

18/07/2026 Daily Current News

1. Investment Friendliness Index:

Context: NITI Aayog has released the report titled "Investment Friendliness Index (IFI)", which presents a structured and data-driven framework for assessing how effectively States and Union Territories create, enable, and sustain an environment conducive to investments.

About Investment Friendliness Index:

- ❖ The Investment Friendliness Index covers all 28 states and 8 Union Territories and evaluates investment attractiveness across the following eight pillars:

Pillars	Parameters
 Infrastructure 25%	Logistics Energy Digital infrastructure Industrial infrastructure
 Business climate 20%	Economic performance Innovation ecosystem Business facilitation
 Resources 15%	Natural resources Human resources
 Government policy 10%	Incentives Approvals
 Regulatory ease 12%	Compliance Legal
 Financial health 7%	Fiscal position
 Institutional environment 6%	Governance and rule of law
 Environment resilience 5%	Geophysical Weather-related

- ☐ Infrastructure
- ☐ Business climate
- ☐ Resources
- ☐ Government policy
- ☐ Regulatory Ease
- ☐ Institutional Environment
- ☐ Financial Health; and
- ☐ viii. Environmental Resilience

- ❖ Comprehensive Framework: The Index is based on 84 indicators, combining secondary data with investor perception-based survey data.
- ❖ Objective: It assesses the investment friendliness of States and Union Territories to promote a competitive and business-friendly environment.

Category	States/Union Territories
Top performers	Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu
Frontrunners	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh
Emerging performers	Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Puducherry, Punjab, West Bengal
Aspiring states	Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim

- ❖ Performance Categories: States/UTs are classified into four categories based on overall scores: Top Performers: Above 50, Frontrunners: 45–50, Emerging Performers: 40–45 and Aspiring States: Below 40
- ❖ Top Performers Overall: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa, and Odisha emerged as the Top Performers.
- ❖ Other Classifications: The Index identified 15 Frontrunners, 8 Emerging Performers, and 8 Aspiring States/UTs.
- ❖ Peer Group Assessment: To ensure fair comparison, States/UTs were evaluated under three peer groups: Large States, Hilly & North-Eastern States and Union Territories & City States

Group	No. of states	List of states
Large states	17	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal
Union territories and city states	7	Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Delhi, Goa, Lakshadweep and Puducherry
Hilly and northeastern states	12	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand

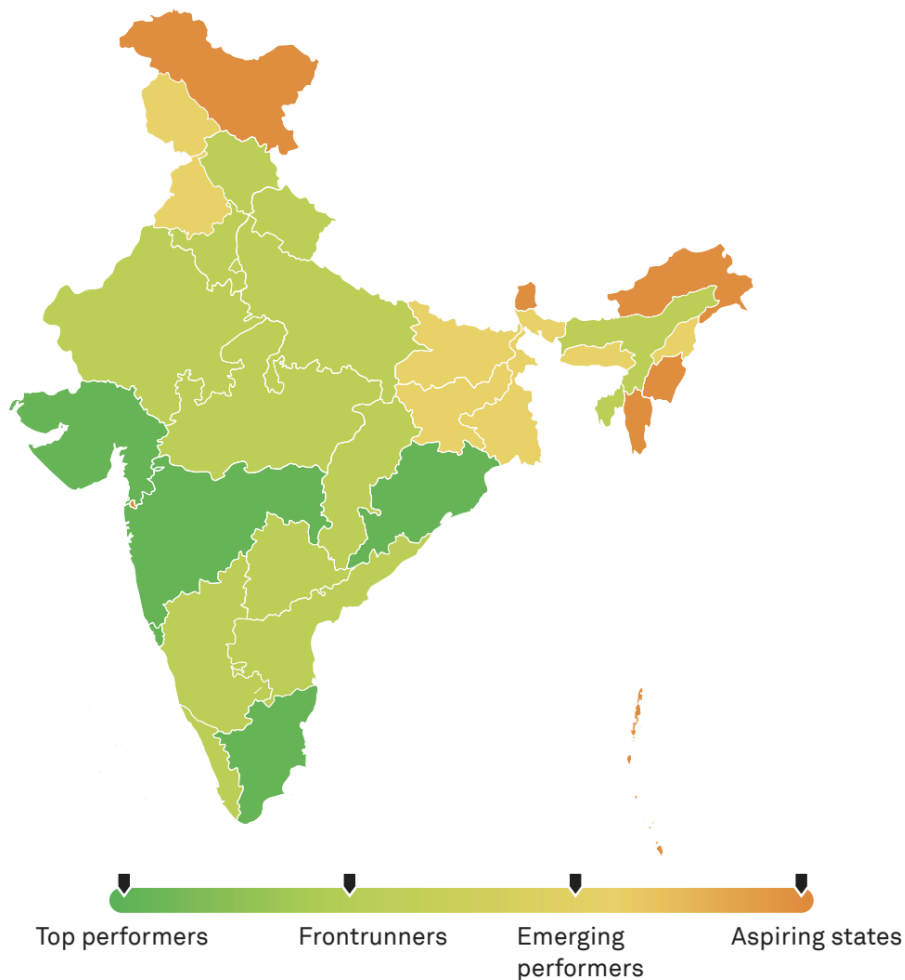
- ❖ Large States Ranking: Gujarat ranked 1st, followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Hilly & North-Eastern States Ranking: Uttarakhand secured 1st, followed by Assam and Himachal Pradesh.

