



CURRENT AFFAIRS – 17 JUNE

1. India and Japan Adopt Rules of Implementation for Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) Under Article 6.2 of Paris Agreement

Source: PIB | GS-3: Environment & Climate Change

2. Central Banks to Raise Gold Reserves Over One Year: WGC

Source: The Hindu | Page 15 | GS-3: Economy – External Sector

3. Five Solutions Indian Cities Need to Stop Fighting for Water Week After Week

Source: The Hindu | Page 11 | GS-3: Water Resources & Urbanisation

4. The Long-Term Implications of the U.S.–Iran Deal

Source: The Hindu | Page 9 | GS-2: International Relations – West Asia

5. Iconic Bridges: Pillars of New India’s Infrastructure Transformation

Source: PIB | GS-3: Infrastructure

6. Centre Puts an End to Over-the-Counter Sales of Cough Syrups

Source: The Hindu | Page 4 | GS-2: Health Governance



India and Japan Adopt Rules of Implementation for Joint Crediting Mechanism Under Article 6.2 of Paris Agreement

Posted On: 16 JUN 2026 3:02PM by PIB Delhi

The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Japan have adopted the ‘Rule of Implementation’ of the Joint Crediting Mechanism on 08.06.2026, under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Last year, India and Japan signed the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) for the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM). The MoC established a framework for collaboration on mitigation activities that deliver greenhouse gas emission reductions or removals while supporting sustainable development outcomes in India and contributing to the achievement of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of both countries.

The Rule of Implementation defines robust governance arrangements, including a Joint Committee with representatives from both Governments, transparent project approval procedures, third-party validation and verification, sustainable development safeguards and national registries to track the issuance and transfer of credits.

The Joint Crediting Mechanism demonstrates India’s firm commitment to climate action. It will catalyse investment, technology transfer and capacity-building for projects involving low-carbon technologies in India to support climate change mitigation and sustainable development.

Consider the following statements :

Statement I :

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on climate change is frequently discussed in global discussions on sustainable development and climate change.

Statement II :

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on climate change sets out the principles of carbon markets.

Statement III :

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on climate change intends to promote inter-country non-market strategies to reach their climate targets.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both of them explain Statement I
- (b) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct but only one of them explains Statement I
- (c) Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I
- (d) Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

1. **Context:** India and Japan adopted the Rules of Implementation for the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, operationalising bilateral carbon-market cooperation.

2. Carbon Credit, JCM and ITMOs

Carbon Credit: A tradable unit representing 1 tonne of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) or equivalent greenhouse gas reduced, avoided or removed.

Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM): A bilateral mechanism under which Japan finances/provides low-carbon technology in India. The resulting emission reductions generate carbon credits that are shared by both countries.

Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs): Carbon credits transferred between countries under Article 6.2 towards their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Flow: Japan's finance/technology → Emission reduction project in India → Carbon credits generated → Credits transferred/shared as ITMOs.

3. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement

* **Article 6.2:** Country-to-country carbon market (JCM, ITMOs).

* **Article 6.4:** United Nations-supervised global carbon market.

* **Article 6.8:** Non-market cooperation (finance, technology transfer, capacity building).

Central banks to raise gold reserves over one year: WGC

Lalatendu Mishra

MUMBAI

World Gold Council's (WGC) 2026 Central Bank Gold Reserves (CBGR) survey indicate that the central banks around the world would accumulate more gold in the future.

This means the price of the yellow metal will remain high in the future impacting retail customers. Indian gold prices had risen by about 40% in 12 months primarily on central banks' buying and rupee's depreciation against U.S. dollar, the determining currency of gold price.

As per the survey central banks "remain very positive on gold, highlighting its significance amid a volatile geopolitical and economic environment."



Central banks accumulated 1,000 tonne gold over 4 years.

The survey shows a continuation of the trend uncovered in previous years: central banks see gold making up a growing share of reserve portfolios.

Doubling purchases

Central banks have accumulated an average of 1,000 tonne of gold over the past four years, which is signifi-

cantly higher from the 500 tonne average over the preceding decade.

"This marked acceleration in the pace of accumulation occurred against a backdrop of geopolitical and economic uncertainty, which clouded the outlook for reserve managers," WGC said in the foreword of the Survey.

