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Top Stories of The Day

- ***Sarnath's Ancient Buddhist Site** Added to UNESCO World Heritage List as India's 45th Heritage Site*
- ***Lando Norris** Wins Hungarian Grand Prix 2026 for McLaren, Securing His First Season Victory*
- ***Mirabai Chanu** Wins Historic Third Consecutive Commonwealth Games Gold Medal in Weightlifting*
- ***Odisha Signs** MoU with HCLTech and Sarvam AI to Develop AI Data Centre and Technology Hub*
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- ***India Calls** for Renegotiation of Indus Waters Treaty 1960 Due to Changing Water and Security Challenges*

Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath Inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List



- The Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath, located near Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List during the 48th Session of the World Heritage Committee held in Busan, Republic of Korea.
- With this inscription, Sarnath becomes India's 45th UNESCO World Heritage Site, making India the 6th country globally and 2nd in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of the number of World Heritage Sites.

Key Highlights

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| • Site Inscribed: Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath. |
| • Location: Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. |
| • UNESCO Session: 48th World Heritage Committee. |
| • Venue: Busan, Republic of Korea. |
| • India's Total World Heritage Sites: 45. |
| • Recognition: India's official nomination for the 2025–26 cycle. |
| • UNESCO Criteria: (iii) and (vi). |

About Sarnath:

- Sarnath is one of the four holiest Buddhist pilgrimage sites. According to Buddhist tradition, it was here that Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon (Dharmachakra Pravartana or "Turning of the Wheel of Dharma") after attaining enlightenment at Bodhi Gaya. This event marked the foundation of the Buddhist Sangha (monastic community) and the beginning of the spread of Buddhism.

Major Monuments at Sarnath:

- The UNESCO-inscribed property includes two protected archaeological zones:

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| • Chaukhandi Stupa – Marks the place where Buddha met his first five disciples. |
| • Dhamek Stupa – Built at the site of Buddha's first sermon. |
| • Dharmarajika Stupa – Originally constructed by Emperor Ashoka. |
| • Ancient monasteries (Viharas). |
| • Ashokan Pillar remains. |
| • Archaeological remains of temples and monastic complexes. |

Emperor Ashoka and Sarnath

- Emperor Ashoka played a significant role in developing Sarnath as a Buddhist centre.

Contributions:

- Constructed the Dharmarajika Stupa.
- Erected the Ashokan Pillar.
- Built monasteries and promoted Buddhism.
- The Lion Capital of Ashoka, discovered at Sarnath, is the National Emblem of India.

Why is Sarnath Important?

Sarnath is significant because:

- | |
|---|
| • Buddha delivered his First Sermon here. |
| • It marks the origin of the Buddhist Sangha. |
| • It became one of the greatest centres of Buddhist learning. |
| • It has remained an important pilgrimage destination for over 2,500 years. |
| • It preserves remains from the Mauryan, Kushan, Gupta, and later periods. |

UNESCO World Heritage Convention:

- The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

Objectives:

- Protect cultural and natural heritage.
- Promote conservation.
- Encourage international cooperation.
- Preserve sites of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

- India ratified the Convention in 1977.

UNESCO World Heritage Committee:

- Established Under: World Heritage Convention, 1972
- Members: 21 States Parties
- 48th Session: Busan, Republic of Korea

UNESCO Criteria for Sarnath

Sarnath was inscribed under:

- Criterion (iii): Bears exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or civilisation.
- Criterion (vi): Directly associated with events, beliefs, and traditions of outstanding universal significance.

Four Major Buddhist Pilgrimage Sites:

According to Buddhist tradition:

- Lumbini (Nepal) – Birthplace of Buddha.
- Bodh Gaya (Bihar) – Enlightenment.
- Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh) – First Sermon.
- Kushinagar (Uttar Pradesh) – Mahaparinirvana (Passing Away).

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Uttar Pradesh:

- After the inscription of Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh now has four UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

- Taj Mahal (Agra)
- Agra Fort (Agra)
- Fatehpur Sikri (Agra)
- Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath (Varanasi)

About UNESCO:

- Full Form: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- Established: 1945
- Headquarters: Paris, France

Objectives:

- Promote education.
- Protect cultural and natural heritage.
- Encourage scientific cooperation.
- Foster intercultural dialogue.

