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Current Affairs Quiz 29 August 2026

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DAILY PRACTICE

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15 MCQs



Explanations



Statistics



Timed

CHOOSE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS

5

10

All 15

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QUESTION 1 OF 15

The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is headquartered at which city?

A Beijing

B Bishkek

C Tashkent

D Astana

FACT: The SCO Secretariat is at Beijing, while the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is at Tashkent, Uzbekistan. These are the organisation's two permanent bodies and they sit in different countries.

ANALYSIS: The split was deliberate. Placing the political secretariat in China and the counter-terrorism body in Central Asia balanced the founding members' interests, since RATS was the instrument the Central Asian states most wanted and the one that gave the grouping its original operational purpose.

CONCEPT NOTE

The SCO grew out of the Shanghai Five of 1996, comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, formed to settle post-Soviet border disputes and build military confidence along them. It was formalised as the SCO in 2001 when Uzbekistan joined.

India and Pakistan became full members in 2017, Iran in 2023 and Belarus in 2024. The organisation's standing counter-terrorism formulation is the "three evils" of terrorism, separatism and extremism.

The 26th Summit is at Bishkek from August 31 to September 1, 2026, and the next presidency passes to Pakistan.

Concept Kit — tap to expand

 CROSS-PAPER LINKS	GS2 regional groupings, India and its neighbourhood; GS3 border security.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	three evils, Connect Central Asia, extended neighbourhood, multi-alignment.
 COMMON MISTAKE	swapping the Secretariat and RATS locations, or assuming Uzbekistan was in the Shanghai Five, which it was not.
 EXAM TIP	memorise the accession years as a chain: 2001 Uzbekistan, 2017 India and Pakistan, 2023 Iran, 2024 Belarus.
 INTERVIEW	** India has spent much of its SCO membership raising objections aimed at two fellow members. What positive agenda could India realistically bring instead?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

The Tashkent Declaration, which formally ended the India-Pakistan war of 1965, is most closely associated with which Indian Prime Minister?

A Lal Bahadur Shastri

B Jawaharlal Nehru

C Indira Gandhi

D Morarji Desai

FACT: Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri signed the Tashkent Declaration with Pakistan's President Ayub Khan on January 10, 1966, and died at Tashkent the following day, January 11, 1966. The agreement was mediated by Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin.

ANALYSIS: The declaration restored the pre-war boundary and committed both sides to non-interference, but it was politically controversial in India precisely because it returned territory captured during the war, including the Haji Pir Pass.

CONCEPT NOTE

Every Indian prime ministerial visit to Tashkent since has included the Shastri Memorial, and the current visit of August 29 and 30, 2026 does as well, alongside the Mahatma Gandhi Centre at Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies. Shastri had become Prime Minister in 1964 after Nehru's death and is associated with the slogan "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan" and with the institutional groundwork of the Green Revolution and the White Revolution, including the founding of the National Dairy Development Board.

Concept Kit — tap to expand



CROSS-PAPER LINKS

GS1 post-independence consolidation; GS2 India-Pakistan relations, bilateral agreements.



MAINS KEYWORDS

Tashkent Declaration, Haji Pir Pass, Soviet mediation, non-interference.



COMMON MISTAKE

attributing the Simla Agreement of 1972, which followed the 1971 war and was signed by Indira Gandhi, to the 1965 war.

EXAM TIP

pair the two: 1965 war ends with Tashkent (1966, Shastri); 1971 war ends with Simla (1972, Indira Gandhi).

INTERVIEW

** Tashkent returned captured territory in exchange for a settlement. When is that the right trade?

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QUESTION 3 OF 15

The Bhote Koshi river of Nepal's Rasuwa district, which was central to the disaster of August 26, 2026, drains into which river system?

- A** The Sun Koshi and hence the Koshi
- B** The Karnali and hence the Ghaghara
- C** The Mahakali and hence the Sharda
- D** The Trishuli and Narayani, and hence the Gandak

FACT: The Bhote Koshi of Rasuwa district is the upper Trishuli. It flows into the Narayani, also called the Gandaki, and enters India as the Gandak.

