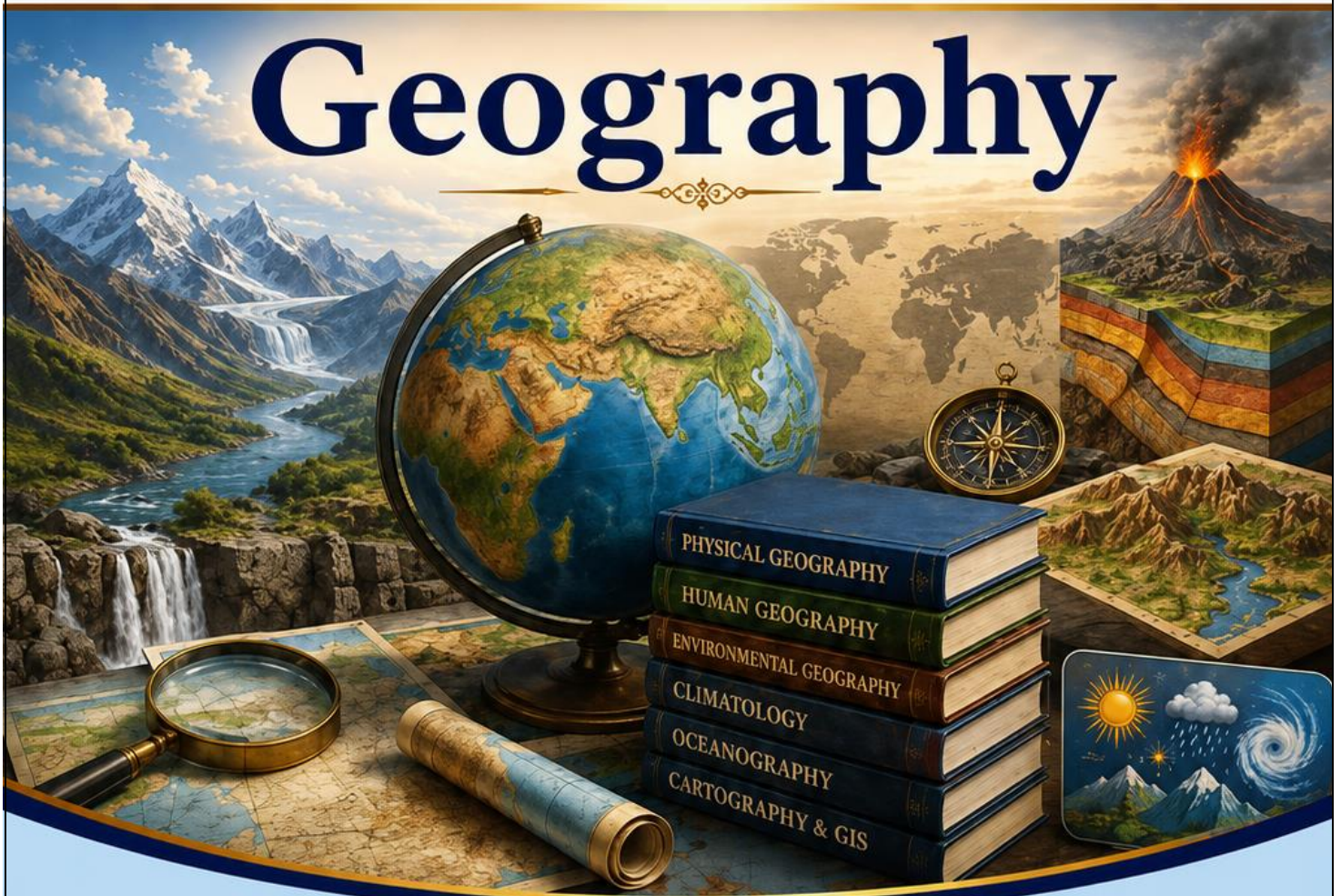




P.L. RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Civil Services Study Material

Geography



UPSC Prelims Current Affairs

(July 2026)

MONTHLY COMPILATION



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1. Super El Nino damages wind potential

Prelims:

Geography, Environment & Ecology

Mains:

GS Paper I–Geography, GS Paper III–Environment, Infrastructure, Disaster Management

Current relevance:

The **Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA)** has projected that the ongoing El Niño could strain India's power sector by **reducing electricity generation from wind and hydropower**.



Highlights:

1. According to **CREA**, India could face an **electricity generation gap** of about **18 TWh** (terawatt-hours) during the one-year period ending June 2027.

