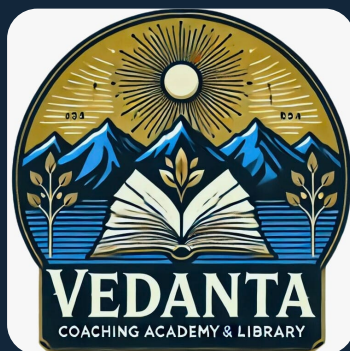




DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS · THE HINDU

9 July 2026

Analysis & Answer Writing

Newspaper decoding, static linkages, prelims-ready facts,
HPAS-pattern MCQs, mains model answers and an essay blueprint.

01	Trump Declares End to Truce with Iran	GS 2 · IR
02	India-Indonesia Prambanan Restoration Project	GS 1 · Culture
03	DRDO Flight-Tests Pinaka Guided Rocket	Prelims · Defence
04	AISHE: 42% Rise in Female Enrolment	GS 2 · Education
05	WHO Global Status Report on Cancer 2026	GS 2 · Health
06	Trump Blasts NATO over Greenland	GS 2 · IR
07	Checkbox Caste: Counting Caste in Census 2027	GS 2 · Governance
08	The Indian Diaspora in Australia	GS 2 · Diaspora
—	Prelims Practice: 10 MCQs + Answer Key	Practice
—	Mains Practice: 8 & 12 Marker Model Skeletons	Practice
—	Essay Blueprint: Civilisational Footprints	Essay

PART ONE

Newspaper Analysis

Each item is decoded as: why in news → core facts → static bridge → examination angle.

GS PAPER 2

PAGE 1

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Trump Declares End to Truce, but Keeps the Door Open for Talks

Trump declares end to truce but says he will let talks go on

U.S. strikes in southern Iran killed 8 military personnel, says Tehran | Iran claims it hit 85 U.S. military assets in the Persian Gulf region | MoU now 'ineffective', says Iran as Trump threatens more strikes

Stanly Johny

The ceasefire between the United States and Iran is "over", U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday, while leaving the door open for more talks, after the two sides exchanged fire amid a dispute over the status of the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran said the U.S. "violations" have rendered parts of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two countries "ineffective".

"As far as I am concerned, it is over," Mr. Trump said at a NATO summit in Ankara, Türkiye, when asked about the ceasefire. "It is just a waste of time dealing with them."

His remarks came after Iran claimed that it targeted 85 U.S. military assets in the Persian Gulf following

U.S. air strikes on "several monitoring and surveillance centres" on Iran's southern coast.

The U.S. strikes killed eight military personnel, Iranian state television said. "Following the criminal aggression carried out this morning by the U.S.

terrorist army against areas in southern Iran, eight courageous members of the Islamic Republic of Iran's military fell as martyrs," the state television said, citing a statement from the military.

This is the second time the U.S. and Iran have exchanged fire since they signed the MoU on June 17, promising to extend the ceasefire and begin talks for a final settlement.

Stock indices dip 2% as Iran, U.S. restart clashes

MUMBAI

Benchmark Nifty and Sensex dipped over 2% to 23,882.05 and 76,503.60 points respectively on Wednesday after renewed Iran-U.S. clashes sent global oil prices soaring. The indices opened about 0.6% down from the previous close before tumbling during the day. » PAGE 13

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 10

IS THE DEAL FALLING APART?

» PAGE 14

The Hindu, Page 1 — the U.S.-Iran ceasefire collapses over the status of the Strait of Hormuz.

Why in news: The U.S. President declared the ceasefire with Iran "over" after both sides exchanged fire amid a dispute over the Strait of Hormuz, while still leaving room for negotiators to continue talking.

CORE FACTS FROM THE REPORT

- Iran said American violations have rendered parts of the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the two countries "ineffective".
- Tehran claimed it targeted **85 U.S. military assets** in the Persian Gulf, following U.S. air strikes on monitoring and surveillance centres on Iran's southern coast.
- Iranian state television reported that **eight military personnel** were killed in the U.S. strikes.
- This is the **second exchange of fire** since the MoU was signed on **June 17**, an agreement meant to extend the ceasefire and open talks on a final settlement.
- Market read-across:** Nifty and Sensex fell over 2% to 23,882.05 and 76,503.60 respectively as renewed clashes pushed global oil prices sharply higher.

STATIC BRIDGE · THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

- A narrow chokepoint connecting the **Persian Gulf** to the **Gulf of Oman** and the Arabian Sea; bordered by Iran to the north and Oman/UAE to the south.
- Carries roughly a fifth of global petroleum liquids trade — no meaningful bypass route exists for most Gulf exports.
- Related chokepoints for map-based questions: Bab-el-Mandeb, Suez Canal, Strait of Malacca, Turkish Straits.

THE INDIAN ANGLE

- The war marked India's **definite and noticeable tilt** toward the Israel-U.S.-UAE bloc, with several decisions analysts have found hard to explain or defend.
- Going forward India must make a **strategic choice** on balancing ties with Iran against those with a wider Gulf region that is itself deeply divided after the war.
- India had quietly built an **insurance policy against geopolitical shocks** by diversifying its crude supplier base.
- Few large economies were as exposed as India, the **world's third-largest oil importer**. Heavy dependence on imported crude and LPG, combined with rising freight costs and maritime risk premia, created the conditions for a severe external shock.

EXAMINATION ANGLE

Prelims: location of Hormuz; littoral states; India's top crude suppliers. **Mains:** energy security as a component of national security; India's de-hyphenation strategy between Iran and the Gulf-Israel bloc; the Chabahar-Hormuz relationship.