In India the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was seen aggressively expanding its gold reserves between FY24 and FY25. Total reserves grew from 822.1 tonne in FY24 to 879.58 tonnes by end FY25 and rose marginally to 880.52 tonne in FY26. The survey was conducted between February 5 and May 19 with the majority of responses coming in after the West Asia conflict began.

Which one of the following groups of items is included in India's foreign-exchange reserves?

- (a) Foreign-currency assets, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and loans from foreign countries
- (b) Foreign-currency assets, gold holdings of the RBI and SDRs
- (c) Foreign-currency assets, loans from the World Bank and SDRs
- (d) Foreign-currency assets, gold holdings of the RBI and loans from the World Bank

1. **Context:** The World Gold Council (WGC) 2026 Central Bank Gold Reserves Survey (CBGR) projects continued gold accumulation by central banks; India's gold holdings rose to 880.52 tonnes in FY26.

2. World Gold Council (WGC)

* **Established:** 1987

* **Global association of gold mining companies; not a United Nations agency.**

* **Headquarters:** London, United Kingdom.

* **Promotes** responsible gold use and publishes data on global gold markets and central-bank reserves.

Important Reports: Central Bank Gold Reserves Survey (CBGR), Gold Demand Trends, Gold Outlook.

3. India's Foreign Exchange (Forex) Reserves

Forex reserves are external assets held by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to maintain currency stability and meet external payment obligations.

Components

* **Foreign Currency Assets (FCA):** Holdings of foreign currencies and foreign government securities.

* **Gold Reserves:** Gold held by RBI as a reserve asset.

* **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs):** International reserve asset created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

* **Reserve Tranche Position (RTP):** India's readily withdrawable reserve with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Composition: Foreign Currency Assets ($\approx 85\%$) > Gold Reserves ($\approx 12\%$) > Special Drawing Rights ($\approx 2-3\%$) > Reserve Tranche Position ($\approx 1\%$)

4. Why are Central Banks Buying Gold?

* Diversification away from the US Dollar.

* Hedge against inflation and currency volatility.

* Protection against geopolitical and sanctions risks.

* Safe-haven asset during global uncertainty.

Five solutions Indian cities need, to stop fighting for water week after week

Water-secure cities require a combination of clear and transparent emergency planning, systematic reduction of water losses through leak repairs, collective efforts to curb demand, strong safeguards to ensure water quality during shortages, and better management and reuse of wastewater

Manish Dubey
K.V. Santhosh Ragavan

Urban India's water emergency is no longer a future risk. It has become the normal of our summers. From high-rises anxiously tracking tanker schedules to informal settlements queuing at a single standpost, every year brings the same mix of dry taps, frayed tempers, and quiet resignation.

This summer, residents in parts of New Delhi have already faced days without piped water supply and large families have had to make do with just one 20-litre water can for a day. The Delhi Jal Board has reportedly planned to deploy more than 1,000 tankers to manage the crisis. Similar scenes have played out in other major cities, including Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad, over the last few summers.

Unfortunately, India still treats this as a seasonal inconvenience to endure until the clouds arrive.

Most cities source their water from reservoirs, groundwater or a combination of both. The annual summer water shortage however is the result of choices made over years. Cities have grown faster than their systems. Lakes and tanks have been built over. People are consuming groundwater faster than it can be replenished.

Cities often focus on finding new water sources instead of fixing and maintaining existing networks. Choices around

development planning and control, enforcement of groundwater regulations, water use and wastewater management, made by all – from every individual to service providers to policymakers – shape the experience each summer.

Many cities have moved from nearby rivers and lakes to distant sources and rapidly depleting groundwater, sinking more borewells and laying longer pipelines. What looks like a sudden shortage is often the result of this slow erosion of local buffers. At the same time, lakes, tanks, ponds and stormwater channels that once softened both floods and droughts have been encroached upon or converted, so a few hours of intense rain can flood streets and, a few weeks later, the same city is again queuing for tankers.

