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21st July 2026

Headlines:

- Index of Core Industries (ICI): Revised Series (Base Year 2022-23) (GS – III: Indian Economy)
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- India-Canada Relations: Emerging Strategic Partnership in Defence and Critical Minerals (GS – II: IR)
- Rising Inflation in India: Drivers and Policy Responses (GS – III: Economy)
- Supreme Court Judge Strength Increased to Enhance Justice Delivery (GS – II: Polity)



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1. Index of Core Industries (ICI): Revised Series (Base Year 2022–23) (GS – III: Indian Economy)

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Commerce & Industry released the revised Index of Core Industries (ICI) with a new base year (2022–23), replacing 2011–12.
- Iron Ore has been included as the 9th core industry, along with revised sectoral weights and estimation methodology.
- As per the revised series, core industries grew by 5% in June 2026, the fastest growth in five months.

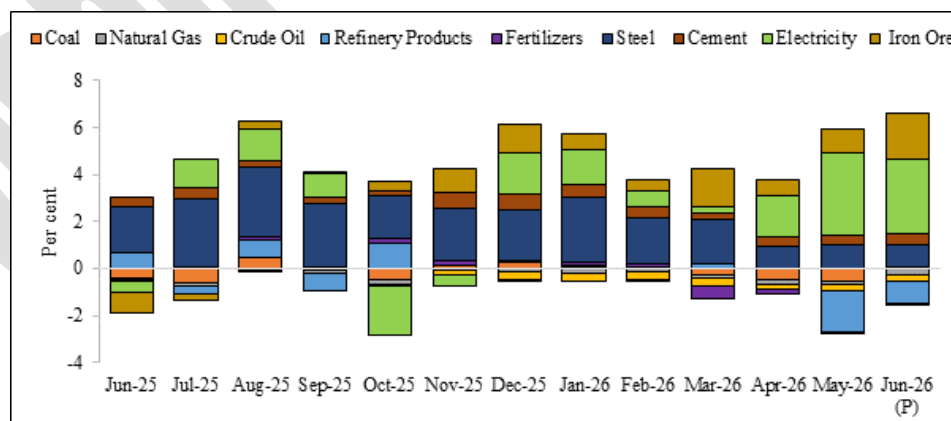
What is the Index of Core Industries (ICI)?

- A monthly economic indicator measuring the performance of India's core industrial sectors.
- Compiled by the Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA) under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- Serves as a leading indicator of industrial production and economic activity.

Key Changes in the Revised Series

- Base Year: Revised from 2011–12 to 2022–23.
- Iron Ore added as the 9th core industry due to its critical role in steel production and industrial growth.
- Sectoral weights and estimation methodology updated to better reflect the present industrial structure.
- The revision enhances the accuracy, relevance and reliability of industrial output measurement.

Nine Core Industries:



Significance

- Better reflects the current industrial structure.
- Improves accuracy of industrial output measurement.

- Serves as a leading indicator for IIP and GDP trends.
- Supports evidence-based policymaking and investment decisions.

Challenges

- Volatility in global commodity prices affects core sector performance.
- Dependence on imported crude oil and natural gas exposes the economy to external shocks.
- Infrastructure and logistics bottlenecks can constrain industrial output.
- Environmental and decarbonisation commitments pose challenges for coal- and steel-intensive industries.
- Frequent base-year and methodology revisions may reduce comparability of long-term data.

Way Forward

- Accelerate infrastructure development under initiatives such as the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) and PM Gati Shakti.
- Promote domestic mineral production and value addition, including iron ore and critical minerals.
- Diversify the energy mix by expanding renewable energy and improving energy efficiency.
- Strengthen data collection and adopt internationally accepted statistical standards for timely and reliable industrial indices.
- Improve the ease of doing business and encourage technology adoption to enhance industrial competitiveness.

2. Right to Walk Safely: Supreme Court Upholds Walkability as a Fundamental Right (GS – II: Polity)

Why in News?

- In *Maniyar Iliyaz @ Shaik Riyaz vs P. Ayyappan* (2026), the Supreme Court held that walking on safe and demarcated footpaths is a Fundamental Right under Articles 19(1)(d) and 21.
- The Court directed States and Union Territories to formulate policies for the creation, maintenance and protection of pedestrian infrastructure.

Court's Key Observations

- Safe and accessible footpaths are integral to the right to life and free movement.
- Pedestrian infrastructure is a constitutional obligation, not merely a municipal function.
- States must ensure safe, accessible and well-maintained footpaths for all citizens.

Constitutional Basis

- Article 19(1)(d): Freedom to move freely throughout India.
- Article 21: Right to life encompasses safe mobility, dignity and a healthy living environment.
- Reinforces the principle of inclusive and accessible public infrastructure.

Significance

- Promotes people-centric and inclusive urban planning.
- Improves road safety, especially for vulnerable road users.
- Encourages active mobility, helping combat non-communicable diseases such as obesity and diabetes.
- Enhances accessibility for women, children, elderly persons and persons with disabilities.
- Supports sustainable cities by reducing dependence on private vehicles.

Challenges

- Encroachment of footpaths by parking, vendors and utilities.
- Poor maintenance and discontinuous pedestrian infrastructure.
- Vehicle-centric urban planning.
- Weak enforcement of municipal regulations.
- Limited coordination among urban local bodies.

Way Forward

- Adopt Complete Streets and Universal Accessibility principles.
- Develop continuous, shaded and barrier-free footpaths with safe pedestrian crossings.
- Balance pedestrian rights with planned vending zones and strict action against illegal parking.
- Integrate walkability into Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT and PM Gati Shakti.
- Promote active mobility through better public transport integration and citizen awareness.

3. India–Canada Relations: Emerging Strategic Partnership in Defence and Critical Minerals (GS – II: IR)

Why in News?

