

UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · [UJIYARI.COM](https://ujiyari.com)**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

Eight Dead in Kerala: Extremely Heavy Rain, Landslides and the Western Ghats Question

2 August 2026

ENVIRONMENT

GEOGRAPHY

GS1

GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Eight Dead in Kerala: Extremely Heavy Rain, Landslides and the Western Ghats Question

2 August 2026 · 5 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

Eight people were confirmed dead, eight missing and thirteen injured as extremely heavy rain triggered landslides and flash floods across Kerala over August 1 and 2, 2026, with the India Meteorological Department issuing an orange alert for twelve districts on August 2.

THE EVENT, IN NUMBERS

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Deaths confirmed (as of 2 August)	8 , with 8 missing and 13 injured
Rainfall recorded	361 mm in 24 hours at Vadasserikkara (Pathanamthitta); 340 mm over about 35 hours at Anakkampoyil on the Kozhikode-Wayanad border; also Athikkayam 357 mm, Vagamon (Kottayam) 314 mm
Alert status, 2 August	Orange alert for 12 districts ; no alert for Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam
Relief camps	209 camps , sheltering 5,792 people
Housing damage	27 houses destroyed , 196 partially damaged
Worst-affected districts	Pathanamthitta, Idukki, Kottayam

Casualty figures in an ongoing disaster are provisional and rose over subsequent days; the numbers above are as reported on 2 August 2026.

UNDERSTANDING IMD'S COLOUR-CODED WARNINGS

IMD's warning system is a four-tier colour code that UPSC tests directly, and the distinction between the tiers is about the **action expected**, not merely the rainfall amount.

COLOUR	MEANING	EXPECTED ACTION
Green	No warning	No action needed
Yellow	Be updated	Watch the situation; heavy rainfall (64.5 to 115.5 mm in 24 hours)
Orange	Be prepared	Very heavy rainfall (115.6 to 204.4 mm); authorities on standby
Red	Take action	Extremely heavy rainfall (above 204.4 mm); disruption expected

The 361 mm recorded at Vadasserikkara in Pathanamthitta over 24 hours sits well into the “extremely heavy” category, which is why red alerts preceded the orange alert as the system moved. The 340 mm at Anakkampoyil accumulated over roughly 35 hours, so it is not directly comparable against a 24-hour threshold, a distinction worth observing since IMD’s categories are defined per 24 hours.

WHY KERALA’S GEOGRAPHY AMPLIFIES THE DAMAGE

Kerala’s vulnerability is not simply a function of rainfall volume. It is the product of a specific and unforgiving combination of terrain, soil and land use.

FACTOR	MECHANISM
Steep Western Ghats slopes	The Ghats rise sharply from a narrow coastal plain, producing short, steep river gradients where water accelerates rather than spreading
Orographic lift	Moist southwest monsoon winds are forced upward by the Ghats, concentrating extremely heavy rainfall on the windward slopes
Lateritic and shallow soils	Thin soil over hard rock saturates quickly; once saturated, the soil-rock interface becomes a failure plane
Short river courses	Kerala’s rivers are short and swift, so runoff reaches the plains within hours rather than days, producing flash flooding
Slope construction and quarrying	Cutting into slopes for building and quarrying removes lateral support and alters drainage, converting a marginally stable slope into an unstable one

THE GADGIL-KASTURIRANGAN QUESTION, AGAIN

Every major Kerala landslide event returns attention to the unresolved policy question of how much of the Western Ghats should be protected from construction and quarrying.

REPORT	RECOMMENDATION
Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (Gadgil Committee), 2011	Classify the entire Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area with three graded zones (ESZ 1, 2 and 3), with the strictest restrictions in ESZ 1
High Level Working Group (Kasturirangan Committee), 2013	Restrict the Ecologically Sensitive Area to roughly 37 per cent of the Ghats, covering the natural landscape only and excluding cultivated and habitation areas

Neither has been implemented in the form recommended. The Union government's successive draft Ecologically Sensitive Area notifications have repeatedly lapsed without inter-state consensus, with the affected states raising livelihood and land-rights objections. The result is that slope construction, quarrying and land-use change in the most landslide-prone terrain continue under a regulatory regime that has been under revision for more than a decade.

THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

INSTITUTION/INSTRUMENT	ROLE
Disaster Management Act, 2005	The governing statute, establishing the NDMA, State Disaster Management Authorities and District Disaster Management Authorities
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)	Chaired by the Prime Minister; lays down policies and guidelines
National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)	The specialist response force deployed for search and rescue
State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)	The primary funding window for state-level relief, with the NDRF fund available for calamities of severe nature
Landslide Risk Mitigation Scheme	The dedicated central scheme for landslide-prone states, with Kerala among the priority states

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 1: Important geophysical phenomena; geographical features and their location; monsoon mechanism and orographic rainfall.

GS Paper 3: Disaster and disaster management; conservation and environmental degradation; environmental impact assessment.

Prelims pointers:

- IMD colour codes: **green** (no warning), **yellow** (be updated, 64.5-115.5 mm), **orange** (be prepared, 115.6-204.4 mm), **red** (take action, above 204.4 mm) in 24 hours.
- **Gadgil Committee (2011)**: entire Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area in three graded zones.
- **Kasturirangan Committee (2013)**: ESA restricted to about **37 per cent** of the Ghats, natural landscape only.
- Governing statute: **Disaster Management Act, 2005**; NDMA chaired by the **Prime Minister**.
- **Orographic rainfall**: precipitation caused by moist air forced to rise over a topographic barrier, the mechanism concentrating monsoon rain on the Ghats' windward slopes.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

THE EVENT (AS OF 2 AUGUST 2026):

8 dead, 8 missing, 13 injured; figures provisional and rising.

Rainfall: 361 mm in 24 hours at Vadasserikkara (Pathanamthitta); 340 mm over about 35 hours at Anakkampoyil on the Kozhikode-Wayanad border.

Orange alert for 12 districts on 2 August, with no alert for Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam; 209 relief camps sheltering 5,792 people.

27 houses destroyed, 196 partially damaged. Worst hit: Pathanamthitta, Idukki, Kottayam.

IMD COLOUR CODES: GREEN (NO WARNING), YELLOW (BE UPDATED), ORANGE (BE PREPARED), RED (TAKE ACTION).

WESTERN GHATS REPORTS:

Gadgil Committee (2011): whole Ghats as ESA, three graded zones.

Kasturirangan Committee (2013): ESA limited to about 37 per cent, natural landscape only.

Neither implemented as recommended; draft ESA notifications have repeatedly lapsed.

WHY THE TERRAIN AMPLIFIES DAMAGE: STEEP SLOPES, OROGRAPHIC RAINFALL CONCENTRATION, THIN LATERITIC SOILS THAT SATURATE FAST, SHORT SWIFT RIVERS, AND SLOPE CUTTING FOR CONSTRUCTION AND QUARRYING.

Sources: India Meteorological Department, National Disaster Management Authority, The Hindu

Source: Eight Dead in Kerala: Extremely Heavy Rain, Landslides and the Western Ghats Question — Ujiyari.com |

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

RELATED EDITORIALS

DOWN TO EARTH

[Every Degree Costs a Harvest: Rice Yields and the Arithmetic of Warming](#)

1 Aug

INDIAN EXPRESS

[Built and Blocked: How Transmission Bottlenecks Are Curtailing India's Renewable Energy](#)

31 Jul

INDIAN EXPRESS

[Neither Blanket Bar Nor Blanket Amnesty: The Supreme Court's "Public Interest" Test](#)

30 Jul

DOWN TO EARTH

[COP32 in Addis Ababa: Africa's Chance to Arrive With Solutions, Not Just Demands](#)

30 Jul

RELATED KEY TERMS

KEY TERM

[Access and Benefit Sharing \(ABS\)](#)

The framework for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising...

KEY TERM

[Agasthyamalai BR](#)

A UNESCO-designated biosphere reserve in the southern Western Ghats...

KEY TERM

[Agri-Photovoltaic](#)

A dual land-use technology that integrates elevated solar panels with...

KEY TERM

[Agroforestry](#)

A land-use system that deliberately integrates trees and shrubs with...



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/daily/2026/08/02/kerala-extremely-heavy-rain-landslides-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](#)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com