to act responsibly yet deformed public discourse and affected democracies, even as people were more or less able to tell what was going on in real time. It is unclear whether individual countries, even China or the U.S., have enough power to meaningfully arrest how AI develops.

AI firms acting irresponsibly have already caused harms that would not be tolerated in any other industry. AI models have ensnared teenagers and adults in parasocial fantasies that have sometimes turned fatal; they have flattened the world wide web, grievously injuring the news media's ability to deploy resources in their respective missions to inform the public; they have unleashed an epidemic of deepfakes, undermining trust in the written word and images alike; and they have deeply intertwined their promises of Artificial General Intelligence with global financial systems, with possible catastrophic economic consequences. The most important task for governments is how to hold these firms to account when needed, as taking a backseat on this conversation — even if industry leaders ignore the Global South's concerns — carries far greater costs. India has already experienced the cost of not asserting itself in the technology development of the decade: even as Anthropic's Mythos and Fable held out the tantalising promise of securing vast cyber systems, the U.S. pulled access, leaving the firms that had these models to ponder the risk of a different model succeeding at attacking their infrastructure. There is a limit to visions of AI as a geostrategic asset; much needs to be done to address its potential for broad damage.

AI must not unfold unchecked

WHY IN NEWS

The UN's Preliminary Report of the **Independent International Scientific Panel on AI** flags fault lines in the rapid spread of AI — chiefly the **Global South-Global North divide** in who reaps the benefits and who can regulate models more advanced than their own ecosystems.

The Hindu editorial —
"A hold on AI"

- ◆ Emerging economies must choose between capital-intensive bids for "a seat at the table" or accepting terms set by a **half-dozen companies** that shape AI access and use.
- ◆ What makes a country matter in AI: abundant **electricity**, highly-capitalised firms, scarce high-paid talent, and relentless competitive drive.
- ◆ AI's development outpaces even social media's rise — leaving little time for societies to adjust in real time.

◆ **HARMS & THE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION**

- ◆ Documented harms: parasocial fantasies (sometimes fatal), degradation of the open web and news media, a **deepfake epidemic** eroding trust, and AGI promises entangled with global finance.
- ◆ The central task for governments is **holding firms to account**; a passive stance carries far greater costs than engagement.
- ◆ India learned the cost of not asserting itself: when access to advanced cyber-defensive models was withdrawn, dependent firms were left exposed — a caution against treating AI purely as a geostrategic asset.

08

A Shot at Life: Mandsaur's HPV Vaccination Model

GS2 · Health

Page 10

Article

A shot at life, Mandsaur's model for HPV vaccination

The birth of Savita (name changed) in Mandsaur district, Madhya Pradesh, 14 years ago was a moment of celebration for her family. The Banchhadia community she was born into — a denotified tribe in Madhya Pradesh traditionally associated with sex work — welcomes the birth of girls, who are often viewed as future breadwinners. Yet, when a team of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinators recently approached Savita's family, they were apprehensive. "Will she be able to work?" they asked candidly, worried about the vaccine's future impact.

Their hesitation was neither unexpected nor isolated. Although cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among Indian women, preventive health-care initiatives often grapple with low levels of awareness and social stigma. Cervical cancer vaccination faces a distinct set of challenges — low cultural sensitivity around sexual health and gender bias, coupled with vaccine hesitancy — making it a pressing public health concern.

In light of this, the Government of India launched a nationwide cervical cancer campaign on February 28, 2020, providing free HPV vaccinations to 1.15 crore girls aged 14–15 years. India bears a quarter of the global cervical cancer burden, reporting over 1.2 lakh new cases and 80,000 deaths annually. Since nearly 95% of cases are caused by high-risk HPV strains, vaccination offers a significant preventive breakthrough.

From data to coverage
To implement the programme effectively and inclusively, the Mandsaur district administration adopted a data-driven, decentralised and adaptive strategy. For exhaustive coverage, the most vulnerable and often overlooked populations were targeted first. Girls from difficult-to-reach communities — Banchhadia, nomadic tribes, urban slums, and school dropouts — became the starting point. These "missed populations" are at greater risk of falling off the radar of government service delivery.