Additional Facts:

- Lion Capital of Ashoka
- Discovered at Sarnath.
- Adopted as the National Emblem of India on 26 January 1950.
- Features four Asiatic lions.
- The motto "Satyameva Jayate" (from the Mundaka Upanishad) appears below the emblem.
- Dharmachakra
- The 24-spoked Ashoka Chakra on the National Flag of India is inspired by the Dharmachakra at Sarnath.

Exam Focus Points:

- UNESCO Site: Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath.
- State: Uttar Pradesh.
- India's UNESCO World Heritage Sites: 45.
- UNESCO Session: 48th.
- Venue: Busan, Republic of Korea.
- Historic Significance: Buddha's First Sermon (Dharmachakra Pravartana).

National Emblem Origin: Lion Capital of Ashoka, Sarnath.	UNESCO Criteria: (iii) and (vi).
UNESCO Convention: 1972.	
India Ratified: 1977.	

Lando Norris Wins 2026 Hungarian Grand Prix, Secures First Victory of the Season



- McLaren's Lando Norris claimed his first Formula One victory of the 2026 season by winning the Hungarian Grand Prix 2026 at the Hungaroring, Budapest.
- Starting from pole position, Norris capitalised on teammate Oscar Piastri's retirement due to a gearbox failure to finish ahead of Max Verstappen (Red Bull) and Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes).
- The victory was also McLaren's first Grand Prix win of the 2026 season.

Race Results:

Position	Driver	Team
1	Lando Norris	McLaren
2	Max Verstappen	Red Bull Racing
3	Kimi Antonelli	Mercedes
4	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari
5	Lewis Hamilton	Ferrari

About Formula One (F1)

- Formula One (F1) is the highest class of international single-seater motor racing, governed by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA).
- Governing Body: Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA)

Inaugural Season: 1950
Championship: FIA Formula One World Championship
Racing Format: Grand Prix races held across multiple countries

About the Hungarian Grand Prix:

- The Hungarian Grand Prix is one of Formula One's longest-running races.
- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Country | Hungary |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Venue | Hungaroring |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Location | Mogyoród, near Budapest |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">First Held | 1986 |

About Hungaroring

- The Hungaroring is a permanent motor racing circuit located near Budapest, Hungary.

Features

Opened in 1986.
Circuit Length: 4.381 km.
Hosts the Hungarian Grand Prix annually.
Popularly known as "Monaco without the walls" because of its technical layout.

About FIA:

- The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) is the governing body for world motorsport.
- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Established: 1904 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Headquarters: Paris, France |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">President: Mohammed Ben Sulayem |

- Governing Body For: Formula One, World Rally Championship (WRC), Formula E and other international motorsports

Major Formula One Drivers (2026):

- Lando Norris (McLaren).
- Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing).
- Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes).
- Charles Leclerc (Ferrari).
- Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari).
- Oscar Piastri (McLaren).

About Hungary:

- Capital: Budapest
- Currency: Hungarian Forint (HUF)
- President: Ágnes Forsthoffer (acting)
- Prime Minister: Péter Magyar
- Continent: Europe
- River: Danube

Important Facts:

- Hungary is a landlocked country in Central Europe.
- Budapest is often called the "Pearl of the Danube."

Exam Focus Points:

- Race: Hungarian Grand Prix 2026.
- Winner: Lando Norris.
- Team: McLaren.
- Runner-up: Max Verstappen.
- Third Place: Kimi Antonelli.
- Venue: Hungaroring, Budapest, Hungary.
- First Hungarian GP: 1986.
- F1 Governing Body: FIA.
- FIA Headquarters: Paris, France.
- McLaren's Achievement: First victory of the 2026 season.

Mirabai Chanu Wins Historic Third Consecutive Commonwealth Games Gold



Commonwealth Games medal overall (Silver in 2014; Gold in 2018, 2022 and 2026).

About Mirabai Chanu

- Saikhom Mirabai Chanu is one of India's most decorated weightlifters and an Olympic medallist.

