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Current Affairs Today, July 28, 2026

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ECONOMY**SECURITY & DEFENCE****SOCIAL ISSUES****GS2****GS3**

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

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A consolidated roundup of the news that matters for UPSC and State PCS preparation on July 28, 2026. The Rajya Sabha carried forward the Monsoon Session's economic legislative agenda, tax administration moved to align India with an OECD transparency standard, and a clutch of infrastructure and health stories rounded out the day. Items that carry a dedicated deep-dive article in today's edition are summarised here in brief; the remaining items are covered in full.

MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

Union MSME Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi introduced the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Rajya Sabha on July 28, 2026, to address chronic delayed payments to MSME suppliers.

Key Data

- Amends the **MSME Development Act, 2006**.
- Empowers courts to direct payment of **at least 50 per cent of an arbitral award** to an MSME supplier where the counterparty's application to set aside that award has been **pending for more than six months**.
- Mandates **Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)** to route invoice settlement through **TReDS**, the Trade Receivables Discounting System.
- Enables States to constitute additional **Micro and Small Enterprises Facilitation Councils (MSEFCs)** with a rationalised composition, and prescribes tighter timelines for adjudication of delayed-payment disputes.

A full deep-dive on this Bill, TReDS and the delayed-payment problem follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, industrial policy and MSMEs as a growth and employment engine, and GS2, the legislative process. See the full article for the institutional detail.

CBDT ALIGNS CRYPTO-ASSET TAX REPORTING WITH THE OECD'S CARF

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) issued a guidance note on July 24, 2026, widely reported from July 26 onward, shifting crypto transaction reporting obligations from individual investors to exchanges, aligning India with the OECD's Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework (CARF).

Key Data

- Legal basis: **Section 509 of the Income-tax Act, 2025**, read with **Rules 241-244** of the Income-tax Rules, 2026.
- Reporting obligation shifts to **Reporting Crypto-Asset Service Providers (RCASPs)**, principally exchanges.
- **Cross-border automatic exchange** of crypto tax data under CARF is set to begin **April 2027**.
- Does **not** alter the existing tax treatment of Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs); no new tax has been introduced.

A full deep-dive on CARF, the Income-tax Act, 2025 and India's VDA tax regime follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, mobilisation of resources and taxation, with a GS2 link to international regulatory cooperation (OECD, FATF). See the full article for the institutional detail.

INDIA'S DATA CENTRE CAPACITY PROJECTED TO REACH 12 GW BY 2030

A Wood Mackenzie report released in late July 2026 projected India's operational data centre capacity rising from 2.2 GW in 2025 to 12 GW by 2030, a nearly six-fold increase led by AI workloads.

Key Data

- **AI-dedicated capacity** projected to expand about 24-fold, from **275 MW (2025)** to **6,546 MW (2030)**.
- **Data centre electricity demand** projected to grow 20-fold by 2040 from **10 TWh (2025)**, reaching roughly **7 per cent of total electricity demand**.
- **Power availability**, not land or capital, is flagged as the binding growth constraint; water stress is flagged in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka data centre hubs.

A full deep-dive on India's data centre buildout and its energy and water implications follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, infrastructure and the energy-water-digital **nexus**, linked to India's AI Mission and renewable energy targets. See the full article for the institutional detail.

VIZHINJAM INTERNATIONAL SEAPORT CLEARED FOR EXIM OPERATIONS

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) granted final clearance for Kerala's Vizhinjam International Seaport to begin Export-Import (EXIM) cargo operations from August 18, 2026.

Key Data

- Deep-water transshipment port built under a **public-private partnership**; owned by the Kerala government's **Vizhinjam International Seaport Ltd (VISL)**, with operations run by **Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Limited (AVPPL)**, an Adani Ports and SEZ **concessionaire**, under a 40-year operating concession.
- Natural draft of about **20 metres**, among the deepest on India's coastline.
- No Container Freight Station (CFS) is yet attached; imports are initially limited to **Full Container Load (FCL)** shipments under **Direct Port Delivery**, to be moved within **48 hours**.

A full deep-dive on Vizhinjam, transshipment leakage and the Sagarmala programme follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, ports, shipping and maritime infrastructure, and GS1, transshipment geography. See the full article for the institutional detail.

RAJNATH SINGH ANNOUNCES TWO POLICY REFORMS FOR THE INDIAN COAST GUARD

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced two reforms for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) at Kartavya Bhavan-2, New Delhi, on July 28, 2026: gender parity in officer induction, and a streamlined ex-gratia process for personnel missing at sea.

Key Data

- **Reform 1:** women candidates to be inducted into both the **Short Service Appointment (SSA)** and **Permanent Appointment (PA)** cadres at par with men.
- **Reform 2:** simplified administrative procedure for granting **ex-gratia compensation** to families of ICG personnel reported missing at sea while on duty.

- Comes months after the ICG's **50th Raising Day / Golden Jubilee (Swarnim Varsh)**, marked on **1 February 2026**; the Force was raised on **1 February 1977**, with the **Coast Guard Act, 1978** giving it statutory form.

