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Current Affairs Today, July 29, 2026

29 July 2026 ·

POLITY**ENVIRONMENT****ECONOMY****GS2****GS3**

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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Current Affairs Today, July 29, 2026

29 July 2026 · 18 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

A consolidated roundup of the news that matters for UPSC and State PCS preparation on July 29, 2026. Environment, judiciary-and-police accountability, [federalism](#), and the economy all carried substantial stories today. Items that carry a dedicated deep-dive article in today's edition are summarised here in brief; the remaining items are covered in full.

INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY 2026

India marked International Tiger Day on July 29, 2026, reaffirming its record as home to roughly 70 per cent of the world's wild tigers, more than five decades after Project Tiger's launch.

Key Data

- **Project Tiger** launched **April 1, 1973** at **Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand**; tiger numbers had fallen to **1,827 by 1972** from roughly **40,000 around 1900**.
- India now has **58 Tiger Reserves** across **18 tiger-range states**, covering about **84,500 sq km**, roughly **2.56 per cent** of India's land area.
- Statutory authority: the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, under the **Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006**.

A full deep-dive on Project Tiger, the NTCA and the "beyond-reserve" conservation debate follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, conservation and biodiversity, and the institutional architecture of India's flagship wildlife programmes. See the full article for detail.

JPC EXTENDS TENURE ON THE ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION BILL

The Lok Sabha extended the tenure of the 41-member Joint Parliamentary Committee examining the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024 till the first day of the last week of the Winter Session, on a resolution moved by JPC chairman P.P. Chaudhary.

Key Data

- The JPC examines the **Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024**, which provides for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- The JPC earlier stated, on **July 11, 2026**, that the ONOE framework “**conforms to the Constitution.**”
- Stated target: a phased rollout, aligning roughly 20 State Assemblies with the **2029** Lok Sabha election as a first stage, with full nationwide synchronisation including local bodies discussed for **2034**.

A full deep-dive on the 129th Amendment Bill, its federalism implications and the JPC’s process follows later in today’s edition.

UPSC Angle

GS2, Parliament and State legislatures, and constitutional amendments. See the full article for detail.

SUPREME COURT ORDERS RELEASE OF MINORS DETAINED IN NEET PROTESTS; STATUS OF POLICING REPORT FLAGS FORCE-IMMUNITY VIEWS

A Supreme Court bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant ordered States to release all under-18 detainees, without criminal antecedents, arrested during nationwide protests over the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak, while a leaked Rapid Action Force diary and the Status of Policing in India Report 2025 raised fresh questions about police accountability.

Key Data

- CJI Surya Kant’s bench, with Justices **Joymalya Bagchi** and **V. Mohana**, barred coercive action against protesting students and directed preservation of digital evidence.
- A **Rapid Action Force diary** confirmed Delhi Police authorised **pellet-gun use** on protesters, contradicting earlier denials.
- The **Status of Policing in India Report (SPIR) 2025**, by **Common Cause and Lokniti-CSDS**, surveyed **8,276 police personnel across 82 locations in 17 states**; over **30 per cent** justified “third-degree” methods in serious crimes, and only **41 per cent** said arrest procedures are “always followed.”

A full deep-dive on judicial oversight of protest policing and the Prakash Singh police-reform framework follows later in today’s edition.

UPSC Angle

GS2, judiciary, fundamental rights and police accountability. See the full article for detail.

CAUVERY WATER REGULATION COMMITTEE ORDERS KARNATAKA TO RELEASE WATER TO TAMIL NADU

The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) directed Karnataka to ensure a flow of 3,500 cusecs at the Biligundlu inter-state gauge for 15 days from July 29, 2026, amid a drought-affected basin.

Key Data

- Karnataka's inflows into its four Cauvery reservoirs were **65.86 per cent below** the 30-year average for June 1 to July 27, 2026.
- Tamil Nadu claims a backlog of **9.46 tmc ft** as of **July 26, 2026**.
- The CWRC functions under the **Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA)** framework, established after the **Supreme Court's 2018 final verdict** on the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal award.

A full deep-dive on inter-state river water disputes and the Cauvery adjudication framework follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS2/GS3, inter-state water disputes and federalism. See the full article for detail.

CENTRE ISSUES SEVENTH DRAFT NOTIFICATION ON WESTERN GHATS ECO-SENSITIVE AREA

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) issued its seventh draft Eco-Sensitive Area (ESA) notification for the Western Ghats on July 27, 2026, proposing 56,825.7 sq km across six states, with public objections invited for 60 days.