Major Achievements:

- India's star weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu created history by winning her third consecutive Commonwealth Games gold medal in the women's 48 kg weightlifting event at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.
- She lifted a Games record total of 190 kg (85 kg in Snatch + 105 kg in Clean & Jerk), securing India's first gold medal of the Games.
- With this victory, Mirabai became the first Indian weightlifter to win three Commonwealth Games gold medals and claimed her fourth

- Olympic Silver Medal – Tokyo 2020 (49 kg).
- World Champion – 2017.
- Commonwealth Games Medals:
 - 2014 (Glasgow): Silver.
 - 2018 (Gold Coast): Gold.
 - 2022 (Birmingham): Gold.
 - 2026 (Glasgow): Gold.
- First Indian weightlifter to win three Commonwealth Games gold medals.

Record-Breaking Performance:

Mirabai dominated the competition by setting:

- Commonwealth Games Record – Snatch (85 kg).
- Commonwealth Games Record – Clean & Jerk (105 kg).
- Commonwealth Games Record – Total Lift (190 kg).

- She finished 22 kg ahead of the silver medallist, highlighting her dominance in the event.

About Weightlifting:

Weightlifting consists of two lifts:

- Snatch:** Lifting the barbell from the floor to overhead in one continuous movement.
- Clean & Jerk:** Lifting the barbell to the shoulders (clean) and then overhead (jerk).
- The combined best lifts determine the athlete's final score.

Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF):

- Headquarters: London, United Kingdom
- President: Donald Rukare
- Founded: 1930

Mirabai Chanu's Honours:

- Padma Shri – 2018.
- Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award – 2018.

Exam Focus Points:

- Gold Medallist: Mirabai Chanu.
- Event: Women's 48 kg Weightlifting.
- Games: Commonwealth Games 2026.
- Host City: Glasgow, Scotland.
- Total Lift: 190 kg.
- Historic Achievement: Third consecutive Commonwealth Games gold.
- India's First Gold: Commonwealth Games 2026.
- Olympic Achievement: Silver Medal – Tokyo 2020.
- International Governing Body: International Weightlifting Federation (IWF).

Odisha Signs MoU with HCLTech for AI Data Centre and Global Technology Centre



- The Government of Odisha signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with HCLTech and Sarvam AI to establish the state's first AI Data Centre at the upcoming Odisha Sovereign AI Park in Bhubaneswar.

- Along with the AI Data Centre, HCLTech will also establish a Global Technology Centre (GTC) in Bhubaneswar.
- The initiative aims to strengthen India's sovereign AI ecosystem, boost digital infrastructure, promote indigenous AI development, and position Odisha as a major AI and technology hub.

About the AI Data Centre:

- The proposed AI Data Centre will be HCLTech's first AI-focused data centre and will leverage HCLTech's full-stack AI capabilities along with Sarvam AI's indigenous foundation models. It will provide sector-specific AI

solutions for government and private enterprises while supporting AI training, inference, multilingual AI services, and secure data processing.

- The project is expected to strengthen India's Sovereign AI Mission, reduce dependence on foreign AI infrastructure, and promote secure storage and processing of critical data within the country.

Global Technology Centre (GTC):

- HCLTech will establish a Global Technology Centre in Bhubaneswar to develop AI-led digital solutions for global enterprises.

Key Features:

- Capacity for 5,000 employees.
- Expected to commence operations by 2028.
- Focus on AI, cloud computing, digital engineering, and emerging technologies.
- Collaboration with engineering institutions to develop AI-ready talent.

What is Sovereign AI?

- Sovereign AI refers to a country's ability to develop, own, deploy, and govern its AI infrastructure, data, computing resources, and AI models while ensuring data security and compliance with national laws.

Objectives:

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| • Data sovereignty. |
| • Indigenous AI models. |
| • Secure digital infrastructure. |
| • Strategic technological self-reliance. |
| • Ethical and responsible AI. |

About Sarvam AI:

- Sarvam AI is an Indian artificial intelligence startup developing foundation models and

multilingual generative AI tailored to Indian languages and use cases.