Beyond short-term coping

For many residents, especially in poorer settlements and smaller towns, the crisis is also about quality. Intermittent supply, leaky pipes, and unsafe storage mean that even when water arrives, it may not be safe to drink. The familiar scenes of tankers, angry protests, and frantic borewell drilling are therefore not one-offs. They are symptoms of a chronic condition that shows up in illness, lost workdays and mounting bills.

If we accept this, we will also realise that coping from week to week is no longer enough.

First, every city needs an honest and public emergency water plan. Residents

should not have to rely on rumours to know what is happening. A basic plan would identify the most vulnerable wards and critical facilities, set simple rules for how water will be prioritised when supplies are tight such as duration and frequency of supply to enable better tail end distribution, and commit to regular public updates on storage levels and expected supply. Where such information is shared clearly, it manages expectations and reduces grievances; this is less about technology than about treating information as part of the service.

Second, a concerted effort must be made to recover water that is already in the system but never reaches the taps. Instead of announcing distant, expensive new sources, cities can launch a time-bound 'leak hunt' in the worst-affected zones: walk key stretches of the network, fix visible leaks quickly, use simple tools to detect hidden ones, and set a short-term target for cutting losses. In systems where a large share – nearly 30% – of water is lost before it reaches users, even modest reductions in a few high-loss areas is equivalent to creating a new local source without building a new pipeline.

Third, government buildings, big campuses and commercial complexes are among the steadiest consumers of water. And a quick internal audit, basic leak repairs, and simple efficiency measures over the next month can free up meaningful volumes and set an example. Neighbourhoods and resident groups can

agree on clear norms for peak months, limiting non-essential uses, tracking weekly consumption and asking tanker suppliers where they draw their water from – while local leaders in low-income areas help authorities see how supply actually reaches their lanes.

Fourth, any emergency response must include water quality: rapid testing in high-risk neighbourhoods and tanker water supply, temporary support for basic treatment where problems are found, and simple communication about safe storage.

Finally, water security cannot be achieved without improving how we manage used-water. Measures to reduce leaks in water pipelines should also be used on sewer networks to identify and stop major sewage exfiltration and prevent contamination.

Not a single solution

Quick, low-cost upgrades to used-water treatment plants such as, optimising aeration, de-weeding, and desludging, can further reduce pollution and help augment available surface- and ground-water resources.

No single measure will pull Indian cities out of their water emergency. Together, however, they can directly address the summer's pain points: unpredictability, waste, inequity, and illness.

Manish Dubey is Dean & Rahul Bajaj Chair, School of Governance, Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS). K.V. Santhosh Ragavan is Adjunct Faculty, IIHS.

5. आज विश्व ताजे जल के संसाधनों की उपलब्धता और पहुँच के संकट से क्यों जूझ रहा है?

(उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए)

Why is the world today confronted with a crisis of availability of and access to freshwater resources?

(Answer in 150 words) 10

What is water stress? How and why does it differ regionally in India? (15 M)

1. **Context:** The article argues that recurring water crises in Indian cities stem not merely from rainfall deficits but from poor water governance, groundwater depletion, leakages, shrinking urban water bodies and inadequate wastewater reuse.

2. Mains Value Addition: Water Stress in India

Water Stress (Falkenmark Indicator): A region is considered water-stressed when annual per capita freshwater availability falls below 1,700 m³; below 1,000 m³ indicates water scarcity and below 500 m³ indicates absolute water scarcity.

Key Facts

* **NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index (CWMI):** Nearly 600 million Indians face high-to-extreme water stress; water demand may become twice the available supply by 2030.

* **United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR):** Uses the Falkenmark framework for assessing water stress and scarcity.

* **Central Water Commission (CWC):** India's per capita water availability declined from 5,177 m³ (1951) to about 1,486 m³ (2021), placing India in the water-stressed category.

Drivers of Water Stress

Uneven monsoon distribution | Groundwater over-extraction | Rapid urbanisation & rising demand | Encroachment of lakes, wetlands & drainage channels | Pollution reducing usable freshwater

3. Five Solutions Suggested

(i) **Urban Water Security Planning:** Prepare city-specific water budgets, drought contingency plans, reservoir monitoring systems and transparent water-allocation frameworks.

(ii) **Improve Water-Use Efficiency:** Reduce Non-Revenue Water (NRW) through leak detection, smart metering, pipeline modernisation and efficient distribution networks.

