

21/07/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS):*

Context: India has deposited its Instrument of Acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS) on 20th July 2026, thereby becoming a Party to the Agreement.

About Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS):

- ❖ The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, adopted by consensus at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva in June 2022, is the first multilateral WTO agreement with an environmental sustainability objective.
- ❖ It prohibits government support to illegal fishing activities and overexploitation of stocks, contributing to the protection of marine life.
- ❖ The Agreement entered into force on 15 September 2025 after acceptance by two-thirds of WTO Members.
- ❖ India is the 123rd Member of the WTO to deposit its Instrument of Acceptance. The Agreement focuses on subsidies related to marine wild capture fishing and fishing-related activities at sea.
- ❖ Importantly, aquaculture and inland fisheries remain outside the scope of this Agreement.
- ❖ The Agreement protects the livelihoods of traditional and small-scale fishers by promoting sustainable fisheries.
- ❖ It prohibits subsidies linked to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and fishing of overfished stocks, thereby addressing unsustainable fishing practices that threaten marine resources and safeguarding the long-term interests of traditional and small-scale fishing communities.

About World Trade Organisation (WTO):

- ❖ It is an intergovernmental organization that regulates and facilitates international trade between nations.
- ❖ It officially commenced operations on 1 January 1995, pursuant to the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement, thus replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that had been established in 1948
- ❖ The WTO is the world's largest international economic organization, with 166 member states representing over 98% of global trade and global GDP.
- ❖ Ministerial Conference is the WTO's highest decision-making entity, convenes typically every two years. It puts together all of the WTO's members, which are either nations or customs unions.
- ❖ All decisions pertaining to any of the multilateral trade agreements must be made by the Ministerial Conference.

2. Index of Core Industries (ICI):

Context: The Office of Economic Adviser (OEA), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is releasing the revised series of Index of Core Industries (ICI) with Base Year 2022-23. The new series will replace the existing series of ICI with Base Year 2011- 12.

First lets understand Index of Industrial Production (IIP):

- ❖ The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) measures short-term changes in the volume of industrial production in India.
- ❖ It is an important indicator used to assess the growth or slowdown of industrial activity and overall economic performance.
- ❖ The IIP is published by the Central Statistics Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- ❖ The previous base year of the IIP is 2011–12, adopted to better reflect the modern industrial structure and production trends.
- ❖ The base year of the index has been revised periodically since earlier base years such as 1937, 1946, 1951, and 1956.
- ❖ The IIP is divided into three major sectors: Manufacturing – 77.63% weight, Mining – 14.37% weight and Electricity – 7.99% weight
- ❖ Manufacturing has the highest weight in the index with 809 items, followed by Mining with 29 items and electricity with 1 item.

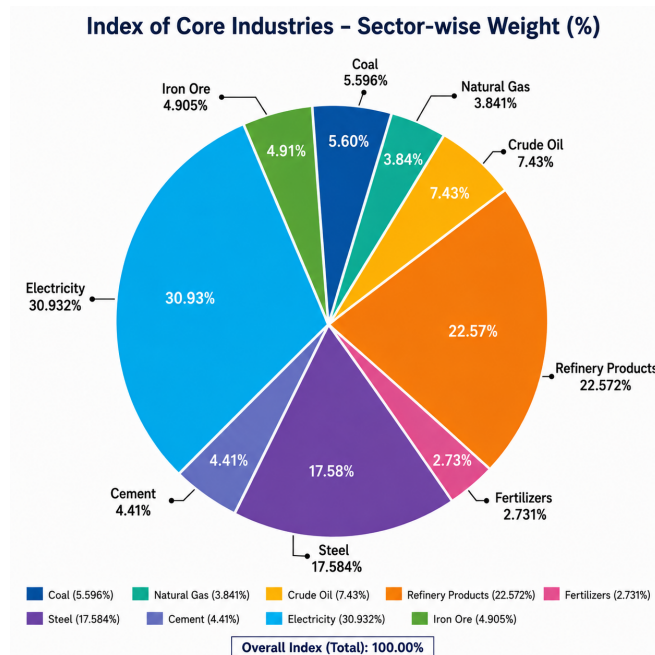
About Index of Core Industries (ICI):

- ❖ The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is released by the Office of Economic Advisor under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- ❖ The ICI measures the production performance of eight (Now 9) core industries: Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, and Electricity.
- ❖ These eight (now 9) industries together account for 40.27% weight in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), making them crucial indicators of industrial growth.