At the grassroots, the challenge is often not vaccine hesitancy but data invisibility. Leveraging



Aditi Garg
Collector and District
Magistrate, Mandsaur,
Madhya Pradesh

multiple government databases — Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), SAMAGRA MP (a citizen-centric social security platform by the Government of Madhya Pradesh) and Ladli Laxmi Yojana hyper-localised target lists were created. Fragmented records were transformed into actionable intelligence. Door-to-door surveys and tracking through SAMAGRA IDs ensured that eligible girls did not fall through statistical gaps. School and anganwadi enrolment gaps over the years were meticulously analysed to prepare village-level Master Line Lists. Rapid identification of "low-coverage/high-resistance" areas enabled coordinated micro-planning. Mapping vulnerable groups geographically also enabled customising communication strategies, tailored to cultural sensitivities.

Reducing barriers through "nudges"

Behavioural insights played a pivotal role in grassroots saturation. The district relied on the "Nudge Approach" that helped design an environment where vaccination became the default choice. This helped in effectively breaking down grassroots barriers such as reluctance, inertia, social discomfort. Health-care workers informed families that their daughters were due for vaccination, rather than asking them to choose to vaccinate. Families who refused vaccinations received repeated counselling visits by health-care teams. Schools and local bodies arranged transportation to eliminate logistical barriers, simplifying access.

Misinformation hoaxes and myths around vaccine-induced infertility resulted in initial resistance. To counter rumours, the administration launched targeted awareness campaigns involving Gen-Z influencers and youth icons. National-level athletes, young doctors, students, religious leaders and media personalities voluntarily joined the effort to promote vaccination and dispel misconceptions. Social norms and peer networks served as powerful "behavioural nudges". Local events publicly felicitated vaccinated families and recognised vaccinated girls as peer champions. Gram panchayat and ward-level data sharing sparked both collaboration and competition. Recognition was given to both top performers

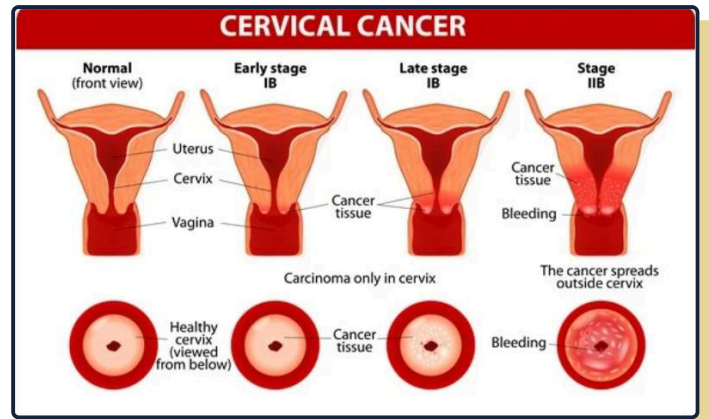
and the most improved. "Digital nudges" and red-flag reminders for frontline workers enhanced monitoring and accountability. At the cutting-edge implementation level, resistance often manifests as delay, doubt, and discomfort rather than outright refusal. Vaccinations were conducted exclusively under medical supervision at visible health-care facilities, normalising the practice of adolescent girls' vaccination. Experiences of women affected by cervical cancer were shared to create emotional resonance and encourage informed decision-making. Counselling sessions reduced stigma and replaced distrust with dialogue.

Strategy to impact

The HPV campaign was further integrated with on-going health-care programmes. Routine immunisation days, antenatal care clinics and the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan sessions were used to promote HPV awareness and conduct vaccination drives. When women accessed one service, they became more receptive to another, creating avenues for "bundling" of health-care service delivery.

The results were significant. In less than 40 days, Mandsaur achieved 100% of its vaccination target — 493 vaccination sessions were conducted through 12 permanent and 27 temporary vaccination sites across the district. Girls who met the criteria, from 893 villages and 190 urban wards, were mobilised, moving from planning on paper to protecting the population.