Focus Areas:

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|---------------------------------|
| • Large Language Models (LLMs). |
| • Indian language AI. |
| • Generative AI. |
| • Enterprise AI applications. |
| • Government AI solutions. |

About HCLTech:

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| • Founded: 1976 (as HCL); HCL Technologies incorporated in 1991 |
| • Headquarters: Noida, Uttar Pradesh |
| • Sector: Information Technology & Digital Services |
| • Chairman: Roshni Nadar Malhotra |
| • CEO & MD: C. Vijayakumar |

Exam Focus Points:

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|---|
| • State: Odisha. |
| • Project: AI Data Centre and Global Technology Centre. |
| • Partners: Government of Odisha, HCLTech and Sarvam AI. |
| • Location: Bhubaneswar. |
| • AI Park: Odisha Sovereign AI Park. |
| • Capital Outlay: ₹14,257 crore. |
| • Employment: 5,000 at the Global Technology Centre. |
| • Operational Year: 2028. |
| • Related Initiative: IndiaAI Mission. |
| • Objective: Promote Sovereign AI and indigenous AI infrastructure. |

IRS Officer Satya Pal Kumar Appointed Director of Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU-IND)



- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed Satya Pal Kumar, a 2005-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS–Income Tax) officer, as the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit–India (FIU-IND).
- The appointment was part of a major Joint Secretary-level administrative reshuffle, in which 20 senior officers were appointed across various ministries and departments of the Government of India.

About Financial Intelligence Unit–India (FIU-IND):

- The Financial Intelligence Unit–India (FIU-IND) is the national agency responsible for receiving, analysing, and disseminating information related to suspicious financial transactions to law enforcement and intelligence agencies. It plays a crucial role in combating money laundering, terrorist financing, and financial crimes.

Key Functions:

- Receives Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) and Cash Transaction Reports (CTRs).
- Analyses financial transaction data.
- Shares financial intelligence with enforcement agencies.
- Coordinates with domestic and international Financial Intelligence Units.
- Supports investigations into money laundering and terror financing.

Organisational Structure of FIU-IND:

- Established: 18 November 2004

- | |
|--|
| • Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue) |
| • Reports To: Economic Intelligence Council (EIC) |
| • Chairperson of EIC: Union Finance Minister |
| • Headquarters: New Delhi |

What is the Indian Revenue Service (IRS)?

- The Indian Revenue Service (IRS) is a Group 'A' Central Civil Service responsible for administering direct and indirect taxes in India.

Two Branches:

- IRS (Income Tax) – Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).
- IRS (Customs & Indirect Taxes) – Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC).

Recruitment

- Recruited through the Civil Services Examination (CSE) conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

What is Money Laundering?

- Money laundering is the process of disguising the illegal origin of money obtained through criminal activities and making it appear legitimate.

Three Stages

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| • Placement – Introducing illegal money into the financial system. |
| • Layering – Concealing the source through complex financial transactions. |
| • Integration – Reintroducing the funds into the economy as legitimate assets. |

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002:

- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 provides the legal framework to prevent money laundering and confiscate proceeds of crime.

Key Features:

- Enforced by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).
- FIU-IND functions as the financial intelligence agency under the Act.
- Reporting entities (banks, financial institutions, intermediaries, etc.) must report specified transactions.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is the global body that sets standards for combating money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing.

• Established: 1989
• Headquarters: Paris, France
• Members: 40
• India and FATF: India became a member in 2010.

Economic Intelligence Council (EIC):

- The Economic Intelligence Council (EIC) coordinates intelligence gathering related to economic offences and financial crimes.
- Chairperson: Union Finance Minister.
- Coordinates agencies such as FIU-IND, ED, CBDT, CBIC, RBI, SEBI, and others.

Related Enforcement Agencies:

Agency	Primary Function
FIU-IND	Financial intelligence and suspicious transaction analysis
Enforcement Directorate (ED)	Money laundering investigations under PMLA
CBDT	Direct tax administration
CBIC	Customs and indirect taxes
SEBI	Securities market regulation
RBI	Banking regulation and supervision

Exam Focus Points:

• Appointed Officer: Satya Pal Kumar.
• Service: IRS (Income Tax), 2005 Batch.
• Organisation: Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND).
• Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue).
• Established: 18 November 2004.
• Reports To: Economic Intelligence Council (EIC).
• Related Law: Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.
• Global Body: Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
• India joined FATF: 2010.

