CURRENT AFFAIRS — 21 September 2026

Monday, 21 September 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Prelims + Mains GS-wise digest

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UPSC CSE

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

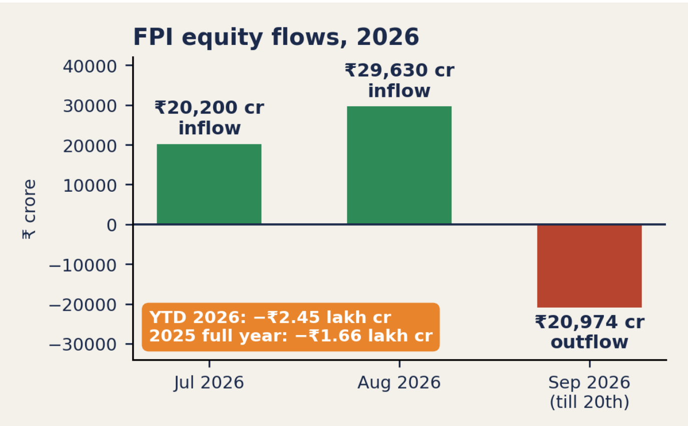
- FPIs sold **₹20,974 cr** of equities in Sept; 2026 YTD outflow **₹2.45 lakh cr** (2025: **₹1.66 lakh cr**).
- CPI inflation rose to **4.82%** in Aug (July **4.45%**); food inflation **5.95%**.
- US **Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, 2026** signed on **18 Sept**; tariffs up to **100%** on top-5 buyers of Russian energy.
- Russia still India's **No.1 crude supplier** in Aug at ~**2.1 mbpd** (>**40%** share).
- SC (**Narasimha–Aradhe** bench): a court deposit is **not payment**; Law Commission to examine a uniform deposit law.
- SIR Phase-3 (12 States + 2 UTs): about **17%** names dropped from draft rolls; **~15%** more served notices.
- Tata Trusts (~**66%** of Tata Sons) call **N. Chandrasekaran**'s reappointment **void** under **Article 121** of AoA.
- Nepal FM **Swarnim Wagle** in Delhi (17-19 Sept) seeks help after **26 Aug Bhote Koshi floods**.
- 5 baby **orangutans** (CITES **Appendix I**) found in **Balasore**, Odisha; shifted to **Nandankanan**.
- **Anant Nag** gets **Dadasaheb Phalke Award** at 72nd National Film Awards, **Ekta Nagar** (22 Sept).

SECTION A — GS-III: SCIENCE & TECH • ECONOMY • ENVIRONMENT

1. FPIs pull ₹20,974 crore from equities in September; 2026 outflow crosses ₹2.45 lakh crore

[ECONOMY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Indian economy, mobilisation of resources, external sector. Prelims: **FPI vs FDI**, **FAR/VRR** routes, rupee depreciation.
Context	After net inflows in **July** and **August**, foreign portfolio investors turned **net sellers** in September (data up to **20 Sept**), reversing the brief recovery.
Key Facts	■ Sept outflow **₹20,974 cr**; July inflow **₹20,200 cr**, Aug inflow **₹29,630 cr**. ■ 2026 YTD equity outflow **₹2.45 lakh cr** – already above full-year **2025 (₹1.66 lakh cr)**. ■ Debt also hit: **FAR ₹10,296 cr**, **VRR ₹1,817 cr**, general route **₹1,068 cr** withdrawn. ■ Drivers: higher **US rates/bond yields**, **Brent above $100/bbl** (Hormuz tension), rupee at **record lows**.
Way Fwd	Deepen **domestic institutional (DII/SIP) flows**, keep **macro-stability** (fiscal discipline, forex buffers) and push FDI over volatile 'hot money'.
Concept	**FPI** = investment below **10%** of a listed company's equity (regulated by **SEBI**); **≥10%** is treated as **FDI**. **VRR** lets FPIs invest in debt if they retain a set share for a minimum period; **FAR** allows unlimited foreign holding in specified G-Secs.