The magnitude of India's health-care challenge must be met with the measure of its grassroots actions. Policy design must bridge the yawning gap between intended outcomes and empirical ground realities. Behavioural and systemic "nudges" in implementation can leverage the human tendency to opt for preset choices. Downtailing health-care data and grassroots innovations tailored to regional realities can bridge the last mile and deliver the final dose. By moving from coverage to care, from data to impact, Mandsaur turned a formidable public health challenge into a collective mass movement. The district's inclusive vaccination campaign demonstrated how a simple shot in the arm can truly become a fair shot at life.



Cervical cancer — stages of progression

The Hindu — Aditi Garg on Mandsaur's grassroots HPV drive

WHY IN NEWS

Mandsaur district (MP) achieved **100%** of its HPV vaccination target in under 40 days using a data-driven, "nudge"-based grassroots model — a template for India's nationwide cervical-cancer campaign launched **28 Feb 2026** (free HPV vaccine to **1.15 crore** girls aged 14–15).

- ◆ India bears a **quarter** of the global cervical-cancer burden — 1.2 lakh+ new cases and 80,000 deaths a year; **~95%** of cases are caused by high-risk HPV strains.
- ◆ **Data to coverage:** RBSK, SAMAGRA MP and Ladli Laxmi Yojana databases were fused into village-level "Master Line Lists" to find missed populations.
- ◆ **Nudge approach:** framing vaccination as the default ("your daughter is due"), repeat counselling, transport support, and Gen-Z/influencer campaigns to counter myths of vaccine-induced infertility.

KEY FEATURES — NATIONAL HPV INITIATIVE

- ◆ **Vaccine:** Gardasil-4 (Merck) against HPV types 16, 18, 6, 11 — a **single-dose** schedule (WHO 2022 evidence).
- ◆ **Target:** girls turning 14 (strongest immune response before exposure); voluntary and free at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs & district hospitals.
- ◆ **Registration:** via the **U-WIN** digital immunisation platform.

Mains Practice Questions

MODEL ANSWER POINTERS

MAINS Q1 · GS PAPER II

8 MARKS · 150 WORDS

The India–Japan partnership has evolved from an economic engagement into a strategic pillar of Indo-Pacific stability. In this light, examine how defence co-development and connectivity initiatives are reshaping the relationship.

भारत–जापान साझेदारी एक आर्थिक जुड़ाव से हिंद-प्रशांत स्थिरता के एक रणनीतिक स्तंभ के रूप में विकसित हुई है। इस संदर्भ में, रक्षा सह-विकास एवं कनेक्टिविटी पहलें इस संबंध को किस प्रकार पुनर्आकार दे रही हैं, इसका परीक्षण कीजिए।

ANSWER POINTERS

- ◆ **Intro:** Frame the "free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific" as the shared vision; note the 129 MoUs and ~\$1 trillion investment pledge.
- ◆ **Defence shift:** first co-development pact (naval radio antenna) marks a move from buyer-seller to joint production; exercises JIMEX, Dharma Guardian, Veer Guardian, Malabar.
- ◆ **Connectivity & resilience:** Act East Forum (2017), JICA-funded NER roads & Dhubri–Phulbari bridge, SCRI with Australia to de-risk supply chains.
- ◆ **Limits:** AAGC's "reality gap" vs China's BRI; bureaucratic and financing constraints.
- ◆ **Way forward:** move beyond traditional diplomacy toward faster, joint delivery.

MAINS Q2 · GS PAPER II

12 MARKS · 250 WORDS

"Prolonged pre-trial detention under stringent laws sits in tension with the right to personal liberty guaranteed by Article 21." Critically analyse this tension with reference to bail jurisprudence and suggest reforms to balance national security with individual liberty.

"कठोर कानूनों के अंतर्गत लंबी विचाराधीन हिरासत, अनुच्छेद 21 द्वारा प्रदत्त व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता के अधिकार के साथ तनाव में है।" जमानत न्यायशास्त्र के संदर्भ में इस तनाव का समालोचनात्मक विश्लेषण कीजिए तथा राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा एवं व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता के बीच संतुलन हेतु सुधार सुझाइए।

ANSWER POINTERS

- ◆ **Core tension:** "how long is too long?"; extended delay triggers Article 21 and can override even UAPA's strict bail bar.
- ◆ **Jurisprudence:** "bail is the rule, jail the exception"; the flaw in using an offence's gravity to defeat delay; judicial inconsistency across benches; referral to a larger Bench.
- ◆ **Security side:** legitimate state interest in investigating terror; 180-day charge-sheet window; risk of witness-tampering.
- ◆ **Reforms:** statutory time-limits for trial completion, fast-track UAPA courts, periodic bail review, forensic/investigative capacity, and guarding against weaponisation of law.
- ◆ **Conclusion:** due process and security are complementary, not rival goods; the rule of law is undermined when process becomes the punishment.