❖ Union Territories & City States Ranking: Goa ranked 1st, followed by Delhi and Chandigarh.

Rank	State/Union Territory	Overall score			
1	Gujarat	56.6	19	Uttar Pradesh	45.0
2	Maharashtra	53.7	20	Tripura	45.0
3	Tamil Nadu	53.3	21	Puducherry	44.9
4	Goa	53.1	22	Punjab	44.7
5	Odisha	52.4	23	Meghalaya	43.0
6	Delhi	49.9	24	West Bengal	41.3
7	Madhya Pradesh	48.9	25	Jharkhand	41.3
8	Andhra Pradesh	48.7	26	Bihar	41.2
9	Karnataka	48.7	27	Nagaland	41.2
10	Rajasthan	48.1	28	Jammu & Kashmir	40.2
11	Uttarakhand	47.5	29	Mizoram	39.9
12	Chhattisgarh	47.5	30	Arunachal Pradesh	37.5
13	Telangana	47.3	31	DNH & DD	37.1
14	Assam	47.3	32	Sikkim	36.6
15	Haryana	47.1	33	Manipur	32.3
16	Chandigarh	47.0	34	A & N Islands	30.2
17	Kerala	46.6	35	Ladakh	27.0
18	Himachal Pradesh	46.1	36	Lakshadweep	24.5

❖ Significance: The peer-group approach accounts for geographical, economic, and administrative differences, ensuring more meaningful and equitable benchmarking across States and UTs.

Figure 14: Performance of states on Investment Friendliness Index



2. *i-DRONE initiative:*

Context: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has tested drone-assisted transport of tuberculosis sputum samples under its i-DRONE initiative in Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district of Telangana. The programme used a hub-and-spoke model to move samples from nearby health facilities to diagnostic centres and reduced the median turnaround time for TB diagnosis from 15 days to 5 days in a study involving 840 participants.

About i-DRONE initiative:

- ❖ i-DRONE connected 11 Primary Health Centres, 60 Sub-Centres, and 4 TB Units into a unified TB sample collection and transport network.
- ❖ The initiative enabled patients to submit sputum samples at nearby health facilities, reducing travel for diagnosis.
- ❖ It significantly improved access to TB diagnostic services, especially in remote areas.
- ❖ Average out-of-pocket expenditure for TB diagnosis dropped from ~₹9,451 to ~₹91.
- ❖ The cost reduction resulted from lower travel expenses, reduced wage loss, and decentralized sample collection.
- ❖ The drone-enabled system also enhanced the speed and efficiency of TB sample transportation and diagnosis.