Despite its name it is not a Koshi tributary. **ANALYSIS:** Nepal has two rivers named Bhote Koshi. The one in Sindhupalchok district does feed the Sun Koshi and hence the Koshi; the Rasuwa one belongs to the Gandaki basin. The affected downstream districts confirm this: Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, Chitwan, Gorkha, Tanahun and East and West Nawalparasi form the Trishuli-Narayani corridor.

CONCEPT NOTE

The distinction has operational consequences for India. The Gandak is regulated at the Valmiki Nagar barrage in Bihar and joins the Ganga near Hajipur and Patna, whereas the Koshi enters Bihar further east and is barraged at Bhimnagar.

Placing this flood in the wrong basin would direct Indian flood preparedness at the wrong

districts. The Sapta Koshi comprises the Sun Koshi, Indravati, Tamba Koshi, Likhu, Dudh Koshi, Arun and Tamor; the Gandaki system comprises the Kali Gandaki, Trishuli, Seti, Marsyangdi, Budhi Gandaki, Madi and Daraudi.

▼ **Concept Kit** — tap to expand

 CROSS-PAPER LINKS	GS1 drainage systems of the Indian subcontinent; GS3 disaster management, transboundary rivers.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Gandaki basin, Sapta Koshi, transboundary early warning, Valmiki Nagar barrage.
 COMMON MISTAKE	assuming any river named Koshi belongs to the Koshi system. The name is the trap.
 EXAM TIP	the Koshi is called the "Sorrow of Bihar"; the Damodar was the "Sorrow of Bengal".
 INTERVIEW	** the flood began in Tibet, killed in Nepal and affects Indian rivers. Who should own the early warning?

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QUESTION 4 OF 15

What primarily distinguishes a landslide-dammed outburst flood (LDOF) from a classic glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF)?

- A** An LDOF occurs only in summer, while a GLOF occurs only in winter
- B** In an LDOF the lake is newly created by rockfall or landslide debris, whereas a GLOF releases a pre-existing lake impounded by moraine or ice
- C** An LDOF involves no ice, while a GLOF involves no rock
- D** An LDOF affects only tributaries, while a GLOF affects only main-stem rivers

FACT: In a classic GLOF, a pre-existing glacial lake impounded behind a moraine or ice dam bursts. In an LDOF, a landslide or rockfall creates a new lake by blocking a river, and that newly formed lake then fails.

ANALYSIS: The consequence is about warning time. A moraine-dammed glacial lake can be inventoried by satellite and monitored for years.

A landslide-dammed lake may form and fail within days, which makes it effectively invisible to early-warning systems built around lake inventories.

CONCEPT NOTE

Nepal's Department of Hydrology and Meteorology and ICIMOD attributed the Rasuwa event of August 26, 2026 to a combination of an ice avalanche, permafrost movement and a rockslide. A bedrock failure at about 5,200 metres sent a 600-metre-wide section of glacier and rock some 1,200 metres into the valley, displacing an estimated 100 to 200 million cubic metres and damming the Lhende Khola, a stream rising in Gyirong County, Tibet.

Permafrost degradation is the underlying driver: permafrost acts as cement in high-altitude bedrock, and as it thaws the rock loses cohesion, which is why rock-plus-ice failures should be expected to become more common relative to pure moraine-dam GLOFs.

Concept Kit — tap to expand

 CROSS-PAPER LINKS	GS1 geophysical phenomena; GS3 disaster management, climate change impacts.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	permafrost degradation, moraine dam, cascading hazard, Hindu Kush Himalaya.
 COMMON MISTAKE	describing every Himalayan flash flood as a GLOF.
 EXAM TIP	India's historical reference events are Kedarnath 2013, Chamoli 2021 and South Lhonak Lake in Sikkim on October 3, 2023, which destroyed the Chungthang dam.
 INTERVIEW	** if the hazard is shifting from lakes to slopes, what should India be monitoring instead of lake inventories?

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QUESTION 5 OF 15

In its compliance affidavit to the Supreme Court reported in August 2026, FSSAI proposed which front-of-pack labelling approach for foods high in fat, sugar or salt?