2. Rare-earth magnets: India's gap lies in the midstream, not in reserves

[SCI-TECH] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

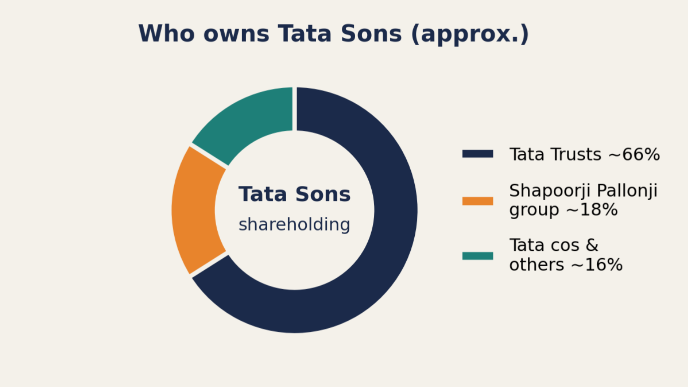
Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Industrial policy, science & technology, critical minerals. Prelims: **NdFeB magnets**, **monazite**, **National Critical Mineral Mission**.
Context	Official industry data put India's magnet market at only about **₹750 crore**, yet **imports are several times larger** – showing the statistical system cannot track where magnets enter the economy, as China's **April 2025 export curbs** keep supplies tight.
Key Facts	■ **Neodymium-Iron-Boron (NdFeB)** magnets power **EV motors, wind turbines, drones, electronics**. ■ India has reserves in coastal **monazite sands** (Kerala, TN, Odisha, AP) – the weak link is **separation, metallisation, alloying**. ■ China dominates the **midstream processing** stage where global concentration is highest. ■ Proposal: an **Integrated Techno-Economic Mapping (ITEM)** framework linking engineering and economic data across the chain.
Way Fwd	Map the full **value chain**, fund **midstream plants**, secure offtake via PLI-type support and tie up with partners under **Mineral Security Partnership**/Quad.
Concept	**Rare Earth Elements** = **17** elements (**15 lanthanides + scandium + yttrium**). **National Critical Mineral Mission** launched in **2025**; in **Nov 2025** the Cabinet approved a **₹7,280 crore** scheme for **6,000 tonnes/yr** of sintered rare-earth permanent magnets. **IREL** handles monazite processing.

3. Tata Trusts call Chandrasekaran's reappointment 'void' – a corporate governance test

[ECONOMY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Corporate governance, investment models. Prelims: **Articles of Association**, **casting vote**, **Core Investment Company (CIC)**.
Context	The Tata Sons board on **17 Sept** gave **N. Chandrasekaran** another **5-year term**; on **20 Sept** Tata Trusts said the resolution is **void ab initio** because their two nominee directors were split.
Key Facts	■ Trusts own about **66%** of Tata Sons; **Article 104B** lets them nominate **one-third** of directors while holding **≥40%**. ■ **Article 121**: key decisions need **affirmative vote of a majority** of Trust nominees. ■ Nominees split **1-1**: **Noel Tata** against, **Venu Srinivasan** for; Trusts say a chairman's **casting vote** cannot fill this gap. ■ Linked row over a **Tata Sons listing**, which **RBI**'s upper-layer NBFC rules for large **CICs** make mandatory.
Way Fwd	Resolve through the board/**NCLT** within the **Companies Act, 2013** framework; clearer **AoA** drafting and independent directors reduce promoter–trust deadlocks.

Concept	**Articles of Association** = company's internal rulebook (Sec **5**, Companies Act 2013). **Casting vote** = chair's extra vote only when votes are **equal**. RBI's **Scale-Based Regulation** puts large CICs in the **upper layer**, which must **list within 3 years**.