Key features of the new ICI series (Base Year 2022-23) are as follows:

- ❖ Owing to intensive use of Iron ore in the production process, and its contribution to industrial development, it has been included in the list of core industries as a new item in the revised series of ICI (Base Year 2022-23).
- ❖ Accordingly, the number of core industries have increased from eight to nine in the new series.
- ❖ Gross production data has been used for compilation of the Steel index in the new ICI series, replacing the use of net production data in ICI (2011-12) series, to make it consistent with Index of Industrial Production (IIP[1]).
- ❖ Only Raw Coal has been retained in the new series of ICI, by excluding Coal Middling and Washed Coal in order to remove double counting, since Coal Middling and Washed Coal are made from Raw Coal.

- ❖ Following the earlier practice, the weights of the ICI (2022–23) series have been derived from the weights of the corresponding items of IIP (2022–23) series, which have been pro-rata distributed to 100.
- ❖ New weightage after introducing Iron Ore:



3. *Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana (KSVY):*

Context: The Ministry of Culture implements the Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana (KSVY), under which financial assistance is provided to eligible cultural organizations and individual artists including tribal and rural artists engaged in performing arts across the country, including the state of Assam and Himachal Pradesh.

About Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana (KSVY):

- ❖ Being a Central Sector Scheme, funds to the eligible beneficiaries are released from Consolidated Funds of India through annual budget allocated under the KSVY.
- ❖ The Government promotes and preserves tribal art, folk traditions, music, dance, cultural festivals and cultural heritage through the Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana (KSVY).
- ❖ Further, to protect, promote and preserve various forms of folk/ tribal art & culture throughout the country, the Government of India has set up seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) with headquarters at Patiala, Nagpur, Udaipur, Prayagraj, Kolkata, Dimapur and Thanjavur.
- ❖ These ZCCs organize various cultural activities and programmes on regular basis all over India for which annual grant-in-aid is provided to them.
- ❖ Nodal Ministry: Implemented by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- ❖ Objective: To preserve, promote, and propagate India's rich art, culture, heritage, and traditional performing and visual arts.

- ❖ Financial Assistance: Provides grants-in-aid to individuals, cultural organizations, NGOs, and institutions engaged in cultural activities.
- ❖ Support to Artists: Promotes the welfare of artists, artisans, folk performers, writers, scholars, and cultural practitioners by supporting cultural events, training, and preservation efforts.
- ❖ Promotion of Cultural Heritage: Encourages the documentation, conservation, research, and dissemination of India's tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- ❖ Umbrella Scheme: KSVY serves as an umbrella scheme, under which several sub-schemes are implemented, such as: Financial Assistance for Promotion of Art and Culture, Scholarship to Young Artists, Guru-Shishya Parampara Scheme, Research Support to Voluntary Organizations and Cultural Function and Production Grants
- ❖ Capacity Building: Supports training workshops, seminars, exhibitions, festivals, and cultural exchange programmes to strengthen cultural institutions and nurture young talent.
- ❖ Expected Outcome: Helps safeguard India's cultural diversity, revive endangered art forms, generate livelihoods for artists, and increase public participation in cultural activities.

4. *Urban Heat Island (UHI):*

Context: Urban planning is a State Government and Urban Local Body (ULB) responsibility under the 12th Schedule of the Constitution. The Government of India supports States by providing schematic interventions, advisories, guidelines, financial assistance, and technical support to strengthen urban planning. Measures to mitigate the Urban Heat Island effect include promoting green spaces, urban forests, cool roofs, reflective and permeable materials, water bodies, and climate-resilient urban planning to reduce heat stress and improve thermal comfort.