- A** A five-star Indian Nutrition Rating based on a composite nutrient score
- B** A green, amber and red traffic-light panel showing all nutrients
- C** A QR code linking to an online nutrition database
- D** A red hexagonal warning mark, replacing the earlier proposed Indian Nutrition Rating star system

FACT: FSSAI proposed red hexagonal warning marks reading HIGH FAT, HIGH SUGAR, HIGH SALT and HIGHLY SWEETENED BEVERAGE, abandoning the Indian Nutrition Rating star-rating model it had earlier favoured. **ANALYSIS:** The change is substantive, not cosmetic.

A composite star score can be gamed by adding a positively-scoring ingredient to offset sugar or salt, whereas a threshold warning cannot: either the product crosses the limit or it does not.

CONCEPT NOTE

Thresholds are aligned to the ICMR-NIN Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024. The warning text must be at least one point larger than the back-of-pack nutrition table font, an anti-evasion provision aimed at the standard industry response of complying in the smallest permissible type. Phase I covers products breaching two or more nutrient thresholds plus highly sweetened beverages; Phase II extends to a single breach. The shift came under Supreme Court pressure in a PIL by 3S and Our Health Society, a Kerala-based non-profit.

FSSAI is a statutory body under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Concept Kit — tap to expand



CROSS-PAPER LINKS

GS2 health policy, regulatory bodies; GS3 food processing and regulation.



MAINS KEYWORDS

interpretive labelling, nudge, non-communicable disease burden, regulatory gaming.


COMMON MISTAKE

confusing the shape. Chile, Mexico and Peru use a black octagon; India's proposal is a red hexagon.


EXAM TIP

Chile pioneered warning labels in 2016 and remains the most cited evidence base.


INTERVIEW

** most of India's dietary risk sits in unpackaged food no label can reach. Is this regulating the problem or the convenient part of it?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

QUESTION 6 OF 15

Under the eight-point consensus from the 25th round of India-China Special Representatives' talks, the two new border hotlines are to be established in which sectors?

- A** Western Sector only
- B** Western and Middle Sectors
- C** Eastern and Middle Sectors
- D** Eastern Sector only

FACT: The consensus provides for two new border hotlines in the Eastern and Middle Sectors, along with two additional military meeting points, the reopening of three designated border trading points, and the tasking of the Expert Group on Boundary Delimitation and the Working Group on Border Management. **ANALYSIS:** The choice of sectors is informative. Existing crisis communication has been concentrated in the Western Sector, where the 2020 standoff occurred, so the additions extend coverage to sectors that were comparatively under-served.


CONCEPT NOTE

The talks were held at Beijing on August 25, 2026, co-chaired by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, with the MEA briefing on operationalisation on August 28. The 26th round is to be held in India in 2027.

Critically, the consensus contains no boundary settlement and no agreement on where the Line of Actual Control runs. It is confidence-building architecture layered over an unresolved dispute.

The three border trading points are Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand, Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh and Nathu La in Sikkim.

▼ **Concept Kit** — tap to expand



CROSS-PAPER LINKS

GS2 India-China relations, bilateral agreements; GS3 border area security management.



MAINS KEYWORDS

confidence-building measures, LAC clarification, WMCC, three mutuals.



COMMON MISTAKE

treating procedural CBMs as a boundary settlement.



EXAM TIP

Government of India position: Aksai Chin, the areas of Ladakh under illegal Chinese occupation and Arunachal Pradesh are integral parts of India; the historical record on Galwan, June 15, 2020, is 20 Indian lives lost and Chinese casualties were never officially confirmed.



INTERVIEW

**** twenty-five rounds since 2003 without agreeing where the line is. When does a mechanism become a substitute for negotiation?**

 [Read Full Article →](#)

QUESTION 7 OF 15

The Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) was established in which year?

A

2012

B

1993

C

1996

D 2003

FACT: The WMCC was established in 2012 as an official-level mechanism for consultation on border affairs. It is distinct from the Special Representatives mechanism, established in 2003, which operates at the political level.