India and Indonesia Launch Joint Restoration at Prambanan Temple

India and Indonesia launch joint restoration project at iconic Prambanan Temple

Press Trust of India
JAKARTA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, on Wednesday visited the centuries-old iconic Prambanan Temple complex in Yogyakarta, marking the inauguration of a joint conservation project for this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Mr. Modi described the initiative as a “shining example of the enduring civilisational bonds” between India and Indonesia, rooted in a shared heritage that has connected the people of the two countries for centuries.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will be



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and devotees visiting the Prambanan Temple in Indonesia on Wednesday. AFP/PIB

the lead agency from the Indian side for the joint restoration project.

Later in the day, Mr. Modi reached Australia on the second leg of his three-nation tour during which he will hold talks with his Aus-

tralian counterpart Anthony Albanese. “Landed in Melbourne, Australia. This visit will add vigour to the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership,” Mr. Modi said in a post on X.

Press Trust of India, Jakarta — the joint conservation project is inaugurated at Yogyakarta.

Why in news: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, visited the Prambanan Temple complex in Yogyakarta on Wednesday to inaugurate a joint conservation project at this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- Mr. Modi described the initiative as a shining example of the **enduring civilisational bonds** between India and Indonesia, rooted in a shared heritage connecting the two peoples for centuries.
- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** will be the lead agency from the Indian side.
- Later the same day the Prime Minister reached Australia on the second leg of his three-nation tour.



Prambanan, Yogyakarta — the largest and most architecturally complex Hindu temple compound in Indonesia.

STATIC BRIDGE · PRAMBANAN (RORO JONGGRANG)

- A towering masterpiece of **classical Shaivite art, design and stone-building technology**, marking the peak of Hindu cultural influence in Southeast Asia.
- **Sailendra-Sanjaya heyday**: built in the 8th-9th centuries CE (c. 850 CE) during the peak of the **Sanjaya Dynasty** — a monumental royal response to the nearby Buddhist **Borobudur**, marking the revival of Shaivite Hinduism in Java.
- **The 11th-century collapse**: after power shifted to East Java, and following earthquakes and eruptions of **Mount Merapi**, the complex was abandoned and lay forgotten under jungle overgrowth.
- **Colonial rediscovery**: formally rediscovered by British surveyors during the brief British administration of Java in the early 19th century.
- **Restoration era**: scientific restoration began in **1918**; UNESCO inscription in **1991**; designated a National Cultural Property by Indonesia in **1998**.

ARCHITECTURE IN ONE GLANCE

Element	Detail
Trimurti spire ensemble	Three towering <i>shikharas</i> in the inner square, dedicated to the Hindu Trinity.
Shiva temple	Massive central tower, 47 m high, housing a monumental statue of Shiva Mahadeva.
Brahma / Vishnu temples	To the north and the south of the Shiva tower respectively.
Vahana companion temples	Three smaller shrines facing the Trimurti, for Nandi, Hamsa and Garuda .
Bas-reliefs	Inner gallery walls carry the Javanese Ramayana and the Bhagavata Purana .

Trap to avoid: Prambanan is in **Yogyakarta** (Central Java region), not East Java; the central spire belongs to **Shiva**, not Vishnu.

DRDO Conducts Successful Flight Test of Pinaka Guided Rocket



DRDO conducts successful flight test of Pinaka rocket

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Wednesday successfully conducted a flight test of the Pinaka long range guided rocket from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, validating its user-defined minimum strike range of 60 km. The rocket executed all planned in-flight manoeuvres and hit the designated target with high precision, following the predicted trajectory, the Defence Ministry said. Range instrumentation deployed during the trial tracked the rocket throughout its flight. The rocket was launched from an in-service Pinaka launcher, demonstrating the system's ability to fire different variants of the Pinaka rocket family with varying ranges from the same launcher, enhancing operational flexibility.

The Pinaka long-range guided rocket lifts off from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur.

Why in news: DRDO successfully flight-tested the **Pinaka long-range guided rocket** from the Integrated Test Range at **Chandipur**, validating its user-defined **minimum strike range of 60 km**.

- The rocket executed all planned in-flight manoeuvres and hit the designated target with high precision, following the predicted trajectory; range instrumentation tracked it throughout.
- It was launched from an **in-service Pinaka launcher**, demonstrating the system's ability to fire **different variants of the family from the same launcher** — a direct gain in operational flexibility.

STATIC BRIDGE · THE PINAKA SYSTEM

- Named after the **bow of Lord Shiva**; a high-precision, indigenously developed **multi-barrel rocket launcher (MBRL)**.
- Developed by DRDO's **Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE)**, Pune.
- Key features: high mobility, quick deployment, and intense concentrated fire on enemy targets with high accuracy.
- **Mark I:** range of about 40 km. **Mark II:** extended range of 70–80 km, expandable up to 120 km and eventually 300 km.
- Upgraded launchers can fire **12 rockets in a single salvo**.

Remember: Chandipur (Odisha) hosts the Integrated Test Range; Dr. Abdul Kalam Island (Wheeler Island) hosts long-range missile launches.

Over 42% Rise in Female Enrolment in Higher Education since 2014

Over 42% rise in female enrolment in higher education since 2014: report

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India's higher education sector has recorded significant growth over the past decade, with total student enrolment rising to 4.5 crore in the 2023-24 academic year.

