

UPSC- Current Affairs – Detailed analysis of the 12 current affairs topics from the July 15, 2026 newspapers

1. Supreme Court SOP for Urgent “Life and Liberty” Cases

Why in News?

In July 2026, the Supreme Court indicated that it would consider framing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to enable urgent petitions concerning life and personal liberty to be heard even outside normal court working hours.

The proposal is therefore about creating a **predictable institutional mechanism for emergency judicial access** rather than treating every after-hours request on an ad hoc basis.

Constitutional Foundation

The issue directly connects with: **Article 21**, this article has been expansively interpreted to include dignity, fair procedure, legal aid, speedy justice and protection against arbitrary state action and **Article 32**, which provides the right to approach the Supreme Court for enforcement of Fundamental Rights, and **Article 226**, which talks about the writ jurisdiction of High Courts.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar famously described Article 32 as the Constitution’s “**heart and soul.**”

Important Judicial Cases

1. Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978) transformed Article 21 jurisprudence by holding that the procedure depriving a person of liberty must satisfy standards of fairness and non-arbitrariness.
2. Hussainara Khatoon cases established the importance of speedy justice and legal access.

2. English and CBSE's Three-Language Scheme

Why in News?

The Supreme Court recently considered a challenge concerning implementation of the three-language scheme by CBSE, including its application from Class VI.

What is the Three-Language Formula?

The three-language formula emerged from India's post-independence education policy debates and was incorporated into successive National Education Policies.

Its broad objective is:

Multilingualism + National integration + Regional linguistic diversity

NEP 2020 Position: The National Education Policy 2020 promotes multilingualism. The three languages are intended to involve flexibility, with at least two being languages native to India under the policy framework.

Constitutional Framework associated to this news article: India does not constitutionally declare any language as the “national language.”

Article 343: Hindi in Devanagari script is the official language of the Union. However, English continues to be used for official purposes under statutory arrangements, particularly the Official Languages Act, 1963.

Article 345: State legislatures may adopt languages for official purposes of the State.

Article 350A: The State should endeavour to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the **mother tongue at the primary stage** for children belonging to linguistic minority groups.

Article 29: Protects the right of sections of citizens to conserve their distinct language, script or culture.

Article 30: Protects minority educational institutions.

Eighth Schedule: The Constitution currently recognises **22 Scheduled Languages**. English is **not** one of the 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule.

3. Definition of “Acid Attack Victim” Expanded

Why in News?

The legal understanding of an acid attack victim under the disability-rights framework has been broadened to recognise survivors harmed not only when acid is thrown externally, but also when acid is forcibly administered or ingested, causing internal disfigurement or disability.

Earlier Problem: Traditional understanding of acid attack focused mainly on:

Throwing acid → Burns/disfigurement

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

The RPwD Act recognises acid attack victims among specified disabilities.

This can affect access to disability-related:

- certification
- welfare measures
- rehabilitation
- educational support
- employment-related entitlements where statutory conditions are met.

Important Supreme Court Intervention:

In Laxmi v. Union of India, The Supreme Court addressed regulation of acid sale and victim protection.

The case became central to:

- restrictions on over-the-counter acid sale
- identity-related safeguards
- compensation
- medical treatment
- administrative responsibility.

4. Bhojshala–Kamal Maula Complex Row

Why in News?

The Bhojshala complex in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, has become the subject of renewed litigation over its historical and religious character.

The Madhya Pradesh High Court delivered a significant ruling in 2026 concerning the site. The Muslim side challenged the decision before the Supreme Court.

In July 2026, the Supreme Court agreed to examine the appeals and declined, at the interim stage, to restore the earlier arrangement inside the complex. It directed that an alternative/open space near the site be made available for Friday namaz as an ad hoc arrangement, subject to the final outcome.

Bhojshala- Located in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh.

- It is an archaeological monument under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Hindu groups associate the site with:

- Raja Bhoja
- Goddess Vagdevi or Goddess Saraswati
- Sanskrit learning

Muslim groups associate part of the complex with:

- Kamal Maula Mosque

In 2024, the Madhya Pradesh High Court ordered a scientific survey by the ASI.

5. CSDS Funding Controversy

Why in News?

Reports indicated that institutional funding routed through the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) could be curtailed or suspended.

What is CSDS?

The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) is a prominent independent social-science research institution based in Delhi.

Its research has included:

- political behaviour;
- democracy;
- elections;
- social change;
- public opinion;
- political theory.

Its Lokniti programme is particularly known for election and public-opinion studies

Core Governance Issue: The controversy creates a classic tension:

Argument for State oversight: Public money requires: financial accountability, audit, research standards, institutional compliance & transparency.

Argument for academic autonomy: Research institutions require protection from: ideological interference, political retaliation, arbitrary funding decisions & pressure over inconvenient research findings.

6. India–UK CETA and DCC

Why in News?

The India–UK economic partnership entered a new implementation phase in 2026 through the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the companion social-security arrangement commonly described as the Double Contribution Convention (DCC).

The agreements were scheduled to enter into force on 15 July 2026.

What is CETA : Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

It seeks deeper economic integration through: tariff liberalisation, services access, investment facilitation, professional mobility, customs simplification, regulatory cooperation, rules governing trade.

Why important?

The UK is a major: trade partner, services market, investment source, financial centre, destination for Indian professionals and students.

The India seeks better market access for labour-intensive sectors such as: textiles, garments, leather, gems and jewellery, engineering goods & processed foods and other exports.

What is DCC?

The Double Contribution Convention addresses social-security contributions for eligible temporary workers/professionals.

Why Important for India?

India has a strong comparative advantage in: IT, consulting, engineering, financial services, professional services.

The DCC can lower the cost of deploying Indian professionals in the UK, subject to the precise eligibility rules.