ANALYSIS: The two-tier design was deliberate: the SR mechanism was meant to negotiate a political settlement at leadership level, while the WMCC handles day-to-day coordination and houses the technical working groups.

CONCEPT NOTE

The principal product of the SR mechanism remains the Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question, signed in 2005, which envisaged a three-stage approach of principles, then framework, then delineation and demarcation. India and China have not moved past the first stage in twenty-one years.

The earlier instruments are the Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement of 1993, the Confidence Building Measures Agreement of 1996 and the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement of 2013.

▼ **Concept Kit** — tap to expand

 CROSS-PAPER LINKS	GS2 bilateral mechanisms and agreements involving India.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	political parameters, delineation and demarcation, LAC clarification.
 COMMON MISTAKE	conflating the WMCC (2012, official level) with the SR mechanism (2003, political level).
 EXAM TIP	build a timeline: 1993 BPTA, 1996 CBM Agreement, 2003 SR mechanism, 2005 Political Parameters, 2012 WMCC, 2013 BDCA.
 INTERVIEW	** which is more valuable in a crisis, a hotline or an agreed line?

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QUESTION 8 OF 15

Which of the following correctly describes the National Testing Agency (NTA)?

- A** A constitutional body established under Article 315
- B** An autonomous body established in 2017, now under the Ministry of Education
- C** A statutory body created by the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024
- D** A department of the Union Public Service Commission

FACT: The NTA was established in 2017 as an autonomous body, registered as a society, under what was then the Ministry of Human Resource Development, renamed the Ministry of Education in 2020. It is not statutory and not constitutional.

ANALYSIS: That status is precisely the governance problem the current reform effort addresses. An autonomous testing agency concentrates enormous consequence in a body with limited external accountability, and a candidate whose examination fails has no statutory grievance forum or appellate authority.

CONCEPT NOTE

A High-Powered Task Force chaired by Nandan Nilekani, co-founder of Infosys and founding Chairman of UIDAI, opened public consultation on August 28, 2026 on the conduct, security, design and governance of public examinations including those run by the NTA. Its six heads are institutional systems and processes, examination integrity and security, technology deployment, examination infrastructure, accessibility and inclusion, and student well-being. An earlier committee chaired by K. Radhakrishnan, former Chairman of ISRO, had already examined NTA reform.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 targets organised paper-leak crime with penalties up to ten years and one crore rupees, and its offences are cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable.

Concept Kit — tap to expand



CROSS-PAPER LINKS

GS2 statutory and regulatory bodies, education governance, accountability; GS4 institutional integrity.



MAINS KEYWORDS

examination integrity, custody chain, institutional accountability, grievance redress.


COMMON MISTAKE

treating the NTA as statutory. By contrast, UPSC is a constitutional body under Article 315.


EXAM TIP

the 2024 Act penalises the leaker, not the institution whose custody failed; that asymmetry is the strongest Mains point available.


INTERVIEW

**** examination reform can make a queue fairer but not shorter. Where does exam policy end and employment policy begin?**

[Read Full Article →](#)

QUESTION 9 OF 15

Project Elephant was launched by the Government of India in which year?

A 1973

B 1986

C 1992

D 2010

FACT: Project Elephant was launched in 1992. Project Tiger, with which it is frequently confused, was launched in 1973.

ANALYSIS: The nineteen-year gap reflects a shift in conservation thinking. Project Tiger was built around protected-area exclusion for a territorial predator; Project Elephant had to address a wide-ranging herbivore whose movement crosses protected-area boundaries, which is why corridors, rather than reserves alone, became its central instrument.

CONCEPT NOTE

Tamil Nadu notified three elephant corridors in late August 2026 in the Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary, Hosur Forest Division, covering over 10,300 hectares, the first tranche of 41 the Madras High Court ordered expedited. The court had directed expedited notification on July 12, 2026, and

on July 31 held that removal of encroachments is not a prerequisite for notification, which removed the State's standing reason for delay.

Critically, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides for National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves, but contains no distinct statutory category for a corridor. Elephant Reserves under Project Elephant are administrative designations without the statutory force of a National Park or Sanctuary.