About Urban Heat Island (UHI):

- ❖ Definition: An Urban Heat Island (UHI) is a phenomenon where urban areas are significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas due to human activities and built-up surfaces.
- ❖ Impervious Surfaces: Materials like concrete, asphalt, and steel have low albedo, absorb large amounts of solar heat during the day, and release it slowly at night.
- ❖ Loss of Green Cover: Reduced vegetation and tree canopy decrease evapotranspiration, limiting natural cooling and increasing urban temperatures.
- ❖ Anthropogenic Heat: Heat released from vehicles, industries, buildings, and air conditioners further raises the temperature in cities.
- ❖ Urban Morphology & Pollution: Dense buildings, narrow streets (urban canyon effect), skyscrapers, and air pollutants such as black carbon trap heat and reduce air circulation.
- ❖ Higher Energy Demand: UHI increases the need for air conditioning, leading to higher electricity consumption, grid stress, and greater greenhouse gas emissions.
- ❖ Health and Air Quality Impacts: Higher temperatures promote ground-level ozone formation, worsening air pollution and increasing heatstroke, dehydration, and cardiovascular illnesses.
- ❖ Water Stress: Elevated temperatures increase evaporation and water demand, reducing water availability in urban areas.
- ❖ Environmental Impact: UHI contributes to biodiversity loss, damages urban ecosystems, and threatens native plants and wildlife by creating excessively hot environments.

5. *National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations (NAKSHA) pilot project:*

Context: The Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, in coordination with the Directorate of Settlement and Land Records (DSLRL), Government of Goa, has issued an official clarification to dismantle groundless rumours regarding the National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations (NAKSHA) pilot project. The government has firmly reiterated that all existing property titles, boundaries, and official land records remain completely secure and unaffected by the ongoing mapping exercise.

About NAKSHA pilot project:

- ❖ Executed under the national Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP), NAKSHA is a GIS-based urban land parcel mapping initiative designed to enhance town planning, modernize land administration, and optimize public utility layouts across multiple states and Union Territories.
- ❖ Physical absence during a survey visit does not put a property at risk or impact legal ownership rights.
- ❖ The programme framework integrates multiple verification stages and formally notified public viewing windows to ensure full legal protection for absent owners.
- ❖ NAKSHA is strictly a data-mapping exercise and is completely distinct from land acquisition frameworks.
- ❖ The government is not taking over private land through this project, nor is the survey designed to increase local property taxes.
- ❖ It simply documents physical land parcels as they currently exist on the field, meaning ongoing legal and boundary disputes will remain unaffected and will continue to be managed by the appropriate judicial and administrative courts.

6. *Cotton production in India:*

Context: Cotton occupies a unique position in India's agricultural and industrial economy. India is the only country cultivating all four recognised cotton species.

More details:

- ❖ Cotton is one of the most important commercial crops cultivated in India. It accounts for around 23 percent of global fibre production.
- ❖ The crop supports the livelihoods of around 6 million cotton farmers. It also sustains employment for another 40-50 million people engaged in related activities such as cotton processing and trade.
- ❖ Beyond clothing, cotton plays a vital role in earning foreign exchange through exports of fibre, yarn, fabrics and garments.
- ❖ Due to its economic importance in India, it is also termed as "White-Gold".
- ❖ India is the only country that cultivates all four recognized cotton species. These include G. Arboreum and G. Herbaceum, commonly referred to as Asian cotton.
- ❖ The other species are G. Barbadense, known as Egyptian cotton, and G. Hirsutum, known as American upland cotton. Among these, G. Hirsutum accounts for nearly 90 percent of hybrid

cotton production in India. All Bt cotton hybrids currently cultivated in the country belong to this species.