3. *Amrit Bharat Station Scheme:*

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to virtually inaugurate 75 redeveloped railway stations across 20 states on July 17, 2026, under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. The main ceremony is anchored from Jalandhar Cantt station in Punjab, which has been redeveloped at a cost of ₹125 crore.

About Amrit Bharat Station Scheme:

- ❖ Launched in February 2023 by the Ministry of Railways.
- ❖ It envisages the development of stations on a continuous basis with a long-term approach.
- ❖ The ABSS aims at enhancing the facilities beyond the Minimum Essential Amenities.
- ❖ It also aimed at construction of Roof Plazas and City Centres at the station.
- ❖ It caters for the introduction of new amenities as well as upgradation and replacement of existing amenities.
- ❖ The scheme follows the principle of “Virasat Bhi, Vikas Bhi”, which combines local heritage with modern infrastructure.
- ❖ The redeveloped stations include wider circulation areas, improved entry and exit points, lifts, escalators, modern waiting halls, executive lounges, CCTV surveillance, free Wi-Fi, and facilities for persons with disabilities.

4. *MH-60R Seahawk:*

Context: The Indian Navy received another MH-60R Seahawk helicopter in Kochi in July 2026, taking the number inducted to 21 out of 24 ordered from the United States. The remaining helicopters are expected to be delivered by the end of 2026 under the original procurement programme.

About MH-60R Seahawk:

- ❖ MH-60R Seahawk is a multi-role maritime helicopter developed by Lockheed Martin for naval operations.
- ❖ It performs anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), search and rescue (SAR), and special operations support.
- ❖ India signed a USD 2.6 billion contract for 24 MH-60R helicopters in February 2020 under the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme.
- ❖ The procurement aims to strengthen the Indian Navy's shipborne aviation and maritime combat capabilities.
- ❖ The Indian Navy inducted the MH-60R fleet into INAS 334 at INS Garuda, Kochi, in March 2024.
- ❖ In December 2025, India signed a ₹7,995 crore sustainment package for maintenance, spares, and operational readiness of the fleet.

5. *AI Squatting:*

Context: Cybersecurity researchers have sounded the alarm on AI Squatting, a dangerous new class of cyber threats where attackers weaponize predictable AI hallucinations rather than software bugs.

About AI Squatting:

- ❖ AI Squatting is a cyberattack that exploits AI hallucinations, where LLMs generate convincing but non-existent websites or software packages.
- ❖ Attackers register these fake domains or software packages to steal credentials, distribute malware, or compromise users.
- ❖ Phantom Squatting targets AI-hallucinated internet domains, using them for phishing, credential theft, and malware attacks.
- ❖ HalluSquatting targets AI-generated fake software libraries or repositories, tricking developers into installing malicious packages.
- ❖ The attack does not rely on software vulnerabilities or prompt injection, but exploits AI-generated misinformation.
- ❖ It is a highly scalable threat, as repeated AI hallucinations can mislead large numbers of users.
- ❖ AI Squatting is difficult to eliminate because hallucinations are inherent to the probabilistic nature of Large Language Models (LLMs).

6. *Vizhinjam port:*

Context: Vizhinjam port has so far served only as an international trans-shipment hub where mother ships from abroad drop off containers and pick them up. But starting August, the port will be able to handle exim cargo from and for India.