(iii) **Demand-Side Water Management:** Promote water audits, rational pricing, greywater reuse and behavioural change to curb excessive urban consumption.

(iv) **Restore & Protect Urban Water Ecosystems:** Rejuvenate lakes, wetlands, storm-water drains and groundwater recharge zones to strengthen local water resilience.

(v) **Circular Water Economy:** Expand wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse for industrial, construction and landscaping purposes, reducing dependence on freshwater sources.

The long-term implications of the U.S.-Iran deal

The world is holding its breath with respect to the June 14 adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Iran and the United States for a cessation of hostilities and a 60-day period of negotiation to iron out their thorny differences. The scepticism stems from at least two scores of premature claims by U.S. President Donald Trump. Moreover, this is only the beginning of a meandering journey pebbled with numerous obstacles. Vicious bloodletting in two wars during the past year has exacerbated instinctual mutual distrust. Hence, even this vaguely worded framework is no mean feat.

Can the world now hope for a durable resolution to this multifaceted crisis, or does the MoU merely kick the can down the road? Some contextual developments create a space for cautious optimism. The respective announcements by both Tehran and Washington are factual and measured, eschewing trenchant triumphalism and demonisation. They have emphasised the complexity of negotiations; both realise that their asymmetric wars were militarily unwinnable, and a sustainable solution would require political negotiations with the recalcitrant enemy. The twin Hormuz blockades morphed into economic attrition, and Iran's threat of expanding the next war beyond the region, with the Houthis choking the Bab el-Mandeb strait again, was foreboding. Both sides were also facing growing domestic discontent, with their respective erratic conduct alienating supporters and neighbours. In front of the international community, both nations have lost their moral high ground, each appearing as irresponsible and vindictive.

A long road

The scope and complexity of the current issues are daunting. These include the question of U.S. sanctions, a release of over \$100 billion of frozen Iranian assets, regional issues such as the crisis in Lebanon and the problem of U.S. military bases, and the demand for reparations. However, Iran's nuclear enrichment and its assertion of sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz are deal breakers. Since President Trump tore down the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)



Mahesh Sachdev

A former Indian Ambassador with an interest in West Asia and oil matters

Irrespective of largely unaltered borders and an endgame that has barely commenced, the past three years of hostilities have triggered seismic geopolitical changes in West Asia and beyond

In 2018, he now insists on a "better" deal, requiring Iran to export enriched uranium. However, Iranian hardliners are steadfastly opposed to this diktat. Moreover, Iran's closure of the Hormuz chokepoint has caused the "biggest energy disruption in human history", creating havoc for the global economy. A resolution of these two contentious issues would require protracted negotiations and creativity, allowing both sides to claim victories. A \$300 billion fund to reconstruct Iran with U.S. companies, a typically bizarre Trumpian transactional diplomacy, is also reportedly on the table. Here, one must also mention the various other influences in the negotiation chamber – Israel and the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) significantly influence the thinking at the White House, while China and Russia each have an inside track in Tehran. Pakistan, the official mediator, also has its own multiple axes to grind.

Discernible undercurrents

Irrespective of largely unaltered borders and an endgame that has barely commenced, the past three years of hostilities have triggered seismic geopolitical changes in West Asia and beyond, irrevocably unbinding its longstanding strategic paradigms. While the situation is still evolving, some basic medium-to-long-term undercurrents are discernible.



Debris and destruction: People and rescue forces search through the rubble following a strike on a school in Minab, Iran, on February 28. REUTERS

First, the two Iran wars have dramatically overturned numerous basic global assumptions. It has shown the limits of American hyperpower with its penchant for military solutions, high tech battlefield dominance, air superiority doctrine, social media-provoked mass uprising etc. Iran was able to counter this with incipient strategies; careful planning for asymmetric warfare; smart and cost-effective tactics; a resilient and coherent command structure; leveraging of geostrategic assets; resolute supply chains and defence production among others. American MAGA (Make America Great Again) hotbeds and Chinese wolf-warriors may need to pull in their claws, hopefully, making the world a safer place.