▼ **Concept Kit** — tap to expand

 CROSS-PAPER LINKS	GS3 conservation, biodiversity, environmental legislation.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	habitat fragmentation, connectivity, human-elephant conflict, payment for ecosystem services.
 COMMON MISTAKE	swapping the launch years of Project Tiger (1973) and Project Elephant (1992), and assuming Elephant Reserves are statutory protected areas.
 EXAM TIP	human-elephant conflict kills roughly 500 people and around 100 elephants a year in India, which lets you frame corridors as a human safety measure.
 INTERVIEW	** the cheap corridors run through forest, the important ones through private land. How should a government sequence that?

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QUESTION 10 OF 15

What is the IUCN Red List status of the Asian elephant?

- A** Least Concern
- B** Vulnerable
- C** Endangered
- D** Critically Endangered

FACT: The Asian elephant, *Elephas maximus*, is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. It is on Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and Appendix I of CITES. **ANALYSIS:** India holds the largest population of Asian elephants, well over half the global total, which makes Indian habitat policy the single largest determinant of the species' global prospects.

CONCEPT NOTE

The elephant was declared India's National Heritage Animal in 2010. Do not transfer the status across species: the African savanna elephant is Endangered while the African forest elephant is Critically Endangered, and they were assessed separately by IUCN only after being recognised as distinct species.

The snow leopard, by contrast, is Vulnerable. The National Board for Wildlife, chaired by the Prime Minister, is constituted under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, and the Wildlife Institute of India at Dehradun is the technical agency for corridor and population studies.

Concept Kit — tap to expand

 CROSS-PAPER LINKS	GS3 biodiversity, conservation, international conventions.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	flagship species, umbrella species, habitat connectivity, CITES appendices.
 COMMON MISTAKE	assigning the Asian elephant a Vulnerable status, which belongs to the snow leopard, or applying the African forest elephant's Critically Endangered status to all elephants.
 EXAM TIP	CITES Appendix I means commercial international trade is prohibited; Appendix II means it is regulated.
 INTERVIEW	** should conservation status drive funding, or should the size of a country's share of the global population drive it?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

QUESTION 11 OF 15

The Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award was renamed the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in which year?

A 2012

B 2016

C 2019

D 2021

FACT: The award was renamed in August 2021. It remains India's highest sporting honour and is conferred by the President of India.

ANALYSIS: The renaming completed a set: Dhyan Chand's name now attaches both to the highest honour and, separately, to the Dhyan Chand Award for lifetime achievement instituted in 2002. These are two distinct awards that share a name, which is exactly why they are examinable.

CONCEPT NOTE

National Sports Day is observed on August 29, the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand, born on August 29, 1905, and was instituted in 2012. He won Olympic hockey gold at Amsterdam in 1928, Los Angeles in 1932 and Berlin in 1936, and received the Padma Bhushan in 1956.

India's men have eight Olympic hockey golds in total. Note an important correction for 2026: the National Sports Awards for 2025 were announced on August 18, 2026, not on National Sports Day, and no conferment ceremony is confirmed for August 29.

The other national sports awards are the Arjuna Award (1961), the Dronacharya Award for coaches (1985), the Dhyan Chand Award for lifetime achievement (2002), the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar and the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy for universities.

Concept Kit — tap to expand



CROSS-PAPER LINKS

GS2 government policies and interventions, sports governance; GS1 society and social mobility.



MAINS KEYWORDS

Khelo India, Target Olympic Podium Scheme, sports federation governance, participation deficit.



COMMON MISTAKE

confusing the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award with the separate Dhyan Chand Award for lifetime achievement.



EXAM TIP

sport is a State subject, which is why Union policy operates through funding rather than legislation. Also note India's best-

ever Women's Hockey World Cup finish is fourth in 1974; the fifth place of 2026 is the best in 52 years, not the best ever.