4. Five baby orangutans found in Odisha expose urban wildlife-trafficking networks

[ENVIRONMENT] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Conservation, internal security (organised crime). Prelims: **CITES Appendices**, **WCCB**, orangutan habitat (**Borneo, Sumatra**).
Context	Five orangutans aged **1-2 years** were found on **8 Sept** in a casuarina forest in **Bhograi block, Balasore**, about **2,000 km** from their native range; they are under quarantine at **Nandankanan Zoological Park**.
Key Facts	▪ Probe by **Odisha Forest Dept** and **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)** into illegal import. ▪ All **3 orangutan species** are **Critically Endangered** (IUCN) and in **CITES Appendix I**. ▪ Black-market price up to **₹20 lakh** per animal; **2 baby orangutans** were seized on the **Assam-Mizoram border in 2022**. ▪ Studies show **urban demand hubs**, not only source forests, reshape trafficking routes; India's key route is the **India-Myanmar border**.
Way Fwd	Enforce the **Living Animal Species (Reporting & Registration) Rules** for exotic pets, strengthen **border/port screening** and intelligence sharing via **SAWEN**/Interpol.
Concept	**CITES** (1973; India party since **1976**): **Appendix I** = trade banned except in exceptional cases; **II** = regulated trade; **III** = listed at a country's request. **Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022** added **Schedule IV** for CITES species. **WCCB** set up in **2007**.

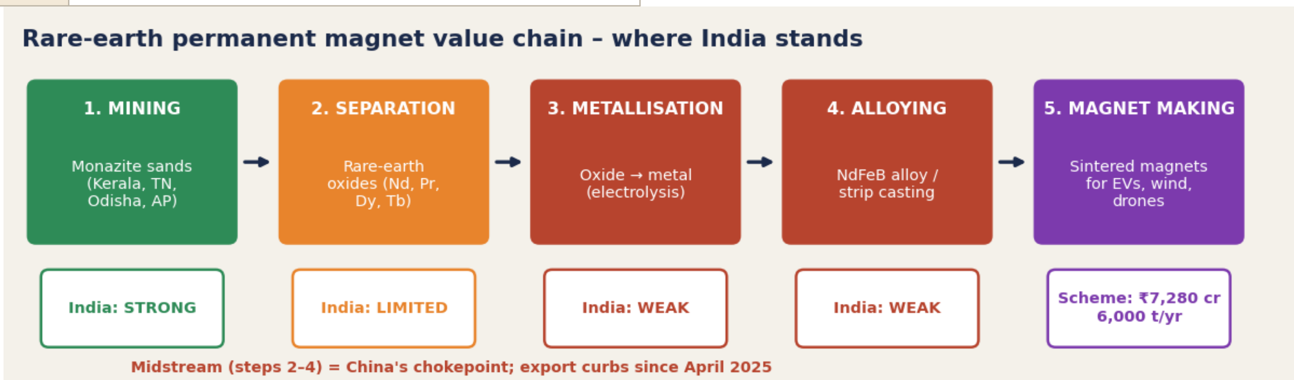


Fig. Item 2 – rare-earth magnet value chain

SECTION B KEY ECONOMY DATA POINT OF THE DAY

4.82%

CPI (retail) inflation, August 2026

Up from **4.45%** in July; food inflation **5.95%** (rural **6.13%**, urban **5.64%**). Above RBI's **4%** target but inside the **2-6%** band; repo rate at **5.25%** means the **real policy rate** is near **zero**.