Moreover, the failure of ad-hoc coercive diplomacy may bring back multilateralism. Nations are now going to fret more about choke points, preventive diplomacy, robust supply lines, and adequate strategic reserves for essential inputs. Physical security and the succession of command of the political leadership would be prioritised and ruggedised.

Second, the hobbled return to regional peace may be catastrophic for global hydrocarbon supplies as depleting strategic reserves compete with demand destruction. In the long-term, high prices and volatility

would destroy demand and hasten us towards the 'peak oil' scenario (a hypothetical point where global crude oil demand reaches its maximum rate and begins to decline). The disruptions have underscored the indispensability of higher strategic oil reserves and clean energy.

Third, there are two regional shifts which are currently underway. While U.S.-Israel relations remain strategic, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's mesmerisation of Mr. Trump has waned. The GCC states were traumatised by the U.S.-Israel coalition's "wars of choice". Apart from the collateral damage from Iranian attacks on their vital infrastructure, their exports via Hormuz also suffered. To add insult to injury, Washington neither consulted the GCC nor adequately protected them from Iranian retaliation.

Moreover, the Pentagon's failure to anticipate the Iranian regime's staying power, Hormuz closure, or a plausible exit strategy has raised doubts about its war planning. This unsavory experience has seriously undermined America's credibility as a security provider for the GCC. They are likely to reassess their geostrategic alignments as they contend with a weakened but defiant Iran. Their sub-optimal past experiences with external defence tie-ups may leave them with a Hobson's choice to shore up their defences, either individually or collectively. Given the GCC disunity, especially the Saudi-Emirati rivalry, burying their hatchets may not be easy, forcing them to accommodate and appease Iran individually. Alternatively, the Iranian grip on the Arab world's Shia militias, particularly in Iraq, may loosen, allowing a reassertion of their Arab and tribal identities.

A more defiant Iran

Fourth, while the Iranian state has defied existential threats, it has now convulsed and radicalised. Regionally friendless, the theocratic regime is in suspended atheism amidst escalating foreign pressure and a brewing domestic blowback. Left to themselves, the Iranian leadership would insist on a strategic deterrence based on both nuclear latency and control of the Strait of Hormuz. But they

also realise that this maximalism may scupper the forthcoming negotiations. A small but significant minority of Iran's leadership now believes that the Iranian capacity to block the Strait of Hormuz is the new and more potent deterrent than nuclear ambiguity. Instead of ensuring the Islamic Republic's survival, Iran's nuclear fixation has attained the opposite: entrenching Israel-U.S. enmity against it. Its direct cumulative costs are estimated at \$100 billion, and if Western sanctions are factored in, costs will rise manifold. They argue that the nuclear strategy can be replaced by Iran's real or presumptive control over Hormuz, already proven to be an effective "weapon of mass disruption".

Tellingly, while Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei's statements have frequently asserted national sovereignty over Hormuz, he has not specifically referred to the indispensability of the nuclear programme. If this incipient shift in deterrence gets traction in Tehran, it could upend Iranian and regional geopolitics.

Tehran's control over Hormuz would be legally questionable and problematic for the global economy, especially for other littoral states. However, an innovative architecture can improve the optics, say, by creating a littoral inter-governmental Hormuz management framework, with Iran as *primus inter pares*.

And finally, in West Asia, those defeated on the battlefield often resort to terrorism to redeem their "lost honour". Israel's single-minded drive for a military solution against the "axis of resistance" and the simultaneous weakening of Iran create such "opportunities". The pro-Iranian militias, particularly in Iraq and Lebanon, may go deeper underground to wage their mini-wars against perceived enemies. The decline of Iran and its proxies may give a second wind to the region's Sunni non-state actors such as the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Kurds, IS-Khorasan, and Jaish al-Adl.

Even if only a few of these forebodings are realised, one could ask if the botched surgery to decapitate Iran has not plunged the entire world into intensive care.



20. In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to its situation? (15)

1. **Context:** The article analyses renewed U.S.–Iran engagement and its implications for West Asian geopolitics, regional security and global energy markets.

2. **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) & Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

- * Signed in 2015 between Iran, P5+1 (United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China + Germany) and the European Union.
- * Iran agreed to restrict uranium enrichment and accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections in return for sanctions relief.
- * The United States withdrew from the agreement in 2018.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

- * **Established:** 1981 | **Headquarters:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- * **Members:** Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
- * **Objective:** Economic, political and security cooperation among Gulf states.