Indian Passport Slips to 81st Rank in Henley Passport Index 2026



- According to the July 2026 edition of the Henley Passport Index, the Indian passport has slipped to 81st position, down from 75th in the February 2026 edition.

- Indian passport holders currently enjoy visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 55 destinations worldwide.
- Despite the decline in ranking, India's passport remains stronger than in 2025, when it was ranked 85th.
- The rankings are based on data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and compare 199 passports across 227 travel destinations.

Top 10 Passports in Henley Passport Index 2026:

Rank	Country/Countries	Visa-Free Access
1	Singapore	192
2	Japan, South Korea, United Arab Emirates	188
3	Sweden	187
4	Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain	186
5	Austria, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Switzerland	185
6	Hungary, Poland, United Kingdom	184
7	Australia, Canada, Czechia, Latvia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Slovakia, Slovenia	183
8	Croatia, Estonia	182
9	Liechtenstein, Lithuania	181
10	Iceland, United States	180

About the Henley Passport Index:

- The Henley Passport Index is one of the world's most widely used rankings of passport strength. It ranks passports based on the number of destinations their holders can access without obtaining a prior visa, including visa-free and visa-on-arrival access.

Key Features:

- Published by Henley & Partners.
- Based on IATA Timatic travel data.
- Compares 199 passports across 227 destinations.
- Updated periodically to reflect changes in visa policies.

What Determines Passport Strength?

A passport's ranking depends on:

- Number of visa-free destinations.
- Visa-on-arrival and electronic travel authorisation (ETA) access.
- Bilateral visa-waiver agreements.
- Diplomatic relations.

- International confidence in passport security.

Types of Travel Entry:

- Visa-Free: No visa required before travel.
- Visa-on-Arrival: Visa issued after reaching the destination.
- Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA): Online travel approval before departure.
- E-Visa: Electronic visa obtained before travel.

About the Indian Passport:

- The Indian Passport is issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) through the Passport Seva Programme.
- Issuing Authority Ministry of External Affairs
- Passport Act Passport Act, 1967
- Service Delivery Passport Seva Programme
- Implementing Agency Passport Seva Project (with Tata Consultancy Services as technology partner)
- Passport Seva Programme (PSP): The Passport Seva Programme is an e-governance initiative to provide efficient passport-related services.

About the International Air Transport Association (IATA):

- Established: 1945
- Headquarters: Montreal, Canada
- Director general: Willie Walsh
- Purpose: Represents global airlines and develops aviation standards

Exam Focus Points:

- India's Rank: 81st.
- Visa-Free/Visa-on-Arrival Access: 55 destinations.
- Top-Ranked Passport: Singapore.
- Ranking Agency: Henley Passport Index.
- Data Source: IATA Timatic.

- Passports Ranked: 199.
- Destinations Covered: 227.
- Issuing Authority of Indian Passport: Ministry of External Affairs.

- Relevant Law: Passport Act, 1967.

Prem K. Vora Conferred Rashtriya Ashok Samman (Bharat Samman)



- Prem K. Vora, President (2025–26) of the Electric Merchants Association (EMA), Mumbai, was conferred the Rashtriya Ashok Samman (Bharat Samman) at the National Leadership Conclave held in New Delhi.
- He was honoured for his contribution to India's electrical trade sector, promotion of ethical business practices, support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and efforts towards sustainable industrial growth.

About Electric Merchants Association (EMA):

- The Electric Merchants Association (EMA), Mumbai, is a trade body representing businesses engaged in the electrical industry.

Major Objectives:

- Promote the electrical trade.
- Support MSMEs and traders.
- Encourage digital transformation.
- Promote sustainable business practices.
- Represent industry interests before the government.

- Under Prem K. Vora's leadership, the association promoted the "Green Electricals" initiative and digital adoption in the electrical sector.

Importance of MSMEs:

- The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector is considered the backbone of India's economy.

Key Facts:

- Contributes about 30% of India's GDP.
- Contributes around 45% of exports.
- Provides employment to over 20 crore people.
- Plays a crucial role in manufacturing, services, and exports.