Key Data

- Covers parts of **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu**; Goa's proposed ESA is unchanged at **1,461 sq km across 108 villages**.
- Proposes a complete ban on **new mining, quarrying and sand mining**, and on **new or expanded thermal power plants**, within the ESA.
- Traces to the **Madhav Gadgil Committee (2011)** and the **K. Kasturirangan Committee (2013)**; this is the seventh draft in a process stalled for over a decade, revived after the 2024 Wayanad landslide.

A full deep-dive on the Western Ghats ESA notification process follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, ecologically sensitive areas and conservation-versus-livelihood trade-offs. See the full article for detail.

GOVERNMENT WEIGHS EASING AIRPORT-AIRLINE CROSS-OWNERSHIP RULES

The Ministry of Civil Aviation is examining a relaxation of the rule capping an airport operator's stake in any airline at 10 per cent, a rule dating to the 2006 Delhi and Mumbai airport privatisation agreements, reportedly following a request from the Adani Group.

Key Data

- **IndiGo and Air India** together control roughly **90 per cent** of India's domestic airline capacity, the stated rationale for considering more competition-friendly ownership rules.
- Any change requires **Law Ministry clearance** and **Union Cabinet approval**.
- **Adani Enterprises** has formally denied plans to launch an airline despite reportedly seeking the policy change; IndiGo's Managing Director has called airport-airline cross-ownership a "**massive conflict of interest**" with no global precedent.

A full deep-dive on airport-airline cross-ownership and competition policy in civil aviation follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, infrastructure and competition policy. See the full article for detail.

ICMR STUDY FLAGS HYPER-ENDEMIC DENGUE TRANSMISSION ACROSS INDIA

An ICMR-linked surveillance study found all four dengue serotypes, DENV-1 to DENV-4, co-circulating in at least eight Indian states, indicating a shift into "hyper-endemic" dengue transmission.

Key Data

- **Hyper-endemicity** means simultaneous circulation of multiple serotypes in the same region and season, distinct from earlier single- or dual-serotype patterns.
- Concurrent multi-serotype exposure raises the risk of **severe dengue** (Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever/Dengue Shock Syndrome) through **antibody-dependent enhancement** on secondary infection with a different serotype.
- Complicates vaccine strategy, since protection must be balanced across all four serotypes.

A full deep-dive on dengue hyper-endemicity and India's vector-borne disease response follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS2/GS3, public health governance and vector-borne disease. See the full article for detail.

INDIA'S SPACETECH STARTUPS CROSS \$871 MILLION IN CUMULATIVE FUNDING; SKYROOT BECOMES FIRST UNICORN

India's private spacetechnology sector has raised approximately \$871 million across 241 funding rounds involving 285 companies as of July 2026, with Skyroot Aerospace becoming the sector's first unicorn at a valuation of about \$1.1 billion.

Key Data

- The space sector was opened to private participation in **2020**, with **IN-SPACe** established as the nodal regulator.
- Other notably funded firms: **Pixxel** (about \$96 million cumulative, the sector's second-most-funded firm), **Digantara** (\$50 million Series B), **EtherealX** (\$20.5 million Series A), **Bellatrix Aerospace** (\$20 million pre-Series B), **AgniKul Cosmos** (\$17 million Series C).

A full deep-dive on India's spacetechnology funding ecosystem and IN-SPACe's regulatory role follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, space technology and private-sector participation. See the full article for detail.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026 INTRODUCED

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai introduced the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha on July 29, 2026, amending Section 13(3) of the parent 1969 Act.

Key Data

- Delayed registration of births or deaths beyond **two years** will now require an order from a **Judicial Magistrate First Class**, rather than administrative approval.
- Registrations delayed by **one to two years** continue to require approval from a District Magistrate, Sub-Divisional Magistrate or Executive Magistrate.
- The **Union Cabinet approved** the amendments on **July 20, 2026**; the parent Act was last substantively amended in **2023**, introducing the National Register of Births and Deaths and digitisation measures.

Background

Delayed civil registration has historically been a route for fraudulent age or identity claims, particularly where Aadhaar or other identity documents are subsequently built on an uncertain birth record. Requiring judicial rather than administrative sign-off for long-delayed registrations raises the evidentiary bar.

UPSC Angle

GS2, government policies on civil registration and identity governance, with an access-to-justice angle for rural and low-income citizens.

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CIVIL REGISTRATION:

Parent Act: Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969; Section 13(3) amended in 2026.