Mains Practice Questions

CONTINUED

MAINS Q3 · GS PAPER II

15 MARKS · 250 WORDS

Despite the Supreme Court reading the right to speedy trial into Article 21, chronic delays in India's criminal justice system continue to convert the judicial process itself into a punishment. Discuss the structural causes behind this pendency and propose a roadmap for delivering time-bound justice.

यद्यपि सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने त्वरित सुनवाई के अधिकार को अनुच्छेद 21 का अंग माना है, फिर भी भारत की आपराधिक न्याय प्रणाली में दीर्घकालिक विलंब न्यायिक प्रक्रिया को ही दंड में बदल देता है। इस लंबित मामलों की संरचनात्मक वजहों की विवेचना कीजिए तथा समयबद्ध न्याय हेतु एक रूपरेखा प्रस्तावित कीजिए।

ANSWER POINTERS

- ◆ **Intro:** Hussainara Khatoon line of cases — speedy trial as an implicit facet of Article 21; "justice delayed is justice denied".
- ◆ **Structural causes:** low judge-population ratio and vacancies; investigative delays and weak forensic capacity; adjournment culture; appeal pyramids; under-trial overload in prisons.
- ◆ **Consequences:** eroded deterrence, prison overcrowding, disproportionate burden on the poor; process becoming the punishment.
- ◆ **Roadmap:** fill vacancies & expand fast-track courts; statutory trial timelines with judicial accountability; plea bargaining & ADR; e-Courts/AI-enabled case management; witness protection; periodic under-trial review committees.
- ◆ **Conclusion:** timely justice is the operative test of the rule of law — reforms must pair capacity with accountability.

MAINS Q4 · GS PAPER III

10 MARKS · 150 WORDS

From suborbital demonstrations to orbital-class launch attempts, India's private space start-ups are redefining the country's space economy. Evaluate the significance of this shift and the challenges that must be addressed for India to become a global commercial launch hub.

उपकक्षीय प्रदर्शनों से लेकर कक्षीय-श्रेणी के प्रक्षेपण प्रयासों तक, भारत के निजी अंतरिक्ष स्टार्ट-अप देश की अंतरिक्ष अर्थव्यवस्था को नया रूप दे रहे हैं। इस बदलाव के महत्व तथा भारत को वैश्विक वाणिज्यिक प्रक्षेपण केंद्र बनाने हेतु आवश्यक चुनौतियों का मूल्यांकन कीजिए।

ANSWER POINTERS

- ◆ **Context:** Vikram-S (2022, first private rocket to space) → Vikram-1 "Mission Aagaman" (first private orbital attempt); Skyroot–Agnikul ecosystem.
- ◆ **Significance:** lower launch costs, larger small-satellite market share, ISRO freed for R&D, deep-tech jobs and strategic autonomy — enabled by IN-SPACE, NSIL and the Indian Space Policy 2023.
- ◆ **Challenges:** patient capital & insurance, testing/launch infrastructure, regulatory certainty (a space activities law), talent retention, global price competition.
- ◆ **Conclusion:** demonstrated orbital success plus predictable regulation can convert start-up momentum into a durable commercial hub.

Prelims MCQ Practice

10 QUESTIONS · THE HINDU FRIDAY, 3 JULY 2026

1 With reference to India–Japan cooperation, consider the following statements:

1. The Act East Forum was established in 2017 to develop India's North Eastern Region.
2. JIMEX is a joint army exercise between India and Japan.
3. The Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) is a trilateral initiative including Australia.

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

2 Consider the following statements about Vikram-1:

1. It is India's first privately developed orbital-class rocket.
2. It is being developed by Skyroot Aerospace.
3. Its maiden mission is named Mission Gaganyaan.