According to the latest reports of the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) for 2022-23 and 2023-24, released by the Education Ministry, this marks a 31.5% rise from 3.42 crore recorded in 2014-15. The multi-year survey data reflect an institutional participation rate of over 90%, drawing metrics from 59,533 higher education institutions across the country to outline major strides in inclusivity, female participation, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) adoption.

Steady progress

Women, STEM learners and marginalised communities drive sustained growth in higher education

	2014-15	2022-23	2023-24	Growth since 2014-15
Total enrolment	3.42 cr.	4.46 cr.	4.50 cr.	+31.5%
Female enrolment	1.57 cr.	2.18 cr.	2.24 cr.	+42.2%
Overall GER	23.7	29.5	30.0	—
Female GER	22.9	30.2	31.2	—
STEM enrolment	91.5 lakh	—	1.02 cr.	+11.4%

The data are self-reported voluntarily by registered institutions via a web-based portal utilising a data capture format. While the Education Ministry executes built-in validations and scrutiny checks, primary data quality remains the responsibility of the respective institutions. The enrolment of female students in higher educational institutions rose from 1.57 crore in

2014-15 to 2.18 crore in 2022-23 and 2.24 crore in 2023-24, marking a 42.2% increase since 2014-15.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) stands at 1.08 for 2023-24, remaining consistently above 1.0 for seven consecutive years. This underlines a trend where female participation systematically outpaces male participation.

Also, India's gross enrolment ratio (calculated for

the 18-23 age bracket) reached 30 in 2023-24. Notably, the female GER scaled to 31.2, distinctly higher than the national baseline. For the Scheduled Castes, the enrolment jumped 51.4% since 2014-15, reaching 69.72 lakh. The GER for SC students grew from 18.9 to 27.8. For the Scheduled Tribes, enrolment witnessed a 75.7% rise, climbing to 28.83 lakh, with the GER up from 13.5 to 22.8. With regard to the Other Backward Classes, student numbers grew 60.2%, from 1.13 crore to 1.80 crore over 10 years. Enrolment in STEM fields climbed to 1.02 crore in 2023-24. "Mirroring the overall demographic shift, the female share in STEM programmes climbed steadily to 44%, up from 38.4% a decade ago," the report said.

The Hindu Bureau — AISHE 2022-23 and 2023-24 reports released by the Education Ministry.

Why in news: The **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)** reports for 2022-23 and 2023-24 record total enrolment rising to **4.5 crore** in 2023-24, a **31.5% increase** over the 3.42 crore of 2014-15.

THE NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Indicator	2014-15	2023-24	Change
Total enrolment	3.42 cr	4.50 cr	+31.5%
Female enrolment	1.57 cr	2.24 cr	+42.2%
Overall GER (18-23 yrs)	23.7	30.0	—
Female GER	22.9	31.2	Above national baseline
STEM enrolment	91.5 lakh	1.02 cr	+11.4%
SC enrolment	—	69.72 lakh	+51.4%; GER 18.9 → 27.8
ST enrolment	—	28.83 lakh	+75.7%; GER 13.5 → 22.8
OBC enrolment	1.13 cr	1.80 cr	+60.2%

- The **Gender Parity Index (GPI)** stands at **1.08** for 2023-24 and has stayed above 1.0 for **seven consecutive years** — female participation systematically outpaces male participation.
- The female share in STEM programmes has climbed steadily to **44%**, up from 38.4% a decade ago.
- Data are drawn from **59,533 institutions** with an institutional participation rate above **90%**.

THE CRITICAL CAVEAT

The data are **self-reported voluntarily** by registered institutions through a web-based portal. While the Ministry runs built-in validations and scrutiny checks, **primary data quality remains the responsibility of the institutions themselves** — a limitation worth quoting in any answer that uses AISHE numbers as evidence.

EXAMINATION ANGLE

Prelims: GER is computed for the **18-23** age bracket; GPI above 1 means more women than men relative to population share. **Mains:** link to NEP 2020 target of 50% GER by 2035; the gap between *enrolment parity* and *outcome parity* (labour force participation of educated women).

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HEALTH

WHO Flags Growing Inequities in Access to Cancer Treatment

WHO flags growing inequities in access to cancer treatment

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

With an estimated 20.6 million new cases and close to 10 million deaths annually, cancer remains the second leading cause of death globally after cardiovascular disease, the World Health Organization's (WHO) first ever survey of people affected by cancer, released on Wednesday, said.

Beyond its impact on health, cancer remains one of the most financially and socially devastating challenges a household can face, the report said. The WHO survey found that at least 45% of affected people experience financial hardship, more than half report mental health challenges, and nearly all caregivers report strain, including unpaid services and social isolation.

The Global Status Re-

port on Cancer, 2026, released by the WHO and the International Agency for Research on Cancer, warns that, without action, annual cases of cancer are projected to rise to nearly 35 million by 2050.

The report also indicates persistent and widening inequities in access to prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and supportive care, leaving millions of people without the services they need. Its analysis shows that while 87% of women with breast cancer survive at five years after their diagnosis in high-income countries, only about 42% do so in low-income countries. Fewer than one in three countries currently include cancer care in their universal health coverage packages.

"Cancer is a deeply personal disease that touches nearly all of us. But whether a person survives cancer

should never depend on where they were born or what they earn," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, adding, "The inequities documented in this report are not inevitable; they are the consequence of choices, and they can be reversed through stronger and unified action."