3. **Long-Term Implications**

- Reassessment of Military Power:** Limits of conventional military superiority; greater emphasis on deterrence, resilience and asymmetric warfare.
- Global Energy Security Risks:** Tensions around the Strait of Hormuz may disrupt oil supplies and increase price volatility.
- Changing GCC Security Calculus:** Gulf states may diversify strategic partnerships beyond traditional security arrangements.
- Emergence of a More Assertive Iran:** Greater reliance on nuclear latency, deterrence and strategic leverage in regional diplomacy.
- Rise of Non-State Security Threats:** Regional instability may strengthen proxy militias and extremist organisations.

4. **Implications for India**

- Energy Security:** Higher crude prices can widen the Current Account Deficit (CAD) and increase imported inflation.
- Connectivity Interests:** Stability in Iran remains crucial for Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).
- Indian Diaspora & Remittances:** Instability may affect over 9 million Indians residing in Gulf countries.
- Trade & Maritime Security:** Disruptions in West Asian sea lanes can increase freight and insurance costs.
- Strategic Balancing:** India must balance relations with Iran, Israel, GCC countries and the United States while maintaining strategic autonomy.



Iconic Bridges: Pillars of New India's Infrastructure Transformation

Posted On: 16 JUN 2026 6:53PM by PIB Delhi

Over the past twelve years, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the dynamic guidance of Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has delivered a series of iconic bridge projects that have transformed connectivity across India's various regions. These engineering marvels are not merely physical structures — they are powerful symbols of the Government's abiding commitment to infrastructure-led development, national integration, economic progress and inclusive growth. By connecting previously inaccessible regions, reducing travel time and enhancing logistical efficiency, these bridges have played a vital role in strengthening regional development and improving mobility.

Bridges: Marvels of Modern India

India is blessed with many rivers which are an integral part of people's life, culture and economy. It is no surprise that India also built some of the most magnificent bridges that span the mighty rivers. Bridges shape everyday life in ways most of us barely notice. They shorten distances that once took days to cross, open access to remote communities and withstand nature at its fiercest.

Among the countless bridges that form a vast network throughout the country, several key bridges exemplify the scale and vision of the infrastructure development in the country. Each one carries its own unique design and the human resolve to overcome difficult terrain. From arch bridges to the extradosed and cable-stayed bridges, the country takes pride in having constructed super-structures that showcase exemplary architecture and engineering brilliance.

Bridge over Brahmaputra River, Guwahati

The 1.49 km long 'New' Saraighat Bridge over the mighty Brahmaputra River stands as a vital connector for the state of Assam, running parallel to the historic Old Saraighat Bridge. Its construction has significantly eased traffic congestion and ensured smoother movement for thousands of daily commuters. The bridge enhances travel between North and South Guwahati, while also strengthening movement along the East-West Corridor on NH-27.



Bridge over Chambal River, Kota

One of the iconic engineering marvels of India is the 6-lane single plane cable-stayed bridge across river Chambal in Kota, Rajasthan. With a length of 1.4 km, it is Rajasthan's first hanging bridge and was dedicated to the nation in August 2017.

The bridge is 30-metre-wide with 1.5-metre-wide footpaths on both sides. The stay cables are composed of individually sheathed strands having triple protection. The external cable ducts are capable of eliminating rain and wind-induced vibrations, enhancing strength and longevity of the structure.

One of the major highlights of the bridge is its environment and wildlife-friendly design. A stretch of nearly 300 metres of the six-lane bridge has been suspended with cables, avoiding any pier in the riverbed to protect the National Chambal Gharial Wildlife Sanctuary, which is home to the endangered gharial, the red-crowned roof turtle, and the Ganges River dolphin.



Bridge over Narmada River, Bharuch

The 1.34 km long Bridge is built over river Narmada on NH-8 in Bharuch, Gujarat. It is an extradosed bridge with one of the longest spans in the country, was open to traffic in March 2017 and was completed in a span of 34 months. The bridge is 20.8 metres wide with 3 metre footpath on either side of the structure. The bridge is part of Ahmedabad-Mumbai section of NH-8 in Baruch district of Gujarat and has provided impetus to speed, safety and economic development of the region.