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

3 The term 'iSLEEPS', recently in the news, is best described as:

- (a) A national sleep-hygiene awareness campaign (b) An open-access polysomnography dataset for ischemic stroke patients
(c) A wearable device for detecting sleep apnea (d) A mental-health tele-counselling helpline

4 With reference to the Siang / Brahmaputra river system, consider the following:

1. The Siang is known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet.
2. The Siang enters India near Gelling in Arunachal Pradesh.
3. The Siang joins the Dibang and Lohit to form the Brahmaputra.

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

5 Consider the following statements about the UAPA, 1967:

1. It allows the Central Government to designate individuals as terrorists.
2. It can be applied to offences committed outside India.
3. The maximum charge-sheet window is 90 days, non-extendable.

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

Prelims MCQ Practice

CONTINUED

6 Regarding India's June GST collections in the news, consider the following:

1. The surge was driven largely by import IGST.
2. Domestic GST growth outpaced import IGST growth.
3. A weaker rupee and higher import prices enlarged the tax base.

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

7 The 'Independent International Scientific Panel on AI', recently in the news, is associated with:

- (a) The World Economic Forum
(b) The United Nations
(c) The OECD
(d) The G20 Presidency

8 Consider the following statements about NIMHANS:

1. It was declared an Institute of National Importance by an Act of 2012.
2. It is located in Bengaluru.
3. Tele MANAS is a mental-health helpline linked to it.

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

9 With reference to India's HPV vaccination initiative, consider the following:

1. The programme uses the Gardasil-4 vaccine on a single-dose schedule.
2. Registration is done through the U-WIN platform.
3. It targets girls aged 14–15 years.

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

10 Almost all cases of cervical cancer are linked to persistent infection by which of the following?

- (a) Helicobacter pylori
(b) Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
(c) Epstein–Barr virus
(d) Hepatitis B virus

ANSWER KEY

1 (b)

2 (a)

3 (b)

4 (d)

5 (a)

6 (a)

7 (b)

8 (d)

9 (d)

10 (b)

Q1 — JIMEX is a naval (not army) exercise, so statement 2 is wrong. Q2 — Vikram-1's maiden mission is "Aagaman", not Gaganyaan. Q5 — the charge-sheet window under UAPA is up to 180 days and extendable. Q6 — domestic GST (6.5%) grew far slower than import IGST (34.6%).

Essay Corner

THOUGHT MAP & POINTERS

ESSAY PROMPT

"Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master."

"प्रौद्योगिकी एक उपयोगी सेवक है, किंतु एक खतरनाक स्वामी ।"

TARGET LENGTH · 900 WORDS

◆ **INTRODUCTION — FRAMING THE PARADOX**

- ◆ Open with the dual face of technology: the same tool that connects and heals can also surveil and harm — anchor with a concrete image (a rocket reaching orbit vs a deepfake destroying a reputation).
- ◆ State the thesis: technology's value is a function of the **governance, ethics and intent** guiding it — the servant/master distinction lies in human control.

◆ **BODY — MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS**

- ◆ **Technology as servant:** private space (Vikram-1) democratising access to orbit; open datasets (iSLEEPS) advancing medicine; digital platforms (U-WIN) delivering health at scale; nudges scaling vaccination.
- ◆ **Technology as master:** AI's deepfake epidemic and parasocial harms; algorithmic erosion of the open web and news; concentration of power in a few firms; the Global South–North divide.
- ◆ **Economy & society:** automation, jobs, and imported-inflation-style dependencies; data as the new frontier of sovereignty.
- ◆ **Governance:** the accountability gap — holding firms to account, precautionary regulation, and the risk of treating technology purely as a geostrategic asset.
- ◆ **Ethics & individual:** autonomy, addiction, and the need for digital literacy and human-in-the-loop safeguards.

◆ **CONCLUSION — RECLAIMING MASTERY**

- ◆ Argue for a **value-anchored, human-centric** approach: technology serves when paired with ethics, inclusion and accountable institutions.
- ◆ Close on Gandhian restraint or the "servant" ideal — mastery restored not by rejecting technology but by governing it wisely.