

20/07/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Mangal Pandey:*

Context: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today, paid tributes to the great revolutionary Mangal Pandey ji on his birth anniversary.

About Mangal Pandey:

- ❖ Mangal Pandey is regarded as one of the earliest heroes of India's struggle against British rule and is closely associated with the Revolt of 1857 (First War of Independence/Sepoy Mutiny).
- ❖ He was born on 19 July 1827 near Faizabad (present-day Ayodhya district), Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ In 1849, he joined the British East India Company's army as a sepoy in the 6th Company of the 34th Bengal Native Infantry at Barrackpore.
- ❖ The immediate cause of his revolt was the introduction of the Enfield rifle cartridges, believed to be greased with cow and pig fat, which offended the religious beliefs of both Hindu and Muslim soldiers.
- ❖ On 29 March 1857, Mangal Pandey openly rebelled at Barrackpore and fired at the British Sergeant-Major, marking one of the first acts of defiance against British authority.
- ❖ He was overpowered, arrested, and tried by Court Martial for mutiny.
- ❖ Mangal Pandey was hanged on 8 April 1857 at Lal Bagan, Barrackpore, becoming a martyr for India's freedom struggle.
- ❖ His regiment, the 34th Bengal Native Infantry, was later disbanded due to its sympathy for the rebellion, similar to the 19th Native Infantry at Berhampore.
- ❖ Pandey's actions inspired the Revolt of 1857, which spread across northern and central India and became the first large-scale uprising against British colonial rule.

2. *National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme:*

Context: The Government of India is implementing the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) as a flagship initiative to ensure the safety, dignity and social security of sanitation workers while accelerating the transition towards mechanised sanitation across the country.

About NAMASTE scheme:

- ❖ NAMASTE (National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem) is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE) and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- ❖ The scheme aims to eliminate hazardous manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks by promoting mechanised sanitation and ending direct human contact with hazardous waste.
- ❖ Its key objective is to ensure dignity, safety, social security, and zero fatalities for sanitation workers.
- ❖ The scheme identifies and profiles Sewer & Septic Tank Workers (SSTWs) and Waste Pickers to extend welfare benefits.
- ❖ Beneficiaries receive PPE kits, health insurance, Ayushman Bharat coverage, occupational safety training, and skill development.

- ❖ It provides financial assistance for self-employment, promotes entrepreneurship through SHGs, and facilitates access to modern mechanised sanitation equipment.
- ❖ The scheme strengthens Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) with advanced safety devices for safer sanitation operations.
- ❖ It adopts a holistic approach integrating mechanisation, occupational safety, health protection, skill development, and entrepreneurship.
- ❖ Achievements: 89,915 SSTWs and 2,81,117 Waste Pickers validated; 2.71 lakh+ PPE kits and 1.81 lakh+ Health Cards distributed; 753 ERSUs equipped with modern safety devices.

3. *Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill:*

Context: The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet on Sunday approved the draft Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, proposing a prohibition on practices like polygamy and nikah halala, while introducing strict provisions for live-in relationships. The Bill, however, exempts the State's large tribal population.

About Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill:

- ❖ The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) refers to a single set of laws governing personal matters like marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, and succession for all citizens of India.
- ❖ It is mentioned in Article 44 of the Indian Constitution under the Directive Principles of State Policy, which directs the State to strive for a uniform civil code across India.
- ❖ Article 44 is not legally enforceable, meaning UCC is a guiding principle rather than a fundamental right.
- ❖ The idea of UCC originated in colonial India, initially aimed at legal uniformity while keeping Hindu and Muslim personal laws separate.
- ❖ The demand gained momentum in the early 20th century, especially from women reformers advocating equality and secularism.
- ❖ During the Constituent Assembly debates, leaders like B.R. Ambedkar supported UCC, but it was included as a non-binding Directive Principle as a compromise.
- ❖ After independence, India codified Hindu personal laws (1955–56), while Muslim, Christian, and other communities retained separate personal law systems.
- ❖ The Supreme Court revived the UCC debate in landmark cases like Shah Bano (1985), Sarla Mudgal (1995), and Shayara Bano (2017), repeatedly urging its consideration.
- ❖ India currently follows a plural legal system, including religious personal laws and secular laws like the Special Marriage Act, 1954, with some regional exceptions under Article 371.
- ❖ At present, while UCC remains debated nationally, Goa and Uttarakhand are cited as states with UCC-type provisions, and other states like Assam and Gujarat are exploring its implementation.

4. *Ken-Betwa river link:*

Context: The Madhya Pradesh Police on Sunday cleared a two-week-long protest led by several tribals against the Ken-Betwa river link and other irrigation and development projects in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district, dispersing protesters and hospitalising protest leader Amit Bhatnagar, who had been on a hunger strike for 14 days.