Delay over 2 years: now requires a Judicial Magistrate First Class order.

Delay of 1-2 years: requires DM/SDM/Executive Magistrate approval.

National Register of Births and Deaths introduced via the 2023 amendment.

WEST BENGAL MOVES TO CURB GRAM PANCHAYAT PRADHANS' POWERS

The West Bengal government is preparing a bill to strip gram panchayat pradhans of the authority to issue birth and death certificates and disburse funds, transferring these functions to bureaucrats, reported in late July 2026.

Key Data

- Nearly **2,000 gram panchayat pradhans** have reportedly become administratively inactive since the change in State government.
- Affected schemes include the state's **125-day rural employment programme, PM Awas Yojana**, and **finance commission-funded** local works.

Background

Panchayats derive their status as institutions of local self-government from the **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992**, which added **Part IX** to the Constitution and devolved specified functions to elected local bodies. Administratively bypassing elected pradhans, even where framed as a service-continuity measure, raises questions about the durability of that constitutional **devolution** when State governments change.

UPSC Angle

GS2, Panchayati Raj institutions and the 73rd Amendment; Centre-State and State-local relations.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

PANCHAYATI RAJ:

73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, added Part IX, giving panchayats constitutional status as institutions of local self-government.

West Bengal's proposed bill would shift certificate-issuance and fund-disbursal from elected pradhans to bureaucrats.

SOLAR POWER CURTAILMENT REACHES 8,133 GWH IN Q1 FY27

Government data disclosed that 8,133 GWh of solar power generation was curtailed in the April-June 2026 quarter due to transmission bottlenecks and grid-security requirements, reported July 28, 2026.

Key Data

- Monthly breakup: **April 2,417 GWh, May 3,235 GWh, June 2,481 GWh.**
- Cause cited: a mismatch between rapid renewable capacity addition and delayed transmission infrastructure commissioning, requiring curtailment for **grid stability**.

Background

Curtailment occurs when the grid operator instructs a renewable generator to reduce output because the transmission network cannot safely evacuate all the power being generated at that moment, distinct from a shortage of renewable capacity itself.

UPSC Angle

GS3, energy infrastructure and the renewable-transmission gap.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

SOLAR CURTAILMENT, Q1 FY27:

Total: 8,133 GWh (April-June 2026).

Monthly: April 2,417 GWh, May 3,235 GWh, June 2,481 GWh.

Cause: transmission bottlenecks, not a renewable generation shortfall.

IIP GROWTH HITS 23-MONTH HIGH OF 7.3% IN JUNE 2026

India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew 7.3 per cent year-on-year in June 2026, its fastest pace in 23 months, up from a revised 5.0 per cent in May, per Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) data released July 28, 2026.

Key Data

- **Manufacturing** grew **7.8 per cent**; **electricity and gas supply** surged **10.6 per cent**, driven by heatwave demand; **mining** grew **1.0 per cent**.
- **19 of 23** NIC two-digit manufacturing sub-sectors posted positive growth; top contributors were **electrical equipment (+34.0 per cent)**, **motor vehicles and trailers (+17.5 per cent)**, and **food products (+10.8 per cent)**.

Background

The IIP uses **2011-12** as its base year and is released monthly by MoSPI, tracking output across mining, manufacturing and electricity.

UPSC Angle

GS3, indices of industrial production and growth indicators.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

IIP, JUNE 2026:

Growth: 7.3 per cent, a 23-month high; May revised to 5.0 per cent.

Base year: 2011-12; released by MoSPI.

Electricity and gas supply led growth at 10.6 per cent, linked to heatwave demand.

CGD REPORT: DELHI HAS HIGHEST SHARE OF SCHOOLS NEAR TOXIC SITES AMONG WORLD CAPITALS

A Center for Global Development (CGD) report found that about 91 per cent of schools in New Delhi are located within 5 km of a documented toxic site, the highest proportion among world capital cities studied, reported around July 29, 2026.

Key Data

- Across seven countries with school-level enrolment data studied, over **12 per cent of pupils (roughly 43 million)** are near a toxic site.

- **Lead-acid battery recycling and manufacturing** accounts for about **86 per cent** of global lead consumption and is the primary source of urban lead contamination in low- and middle-income countries.

Background

Unlike wealthier nations, where pollution is more concentrated in poorer neighbourhoods, the CGD study found pollution exposure in developing-country capitals like Delhi is significant even in affluent areas, complicating standard poverty-pollution correlation assumptions.