- India and Canada have initiated efforts to revitalise bilateral relations by expanding cooperation in defence, critical minerals, space technology and advanced manufacturing.

- Both countries have agreed to establish a Defence Dialogue, accredit Defence Advisers, and operationalise the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Critical Minerals Value Chain.

Key Areas of Cooperation

- Defence:** Institutionalised Defence Dialogue, military exchanges, participation in multinational naval exercises, and collaboration in defence industrial production.
- Critical Minerals:** Cooperation in securing resilient supply chains for minerals such as uranium, rare earth elements, cobalt and tungsten, which are vital for clean energy and defence manufacturing.
- Space & Emerging Technologies:** Collaboration in satellite technologies, space robotics, aerospace innovation, drones and advanced manufacturing, leveraging Canada's technological expertise and India's manufacturing capabilities.
- Defence Industrial Cooperation:** Opportunities for co-development, component manufacturing, research & development, and supply chain diversification.



Strategic Significance

- Strengthens India's objective of defence indigenisation and Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- Enhances resilience of critical mineral supply chains amid geopolitical uncertainties.
- Supports cooperation in emerging technologies, maritime security and the Indo-Pacific.
- Expands economic engagement through high-technology investments and innovation partnerships.

Challenges

- Residual diplomatic trust deficit following recent bilateral tensions.
- Regulatory and investment barriers affecting strategic cooperation.
- Global geopolitical competition over critical minerals and advanced technologies.

Way Forward

- Institutionalise the Defence Dialogue with regular high-level engagements.
- Expedite implementation of the Critical Minerals Value Chain MoU.
- Promote joint research, defence manufacturing and technology transfer.
- Expand cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and space, while strengthening people-to-people and academic exchanges.

4. Rising Inflation in India: Drivers and Policy Responses (GS – III: Economy)

Why in News?

- India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation accelerated to around 10% in June 2026, primarily driven by rising fuel costs and food prices.
- Higher global crude oil prices and weather-related disruptions have intensified inflationary pressures, raising concerns over production costs and price stability.

About Wholesale Price Index (WPI):

- Wholesale Price Index (WPI) measures the average change in the prices of goods traded at the wholesale (producer) level before they reach consumers.
- It is compiled and released monthly by the Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA) under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- **Base Year:** 2022–23.
- It comprises three major components:
 - Primary Articles
 - Fuel & Power
 - Manufactured Products
- WPI serves as an important indicator of producer-level inflation, production costs and overall industrial price trends, helping policymakers assess inflationary pressures in the economy.

Key Drivers of Inflation

- **Imported Inflation:** Rising international crude oil prices have increased fuel, transport and logistics costs.
- **Food Inflation:** Erratic monsoon conditions and El Niño-induced supply disruptions have reduced agricultural output, leading to higher food prices.
- **Cost-Push Inflation:** Higher energy and raw material costs have raised the cost of manufacturing, resulting in increased prices of industrial goods.
- **Supply-side Constraints:** Disruptions in supply chains and rising input costs have further contributed to inflationary pressures.

Economic Implications

- Erodes household purchasing power and disproportionately affects low-income groups.
- Raises production costs, impacting industrial competitiveness and profitability.
- Influences inflation expectations, interest rates and investment decisions.
- May affect overall economic growth if inflation persists over the medium term.

Challenges

- High dependence on imported crude oil exposes India to global price volatility.
- Climate variability continues to affect agricultural production and food security.
- Balancing inflation control with growth remains a key macroeconomic challenge.
- Supply chain bottlenecks and geopolitical uncertainties can aggravate price pressures.

Way Forward

- Diversify the energy basket through renewable energy and domestic energy production.
- Strengthen irrigation, warehousing and climate-resilient agriculture to reduce food inflation.
- Improve logistics and supply-chain efficiency under initiatives such as PM Gati Shakti.
- Ensure coordinated fiscal and monetary measures to maintain price stability while sustaining economic growth.

5. Supreme Court Judge Strength Increased to Enhance Justice Delivery (GS – II: Polity)

Why in News?

- The Government introduced the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 to replace the Ordinance that increased the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court from 34 to 38 judges (including the Chief Justice of India).
- The move seeks to address rising case pendency and improve the efficiency of the justice delivery system.

Constitutional & Legal Framework

- **Article 124(1):** Establishes the Supreme Court, comprising the Chief Justice of India and such number of judges as Parliament may prescribe by law.
- **Article 123:** Empowers the President to promulgate an Ordinance when Parliament is not in session; the 2026 Ordinance increased the Court's sanctioned strength pending parliamentary approval.
- **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956:** Empowers Parliament to determine and revise the sanctioned strength of Supreme Court judges through legislation.

Need for the Amendment

- The Supreme Court had over 92,000 pending cases as of January 2026.
- Rising case institution has consistently outpaced disposals, increasing judicial backlog.

- Additional judges will facilitate regular constitution of Constitution Benches and improve case management.

Significance

- Enhances the Court's capacity for timely disposal of cases.
- Enables more frequent hearings of Constitution Bench matters involving substantial questions of law.
- Strengthens access to justice and reduces judicial delays.
- Improves efficiency and public confidence in the justice delivery system.

Challenges

- Merely increasing judge strength may not substantially reduce pendency.
- Persistent vacancies in High Courts and subordinate courts.
- Inadequate judicial infrastructure and support staff.
- Procedural delays, frequent adjournments and increasing litigation.

Way Forward

- Ensure timely appointments to all levels of the judiciary.
- Strengthen the e-Courts Mission Mode Project and digital case management.
- Promote Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to reduce court burden.
- Improve judicial infrastructure, manpower and regular Constitution Bench sittings for efficient justice delivery.

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