The burden of cancer varies across regions. In 2024, Asia accounted for the largest share, with more than half of all cancer cases (50.7%) and deaths (56.5%) reflecting its large population. Europe carried a disproportionately high burden, contributing 21% of global cases and 20% of deaths despite having only about 9% of the world's population. In contrast, many countries in Africa and parts of Asia experience lower incidence but disproportionately high mortality.

WHO and IARC release the Global Status Report on Cancer, 2026.

Why in news: With an estimated **20.6 million new cases** and close to **10 million deaths** annually, cancer remains the **second leading cause of death globally** after cardiovascular disease, according to the WHO's first-ever survey of people affected by cancer.

FINDINGS

- The **Global Status Report on Cancer, 2026**, released by WHO and the **International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)**, warns that without action annual cases could rise to nearly **35 million by 2050**.

- At least **45%** of affected people face financial hardship; more than half report mental health challenges; nearly all caregivers report strain, unpaid service burden and social isolation.
- **Survival divide:** five-year breast cancer survival is about **87%** in high-income countries but only around **42%** in low-income countries.
- Fewer than **one in three countries** include cancer care in their universal health coverage packages.

REGIONAL BURDEN, 2024

Region	Share of cases	Share of deaths	Note
Asia	50.7%	56.5%	Largest share, reflecting population size
Europe	21%	20%	Disproportionate — only ~9% of world population
Africa / parts of Asia	Lower incidence	High mortality	Late diagnosis, weak treatment access

The Director-General's framing is the quotable core of the report: inequities of this kind are **not inevitable** — they are the consequence of choices, and can be reversed through stronger and unified action. Whether a person survives cancer should not depend on where they were born or what they earn.

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INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Trump Blasts NATO for Rejecting Efforts to Claim Greenland

Trump blasts NATO for rejecting efforts to claim Greenland

Associated Press
ANKARA

U.S. President Donald Trump took aim at his NATO partners at a summit in Türkiye on Wednesday, saying he was unhappy with the alliance for pushing back against his efforts to take control of Greenland and for not supporting his war in Iran.

NATO's European members plus Canada have scrambled to meet the increased defence spending targets Mr. Trump has demanded, as the U.S. draws down the number of troops it has in Europe and insists that the continent take more responsibility for its own security.

But Mr. Trump reopened old wounds as he arrived at the meeting of 32 NATO leaders by insisting again that the United States should control Greenland, a semi-autonomous Danish territory. He blasted some European countries for refusing to participate in the Iran war, singling out Spain as "a terrible partner in NATO" and renewing his threats to cut off trade.

Ahead of the summit, Mr. Trump said Greenland "is very important" for the



Donald Trump

U.S. but not for Denmark, declaring, "We need it for protection of the world, not just the United States."

'Defend every inch'

But Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said her country is "ready to defend every inch of NATO including our own territory" in the event of an attack, and would rely on NATO allies to honour their commitment to defend each other.

Ahead of the summit, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte praised Mr. Trump for the series of U.S. strikes on Iran overnight, after Tehran struck three merchant ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

"I think what you did last night was absolutely necessary," Mr. Rutte said to Mr. Trump.

Associated Press, Ankara — friction at the summit of 32 NATO leaders.

Why in news: At a NATO summit in Türkiye, the U.S. President said he was unhappy with the alliance for pushing back against his efforts to take control of **Greenland** and for not supporting his war in Iran.

- NATO's European members plus Canada have scrambled to meet **increased defence spending targets**, as the U.S. draws down troops in Europe and insists the continent take more responsibility for its own security.
- Arriving at the meeting of **32 leaders**, the President reopened old wounds by insisting again that the U.S. should control Greenland, a **semi-autonomous Danish territory**. He called Spain a terrible partner for refusing to join the Iran war and renewed threats to cut off trade.
- Denmark's Prime Minister replied that her country is ready to defend **every inch of NATO territory**, including its own, and would rely on allies to honour their commitment to defend one another.

STATIC BRIDGE · NATO

- A political and military alliance created after World War II by **12 countries** of Europe and North America; founded **4 April 1949**.
- **Founding members:** Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- **Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium. Allied Command Operations HQ is near **Mons**, Belgium.
- Formed by the **Washington Treaty**, itself grounded in **Article 51 of the UN Charter**, which reaffirms the right of individual or collective defence.
- **Article 5** enshrines collective defence — an attack against one Ally is an attack against all.
- **Later expansions:** Greece, Türkiye, Germany, Spain, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia. **Recent:** Finland (2023), Sweden (2024).

TWO COMPANION CONCEPTS

- **Warsaw Pact:** a collective defence treaty signed in **1955** by Russia and seven other states to counter the U.S.-led NATO; all seven are now NATO members. Abolished in **1991**.
- **NATO Plus:** NATO together with five partners — **Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Israel and South Korea** — working toward stronger global defence cooperation.

Checkbox Caste: An Open-Ended Method May Not Yield Usable Data

Checkbox caste

An open-ended method of counting caste may not yield usable data

The rehearsal for the second phase of Census 2027, underway in 16 States and Union Territories since July 6, carries a key feature: an "open column" where respondents can state their caste, which the enumerator will record. Unlike the 2011 Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), which also had this feature, this counting of caste in the Census itself has statutory backing. The pre-test ends on July 20, and the government says that it will then finalise the methodology for counting caste. The hope is that the pre-test findings will corroborate what is known: an open-ended response on caste yields only unwieldy data, as seen in the 2011 SECC, which eventually proved unusable. It is not difficult to understand why. The method led the 2011 SECC to return more than 46 lakh "caste names", against the 4,147 in the 1931 Census, the last to tabulate caste. Respondents entered surnames, sub-castes and clan names as if interchangeable, inflating the count into incoherence. The Centre told the Supreme Court in 2021 that the SECC figures were too error-ridden to be relied upon for reservation. The pre-test should instead point to a better method – using the digital Census's hand-held devices, pre-loaded with a curated list of castes and sub-castes, so that the enumerator selects the 'correct' entry after asking the respondent. Mistakes and mismatches will happen, but as the 2022-23 Bihar caste survey revealed, this method could return more usable data.