UPSC Angle

GS3, environmental pollution; GS2, child health equity.

FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

TOXIC-SITE SCHOOL EXPOSURE:

Delhi: about 91 per cent of schools within 5 km of a documented toxic site, the highest among capitals studied.

Lead-acid batteries account for about 86 per cent of global lead consumption.

Governed in India by the Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022.

ICMR-NICPR'S INDIGENOUS CERVICAL CANCER DRUG CANDIDATE LICENSED FOR COMMERCIALISATION

ICMR's National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR) licensed SHetA2, an indigenous anti-HPV therapeutic candidate for Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN), to Emcure Pharmaceuticals for commercialisation, reported in late July 2026.

Key Data

- Jointly developed by **Dr Showket Hussain (ICMR-NICPR)** and **Dr Doris Benbrook (University of Oklahoma, Stephenson Cancer Center)**.
- Mechanism: selectively targets HPV-infected precancerous cells while sparing healthy tissue, unlike current destructive or ablative treatments.
- Currently at the **Phase I clinical trial** stage.

Background

SHetA2 complements India's indigenous HPV vaccine **CERVAVAC** in a broader cervical cancer elimination strategy, addressing treatment of precancerous lesions rather than primary prevention.

UPSC Angle

GS3, indigenous biomedical innovation and health technology.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

SHETA2:

Developer: ICMR-NICPR with the University of Oklahoma.

Target: Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN).

Licensed to: Emcure Pharmaceuticals; currently Phase I trial stage.

FOREIGN SECRETARY MISRI'S BEIJING VISIT REAFFIRMS BORDER PEACE

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri concluded a two-day visit to Beijing on July 28, 2026, meeting Vice Minister Sun Haiyan of the Communist Party of China's International Department, with both sides reaffirming the importance of peace and tranquility along the border.

Key Data

- Builds on the **October 2024 India-China patrolling agreement** in eastern Ladakh, which enabled disengagement steps after the 2020 stand-off.
- MEA spokesperson **Randhir Jaiswal** confirmed both sides “acknowledged that peace and tranquility in India-China border areas remain important to advance **bilateral** cooperation.”

Background

Eastern Ladakh, Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh are integral parts of India under the Government of India's consistent position; diplomatic engagement on border management does not alter India's sovereign territorial stance.

UPSC Angle

GS2, India's bilateral relations with China and border management diplomacy.

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INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS:

FS Misri's Beijing visit: July 27-28, 2026.

October 2024 patrolling agreement covers eastern Ladakh, following the 2020 Galwan clash.

Galwan clash, June 2020: 20 Indian soldiers killed; Chinese casualties never officially confirmed by China.

OMAN PRESENTS VOLUNTARY FEE PLAN FOR STRAIT OF HORMUZ PASSAGE

Oman proposed a joint regional mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz under which Iran would collect voluntary, not compulsory, fees from passing vessels, modelled on the Strait of Malacca system, reported July 28-29, 2026.

Key Data

- The Strait of Hormuz carries roughly **one-fifth of global oil and LNG trade**.
- The **Malacca precedent** (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore) uses voluntary contributions to fund navigation safety, environmental protection and search-and-rescue, not sovereign toll collection.

Background

The plan aims to end months of shipping disruption in the strait amid regional tensions, without granting Iran **unilateral** toll-collection authority over an international waterway.

UPSC Angle

GS2/GS3, West Asia geopolitics and India's energy security given its dependence on Gulf crude and LNG transiting Hormuz.

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STRAIT OF HORMUZ:

Carries about 20 per cent of world oil and LNG trade.

Oman's proposal models the voluntary-fee cooperative used at the Strait of Malacca.

GULVEER SINGH WINS INDIA'S FIRST-EVER CWG MEDAL IN MEN'S 10,000M

Gulveer Singh won silver in the men's 10,000m at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow on July 29, 2026, India's first-ever Commonwealth Games medal in the event, finishing behind Australia's Ky Robinson.

Key Data

- Timing: **27:49.78**; Gulveer Singh is the reigning **Asian 10,000m champion** and holds the **Indian national record of 27:00.22**.
- Won bronze at the **2023 Asian Games**; President **Droupadi Murmu** congratulated Gulveer Singh and fellow silver medallist Harjinder Kaur.

UPSC Angle

Prelims-facing sports current affairs.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

GULVEER SINGH:

CWG 2026 Glasgow: silver, men's 10,000m, 27:49.78, India's first-ever medal in the event.

Indian national record: 27:00.22; Asian 10,000m champion; 2023 Asian Games bronze.