Ministry of MSME:

- Cabinet Minister: Jitan Ram Manjhi

Major Schemes

- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).
- MSME Champions Scheme.
- Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs.
- Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP).

Green Electricals Initiative:

- The Green Electricals initiative encourages:
- Energy-efficient electrical products.
- Sustainable manufacturing.
- Green technologies.
- Reduced carbon emissions.
- Environment-friendly industrial practices.

Exam Focus Points:

- Award: Rashtriya Ashok Samman (Bharat Samman).
- Recipient: Prem K. Vora.

- Organisation: Electric Merchants Association (EMA), Mumbai.
- Recognised For: Leadership in the electrical trade sector and MSME development.
- Venue: National Leadership Conclave, New Delhi.

- Related Vision: Viksit Bharat 2047.
- Key Focus: MSMEs, digitisation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development.

Nicolás Otamendi Retires from International Football



- Argentina's veteran defender Nicolás Otamendi has announced his retirement from international football, bringing an end to a 17-year international career.
- The 38-year-old centre-back made 139 appearances for Argentina after making his debut in 2009 under Diego Maradona.
- His final international match was the 2026 FIFA World Cup Final, where Argentina finished runners-up after losing 1–0 to Spain.
- Otamendi retires as a FIFA World Cup champion (2022) and a two-time Copa América winner (2021 and 2024).

About Nicolás Otamendi:

- Nicolás Otamendi is regarded as one of Argentina's finest defenders of the modern era. Known for his leadership, aerial ability, and defensive resilience, he represented Argentina in four FIFA World Cups and played a key role in the country's recent international success.

International Achievements:

- FIFA World Cup Champion: 2022 (Qatar).
- FIFA World Cup Runner-up: 2014 and 2026.
- Copa América Champion: 2021 and 2024.

- FIFA Finalissima Champion: 2022.
- International Caps: 139.

Major Clubs:

- Vélez Sarsfield (Argentina).
- FC Porto (Portugal).
- Valencia CF (Spain).
- Manchester City (England).
- Benfica (Portugal).
- River Plate (Argentina).

About FIFA World Cup

- The FIFA World Cup is the premier international men's football tournament organised by FIFA.
- Organising Body: FIFA
- First Edition: 1930
- Frequency: Every four years
- 2026 Champions: Spain
- 2026 Runner-up: Argentina

About Copa América: The Copa América is the oldest continental football championship.

- Organised By: CONMEBOL
- First Edition: 1916
- Region: South America
- Most Successful Team Argentina (most titles after the 2024 edition)

About FIFA:

Full Form: Fédération Internationale de Football Association
Established: 1904
Headquarters: Zurich, Switzerland
President: Gianni Infantino

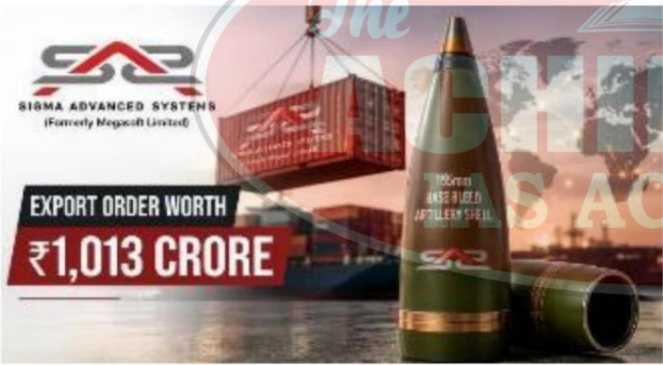
About Argentina:

Capital: Buenos Aires
Currency: Argentine Peso
President: Javier Milei

Exam Focus Points:

Retiring Player: Nicolás Otamendi.
Country: Argentina.
Position: Defender (Centre-back).
International Caps: 139.
International Career: 2009–2026.
World Cup Title: 2022.
Copa América Titles: 2021 and 2024.
Final International Match: FIFA World Cup 2026 Final.
FIFA Headquarters: Zurich, Switzerland.
Football Governing Body: FIFA.