SECTION C GS-II: POLITY • GOVERNANCE • IR • HEALTH • SOCIETY

5. US Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act signed – up to 100% tariffs threaten India's oil diplomacy

[IR] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2 & GS3**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Effect of policies of developed countries on India's interests; **GS3** – Energy security. Prelims: **secondary sanctions**, **CAATSA**, Strait of **Hormuz**.
Context	The US President signed the **Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 (H.R. 5334)** on **18 Sept**. Being a **law of Congress**, it is more durable than the earlier **50%** tariffs imposed by executive order.
Key Facts	▪ Allows duties of **up to 100%** on goods from the **top-5 buyers** of Russian crude or gas; to be applied within **30 days**. ▪ Russia supplied ~**2.1 mbpd** to India in **Aug 2026** (down from **2.6 mbpd** in June-July) – still **>40%** of imports. ▪ US takes about **20%** of India's goods exports; **MSME exporters** most exposed. ▪ India's stance: will keep importing from **commercially viable sources**.
Way Fwd	Diversify crude basket (**UAE, Saudi, Venezuela, Africa**), build **SPR** capacity, negotiate carve-outs in the **India-US trade deal** and cushion MSMEs.
Concept	**Secondary sanctions** penalise **third countries** dealing with a sanctioned state. **Strategic autonomy** = India's policy of issue-based alignment. India's **Strategic Petroleum Reserves** (ISPRL): **Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, Padur** – **5.33 MMT**.

6. SC: a court deposit is not payment – asks Law Commission to frame a uniform deposit law

[POLITY] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Judiciary, judicial reforms, arbitration. Prelims: **Order XXI Rule 1 CPC**, **Law Commission** (non-statutory), **Sec 36 Arbitration Act**.

Context	In **National Seeds Corporation v. National Agro Seed Corporation** (**18 Sept**), a bench of **Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe** held that depositing an arbitral award amount in court does not stop interest unless the award-holder can **withdraw it unconditionally**.
Key Facts	■ Interest liability ceases only on payment per **Order XXI Rule 1, CPC**. ■ Found wide **inconsistency** across courts in deposit %, banks, instruments and **interest accounting**. ■ Recommended a **statutory framework**; copy sent to **Law Commission, RBI Governor**, **Finance & Law Secretaries**. ■ Model cited: US **Court Registry Investment System** – a **pooled, unified** investment platform.
Way Fwd	A single **court-deposit law** with a pooled, transparent investment window would protect the **time value of money** and cut satellite litigation on interest.
Concept	**Law Commission** = executive body set up by govt order for **3-year** terms (1st post-independence in **1955**, chair **M.C. Setalvad**). **Sec 36(2)-(3), Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1996**: stay of award may be conditional on **deposit**.