AIR INDIA GROUP REPORTS FY26 COMBINED NET LOSS OF RS 22,238 CRORE

Air India and Air India Express posted a combined FY26 net loss of Rs 22,238 crore, more than double the previous year's Rs 10,859 crore loss, despite privatisation in 2022, reported July 28, 2026.

Key Data

- **Air India:** revenue Rs 51,452 crore, net loss Rs 15,368 crore. **Air India Express:** revenue Rs 19,088 crore, net loss Rs 6,767 crore.
- Combined revenue declined about **9 per cent year-on-year**, attributed partly to West Asia conflict-related disruption and elevated fuel prices.
- Ownership: **Tata Sons 73.82 per cent, Singapore Airlines 25.1 per cent**, employees **1.08 per cent** (ESOP from the 2022 privatisation).

UPSC Angle

GS3, disinvestment outcomes and the post-privatisation performance of former public-sector undertakings.

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AIR INDIA GROUP, FY26:

Combined net loss: Rs 22,238 crore, against Rs 10,859 crore in FY25.

Tata Sons stake: 73.82 per cent; Air India privatised in 2022.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS3 dominates July 29, 2026, with environment and economy both heavily represented.

International Tiger Day and the Western Ghats ESA seventh draft are two contrasting conservation stories, one celebrating a five-decade success (Project Tiger), the other stuck in over a decade of stakeholder deadlock. Solar curtailment and the airport-airline ownership debate both illustrate infrastructure bottlenecks constraining sectors that are otherwise growing fast, a theme reinforced by the 23-month-high IIP print.

GS2 carries the judiciary-and-federalism thread. The Supreme Court's order on NEET protest minors, read alongside the Status of Policing Report and the RAF diary revelation, is this edition's strongest police-accountability peg. The Cauvery order and the West Bengal panchayat story both test federalism from different angles, inter-state water-sharing adjudication and Centre-State-local devolution. The JPC extension keeps the One Nation, One Election debate alive without resolving it.

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BILLS AND INSTITUTIONS:

Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024 (ONOE): JPC tenure extended to the last week of the Winter Session; JPC has 41 members, chaired by P.P. Chaudhary.

Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026: amends Section 13(3); delay beyond 2 years now needs a Judicial Magistrate First Class order.

Status of Policing in India Report 2025: Common Cause and Lokniti-CSDS; 8,276 personnel surveyed across 82 locations, 17 states.

ENVIRONMENT:

Project Tiger: launched 1 April 1973, Corbett National Park; 58 Tiger Reserves across 18 states, about 84,500 sq km; NTCA under the WPA (Amendment) Act, 2006.

Western Ghats ESA seventh draft: 56,825.7 sq km across 6 states; Gadgil Committee 2011, Kasturirangan Committee 2013; 60-day objection window from 27 July 2026.

Solar curtailment, Q1 FY27: 8,133 GWh, due to transmission bottlenecks.

FEDERALISM AND WATER:

Cauvery Water Regulation Committee: ordered 3,500 cusecs release at Biligundlu for 15 days from 29 July 2026; under the CWMA framework post the Supreme Court's 2018 verdict.

73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992: constitutional status for Panchayati Raj institutions, Part IX.

HEALTH AND SCIENCE:

Dengue hyper-endemicity: all four serotypes (DENV-1 to DENV-4) co-circulating in at least 8 states; risk mechanism is antibody-dependent enhancement.

SHetA2: ICMR-NICPR cervical cancer drug candidate, licensed to Emcure Pharmaceuticals, Phase I trial.

India spacetechnology funding: about \$871 million across 241 rounds; Skyroot Aerospace is India's first spacetechnology unicorn, about \$1.1 billion valuation; IN-SPACE established 2020.

ECONOMY:

IIP, June 2026: 7.3 per cent growth, a 23-month high; base year 2011-12.

Air India Group FY26: combined net loss Rs 22,238 crore; Tata Sons holds 73.82 per cent.

Airport-airline cross-ownership cap: 10 per cent, from the 2006 Delhi/Mumbai privatisation agreements.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

FS Vikram Misri's Beijing visit: 27-28 July 2026; builds on the October 2024 eastern Ladakh patrolling agreement.

Strait of Hormuz: carries about 20 per cent of world oil/LNG trade; Oman's fee proposal models the Strait of Malacca.

SPORTS:

Gulveer Singh: CWG 2026 silver, men's 10,000m, India's first-ever medal in the event, timing 27:49.78.

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