7. Indo-Pacific Consolidation and MAHASAGAR

What is MAHASAGAR?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated the MAHASAGAR vision in 2025 during his Mauritius visit. It expands India's earlier maritime doctrine.

From **SAGAR** (Security and Growth for All in the Region) to **MAHASAGAR**
(Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)

It signals a wider geographic and strategic vision extending beyond India's immediate Indian Ocean neighbourhood toward broader Global South and Indo-Pacific partnerships.

India's maritime outreach increasingly connects:

- Indian Ocean;
- Southeast Asia;
- Pacific partners;
- Global South.

India's policies increasingly operate as complementary layers like:

1. Act East Policy
2. Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative
3. Quad
4. SAGAR
5. MAHASAGAR

Strategic Geography

India occupies a crucial location near major sea lanes connecting:

Persian Gulf → Indian Ocean → Strait of Malacca → East Asia

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands provide major geostrategic significance near the Malacca Strait.

8. India Creates Framework to Ban Forced-Labour Imports

Why in News?

India amended its Foreign Trade Policy framework in July 2026 to provide a legal basis for prohibiting imports of goods produced wholly or partly through forced labour.

What is Forced Labour?

ILO Convention No. 29 broadly defines forced or compulsory labour as work extracted under threat of penalty and not offered voluntarily, subject to specified exceptions.

Examples can include: bonded labour, debt bondage, trafficking-related labour, coercive prison labour in certain circumstances, state-imposed labour & forced child labour.

Article 23: Prohibits:

- trafficking in human beings;
- begar;
- other similar forms of forced labour.

In, People's Union for Democratic Rights v. Union of India (1982): The Court held that labour extracted for less than the legally prescribed minimum wage can, in relevant circumstances, fall within the constitutional understanding of forced labour.

9. Inaugural Index of Services Production (ISP)

Why in News?

India introduced a trial Index of Services Production (ISP) in July 2026.

It is intended to provide a higher-frequency indicator of services-sector output, analogous in broad purpose to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for industry.

This fills an important statistical gap because services dominate India's economic structure but have historically lacked a comprehensive monthly production indicator.

India already has:

IIP → Industry

CPI → Retail prices

WPI → Wholesale/producer-side goods prices

GDP/GVA → Overall economic activity

But services needed a more frequent dedicated output indicator.

Thus: ISP → High-frequency services activity

Coverage

The trial framework covers major service activities using available volume and administrative indicators.

Reported coverage includes areas such as:

- trade;
- transport;
- financial services;
- real estate-related services;
- professional services;
- public administration;
- other services.

10. WPI Inflation Spike

Why in News?

India witnessed a sharp rise in wholesale inflation in 2026 amid pressures from: food prices, energy costs, geopolitical disruptions, supply-side pressures.

The WPI series itself has also undergone an important statistical transition: the government revised the base year from 2011–12 to 2022–23 in 2026.

This base-year revision is crucial when comparing reported inflation numbers across series.

What is Wholesale Price Index (WPI)?

It tracks price movements in a basket of goods at the wholesale/producer transaction level.

Broad groups include: Primary Articles, Fuel and Power, Manufactured Products.

Why WPI Rise Sharply?

Energy shock: India imports a large proportion of its crude oil requirement. Higher global energy prices increase:

Transport cost → Production cost → Logistics cost → Input cost → Wholesale prices

Food inflation: Weather disruptions can affect:

- vegetables;
- cereals;
- pulses;
- agricultural supply chains.

Imported inflation: A weaker rupee or higher global commodity prices can raise import costs.

Geopolitical conflict: Disruption to:

- shipping
- oil markets
- fertiliser supply
- intermediate goods, can raise producer prices.

11. Draft National Health Research Policy 2026

Why in News?

The Department of Health Research under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the Draft National Health Research Policy 2026 for public consultation.

The official draft describes its goal as creating a **trusted, adaptive, inclusive, self-reliant and impact-oriented health research ecosystem**.

Why Needed?

India's health challenges have changed significantly.

Earlier: Communicable diseases + Maternal/child mortality

Now India faces a complex burden: Communicable diseases, Non-communicable diseases, Mental-health burden, Emerging infections, AMR, Climate-related health threats, Ageing population; Therefore research governance must become multidisciplinary.

12. Paraquat Dichloride: Demand for Ban

Telangana Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution urging the Union Government to impose a complete ban on its sale and use.

India has banned Paraquat Dichloride nationwide.

What is Paraquat?

Paraquat Dichloride is a: **fast-acting, non-selective contact herbicide**

It is used to kill weeds. "Non-selective" means it can damage a wide range of green plant tissues rather than targeting only one narrow weed category.

It interferes with photosynthetic electron transfer and generates destructive reactive oxygen species in plant tissues.

Why Controversial?

Paraquat is **acutely toxic to humans**.

Ingestion can cause severe damage involving: gastrointestinal tract, kidneys, liver, lungs.

Severe poisoning can cause progressive lung injury and respiratory failure.

Regulatory Framework

Pesticide regulation in India has historically operated under: **Insecticides Act, 1968** and **Insecticides Rules, 1971**.

The Central Government has important powers relating to registration, regulation and prohibition/restriction.

Why is banning difficult?

Paraquat is valued by some farmers because it is: fast acting, effective, relatively inexpensive, useful in weed management.

Paraquat is prohibited or heavily restricted in numerous jurisdictions, while others continue to allow restricted agricultural use.

This creates a broader issue of: **Hazardous chemical governance** and **double standards in production/export vs domestic use**.

Rotterdam Convention Link

The **Rotterdam Convention** deals with the **Prior Informed Consent (PIC)** procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade.

Rotterdam Convention ≠ Global ban treaty

It primarily promotes information exchange and informed decision-making regarding hazardous chemical trade.