 **INTERVIEW**

** cash rewards are announced within a day and coaching appointments take years. What does that asymmetry reveal?

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QUESTION 12 OF 15

Under the India Meteorological Department's classification, seasonal rainfall is categorised as "Deficient" when it is:

- A** Between 96 and 104 per cent of the long period average
- B** Less than 90 per cent of the long period average
- C** Between 90 and 96 per cent of the long period average
- D** Less than 60 per cent of the long period average

FACT: IMD classifies rainfall as Normal within the long period average plus or minus 4 per cent, Below Normal at 90 to 96 per cent of LPA, and Deficient at less than 90 per cent of LPA.

ANALYSIS: The categories matter because policy triggers attach to them. A season at 94 per cent is Below Normal but not Deficient, which is a meaningful administrative difference even though both represent a shortfall.

CONCEPT NOTE

The long period average on the 1971 to 2020 baseline is 87 centimetres for the June to September southwest monsoon. Through August 26, 2026, cumulative rainfall was 13 per cent below the LPA, with 14 states and union territories in deficit.

Month-wise, June was 35.4 per cent below normal, July 1 per cent above, and August 15 per cent below through the 24th. The driver is a strengthening El Nino, the warm phase of the El Nino-Southern Oscillation.

Claims that this will be the weakest monsoon since 2009 are projections attributed to IMD officials, not official IMD forecasts.

▼ **Concept Kit** — tap to expand

 CROSS-PAPER LINKS	GS1 climatology and the Indian monsoon; GS3 agriculture, food security, energy demand.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	ENSO, Indian Ocean Dipole, Madden-Julian Oscillation, spatial variability, rainfed agriculture.
 COMMON MISTAKE	inverting El Nino and La Nina. El Nino weakens the Indian monsoon; La Nina strengthens it.
 EXAM TIP	a positive Indian Ocean Dipole can partially offset El Nino's suppressing effect, so any seasonal assessment ignoring the IOD is incomplete.
 INTERVIEW	** the same season brought too much rain where India mines coal and too little where it grows food. How useful is a national rainfall average?

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QUESTION 13 OF 15

A thermal power plant in India is officially classified as having "critical" coal stock when its stock falls:

- A** Below 25 per cent of the required normative inventory, or below three days of fuel
- B** Below 50 per cent of the required normative inventory, or below ten days of fuel
- C** To zero, with generation already curtailed
- D** Below 75 per cent of the required normative inventory, or below fifteen days of fuel

FACT: A plant is classified as critical when its coal stock falls below 25 per cent of the required normative inventory, or when it holds fuel for fewer than three days. **ANALYSIS:** The threshold is deliberately conservative because coal replenishment depends on rail movement, which cannot be accelerated quickly.

A plant that waits until stocks are actually exhausted has already lost the window in which additional rakes could have been arranged.

CONCEPT NOTE

Government data as of August 25, 2026 showed 45 plants at critical stock, up from 31 at end-July, of which 40 are domestic-coal-fired. Aggregate stocks stood at 30.95 million tonnes, about 10 days of requirement against 12 days in July, a drawdown of roughly 19 per cent from end-July. The cause was heavy rain in Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh disrupting mining and rail loading, with some plants receiving only about half the five to six daily rakes they need. Monitoring is by the Central Electricity Authority, a statutory body under the Electricity Act, 2003. Note the apparent paradox: the coal crisis was caused by too much rain in mining States, in a season 13 per cent deficient nationally.

Concept Kit — tap to expand

 CROSS-PAPER LINKS	GS3 infrastructure and energy, Indian economy, environmental issues.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	coal evacuation, rake availability, capacity versus availability, battery energy storage, just transition.
 COMMON MISTAKE	treating recurring coal crises as production shortfalls. Coal India output has risen; rail evacuation, washery and pithead stocking capacity have lagged.
 EXAM TIP	roughly 70 per cent of India's electricity generation is coal-based, and solar does not help at the 10 p.m. peak, which is why storage, not capacity alone, reduces the thermal buffer requirement.
 INTERVIEW	** if coal exists at the pithead but cannot move, is this an energy problem or a railways problem?