Fig. Item 5 – US sanctions law and India's options

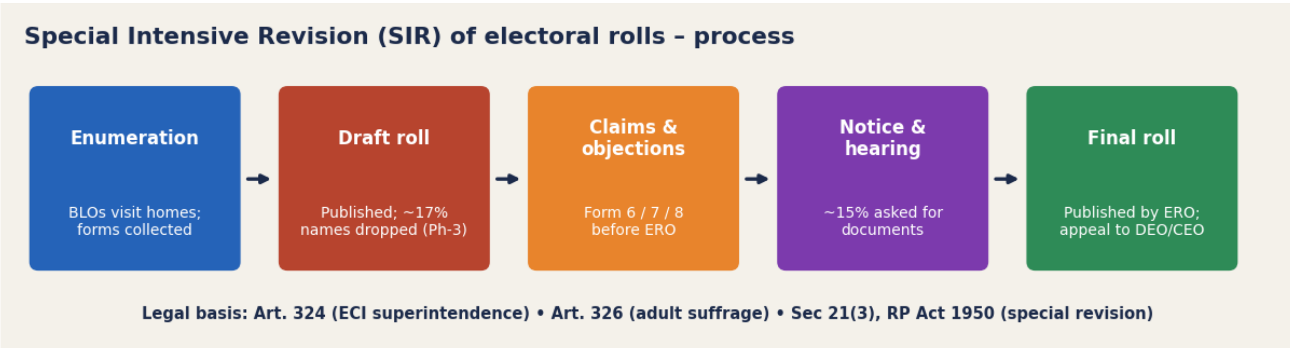


Fig. Item 7 – SIR process

7. SIR Phase-3: about 17% names dropped from draft rolls in 12 States and 2 UTs

[POLITY] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Elections, ECI, Representation of People Acts. Prelims: **Article 324, 326**, **Sec 21 RP Act 1950**, **BLO**.
Context	Draft rolls after the third phase of the **Special Intensive Revision** show deletions of about **17%**, with another **~15%** of electors served notices for documents; the Opposition alleges exclusion, the **ECI** says it is cleaning rolls **for the first time in 22 years**.
Key Facts	■ Phase-3 covers **12 States + 2 UTs**; earlier two phases removed about **13%** of names. ■ Highest combined rates flagged in **Delhi (53.73%)**, **Chandigarh (52.58%)**, **Telangana (48.90%)**, **Jharkhand (39.57%)**. ■ Reasons cited by ECI: **deaths, shifted, duplicate, untraceable** electors. ■ Excluded persons can file **Form 6** / claims before the **ERO** during the claims-and-objections window.
Way Fwd	Ensure **due process** – door-to-door verification, accessible documents list, and a **presumption of inclusion** for long-time electors to protect **universal adult franchise**.
Concept	**Art 324** – ECI's superintendence of rolls; **Art 326** – adult suffrage (**18 yrs**, 61st Amendment **1988**). **Sec 21(3), RP Act 1950** empowers ECI to order a **special revision** of rolls. Roll is prepared by the **ERO**.

8. Nepal's Finance Minister in Delhi seeks help for post-flood reconstruction

[IR] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2**

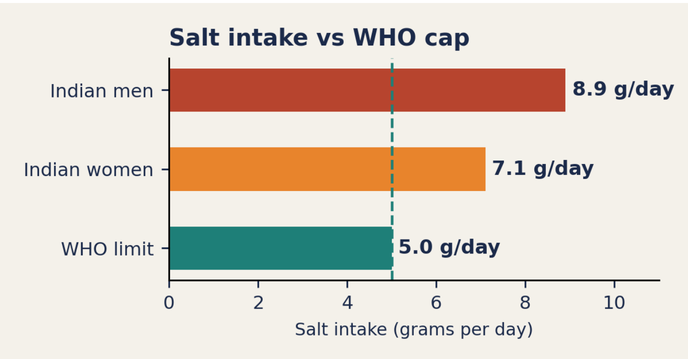
Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – India and its neighbourhood. Prelims: **Bhote Koshi / Sun Koshi**, **1950 Treaty**, **Neighbourhood First**.
Context	**Swarnim Wagle** made Nepal's first high-level visit (**17-19 Sept**) after the **26 August Bhote Koshi floods**, meeting **Nirmala Sitharaman** and **S. Jaishankar** on reconstruction and economic cooperation.
Key Facts	■ Floods killed **1,388** people; property loss ~**$4.75 bn** across three districts. ■ Reconstruction estimated at **$4.7-5 bn** over **3-5 years**. ■ After the **2015 earthquake**, India gave a **$250 mn grant + $750 mn LoC**. ■ Pending: revision of the **2009 Trade Treaty**, **overflight/air-entry routes** for **Pokhara & Bhairahawa** airports.

Way Fwd	Offer **grant-heavy** aid, fast-track **hydropower and connectivity** projects and settle the air-route issue to build trust under **Neighbourhood First**.