Unlike the other identities – linguistic, religious and gender – that the Census notes, caste is an abstract, irrational one that designates people not by biological, physical, or professed attributes, but by a perceived, primordial identity conferred at birth and arranged in a hierarchy. Even this hierarchy is not self-evident, with the perceptions of social status of different castes often contradicting one another. India's Constitution, committed to social justice, set itself against caste by abolishing untouchability, forbidding caste-based discrimination and holding out the promise of a republic where birth would not determine a citizen's standing. So why count caste when the very act of enumeration can ossify or reify this abstract identity? The only rationale is that self-perceived or imposed caste identity creates social inequities, and welfare and social justice measures that address caste-based injustice can, over time, be expected to delegitimise the casteism rather than entrench it. Through sharper targeting of welfare and affirmative action, empirical caste data can also inform questions of the creamy layer and the sub-categorisation of castes and classes already benefiting from reservation. In these, better data are indispensable. If caste is to be counted, it should be counted well. The open-ended way of registering it will not serve the intended purpose.

The Hindu editorial, Page 6 — on the pre-test for the second phase of Census 2027.

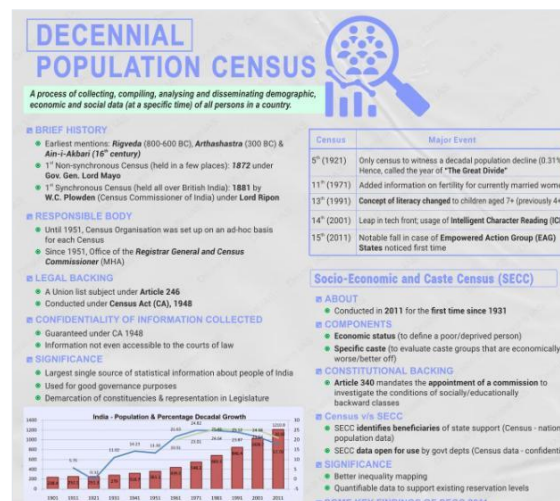
Why in news: The rehearsal for the second phase of **Census 2027**, underway in **16 States and Union Territories since July 6**, carries an **"open column"** in which respondents state their caste and the enumerator records it. The pre-test ends on **July 20**, after which the methodology will be finalised.

THE EDITORIAL'S ARGUMENT

- Unlike the 2011 **Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC)**, which had the same feature, the counting of caste in the Census itself now has **statutory backing**.
- The open-ended method led the 2011 SECC to return more than **46 lakh caste names**, against just **4,147** in the **1931 Census** — the last to tabulate caste.
- Respondents entered **surnames, sub-castes and clan names as if interchangeable**, inflating the count into incoherence. The Centre told the Supreme Court in **2021** that SECC figures were too error-ridden to be relied upon for reservation.
- **The proposed fix:** use the digital Census's hand-held devices, **pre-loaded with a curated list** of castes and sub-castes, so the enumerator selects the correct entry after asking the respondent. Mistakes will happen, but the **2022-23 Bihar caste survey** showed this method returns more usable data.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PARADOX

- Unlike linguistic, religious or gender identity, **caste is an abstract identity** — it designates people not by biological, physical or professed attributes but by a perceived, primordial identity conferred at birth and arranged in a hierarchy.
- Even that hierarchy is not self-evident: perceptions of the social status of different castes often **contradict one another**.
- India's Constitution set itself against caste by abolishing untouchability, forbidding caste-based discrimination, and promising a republic where birth would not determine a citizen's standing.
- **The only rationale for counting** is that caste identity creates social inequities; welfare and affirmative action that address caste injustice may, over time, delegitimise casteism rather than entrench it. Empirical data can also inform the **creamy layer** question and **sub-categorisation**.
- The Census is being conducted under **Sections 3 and 17A of the Census Act, 1948** by the Office of the **Registrar General of India (RGI)**, superseding the 2020 notification for the deferred 2021 Census.



Reference sheet — the Decennial Population Census and the SECC compared.

CENSUS: PRELIMS CAPSULE

Head	Detail
Earliest mentions	Rigveda (800–600 BC), Arthashastra (300 BC), Ain-i-Akbari (16th century)
First non-synchronous	1872 , under Governor-General Lord Mayo
First synchronous	1881 , by W.C. Plowden under Lord Ripon
Responsible body	Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner (MHA), on a permanent footing since 1951
Legal backing	A Union List subject under Article 246 ; conducted under the Census Act, 1948
Confidentiality	Guaranteed under the Act — information is not accessible even to courts of law
1921	Only census to witness a decadal population decline (0.31%) — " The Great Divide "
1971	Added fertility information for currently married women
1991	Literacy concept changed to children aged 7+ (previously 4+)
2001	Leap in technology — Intelligent Character Reading (ICR)
2011	Notable fall in Empowered Action Group (EAG) States noticed for the first time

Census vs SECC: the SECC (2011, first since 1931) identifies **beneficiaries** of state support and its data are **open for use** by government departments; Census data are national population data and are **confidential**. SECC draws constitutional resonance from **Article 340**, which mandates appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes.