2. Impact of Super El Niño on Power Generation:

- i. [Super El Niño](#) is exceptionally high warming of sea surface temperatures in the **central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean**. It weakens the Indian southwest monsoon, leading to below-normal rainfall.
- ii. Reduced rainfall **lowers water availability** in reservoirs, decreasing hydropower generation. Changes in atmospheric circulation can also **weaken wind speeds**, reducing wind power generation. At the same time, hotter weather increases electricity demand, particularly for air conditioning.

3. India's Power Sector:

- i. As of March 2026, India's **installed non-fossil fuel power** capacity stood at **283.46 GW**, including solar, wind, hydropower, and nuclear energy. **Solar energy** currently supplies nearly **one-fourth** of daytime electricity demand, but **inadequate battery storage** and grid infrastructure limit its full utilization.
- ii. **CREA** recommends **expanding battery energy storage** systems and **upgrading the electricity grid** to better integrate renewable energy and reduce dependence on coal during periods of high demand.

Source: THE HINDU - <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/el-nino-to-dent-indias-wind-hydropower-output-study/article71189323.ece>

2. Rameshwar–Paradeep Coastal Highway

Prelims:

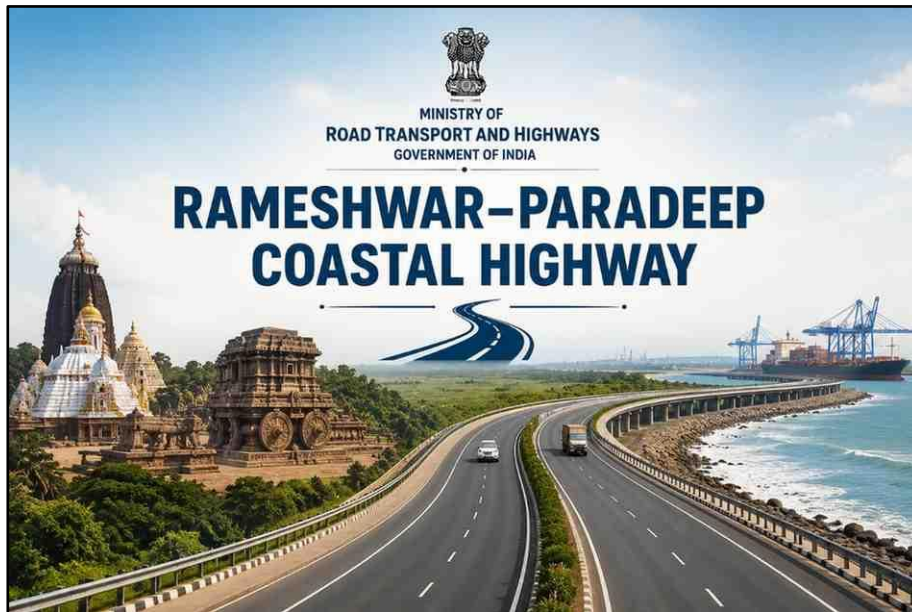
Geography, Environment & Ecology

Mains:

GS Paper II–Government Policies and Interventions, GS Paper III – Infrastructure

Current relevance:

The **Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH)** has approved the construction of the **Rameshwar–Paradeep Coastal Highway** in Odisha.



Highlights:

1. A **160.18 km coastal highway** being developed by the **Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH)**.
2. Enhances connectivity between **Jagannath Temple (Puri)**, **Konark Sun Temple** (UNESCO World Heritage Site), **Ramchandi Temple** and other major tourism destinations along Odisha's coast.
3. Will **reduce travel time** between Rameshwar and Paradeep by about 2.5 hours, improving passenger and freight movement.
4. Enhances connectivity to **Paradeep Port**, one of India's major ports, and links **9 economic nodes** and **5 logistics nodes**.
5. Expected to boost religious tourism, coastal tourism, local employment, logistics efficiency, and regional economic development, in line with the **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan**.

Source: PIB-

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2286292®=%203&lang=1#:~:text=Odisha's%20New%20Coastal%20Highway%3A%20A,Journeys%20and%20Coastal%20Tourism%20Revolution&text=Odisha's%20coastline%20is%20set%20to,across%20the%20state's%20coastal%20belt.>

3. Ken–Betwa River Linking Project

Prelims:

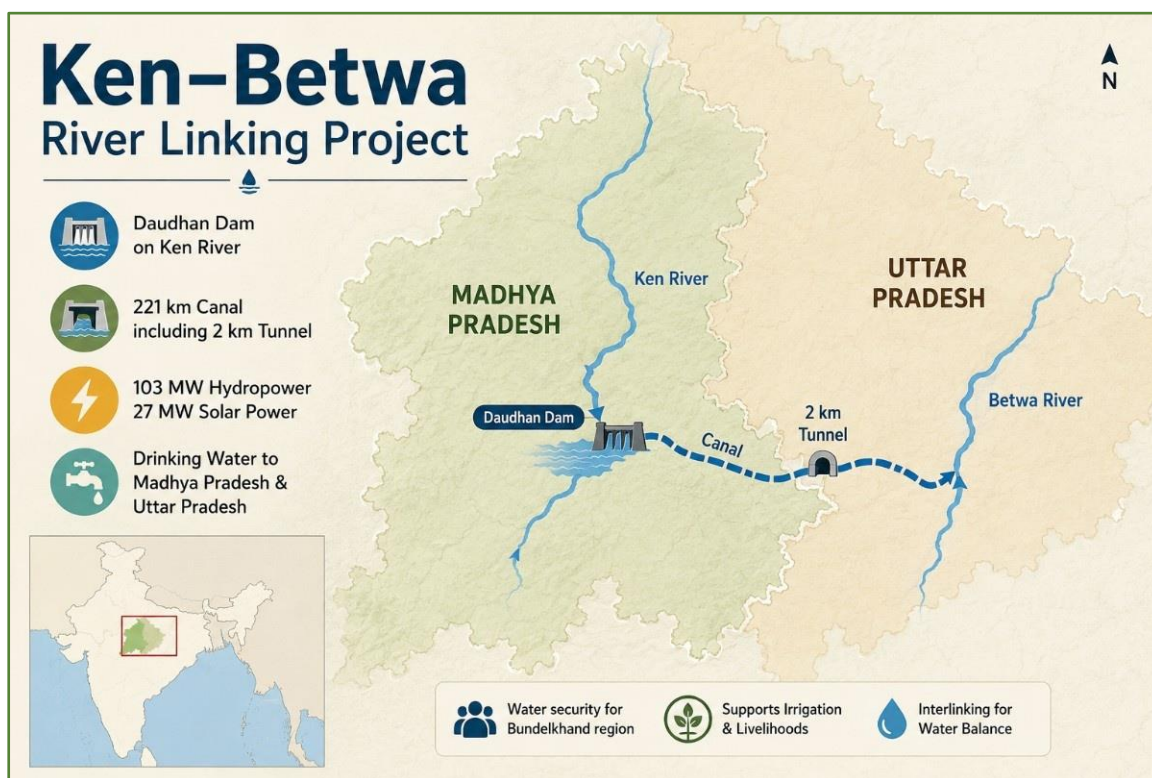
Indian Geography, Environment & Ecology, Polity

Mains:

GS Paper II–Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections, Centre–State Relations, GS Paper III– Infrastructure

Current relevance:

Protests were held in **Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh**, against the **Ken–Betwa River Linking Project** and two State irrigation projects.



Highlights:

About Ken–Betwa River Linking Project:

1. The Ken–Betwa River Linking Project is the **first of the 30 proposed river-linking projects** under the **National Perspective Plan (NPP)**.
2. The National Perspective Plan, formulated in **1980** by the then **Union Ministry of Irrigation** and the **Central Water Commission**.
3. **Aim:** To transfer water from rivers with a perceived surplus to rivers facing water deficits.
4. The NPP is divided into two components:
 - i. **Himalayan Rivers Development**
 - ii. **Peninsular Rivers Development**
5. Transfer the declared surplus water of the **Ken River** to the **Betwa River** through the construction of the **Daudhan Dam** and a **221-km canal**, including a **2-km tunnel**.
6. Generate **103 MW of hydropower** and **27 MW of solar power**.
7. It also aims to address water scarcity in the drought-prone **Bundelkhand region**.

Key Demands of the Tribal Communities:

1. Treat **each adult as an individual beneficiary**, rather than as part of a family, for the **₹12.5 lakh rehabilitation package**.
2. Provide rehabilitation and compensation for the **Majhgaon and Runjh irrigation projects** on par with the Ken–Betwa project.

Environmental concerns:

1. A significant portion of the project falls within the **Panna Tiger Reserve**.
2. The **Jal Shakti Ministry** reported that approximately 17,101 trees had been identified for felling for the **Daudhan Dam** and related infrastructure.
3. A total of 12,404 trees had been felled within the **Reserve Forest** as part of the project implementation.
4. The project has **raised concerns** over its possible impact on:
 - i. The tiger reintroduction programme in the **Panna Tiger Reserve**

- ii. Endangered vultures
- iii. Mahseer fish
- iv. Gharials in the **Ken Gharial Sanctuary**

Source: THE HINDU - <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/why-are-there-protests-over-the-ken-betwa-project/article71267449.ece>