- ❖ Cotton production in India is largely concentrated in 9 major states, grouped into 3 distinct agro-ecological zones:
 - Northern Zone comprising Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan
 - Central Zone comprising Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh
 - Southern Zone comprising Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka
 In addition to these states, cotton is also grown in Odisha and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ India ranks first in the world in cotton cultivation area (in hectares), with 114.84 lakh hectares devoted to the crop. This accounts for around 38 percent of the global cotton area of 304.08 lakh hectares.
- ❖ A large share of the country's cotton production depends on rainfall, with approximately 62 percent grown in rain-fed regions. The remaining 38 percent is cultivated under irrigated conditions.
- ❖ India ranks second globally in both cotton production and consumption. This shows the scale of its cultivation base and the strength of its textile industry.
- ❖ During the 2024-25 cotton season, cotton production pegged at 297.24 lakh bales (5.06 million tonnes). This accounts for nearly 20 percent of global cotton output.
- ❖ For 2025-26 (provisional), cotton production stood at 290.91 lakh bales (4.95 million tonnes).
- ❖ In 2024-25, the country exported an estimated 18 lakh bales, equivalent to 0.31 million metric tonnes. This accounts for about 3.37 percent of total world exports, amounting to 541.69 lakh bales (9.21 million metric tonnes).
- ❖ The United States of America emerged as the largest destination for Indian cotton fabrics and made-ups exports, accounting for 26.35 percent of cotton exports. This was followed by Bangladesh at 19.81 percent and Sri Lanka at 5.11 percent.

High-Density Planting System

A method of planting cotton at higher plant population per hectare to improve yield and resource efficiency.



High-Density Planting System

Closer Spacing Planting System

A technique where cotton plants are grown at reduced row and plant spacing to increase productivity and optimise field utilisation.



Closer Spacing Planting System

Production Technology for Extra Long Staple Cotton

A set of production and crop management practices including improved varietal selection, balanced nutrition and pest-management protocols. These practices aim at enhancing fibre length and quality of Extra Long Staple cotton for premium textile use.

- ❖ Other important destinations included the United Kingdom, with a share of 2.38 percent, and the United Arab Emirates, at 2.32 percent.

- ❖ For 2025-26, the MSP for cotton was fixed at Rs. 7,710 per quintal for medium-staple cotton and Rs. 8,110 per quintal for long-staple cotton. For 2026-27, it was increased to Rs. 8,267 per quintal for medium-staple cotton and Rs. 8,667 per quintal for long-staple cotton. This marked an increase of Rs. 557 per quintal for both varieties.

7. **FIFA world cup 2026:**

Context: Spain defeated Argentina 1–0 in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Final at MetLife Stadium, New Jersey (USA) to win their second FIFA World Cup title, having previously won in 2010.

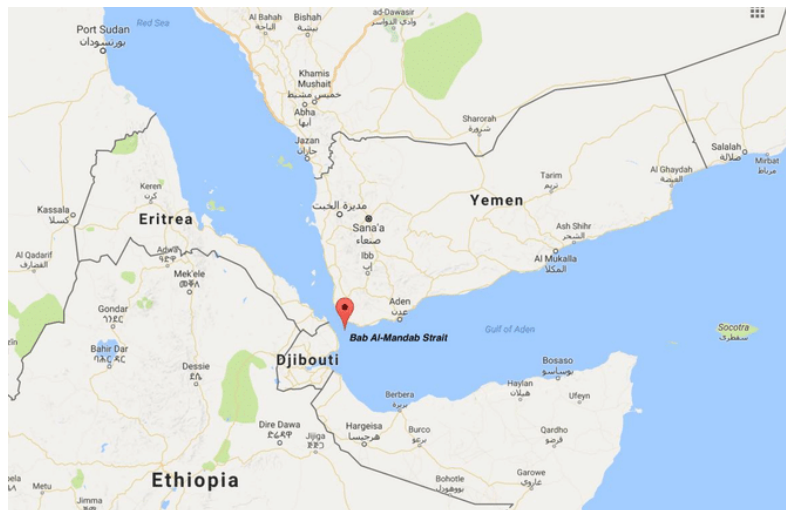
About FIFA world cup 2026:

- ❖ Edition: The FIFA World Cup 2026 is the 23rd edition of the men's FIFA World Cup.
- ❖ Historic Hosting: It is the first FIFA World Cup co-hosted by three sovereign nations—Canada, Mexico, and the United States.
- ❖ Expanded Format: The tournament features a record 48 teams (up from 32), divided into 12 groups of four teams.
- ❖ Golden Ball: Rodri (Spain) won the Golden Ball as the tournament's best player.
- ❖ Golden Boot: Kylian Mbappé (France) secured the Golden Boot by scoring 10 goals.
- ❖ Other Major Awards: Unai Simón (Spain) won the Golden Glove, while Pau Cubarsí (Spain) received the FIFA Best Young Player Award.
- ❖ India's Participation: India qualified only once for the FIFA World Cup (1950, Brazil) but did not participate in the tournament.