The Indian Diaspora as Australia's Identity, its Future

The Indian diaspora as Australia's identity, its future

The Indian diaspora is now officially Australia's largest overseas-born community, overtaking the England-born population for the first time. This is not a small demographic footnote. Australia's population has, for two centuries, been anchored by a British-derived majority. An Indian-origin community now outnumbering it marks a genuine inflection point in how the country understands itself. It is against this backdrop that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia – his third visit Down Under – will be a trip in which the diaspora is expected to command the spotlight.

The Australia-India relationship has come a long way, from being defined by the simplistic 'three Cs' – Cricket, Curry and Commonwealth – to a more meaningful 'four Ds': Democracy, Defence, Diaspora and *Dosti*. This shift reflects a decade of institution-building, including India's participation alongside Australia, the United States and Japan in the Quad, the informal security grouping that has become the backbone of the Indo-Pacific strategy of India and Australia. Mr. Modi's visit will touch on all four pillars, but it is the diaspora event – a large public gathering billed as 'Melbourne Meets Modi' – that is drawing the most attention, precisely because of what this community has come to represent for both nations.

A new migration era
The settlement trajectory of the Australian-Indian community is very different from its counterparts in the U.S. or the United Kingdom. The first significant wave of Indian professional migration to Australia dates only to the 1960s and 1970s,



Teesta Prakash
Research Fellow at the Australia India Institute, University of Melbourne



Hiya Harinandini
Research Fellow at the Australia India Institute, University of Melbourne

The diaspora must be valued not merely as a symbol of partnership, but as a community whose voices matter

climbing after the dismantling of the White Australia Policy – an explicitly racist immigration regime that excluded all but European migrants.

By diaspora standards, this makes the Australian-Indian community still young. A large share of recent arrivals left India during the 'New India' years since 2014, a period of rapid outward migration driven by a mix of economic ambition and, for some, disillusionment with the state of democratic institutions at home. Whatever the reasons for leaving, this cohort tends to be more recently and more tightly bound to India – through family, business, remittances and a resurgent nationalist identity. That is what makes Australia's Indian community distinct beyond just numbers.

The rise of political backlash

As the anti-immigration wave rises across the globe, in Australia this wave has found a specific target in the Indian community. Nationalist street rallies under banners such as 'March for Australia' have gathered pace over the past year, and the right-wing populist One Nation party is emerging as the main opponent to the left-of-centre Labor party currently in power. Mr. Modi's high-visibility diaspora event lands squarely within this tense landscape. By showcasing the scale, accomplishments and mobilisation of the Indian community, it will reiterate the statement – increasingly co-opted by conservative movements – that this community has grown too large, too fast, and too visible.

For Australia, the Indian diaspora is an economic asset and a force multiplier for the country's multicultural fabric. But a fracturing domestic political landscape means that this asset

can just as easily be recast as a liability in public discourse. Mr. Modi's visit should be a reminder to policymakers that failing to invest in better understanding this growing and dynamic community carries real stakes for the future of this strategic partnership.

Beyond numbers and narratives

For India, the diaspora has long been framed as a source of pride and a connecting tissue of cultural links to Australia as a strategic partner. But pride and sentiment are not the same as understanding. What is missing – on both sides of the relationship – is a serious, evidence-based picture of how this diaspora actually lives, trusts and participates in Australian civic life, beyond the headline statistics on income, education and trade that has long been the mainstay of government discourse. If both countries are serious about treating the diaspora as a genuine pillar of their partnership rather than a talking point, that requires concerted efforts to capture their experiences of settlement which are far from monolithic.

Australia's demographic transformation is not a passing trend. It will permanently reshape its national identity from an antipodean one to one that is far more entangled with India and the wider Indo-Pacific. That means sustained research, stronger engagement with civil society, and policies that build social cohesion rather than taking it for granted. If democracy, defence, diaspora and *dosti* are to remain the four pillars of the partnership, then the diaspora must be treated not merely as a symbol of the relationship, but as a constituency whose experiences and trust deserve to be understood.

Teesta Prakash and Hiya Harinandini, Australia India Institute, University of Melbourne.

Why in news: The Indian diaspora is now officially Australia's **largest overseas-born community**, overtaking the England-born population for the first time — a genuine inflection point for a nation anchored for two centuries by a British-derived majority.

THE ARGUMENT IN FOUR MOVES

- **From three Cs to four Ds.** The relationship has moved from being defined by **Cricket, Curry and Commonwealth** to the more meaningful **Democracy, Defence, Diaspora and Dosti** — reflecting a decade of institution-building, including India's participation with Australia, the U.S. and Japan in the **Quad**.
- **A new migration era.** The first significant wave of Indian professional migration to Australia dates only to the **1960s and 1970s**, climbing after the dismantling of the explicitly racist **White Australia Policy**. By diaspora standards the community is still young; a large share of recent arrivals left India since 2014 and remains tightly bound to India through family, business, remittances and a resurgent nationalist identity.
- **The rise of political backlash.** As the anti-immigration wave rises globally, in Australia it has found a specific target in the Indian community — nationalist street rallies under banners such as "March for Australia", and the right-wing populist **One Nation** party emerging as the main opponent to the centre-left Labor party in power.
- **Beyond numbers and narratives.** Pride and sentiment are not the same as understanding. What is missing on both sides is a serious, evidence-based picture of how the diaspora actually lives, trusts and participates in Australian civic life — beyond headline statistics on income, education and trade.