A full deep-dive on the Coast Guard's [mandate](#), gender-inclusion trajectory across the armed forces, and the ex-gratia reform follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, coastal and maritime security, and GS2, gender-inclusive governance in the armed forces. See the full article for the institutional detail.

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY 2026 AND INDIA'S NATIONAL VIRAL HEPATITIS CONTROL PROGRAMME

July 28 is observed globally as World Hepatitis Day. PIB marked the day by highlighting India's progress under the National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (NVHCP), launched in 2018.

Key Data

- **WHO 2026 theme:** "Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down", a call to dismantle financial, social and systemic barriers to hepatitis elimination.
- **NVHCP (since 2018):** over **21 crore** persons screened; over **6 lakh** Hepatitis B and C patients on treatment across more than **1,150** treatment sites.
- The date marks the birthday of **Dr Baruch Blumberg**, who discovered the Hepatitis B virus, the reason WHO chose July 28.

A full deep-dive on NVHCP, India's hepatitis burden and the WHO 2030 elimination target follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS2, government policies and interventions in public health; Social Issues, disease burden and health equity. See the full article for the institutional detail.

ASTRAZENECA INDIA ANNOUNCES INTEGRATED GENOMIC ONCOLOGY CENTRE IN AMARAVATI

AstraZeneca India, partnering with the Andhra Pradesh government, Strand Life Sciences and Qure.ai, announced an integrated genomic solutions centre in Amaravati as part of India's first Integrated Precision Oncology programme, targeting lung and breast cancer.

Key Data

- Combines **AI-powered X-ray screening** with **next-generation genomic testing**, for deployment in government hospitals.
- End-to-end platform spanning screening, diagnosis, biomarker testing, treatment planning and follow-up.
- Located within Andhra Pradesh's wider **Amaravati health-tech and Quantum Valley** push.

A full deep-dive on precision oncology, genomic medicine and India's cancer-care infrastructure follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, biotechnology and healthcare innovation, and GS2, public-private partnership in health delivery under Ayushman Bharat. See the full article for the institutional detail.

GMR AERO TECHNIC SIGNS MRO LICENCE AGREEMENT WITH HONEYWELL AEROSPACE

GMR Aero Technic, part of the GMR Group and India's leading airframe maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) firm, signed a licence agreement with Honeywell Aerospace at Hyderabad on July 28, 2026, to service components on LEAP engines.

Key Data

- Agreement covers **seven Honeywell Line Replaceable Units (LRUs)** used on **LEAP engines**, which power the **Airbus A320neo** and **Boeing 737 MAX**.
- Scope includes full disassembly, inspection, repair, reassembly and functional testing.
- Aligns with India's civil aviation policy push to build a **regional MRO hub**, backed by GST rationalisation and customs duty exemptions on MRO imports.

Background

Indian airlines historically sent roughly **90 per cent** of their MRO work overseas, chiefly to Singapore, Sri Lanka and the Gulf, because of an unfavourable domestic tax and duty structure. Recent GST and customs reforms for aircraft parts and MRO services aim to reverse that outflow.

UPSC Angle

GS3, civil aviation infrastructure and Make in India in high-technology services.

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AVIATION MRO:

LEAP engines are made by CFM International, a joint venture of GE Aerospace and Safran.

GMR Aero Technic is headquartered at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad.

INDIAN RAILWAYS SANCTIONS RS 163 CRORE FOR PARBHANI-MUDKHED TRACTION UPGRADE

Indian Railways approved Rs 163 crore on July 28, 2026 to upgrade the electric traction system on the Parbhani-Mudkhed double-line section, Nanded Division, South Central Railway, from a 1x25 kV to a 2x25 kV system.

Key Data

- Covers about **164 track-km**; supports Vande Bharat Express operations and heavier freight loads.
- Part of **Highly Utilised Network (HUN) Route-9**: Ajmer-Indore-Khandwa-Akola-Purna-Mudkhed-Secunderabad-Mahbubnagar-Dhone.
- Aligns with Indian Railways' target of **3,000 million tonnes** of freight loading by **2029-30**.

Background

A 2x25 kV traction system feeds the overhead line from both ends through an auto-transformer, halving line losses and permitting higher-speed, heavier trains than a 1x25 kV system, without adding new track.

UPSC Angle

GS3, railway infrastructure and capacity [augmentation](#) under the National Rail Plan.

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RAIL ELECTRIFICATION:

South Central Railway's Nanded Division covers parts of Maharashtra, Telangana and Karnataka.

The National Rail Plan targets raising rail's freight modal share from about 27 per cent toward 45 per cent by 2030.

PIB FEATURE: KHELO INDIA AND INDIA'S BID TO BECOME A TOP-10 SPORTING NATION

PIB published a feature on July 28, 2026 on the Khelo India scheme's role in India's stated goal of becoming a top-10 sporting nation by 2036 and top-5 by 2047, tied to India's Olympic and Paralympic 2036 hosting ambitions.