Bridge over River Ganga, Bihar

The 1.8 km long six-lane bridge over the majestic river Ganga is located on the Aunta –Simaria section of NH-31 in the state of Bihar. The project features one of India's widest extradosed bridge designed with a single segmental structure having 34-metre-wide deck, over the river. With span lengths ranging from 57 meter to 115 metre and 70 metre cantilever arms, the structure exemplifies engineering excellence.

The bridge is constructed parallel to old Rajendra Setu, a two-lane rail-cum-road bridge built nearly seven decades ago. Age and extensive repairs rendered it inadequate for heavy vehicles, forcing them onto lengthy detours. The new six-lane extra-dosed bridge over river Ganga provides direct link between North & South Bihar and was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in August 2025.



Dhola–Sadiya Bridge

The 9.15 km long Dhola–Sadiya Bridge, also known as the Bhupen Hazarika Setu, is a vital link between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, providing the first permanent road connection between northern Assam and eastern Arunachal Pradesh. Built as a beam bridge, it sweeps over the Lohit River, one of the Brahmaputra's major tributaries, connecting Dhola in Tinsukia district to Sadiya in the North. The Bridge is built to withstand load of 60-tonne military tanks, including the Indian Army's Arjun and T-72 models. This capability adds significant strategic value to the structure.



In a particular region in India, the local people train the roots of living trees into robust bridges across the streams. As the time passes, these bridges become stronger. These unique 'living root bridges' are found in

- (a) Meghalaya
- (b) Himachal Pradesh
- (c) Jharkhand
- (d) Tamil Nadu



1. **Context:** Bridges are critical infrastructure assets that **improve connectivity, logistics efficiency, regional integration, border accessibility and economic growth, particularly in riverine and remote regions.**

2. **Important Bridges**

(i) **Dhola–Sadiya (Bhupen Hazarika Setu)** – Lohit River; connects Dhola–Sadiya (Assam); strategic access to Arunachal Pradesh.

(ii) **New Saraighat Bridge** – Brahmaputra River; connects North Guwahati–South Guwahati (Assam); strengthens NH-27.

(iii) **Aunta–Simaria Bridge** – Ganga River; connects Mokama–Begusarai (Bihar); links North and South Bihar.

(iv) **Narmada Extradosed Bridge** – Narmada River, Bharuch (Gujarat); key link on the Ahmedabad–Mumbai Corridor.

(v) **Chambal Cable-Stayed Bridge** – Chambal River, Kota (Rajasthan); eco-sensitive design near the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary.

Centre puts an end to over-the-counter sales of cough syrups

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Medicinal syrups, including those used to treat coughs, can no longer be bought without a doctor's prescription, according to a government notification issued on Tuesday.

The notification means that over-the-counter sales of such syrups will no longer be allowed. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare notified the change to the Drugs Rules, 1945, which laid out the regulations pertaining to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. It stated that the word 'syrups' should be removed from the list of items that had been exempted from the provisions of the Act.

The rules had earlier specified that "syrups, lozenges, pills and tablets

for cough" would be exempted, meaning that cough lozenges, pills, and tablets will still be available over the counter.

Safety concerns

The amendment follows a December 2025 draft notification to which the Centre invited objections and suggestions from stakeholders and the public. The government said all comments received on the draft rules were considered before issuing the final notification.

The move comes after many deaths were linked to adulterated cough syrups, including 24 children in M.P. in September. Cough syrups exported from India have been linked to over 140 children's death in Africa and Central Asia since 2022.

1. **Context:** The Union Government has amended the Drugs Rules, 1945 to prohibit over-the-counter (OTC) sale of medicinal cough syrups; these will now require a doctor's prescription.

2. Legal Framework

- * **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drugs:** Medicines that can be purchased without a doctor's prescription.
- * **Drugs Rules, 1945:** Rules governing manufacture, storage, sale and distribution of medicines; amended to remove medicinal cough syrups from the OTC category.
- * **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940:** Parent legislation regulating the import, manufacture, distribution and sale of drugs and cosmetics in India.
- * **Ministry :** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).