THE AUTHORS' CONCLUSION

Australia's demographic transformation is not a passing trend; it will permanently reshape its national identity from an antipodean one to one far more entangled with India and the wider Indo-Pacific. If democracy, defence, diaspora and *dosti* are to remain the four pillars of the partnership, the diaspora must be treated **not as a symbol of the relationship but as a constituency** whose experiences and trust deserve to be understood — a community that is **far from monolithic**.

PART TWO

Prelims Practice · 10 MCQs

HPAS-pattern statement-based questions drawn strictly from today's coverage.

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the **Prambanan Temple complex**, recently in the news:

1. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in East Java, Indonesia.
2. The complex was constructed around 850 CE during the peak of the Sanjaya Dynasty as a response to the nearby Buddhist Borobudur monument.
3. It features a "Trimurti Spire Ensemble" in which the towering central shikhara is dedicated to Vishnu.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q2. With reference to the **Pinaka Rocket System**, consider the following statements:

1. It is an indigenous multi-barrel rocket launcher developed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) of DRDO.
2. The guided Pinaka rocket has an operational user-defined minimum strike range of 60 km.
3. The launcher lacks cross-variant capability; different variants of the Pinaka family require distinct launch platforms.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q3. Based on the **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)** report, consider the following statements:

1. India's overall higher education enrolment reached 4.5 crore in the 2023-24 academic year.
2. The female Gross Enrolment Ratio scaled to 31.2, which is lower than the overall national baseline.
3. The Gender Parity Index in higher education has consistently remained above 1.0 for seven consecutive years.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Q4. Consider the following pairs of historical **Census milestones** in India:

1. 1872 — First non-synchronous Census, under Lord Mayo.
2. 1921 — The Year of the Great Divide, which witnessed a decadal population decline.
3. 1991 — Literacy definition changed to children aged 7 and above.

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (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 **Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011**, consider the following statements:

1. It was conducted for the first time since the 1931 Census.
2. Unlike the Decennial Population Census, information collected under SECC is open for use by government departments to map inequality and identify beneficiaries of state support.
3. The 2011 SECC returned fewer than 50,000 distinct caste names owing to strict digital curation at the source.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding **NATO** and global security alliances:

1. NATO was founded in 1949 via the Washington Treaty, which is anchored in Article 51 of the UN Charter.
2. Article 5 of the treaty commits members to individual and collective self-defence.
3. The Warsaw Pact was a parallel collective defence treaty created by Western European allies in 1955 to counter Soviet expansion.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q7. In the context of the **WHO Global Status Report on Cancer 2026**, which region accounted for the largest share of global cancer cases (50.7%) and deaths (56.5%) in 2024?

- | | |
|------------|-------------------|
| (a) Europe | (b) Africa |
| (c) Asia | (d) North America |

Q8. Consider the following statements regarding the **Indian diaspora in Australia**:

1. The Indian diaspora has overtaken the England-born population to become Australia's largest overseas-born community.
2. The bilateral relationship has evolved from the "Three Cs" framework to the "Four Ds" framework.
3. The first significant wave of Indian professional migration to Australia dates back to the early 1910s under British colonial arrangements.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q9. With reference to the architectural layout of the **Prambanan Temple**, which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched?

1. Central tower — houses the monumental statue of Shiva Mahadeva.
2. Vahana companion temples — facing the Trimurti shrines, dedicated to Nandi, Hamsa and Garuda.
3. Inner gallery walls — narrative stone carvings depicting only the Javanese version of the Mahabharata.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Q10. With reference to the **Census Act, 1948** and the legislative framework in India, consider the following statements:

1. Population Census is a subject under the State List of the Seventh Schedule.
2. The Decennial Population Census is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
3. Under the Census Act, 1948, confidentiality of the information collected is legally guaranteed and it cannot be accessed even by courts of law.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

ANSWER KEY WITH REASONING

Q	Ans	Explanation
1	B	S1 wrong — Prambanan is at Yogyakarta, not East Java. S3 wrong — the central 47 m spire is Shiva's.
2	A	S3 wrong — the test demonstrated that one in-service launcher fires multiple variants of the family.
3	B	S2 wrong — female GER of 31.2 is <i>higher</i> than the national baseline of 30.
4	D	All three pairs match the historical record.
5	A	S3 wrong — the open-ended column produced over 46 lakh incoherent caste names.
6	B	S3 wrong — the Warsaw Pact was signed by Russia and its seven eastern allies to counter NATO.
7	C	Asia carries the largest absolute burden, reflecting its demographic size.
8	A	S3 wrong — the first major professional wave came in the 1960s–70s, after the White Australia Policy was dismantled.
9	B	S3 wrong — the bas-reliefs depict the Ramayana and the Bhagavata Purana.
10	B	S1 wrong — Census is a Union List subject under Article 246.

PART THREE

Mains Practice · Model Skeletons

Pointer-based structures. Write in your own prose; keep the architecture.

QUESTION 1 · 8 MARKS · GS-2 · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The rising geopolitical volatility in the Strait of Hormuz presents a critical vulnerability for major energy consumers. Analyse India's strategic choices and options to mitigate external shocks arising from disruptions in this maritime chokepoint.