8. **Bab el-Mandeb strait:**

Context: Deputy head of the Houthi media office, Nasruddin Amer, said on X that the Bab el-Mandeb strait will be closed in response to what he called Saudi Arabia's "unjust blockade on Yemenis for over 10 years."

About Bab el-Mandeb strait:



- ❖ Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is the gateway to the Red Sea through which around 12% of the world's trade passes.
- ❖ Meaning: Bab-el-Mandeb is an Arabic term meaning "Gate of Tears" or "Gate of Grief", reflecting the historical dangers of navigation.
- ❖ Location: It is a narrow maritime chokepoint between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, connecting the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea/Indian Ocean.
- ❖ Bordering Countries: It separates Yemen (Asia) from Djibouti and Eritrea (Africa).
- ❖ Key Island: The Perim Island (Yemen) divides the strait into two navigation channels.
- ❖ Gateway to Suez Canal: It is the only sea entrance to the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean and forms a vital Asia–Europe trade route via the Suez Canal.
- ❖ Energy Chokepoint: It is a crucial transit route for crude oil, petroleum products, and LNG from the Persian Gulf to Europe and global markets.
- ❖ Global Trade Importance: Around 10–12% of global trade and nearly 30% of global container traffic passes through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.
- ❖ Strategic Impact: Any disruption forces ships to reroute via the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa), adding 10–14 days to voyages and increasing freight costs, insurance premiums, and global inflation.
- ❖ The Houthis are an Iran-backed, heavily armed political and military organization that emerged from Yemen's Zaydi Shia Muslim minority. Officially known as Ansar Allah, they control northern Yemen and are a key member of Iran's "Axis of Resistance"

Quick Bites:

- ☐ National Coal Gasification Mission has set the ambitious target of achieving 100 Million Tonnes (MT) of coal gasification capacity by 2030. As on date, approximately 22.6 Million Tonnes Per Annum (MTPA) of coal gasification capacity is operational or under implementation, comprising: (i) Jindal Steel Limited (JSL): ~8 MTPA (operational) (ii) Talcher Fertilisers Limited (TFL): ~2.6 MTPA (under implementation) (iii) 8 Projects approved under the ₹8,500 crore Financial Incentive Scheme: ~12 MTPA (under implementation)
- ☐ The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, has facilitated the first export of 24 Tonnes of Frozen French Fries from Kashipur in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand to Iraq.
- ☐ The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing the Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) Scheme to ensure the social and economic rehabilitation of vulnerable communities with dignity and sustainable livelihood opportunities. The umbrella scheme includes the Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging, which aims to transform lives through rehabilitation, skill development, education, healthcare, counselling and economic empowerment.
- ☐ The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is mandated to monitor the status of Ongoing Central Sector Infrastructure Projects costing Rs. 150 crore and above through online portal/ web monitoring system "Project Assessment Infrastructure Monitoring and Analytics for Nation-Building (PAIMANA)". All line Ministries/ Departments/ Implementing

Agencies regularly update the information of projects on PAIMANA portal via APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) and data entry mode.