9. Tamil Nadu launches a salt-reduction strategy to curb hypertension

[HEALTH] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Health, NCDs, public policy. Prelims: **WHO salt limit (below 5 g/day)**, **hypertension**, **low-sodium salt**.
Context	Tamil Nadu plans **urine-sample surveys**, gradual salt cuts in **public kitchens** and a **low-sodium salt study**, making salt reduction a frontline tool against **hypertension**.
Key Facts	▪ Average Indian intake: **8.9 g/day (men)**, **7.1 g/day (women)** vs WHO cap of **5 g**. ▪ TN adult hypertension: **33.9% (men)**, **28.5% (women)**. ▪ Excess sodium → **water retention** → higher blood volume → **raised arterial pressure** (the 'silent killer'). ▪ Four levers: **measurement, reformulation, awareness, screening** with doorstep drug delivery.
Way Fwd	Scale up nationally with **front-of-pack labelling**, sodium targets for **packaged foods** and linking with **NP-NCD** screening.
Concept	WHO global target: **30% relative cut** in mean salt intake by **2025** (world **off-track**). TN's **Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam** (2021) delivers NCD drugs at home. Hypertension = BP **≥140/90 mmHg**.



10. Community cadres: 30 lakh+ village workers powering last-mile delivery

[SOCIETY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Welfare schemes, SHGs, role of civil society. Prelims: **DAY-NRLM**, **Krishi Sakhi**, **ASHA**, **SVEP**.

Concept	**India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950** allows open border and national treatment. **Kosi Treaty (1954)**, **Gandak (1959)**, **Mahakali Treaty (1996)** govern shared rivers. Bhote Koshi flows into the **Sun Koshi**, a Kosi tributary.

Context	An official explainer (**20-21 Sept**) highlights over **30 lakh trained village-level workers** – from **Krishi Sakhis** to **ASHAs** – as the backbone of rural service delivery.
Key Facts	▪ **9 lakh+** Community Resource Persons; **92 lakh SHGs** under DAY-NRLM cover **10 crore+** households. ▪ **10.40 lakh ASHAs**; **Krishi Sakhi 1.91 lakh**, **Pashu Sakhi 1.70 lakh**, **BC Sakhi 1.48 lakh**. ▪ **₹13.41 lakh crore** bank credit to SHGs since **2013-14**; **4.32 lakh** enterprises under **SVEP**. ▪ Concern: paid by **honoraria/incentives**; **45th Indian Labour Conference (2013)** call for minimum wages largely unmet.
Way Fwd	Recognise cadres as **skilled workers** with fixed pay, social security under the **Labour Codes**, and curb **mission creep** from multiple departments.
Concept	Lineage: **Kudumbashree (Kerala, 1998)**, **SERP/Velugu (AP)** → **SGSY (1999)** → **NRLM (2011)** → **DAY-NRLM**. **ASHA** began with **NRHM (2005)**; **Anganwadi** with **ICDS (1975)**.

11. 72nd National Film Awards at Ekta Nagar; Anant Nag gets Dadasaheb Phalke Award

[SOCIETY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS1

Syllabus Linkage	**GS1** – Art & culture, Indian cinema. Prelims: **Swarna Kamal/Rajat Kamal**, **Phalke Award (1969)**, first recipient **Devika Rani**.
Context	The awards for films certified in **2024** will be presented on **22 Sept** at **Ekta Nagar, Gujarat** – the **first time** the ceremony moves out of Delhi.
Key Facts	▪ **Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2024**: **Anant Nag** – 300+ films in six languages; debut in **Ankur** (Hindi); known for **Malgudi Days**. ▪ Best Feature Film: **Article 370**; Best Actor shared by **Mammootty** and **Kartik Aaryan**. ▪ **Ravi Raj Murmu**'s **Angen** – first **Santhali** film honoured (Best Debut, Non-Feature). ▪ Prize money: **Swarna Kamal ₹3 lakh**, **Rajat Kamal ₹2 lakh**; presented by the **President**.
Way Fwd	Rotate venues across States, cut the **certification-to-award lag** and keep jury selection **transparent** to protect credibility.
Concept	National Film Awards instituted in **1954** (first for **1953** films) on the **Film Enquiry Committee (1949)**; run by **Ministry of I&B**. **Raja Harishchandra (1913)** – first Indian feature film by **Dadasaheb Phalke**.