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QUESTION 14 OF 15

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force because:

- A** The United Nations Security Council has not endorsed it
- B** It requires ratification by all 44 Annex 2 states, several of which have not signed or ratified
- C** It requires ratification by two-thirds of all UN member states
- D** Its provisions lapse automatically every ten years unless renewed

FACT: The CTBT of 1996 enters into force only when all 44 states listed in its Annex 2, those possessing nuclear power or research reactors at the time of negotiation, have ratified it. India, Pakistan and North Korea have not signed, and several others have signed without ratifying.

ANALYSIS: This entry-into-force clause was intended to guarantee that the treaty would bind every state capable of testing. Its practical effect has been to keep the treaty permanently in limbo for three decades, which is a standard example of a design feature that defeated its own purpose.

 CONCEPT NOTE

August 29 is the International Day against Nuclear Tests, declared by UNGA Resolution 64/35 in December 2009 on a proposal by Kazakhstan. The date marks both the first Soviet nuclear test at Semipalatinsk in 1949 and the closure of that test site in 1991.

India conducted Pokhran-I, codenamed Smiling Buddha, on May 18, 1974, and Pokhran-II, Operation Shakti, on May 11 and 13, 1998. India maintains a voluntary unilateral moratorium on further testing, a No First Use doctrine and a posture of credible minimum deterrence.

India is also not a party to the NPT of 1968, which it regards as discriminatory. The CTBTO Preparatory Commission at Vienna operates the International Monitoring System even though the treaty is not in force.

 Concept Kit — tap to expand

CROSS-PAPER LINKS

GS2 international treaties and institutions, disarmament; GS3 nuclear security and technology.


MAINS KEYWORDS

Annex 2, No First Use, credible minimum deterrence, discriminatory non-proliferation regime.


COMMON MISTAKE

assuming India signed the CTBT but did not ratify it. India has not signed.


EXAM TIP

distinguish the PTBT of 1963, which India did join and which bans atmospheric, underwater and outer-space tests, from the CTBT of 1996, which India has not joined.


INTERVIEW

**** India observes a testing moratorium voluntarily. What does it gain by not converting that into a treaty commitment?**

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QUESTION 15 OF 15

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), whose seventeenth Conference of Parties concluded at Ulaanbaatar in August 2026, has its Secretariat in which city?

A

Geneva

B

Nairobi

C

Montreal

D

Bonn

FACT: The UNCCD Secretariat is at Bonn, Germany. The Convention was adopted in 1994 and entered into force in 1996, and it is one of the three Rio Conventions alongside the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

ANALYSIS: The three Rio Conventions emerged from the 1992 Earth Summit and are institutionally separate, which is itself a governance problem: land degradation, climate change

and biodiversity loss are physically interlinked but negotiated in three different forums with three different party lists.

CONCEPT NOTE

COP17 ran from August 17 to 28, 2026 at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, under the theme “Restoring Land. Restoring Hope.” with 197 Parties, during the UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

On August 26 Union Minister Bhupender Yadav addressed the Ministerial Dialogue on rangelands, arguing that successful restoration begins with pastoralists as custodians rather than beneficiaries.

India hosted COP14 at New Delhi in 2019 and issued the Delhi Declaration; India’s Land Degradation Neutrality pledge is to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.

Note that the “Ulaanbaatar Declaration” associated with COP17 was adopted at the Mayors’ Forum from August 20 to 22, a sub-event, and is not the plenary outcome document.

Concept Kit — tap to expand

 CROSS-PAPER LINKS	GS3 conservation and environmental degradation; GS2 international conventions and India’s role.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Land Degradation Neutrality, rangelands, wasteland classification, Bonn Challenge, Aravalli Green Wall.
 COMMON MISTAKE	placing the UNFCCC Secretariat, which is also at Bonn, and the CBD Secretariat, which is at Montreal, in the wrong cities.
 EXAM TIP	the sharpest Indian angle is that India’s grasslands are classified as “wastelands” in revenue records, which is the single largest structural driver of their diversion.
 INTERVIEW	** India argued at Ulaanbaatar for secure tenure for pastoralists. Does India’s own land classification system support that argument?

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