KEY POINTERS

- **Context of vulnerability.** India is the world's third-largest oil importer; heavy dependence on imported crude and LPG, combined with rising freight costs and maritime risk, makes it hyper-exposed to price spikes triggered by U.S.–Iran clashes. Evidence: the 2% single-day fall in Nifty and Sensex.
- **Geopolitical tilt versus strategic balancing.** The war marked a noticeable diplomatic tilt toward the Israel–U.S.–UAE bloc. The administrative challenge is to reconcile this with long-standing ties to Iran and with a Gulf region that is itself deeply divided post-war.
- **The insurance policy.** India's quiet, long-run diversification of its supplier base away from exclusive Hormuz dependence is the single most effective absorber of geopolitical shock.
- **Maritime risk mitigation.** Deepen strategic petroleum reserves for crude and LPG; expand naval presence and maritime security partnerships; hedge freight and insurance costs; develop alternative routes and the Chabahar corridor.
- **Conclusion.** Strategic autonomy is not neutrality — it is the capacity to absorb a shock without being forced into a camp.

QUESTION 2 · 12 MARKS · GS-2 · GOVERNANCE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Evaluate the administrative and methodological challenges associated with the enumeration of caste data in the Indian Census. Differentiate between an "open-ended response" method and a "curated digital list" approach in terms of data usability for targeted welfare.

KEY POINTERS

- **The structural conflict.** The Constitution aims at a caste-blind republic — abolishing untouchability, forbidding caste discrimination — yet policymakers require empirical, quantifiable data for targeted social justice, sub-categorisation and creamy-layer evaluation. Enumeration risks reifying an abstract identity even as it enables its remedy.
- **The 2011 SECC methodological failure.** The open-ended model allowed surnames, sub-castes and clan names to be entered interchangeably, returning over 46 lakh names against 4,147 in 1931. The Centre told the Supreme Court in 2021 that the figures were too error-ridden for reservation purposes.
- **The statutory shift in Census 2027.** Caste enumeration now has statutory backing under the Census Act, 1948 (Sections 3 and 17A), raising the stakes on method correction. The pre-test in 16 States and UTs (6-20 July) is the moment to fix it.
- **Administrative fix — digital versus open-ended.** Contrast the chaotic open column with hand-held devices pre-loaded with a validated, curated list of castes and sub-castes, from which the enumerator selects after asking the respondent. As the 2022-23 Bihar caste survey showed, this eliminates redundancy and yields usable data. Mismatches will still occur, but they become correctable rather than structural.
- **Way forward.** Curated lists prepared in consultation with State Backward Classes Commissions; enumerator training; audit trails; disclosure norms. If caste is to be counted, it must be counted well.

SUPPLEMENTARY PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- **(10 marks)** Cultural diplomacy is an instrument of statecraft, not merely of memory. Examine in the light of India's joint heritage conservation projects in Southeast Asia.
- **(10 marks)** Rising enrolment is not the same as rising opportunity. Critically examine AISHE findings on female participation in higher education.
- **(15 marks)** Cancer inequity is a consequence of choices, not of chance. Discuss with reference to universal health coverage in developing countries.

PART FOUR

Essay Blueprint

Civilisational Footprints and Diaspora Diplomacy: The Dual Engines of India's Cultural Soft Power

I · INTRODUCTION

- Define soft power in modern diplomacy — the shift from economic and military might toward cultural and human bridges.
- **Thesis:** Through joint civilisational restoration projects in Southeast Asia and the rising influence of a highly integrated global diaspora, India is moving from a passive cultural observer to an assertive soft-power actor.

II · CIVILISATIONAL FOOTPRINTS: HERITAGE RESTORATION AS DIPLOMATIC CAPITAL

- **Case in point:** the India-Indonesia joint conservation project at Prambanan, led by the Archaeological Survey of India — an empirical instance of enduring civilisational bonds.
- **Strategic overtones:** heritage projects function not merely as religious conservation but as strategic instruments — a way of countering alternative regional hegemonies by invoking centuries of shared heritage and mutual historical respect.
- Supporting canvas: Angkor Wat (Cambodia), My Son (Vietnam), Bagan (Myanmar); the ASI as an instrument of foreign policy.

III · DIASPORA DIPLOMACY: THE RISE OF THE HUMAN BRIDGE

- **Demographic tipping points:** the Indian community overtaking the England-born population to become Australia's largest overseas-born group.
- **The Four Ds matrix:** how diaspora presence carries bilateral relations from transactional trade into deep institutional cooperation — Democracy, Defence, Diaspora and *Dosti*.

IV · THE FRICTION AND THE GEOPOLITICAL VULNERABILITIES

- **Domestic political backlash:** rapid diaspora visibility can spark localised populist counter-reactions and nationalist anti-immigration movements in host countries; an asset in one narrative is recast as a liability in another.
- **The monolith fallacy:** the diaspora is diverse and non-monolithic; assuming automatic consensus distorts foreign policy expectations and, over time, erodes trust.

V · CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

- Recommend a shift in Indian foreign policy: from treating heritage and diaspora as symbolic talking points toward viewing them as data-driven strategic assets requiring sustained research, civil-society engagement and social-cohesion policy.
- **Final thought:** India's global rise is uniquely sustainable because it rests on two foundations that cannot be purchased — shared historical footprints, and trusted human networks.

QUOTABLE ANCHORS

- "Pride and sentiment are not the same as understanding." — *on the diaspora as constituency rather than symbol*
- "The inequities documented in this report are not inevitable; they are the consequence of choices." — *WHO Director-General*
- "If caste is to be counted, it should be counted well." — *The Hindu editorial*

— End of Analysis · Vedanta Coaching Academy & Library —