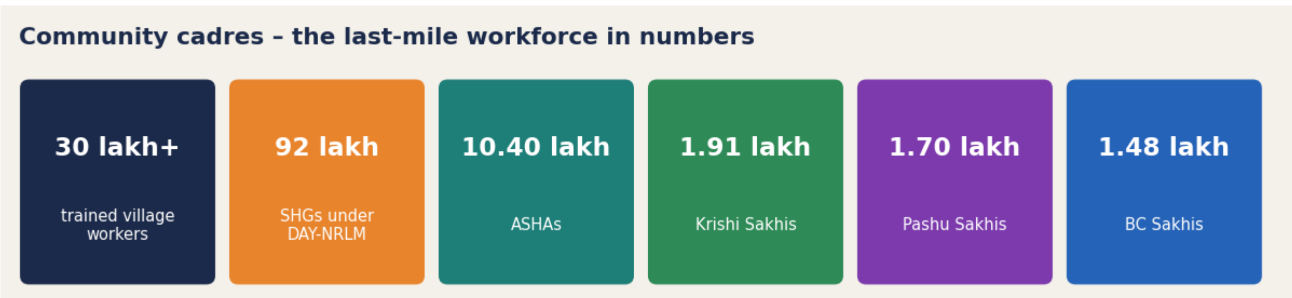


Fig. Item 10 – community cadres

SECTION D PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

Topic	Quick fact
Dadasaheb Phalke Award instituted	**1969**; first recipient **Devika Rani**
CITES Appendix I	Species threatened with extinction – **commercial trade banned**
FPI vs FDI threshold	**10%** of equity of a listed company
Rare-earth elements	**17** = 15 lanthanides + **Sc + Y**
Article 326	Elections on basis of **adult suffrage** (18 yrs)
WHO daily salt limit	Less than **5 g** (about 1 teaspoon)

SECTION E PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. With reference to foreign investment in India, consider the following statements:

1. An investment of less than 10% of the post-issue paid-up equity of a listed Indian company is treated as Foreign Portfolio Investment.
2. The Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) is meant for FPI investment in equity shares only.
3. Under the Fully Accessible Route (FAR), non-residents can invest in specified government securities without investment limits.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only **(b)** 2 and 3 only **(c)** 1 and 3 only **(d)** 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c) — Statement 1 is correct – **below 10%** is FPI. Statement 2 is wrong – **VRR** is for **debt** investment. Statement 3 is correct – **FAR** (2020) removes limits on specified **G-Secs**.

Q2. Consider the following pairs:

1. Orangutan – Native to Borneo and Sumatra
2. CITES Appendix I – Trade permitted without any permits
3. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau – Statutory body under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

(a) Only one **(b)** Only two **(c)** All three **(d)** None

Answer: (b) — Pair 1 is correct. Pair 2 is wrong – **Appendix I** bans **commercial trade** and needs **both export and import permits** for exceptional trade. Pair 3 is correct – **WCCB** was set up in **2007** under the **WPA, 1972**.

MAINS PRACTICE (GS2/GS3)

Unilateral secondary sanctions by major powers are testing India's 'strategic autonomy' in energy security. Critically examine India's options in the light of the US Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, 2026. (15 marks, 250 words)

Hint: Intro: law signed **18 Sept**, tariffs up to **100%**. Body: dependence on Russian crude (**>40%**), US as **20%** export market, MSME risk; options – **diversify, negotiate, SPR, rupee trade**; WTO angle. Conclude: **multi-alignment** with calibrated hedging.

ONE-LINE REVISION ▸ ₹20,974 cr FPI exit | CPI **4.82%** | US sanctions law, tariffs up to **100%** | SC: deposit ≠ payment | SIR-3 **~17%** deletions | Tata **Art. 121** | Phalke: **Anant Nag**

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team | ▶ **YouTube: @Study_ForGS** | ➤ **Telegram: t.me/studyforgeneralstudies**