- ☐ Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is the nodal Ministry for monitoring the National Indicator Framework (NIF) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which includes indicators covering health, education, gender equality, environmental sustainability and other aspects related to citizens' well-being. These indicators, along with data generated through various official statistical surveys, support evidence-based policy formulation and enable assessment of progress towards improving the overall well-being of citizens.
- ☐ Colobus Congoensis is a newly identified species of African colobus monkey, belonging to the genus Colobus and locally known as the "Likweli." It inhabits the tropical rainforests of the Congo Basin in Central Africa. The species is distinguished by its small size, a striking orange-cream patch around the mouth, and a white perianal patch, which is covered with fine white hairs in males but hairless (glabrous) in females. It is arboreal (tree-dwelling), diurnal (active during the day), and lives in social groups.
- ☐ The Sleemanabad Tunnel in Madhya Pradesh, a key component of the Bargi Diversion Project, is nearing completion. It is part of the 197-km-long Right Bank Main Canal and is India's longest underground water conveyance tunnel. The tunnel will transport Narmada River water from the Bargi Reservoir to the drought-prone Vindhya region and the Son basin through gravity flow, enhancing irrigation, water security, and agricultural development in the region.
- ☐ OpenAI appointed Indian-origin technology executive Uday Ruddaraju as Chief Technology Officer, Compute, on 19 July 2026.
- ☐ Bangladesh and the United States began the annual bilateral military exercise Tiger Lightning 2026 on 19 July 2026.
- ☐ India granted market authorisation to QDENG (TAK-003) on 20 July 2026 through the Drug Controller General of India. QDENG became India's first approved dengue vaccine and is approved for people aged 4 to 60 years. QDENG is a live-attenuated tetravalent vaccine developed by Takeda Biopharmaceuticals of Japan. A tetravalent vaccine is designed to provide protection against all four dengue virus serotypes. QDENG can be given to individuals with or without previous dengue exposure. This feature removes the need for pre-vaccination screening or testing before administration.
- ☐ Pakistan will host the 14th South Asian Federation Games, officially called the XIV South Asian Games, from 23 March to 31 March 2027. The multi-sport event will be held in Lahore, Islamabad, and Faisalabad, and more than 3,500 athletes from eight South Asian nations are expected to compete in 27 sports. The South Asian Games are a regional multi-sport event for countries of South Asia. The event is organised under the South Asian Olympic Council, which is the governing body for the Games. The participating countries are members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation sporting framework.
- ☐ Four Indian citizens were killed and one was critically injured in an attack on a merchant vessel near the Ukrainian port of Odessa on Sunday. India condemned the incident and called such

attacks impeding freedom of navigation “deplorable”.



- ☐ The Indian Institute of Technology-Tirupati (IIT-Tirupati), in collaboration with its Navavishkar I-Hub Foundation (IITNiF), on Monday hosted the fifth meeting of the BRICS Working Group on ‘Geospatial Technologies and its Applications’ at its Yerpedu campus.
- ☐ The Philippine military accused China’s coast guard of allegedly injuring a Filipino sailor during an incident in the disputed Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea. The military said Chinese coast guard personnel aboard a motorboat repeatedly struck the sailor on the head with a wooden baton, injuring him and damaging his smaller vessel. Second Thomas Shoal, also known as Ayungin Shoal, is a submerged reef in the Spratly Islands of the South China Sea, 105 nautical miles west of Palawan, Philippines. It is a disputed territory and claimed by multiple nations.

Practice questions:

Objective questions:

The Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging is a component of:

- (a) Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission
- (b) Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi Yojana
- (c) Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise
- (d) Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana

The National Indicator Framework (NIF) is primarily associated with monitoring:

- (a) Ease of Doing Business
- (b) Sustainable Development Goals
- (c) National Education Policy
- (d) National Logistics Policy

Which one of the following countries will host the 14th South Asian Games (XIV South Asian Games), scheduled to be held in 2027?

- (a) India
- (b) Nepal

- (c) Pakistan
- (d) Sri Lanka

Which of the following statements relating to 2026 FIFA Men's Football World Cup is/are correct?
(UPSC EPFO 2025)

1. The USA, Mexico and Canada will jointly host the event.
2. 48 teams shall participate in the event.

Select the answer using the codes given below :

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

With reference to the Index of Core Industries (ICI), consider the following statements:

1. It is released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
2. It currently includes ten core industries.
3. It accounts for more than 60% weight in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
4. The new ICI series (Base Year 2022–23) includes Iron Ore as a core industry.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1
- (b) 2
- (c) 3
- (d) 4

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