About Vizhinjam port:

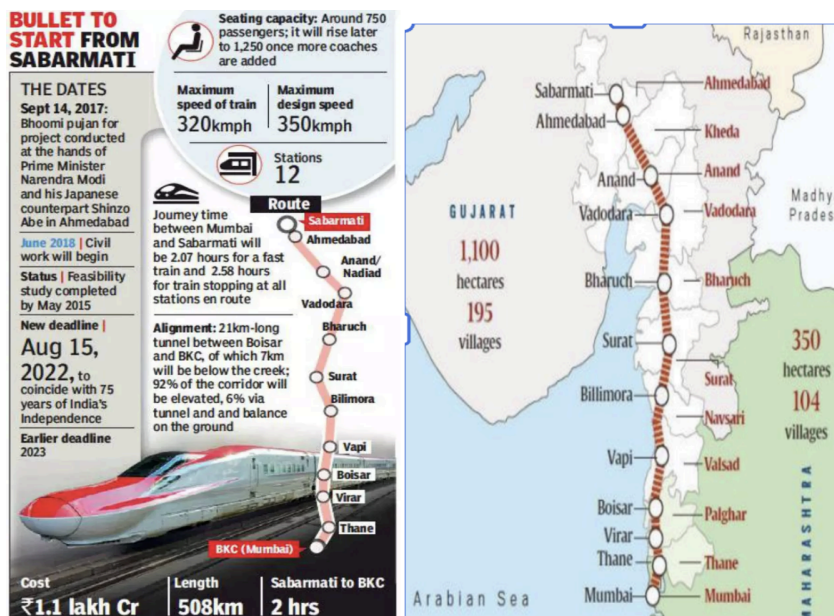
- ❖ It is a transshipment deepwater multipurpose seaport project built by Adani Ports and SEZ Private Limited in Vizhinjam near Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- ❖ Vizhinjam port is India's first international deepwater transshipment port.

- ❖ The port is designed to handle container transshipment, multi-purpose, and break-bulk cargo.
- ❖ It is strategically located just ten nautical miles from the international shipping route.
- ❖ The port has minimal littoral drift and requires minimal maintenance dredging, reducing operational costs.
- ❖ The port boasts a natural depth of more than 18 meters, which can be further scaled up to 20 meters.
- ❖ It is India's first deep-water transshipment port, designed for container and multi-purpose cargo.
- ❖ The port is developed under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) on a Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT) basis.

7. **Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project:**

Context: India rejects former Japan Minister's remarks on bullet train project delay. The clarification comes in response to a recent critical social media post by a former Japanese Minister regarding the project, which will be India's first bullet train network. In the post, Hideki Makihara, a member of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, had blamed New Delhi for the timeline delays. He had also flagged concerns over the Japanese side allegedly being "excluded from the signalling system" of the high-speed network. The MEA clarified that the statement represented an "individual opinion" that stands at "considerable variance with facts."

About Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project:



- ❖ The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor, often referred to as the Bullet Train project, is an ambitious infrastructure undertaking in India.
- ❖ It aims to connect the financial capital, Mumbai, with the industrial hub, Ahmedabad, through a high-speed rail network.
- ❖ The length of the project is 508 Km with 12 stations planned at Mumbai, Thane, Virar, Boisar, Vapi, Bilimora, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara, Anand, Ahmedabad and Sabarmati.

- ❖ The train is expected to take around 2 hours and 58 minutes to travel between Ahmedabad and Mumbai, covering eight stations in Gujarat and four in Maharashtra.
 - ❖ The sanctioned cost of the project is ₹1,08,000 Crore.
 - ❖ It passes through the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli.
 - ❖ The project utilizes Japanese Shinkansen technology, renowned for its speed, safety, and comfort.
- 8. *Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill:***

Context: The Joint Committee of Parliament reviewing the legislation on the removal of the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers on serious charges decided to defer the adoption of a draft report that had been circulated nearly a week ago, after voting had been completed on two of the five recommendations made by the panel at a meeting on Friday.

About Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill:

- ❖ Bill mandates removal of PM, CM, or Ministers if in custody for 30 consecutive days on serious criminal charges.
- ❖ Proposes amendments to Articles 75, 164, and 239AA of the Constitution.
- ❖ Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2025 extends provisions to Puducherry, empowering the President.
- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Amendment) Bill, 2025 empowers the LG to remove CM/Ministers under the same rule.
- ❖ All three bills referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for examination and debate.
- ❖ Grounds for Removal: PM, CM, or Ministers removed if in custody 30 consecutive days for an offense punishable with ≥ 5 years imprisonment.
- ❖ Union Ministers: President must act on PM's advice by 31st day; if no advice, Minister automatically loses office.
- ❖ State Ministers: Governor must act on CM's advice by 31st day; if no advice, Minister automatically loses office.
- ❖ Delhi Ministers: President acts on Delhi CM's advice; if no advice, Minister automatically ceases office.
- ❖ PM/CMs: Must resign by 31st day of custody, else automatically removed from the next day.
- ❖ Reappointment allowed after release from custody.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ In a landmark moment for the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu, Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Shri Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu, along with Administrator of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu, Shri Praful Patel, flagged off the inaugural flight on the Daman–Delhi–Daman route from the newly operational NAMO Airport, Daman on July 16, 2026. Government owned regional carrier Alliance Air launched the flight, marking Daman's first-ever direct air link.
- ☐ The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), under the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, has launched "VISHWAS, 2026", a one-time dispute resolution initiative to facilitate amicable settlement of disputes relating to levy of damages

/penalty under Section 14B of the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and Section 128 of the Code on Social Security, 2020.

- ☐ On 16 July 2026, the Centre for Trade and Investment Law at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry, launched a guidebook titled Going Global: A Practical Guide for Indian MSMEs in New Delhi. The guidebook is a practical resource for Indian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises that covers export opportunities, market access requirements, trade intelligence tools, international standards, and sustainability norms.
- ☐ The Gandak River (also known as Gandaki, Sapt Gandaki, and Narayani) is an ancient transboundary river and one of the largest left-bank tributaries of the Ganga. It originates from the Nhubine Himal Glacier in Nepal's Mustang region near the Tibet border at an elevation of 6,268 m. Flowing as the Kali Gandaki through deep Himalayan gorges, it becomes the Narayani near Devghat before entering India at Triveni. It briefly forms the Uttar Pradesh–Bihar boundary, flows through West Champaran, Gopalganj, East Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Siwan, Saran, and Vaishali, and finally joins the Ganga at Hajipur, Bihar.
- ☐ The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) approved Danish major Novo Nordisk's weight loss drug Wegovy (semaglutide injection 2.4 mg) for a new indication — fatty liver disease.
- ☐ SEBI has cautioned regulated entities and listed firms against a 'Boss Scam', wherein fraudsters impersonate as chief executives or senior officials to trick finance teams into transferring funds. "The communication through email/ WhatsApp/Microsoft Teams/other social media platforms with their subordinates or counterparts, directs them to carry out instructions given to them resulting in transfer of funds to fraudsters
- ☐ The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) unveiled E-Commerce Council of India (ECCI), a 'first-of-its-kind' national platform to unify India's \$120 billion digital commerce ecosystem. The ECCI would serve as a collaborative platform for industry stakeholders to engage with policymakers, generate research, develop best practices and contribute to policy discussions that shape the future of digital commerce in India, according to Subho Ray, president, IAMAI.

Practice questions:

Objective questions:

The "Boss Scam", recently in the news, refers to:

- (a) Insider trading by company executives
- (b) Impersonation of senior officials to obtain fund transfers
- (c) Tax evasion by multinational companies
- (d) Illegal takeover of listed companies

The E-Commerce Council of India (ECCI) has been launched by:

- (a) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- (b) NITI Aayog
- (c) Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)

(d) Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)

With reference to the Investment Friendliness Index, consider the following statements:

1. The Index evaluates all 28 States and 8 Union Territories published by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)
2. It assesses investment attractiveness across eight pillars and 84 indicators.
3. Delhi ranked first among Union Territories and City States.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

With reference to the i-DRONE initiative, consider the following statements:

1. It was tested by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for drone-assisted transport.
2. The initiative was implemented since 2020 initially established to transport COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Consider the following statements regarding AI Squatting:

1. Attackers register AI-generated fake websites or software packages to steal credentials or distribute malware.
2. AI Squatting is a type of ransomware attack.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

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