Sigma Advanced Systems Bags ₹1,013 Crore Export Order for 155 mm Base Bleed Artillery Shell Bodies



- Hyderabad-based Sigma Advanced Systems Ltd. has secured an export order worth US\$104.9 million (approximately ₹1,013 crore) from a North American customer for the manufacture and supply of 147,000 units of 155 mm base bleed artillery shell bodies.
- The order will be executed over the next 6–12 months and marks the company's entry into the manufacturing of advanced base bleed artillery ammunition, strengthening India's position in the global defence manufacturing supply chain.

What are Base Bleed Artillery Shells?

- A Base Bleed Artillery Shell is an advanced artillery projectile equipped with a gas generator at its base. During flight, the gas generator reduces aerodynamic drag (base drag), allowing

the shell to travel farther without increasing the explosive charge.

Advantages:

- Extends firing range by 20–30%.
- Improves firing efficiency.
- Compatible with existing 155 mm artillery guns.
- Provides greater battlefield reach without major modifications to artillery systems.

About 155 mm Artillery:

- The 155 mm calibre is the NATO-standard heavy artillery calibre and is widely used by armed forces worldwide.

Major Indian 155 mm Artillery Systems:

Dhanush Howitzer.
Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS).
K9 Vajra-T Self-Propelled Howitzer.
M777 Ultra-Light Howitzer.
Sharang Gun.

Significance of the Order

The export order will:

- Strengthen India's defence manufacturing ecosystem.
- Enhance defence exports.
- Reduce dependence on foreign suppliers through indigenous manufacturing.
- Improve India's position in the global ammunition supply chain.
- Support the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India in defence.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| • Base Bleed | Rocket-Assisted Projectile (RAP) |
| • Uses a gas generator to reduce drag | Uses a rocket motor for propulsion |
| • Increases range without thrust | Increases range using rocket propulsion |
| • Simpler and more economical | More complex and costlier |

Exam Focus Points:

About Sigma Advanced Systems

- Sigma Advanced Systems Ltd. is a Hyderabad-based defence and aerospace manufacturer engaged in:
- Precision engineering.
- Defence electronics.
- Embedded systems.
- Aerospace components.
- Artillery ammunition and fuze manufacturing.
- The company had earlier secured export contracts for 155 mm fuzes and M107 artillery shell bodies, making this order a significant expansion into advanced ammunition manufacturing.

- | |
|---|
| • Company: Sigma Advanced Systems Ltd. |
| • Export Order Value: ₹1,013 crore (US\$104.9 million). |
| • Product: 155 mm base bleed artillery shell bodies. |
| • Quantity: 147,000 units. |
| • Customer: North America. |
| • Execution Period: 6–12 months. |
| • Calibre: 155 mm (NATO standard). |
| • Related Initiative: Aatmanirbhar Bharat. |
| • Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Defence. |
| • Related Department: Department of Defence Production. |

Difference Between Base Bleed and Rocket-Assisted Projectiles:

Indus Waters Treaty Remains in Abeyance: India Calls for Renegotiation



- India has reiterated that the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), 1960 remains in abeyance and has argued that the treaty requires renegotiation to reflect present-day realities.

- According to India, the treaty no longer adequately addresses climate change, changing hydrological conditions, increasing water demand, modern engineering practices, and national security concerns.
- India also maintains that Pakistan has repeatedly delayed Indian hydropower projects through the treaty's dispute resolution mechanisms and has failed to respond to India's notices seeking modification of the treaty.

Why Does India Want to Renegotiate the Treaty?

- India argues that the treaty was negotiated in the 1950s and does not reflect present-day realities.
- Major Reasons:
- Climate change has altered river flows and hydrological patterns.
- Rising population has increased demand for drinking water, irrigation, industry, and urban use.
- Modern dam engineering requires technologies such as low-level outlets, sediment flushing, gated spillways, and flexible reservoir operations, which are not adequately addressed in the treaty.
- India needs greater hydropower development to achieve its clean energy goals.
- Pakistan has frequently objected to Indian hydropower projects, delaying their implementation.
- India seeks better utilisation of its allocated waters and improved flood and drought management.