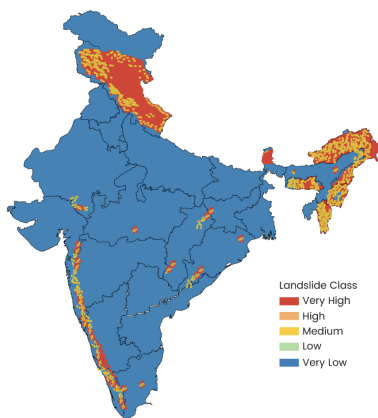
About Ken-Betwa river link:

- ❖ Under the project, the transfer of excess water from the River Ken to the Betwa basin was envisaged.
- ❖ Both are tributaries of Yamuna river
- ❖ It aims to provide irrigation to the Bundelkhand region, which is one of the worst drought-affected areas in India.
- ❖ The project involves building a 77-metre tall and a 2-km wide Dhaudhan dam (to be built within Panna Tiger Reserve) and a 230-km canal.
- ❖ A Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Centre and the governments of U.P and M.P for the project.
- ❖ A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) called Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA) was set up to implement the project.

5. *Landslides:*

Context: Landslides in at least 11 locations, triggered by heavy, incessant rainfall, killed eight people and injured 15 in Mon town in Nagaland on Sunday morning. The town, which is the headquarters of Mon district bordering Myanmar, is about 300 km northeast of the State's capital, Kohima. Mon Deputy Commissioner Wennyei Konyak said the landslides occurred around 6 a.m.

About Landslides in India:



- ❖ A landslide is the downslope movement of rock, soil, or debris under the influence of gravity.
- ❖ Steep slopes, heavy rainfall, earthquakes, and weak geological formations are the major natural factors triggering landslides.
- ❖ According to the India Landslide Susceptibility Map (ILSM), about 13.17% of India's area is landslide-prone, while 4.75% falls under the very high susceptibility category.
- ❖ Sikkim has the highest landslide-prone area (57.6%), while Kerala has 14% of its area under the very high susceptibility category outside the Himalayas.
- ❖ India accounts for around 8% of global fatalities caused by landslides.
- ❖ In the Himalayas, landslides are mainly caused by tectonic instability, earthquakes, loose sediments, hydropower projects, and infrastructure development such as road widening and construction.

- ❖ In the Western Ghats, the major causes include intense monsoon rainfall, neo-tectonic activity, deforestation, mining, human settlements, and construction activities.
- ❖ The National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC), established by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) in Kolkata, provides landslide forecasting and early warning.
- ❖ The Bhusanket Web Portal and Bhooskhalan Mobile App facilitate real-time dissemination of landslide forecasts and reporting of landslide events.
- ❖ The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued Guidelines on Management of Landslides and Snow Avalanches to strengthen preparedness and response.
- ❖ The Landslide Risk Mitigation Scheme (LRMS) provides financial and technical assistance to landslide-prone states for mitigation measures.
- ❖ The National Landslide Risk Management Strategy focuses on hazard mapping, monitoring, early warning systems, awareness, capacity building, policy support, and slope stabilization to reduce landslide risk.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today congratulated ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu on winning the Japan Open 2026 title, becoming the first Indian to achieve this historic feat.
- ☐ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today congratulated the Indian team for its remarkable performance at the 37th International Biology Olympiad held in Vilnius, Lithuania, where all four team members secured medals, including one Gold Medal.
- ☐ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today congratulated the Indian team of Debadatta Priyadarshi, Harshit Singhal, Kabeer Chhillar and Sandeep Kuchi for securing four Gold Medals at the 58th International Chemistry Olympiad, marking India's best-ever performance at the prestigious global competition held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- ☐ The Indian Air Force (IAF) starts Ex Pitch Black 2026 tomorrow at the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Darwin. Scheduled from 20 July 26 to 07 August 26, Exercise Pitch Black is the RAAF's premier biennial multinational air combat exercise. The exercise derives its name from its emphasis on night flying over the vast un-populated areas of northern Australia.
- ☐ Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah today inaugurated the first phase of the 'Museum of Word' in Kolkata. The 'Museum of Word' (Shabdlok) in Kolkata is India's first immersive language museum. Inaugurated on July 19, 2026, it explores the country's rich linguistic and storytelling traditions. The museum is located in the historic Belvedere House at the National Library campus.
- ☐ President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday embarked on state visits to Moldova, North Macedonia, and Romania to deepen India's ties with the three European countries across a range of sectors, including trade and technology, and to boost people-to-people ties.

Practice questions:

Objective questions:

Mangal Pandey served as a sepoy in which regiment of the British East India Company?

- (a) 19th Bengal Native Infantry

- (b) 34th Bengal Native Infantry
- (c) 19th Madras Native Infantry
- (d) 24th Bombay Native Infantry

Which of the following beneficiaries are specifically covered under the NAMASTE Scheme?

- (a) Street Vendors
- (b) ASHA Workers
- (c) Anganwadi Workers
- (d) Waste Pickers

Consider the following statements regarding the Ken–Betwa River Link Project:

1. It envisages the transfer of surplus water from the Ken River to the Betwa basin.
2. Both the Ken and Betwa rivers are tributaries of the Yamuna.
3. The project primarily aims to provide irrigation to the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.

Select the correct answer:

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

Consider the following statements:

1. Sikkim has the highest proportion of landslide-prone areas in India.
2. About 13.17% of India's geographical area is susceptible to landslides.
3. India accounts for nearly 20% of global fatalities caused by landslides.

Select the correct answer:

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

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