Key Data

- Sports Ministry's **2026-27 budget: Rs 4,479.88 crore**, the highest ever, up from **Rs 1,219 crore in 2013-14**.
- **349 infrastructure projects** sanctioned, outlay **Rs 3,176 crore**; **1,067 Khelo India Centres**; **267 supported academies**.
- **Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI): 174 Talent Assessment Centres**, over **1.87 lakh assessments** completed, targeting the **9-18** age group using AI-based tools.
- Games ecosystem under the scheme: Youth Games (2019), University Games (2020), Para Games (2023), Beach Games (2025), Winter and Tribal Games (2026).

Background

Khelo India was launched in 2017-18 to build a structured grassroots-to-elite talent pipeline, replacing the earlier ad hoc pattern of sports funding that relied heavily on state federations and the private sector for talent identification.

UPSC Angle

GS2, government schemes for human resource development among youth, and India's preparedness for hosting the 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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KHELO INDIA:

Launched 2017-18; administered by the Department of Sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

KIRTI uses AI-based assessment tools for talent identification in the 9-18 age group.

India's stated target: top-10 sporting nation by 2036, top-5 by 2047.

DAYS OBSERVED AROUND JULY 28, 2026

Besides World Hepatitis Day on July 28 (covered in full above), the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem fell on July 26, 2026, its 11th UNESCO observance.

Key Data

- Mangroves buffer coastlines against cyclones and erosion, sequester **“blue carbon”**, and serve as critical fish-breeding habitats.
- India’s largest mangrove cover lies in the **Sundarbans, West Bengal**, with significant cover also in **Gujarat** (Kachchh) and the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- Relevant scheme: **MISHTI** (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes), launched in the **Union Budget 2023-24**.

UPSC Angle

GS3, coastal ecosystems and blue carbon; a recurring Prelims pairing is the observance date, the UNESCO designation, and the MISHTI scheme.

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MANGROVE CONSERVATION:

International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem: July 26, a UNESCO observance since 2015.

MISHTI launched in Union Budget 2023-24, implemented through convergence with MGNREGS, CAMPA and other schemes.

Sundarbans (West Bengal) holds India’s largest mangrove cover.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS3 dominates July 28, 2026. The MSME Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026 and the CBDT’s alignment with the OECD’s CARF are both economy-and-regulation stories: one strengthens payment discipline for India’s roughly 6.3 crore MSMEs, the other extends India’s financial-transparency architecture from bank accounts to crypto-assets. The Wood Mackenzie data centre report and the Vizhinjam port clearance are both infrastructure stories with a resource-constraint twist, energy and water for data centres, and transshipment capacity for shipping, that reward students who can connect a single news item to India’s larger infrastructure strategy (AI Mission, Sagarmala).

Security and health. The Coast Guard’s gender-parity and ex-gratia reforms extend the post-2020 trend of gender-inclusive reform across the armed forces into a maritime security force that marked its own 50th Raising Day only months earlier, in February 2026. World Hepatitis Day is this year’s strongest health-governance peg, testing both the WHO’s 2030 elimination goal and the NVHCP’s scale of screening and treatment.

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BILLS AND LEGAL INSTRUMENTS:

MSME Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026: amends the MSME Development Act, 2006; mandates CPSEs to route settlement through TReDS; empowers courts to direct payment of at least 50 per cent of an arbitral award once a set-aside application has been pending for more than six months.

CBDT crypto CARF alignment: Section 509, Income-tax Act, 2025; Rules 241-244, Income-tax Rules, 2026; cross-border reporting from April 2027; no new tax introduced.

INFRASTRUCTURE:

India data centre capacity: 2.2 GW (2025) to 12 GW (2030) per Wood Mackenzie; AI-dedicated capacity 275 MW to 6,546 MW; power, not land or capital, is the binding constraint.

Vizhinjam International Seaport: EXIM operations from August 18, 2026; owned by Kerala government SPV VISL, operated by Adani's concessionaire AVPPL; natural draft about 20 metres; located in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

Parbhani-Mudkhed traction upgrade: Rs 163 crore, about 164 track-km, 1x25 kV to 2x25 kV, Nanded Division, South Central Railway.

SECURITY AND HEALTH:

Indian Coast Guard: raised 1 February 1977, statutory basis the Coast Guard Act, 1978; 50th Raising Day (Golden Jubilee) marked 1 February 2026; reforms of July 28, 2026 cover gender parity in SSA and PA cadres, and simplified ex-gratia for personnel missing at sea.

World Hepatitis Day: July 28, WHO observance since 2010, marks the birthday of Dr Baruch Blumberg; 2026 theme "Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down"; NVHCP launched 2018, over 21 crore screened, over 6 lakh on treatment.

AstraZeneca Amaravati genomic oncology centre: partners Strand Life Sciences and Qure.ai; focus lung and breast cancer.

SPORTS AND ENVIRONMENT:

Khelo India: launched 2017-18; 2026-27 Sports Ministry budget Rs 4,479.88 crore; KIRTI covers ages 9-18 across 174 Talent Assessment Centres; India's target is top-10 sporting nation by 2036.

International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem: July 26, UNESCO; MISHTI launched Union Budget 2023-24; Sundarbans holds India's largest mangrove cover.

Sources: PIB, The Hindu, PRS Legislative Research

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

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