About the Indus Waters Treaty (1960):

- The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) was signed on 19 September 1960 in Karachi after nearly nine years of negotiations.
- Signed Between: India and Pakistan
- Broker: World Bank
- Signed By: Jawaharlal Nehru (India) and Ayub Khan (Pakistan)
- Signed On: 19 September 1960
- Signed At: Karachi, Pakistan
- The treaty is regarded as one of the world's most enduring international water-sharing agreements.

Distribution of Rivers under the Treaty:

- Eastern Rivers (Allocated to India)
- Ravi
- Beas
- Sutlej

- India has unrestricted use of the waters of these rivers.

Western Rivers (Primarily Allocated to Pakistan):

- Indus
- Jhelum
- Chenab

- India is permitted non-consumptive uses, including run-of-the-river hydropower, domestic use, navigation, and limited irrigation, subject to treaty provisions.

Permanent Indus Commission (PIC):

- The treaty established the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) to implement and monitor its provisions.

Functions:

- Exchange of river flow data.
- Inspection of projects.
- Resolution of technical issues.
- Annual meetings between commissioners.
- Each country appoints one Indus Commissioner.

Dispute Resolution Mechanism:

- The treaty provides a three-tier dispute resolution mechanism:
- Permanent Indus Commission – Technical discussions.
- Neutral Expert – Technical disputes.
- Court of Arbitration – Legal disputes.
- India has objected to the simultaneous use of a Neutral Expert and a Court of Arbitration for the same issues.

India's Major Hydropower Projects on the Western Rivers:

- Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project (Jhelum Basin).
- Ratle Hydroelectric Project (Chenab).
- Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project (Chenab).
- Kiru Hydroelectric Project (Chenab).
- Kwar Hydroelectric Project (Chenab).
- Sawalkot Hydroelectric Project (Chenab).

Importance of the Indus Basin:

- The Indus River System is one of South Asia's largest river systems.

Major Tributaries

- Indus.
- Jhelum.
- Chenab.
- Ravi.
- Beas.
- Sutlej.

Origin of the Indus River

- Origin: Near Lake Manasarovar, Tibet (China).
- Flows through Ladakh, Pakistan, and drains into the Arabian Sea.

World Bank's Role:

- The World Bank facilitated negotiations between India and Pakistan and is a signatory to the treaty. Its role includes facilitating certain procedures related to dispute resolution but it is not a party to the water-sharing arrangement itself.

Exam Focus Points:

- Treaty: Indus Waters Treaty (1960).
- Signed By: Jawaharlal Nehru and Ayub Khan.
- Broker: World Bank.
- Eastern Rivers: Ravi, Beas, Sutlej.
- Western Rivers: Indus, Jhelum, Chenab.
- Implementation Body: Permanent Indus Commission.
- Current Status: In abeyance by India.
- India's Demand: Renegotiation to reflect climate change, modern engineering, water needs, and security concerns.
- Major Indian Projects: Kishanganga, Ratle, Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar, Sawalkot.

Lets Revise

- ❖ Which Indian site was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List during the 48th World Heritage Committee Session? **Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath.**
- ❖ Who won the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix 2026? **Lando Norris.**
- ❖ Who won India's first gold medal at the 2026 Commonwealth Games? **Mirabai Chanu.**
- ❖ Which state signed an MoU with HCLTech to establish its first AI Data Centre? **Odisha.**
- ❖ Who has been appointed as the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit–India (FIU-IND)? **Satya Pal Kumar.**
- ❖ What is India's rank in the July 2026 Henley Passport Index? **81st.**
- ❖ Who was conferred the Rashtriya Ashok Samman (Bharat Samman) in 2026? **Prem K. Vora.**
- ❖ Which Argentine footballer announced his retirement from international football in July 2026? **Nicolás Otamendi.**
- ❖ Which Indian company secured a ₹1,013 crore export order for 155 mm base bleed artillery shell bodies? **Sigma Advanced Systems Ltd.**
- ❖ In which year was the Indus Waters Treaty signed? **1960.**
- ❖ Which organisation brokered the Indus Waters Treaty? **The World Bank.**
- ❖ Which three rivers are allocated to India under the Indus Waters Treaty? **Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej.**



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IMPORTANCE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS IN UPSC EXAMINATIONS

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