

31/07/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026:*

Context: The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 amends Section 3 of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971. It extends the same legal protection to the National Song, Vande Mataram that is currently afforded to the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana. The amendment makes it an offence to intentionally prevent the singing of the National Song or to cause a disturbance to an assembly engaged in its singing.

Background:

- ❖ According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons, the 1971 Act safeguards the National Anthem by making it a criminal offense to deliberately stop its singing or to cause disruptions to any group engaged in singing it. It recalls the Constituent Assembly meeting held on 24th January 1950.
- ❖ At the meeting, its then President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, highlighted the historic role of Vande Mataram in India's freedom struggle. He stated that it should be honoured equally with Jana Gana Mana and accorded equal status.
- ❖ However, there was no specific legal provision extending similar protection to the National Song. The Bill addressed this gap. It proposed to include Vande Mataram within Section 3 of the 1971 Act.

About Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026:

- ❖ Short Title: The law is called the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026.
- ❖ Key Amendment: Section 3 is substituted to protect both the National Anthem (Jana Gana Mana) and the National Song (Vande Mataram).
- ❖ Earlier Scope: The 1971 Act protected only the National Anthem under Section 3.
- ❖ Expanded Scope: The amended Section 3 extends legal protection to the National Song (Vande Mataram) as well.

Vande Mataram: A Melody That Became a Movement

- *Vande Mataram*, meaning “Mother, I Bow to Thee”, was composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.
- It was first published in the literary journal *Bangadarshan* on 7th November 1875. It was later included in the novel *Anandamath*, published in 1882.
- Rabindranath Tagore set it to music and first sang it at the 1896 session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta.
- The song became a powerful symbol of resistance during the freedom struggle. It was first used as a political slogan on 7th August 1905 during the Swadeshi movement.
- On 24th January 1950, Constituent Assembly President Dr. Rajendra Prasad stated that *Vande Mataram* should be honoured equally with *Jana Gana Mana* and accorded equal status.

- ❖ Prohibited Act 1: Intentionally preventing the singing of the National Anthem or National Song is punishable.
- ❖ Prohibited Act 2: Intentionally causing disturbance to an assembly singing the National Anthem or National Song is punishable.

- ❖ Punishment: Up to 3 years' imprisonment, or fine, or both (unchanged).
- ❖ Repeat Offenders: A second or subsequent conviction attracts a minimum one-year imprisonment under Section 3A.
- ❖ New Impact: Repeat offenders disrupting the singing of Vande Mataram will also face the mandatory minimum one-year jail term.
- ❖ Objective: To provide equal statutory protection to both the National Anthem and the National Song.

2. *Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme:*

Context: Government in Parliament said that the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme has been implemented through a phased, scientifically validated and consultative process involving NITI Aayog, automobile manufacturers, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP) and other technical institutions.

About Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme:

- ❖ Ethanol (C_2H_5OH), considered a renewable fuel, is an anhydrous ethyl alcohol produced from sugarcane, maize, wheat, and other crops with high starch content.
- ❖ It is naturally produced by the fermentation of sugars by yeasts or via petrochemical processes such as ethylene hydration.
- ❖ Launch: Started in 2003 to promote ethanol blending in petrol.
- ❖ Definition: Mixing ethanol with petrol to make fuel cleaner and more sustainable.
- ❖ Blending Types: E10 (10% ethanol), E20 (20%), E85 (85%).
- ❖ E20 Benefits: Better acceleration, improved ride quality, and 30% lower carbon emissions vs. E10.
- ❖ Target: 20% ethanol blending in petrol by 2025-26 (advanced from 2030).
- ❖ Achievement: Ethanol production rose from 38 crore liters (2014) to 660+ crore liters (2025).

3. *ILO Convention No. 193:*

Context: A major diplomatic and labor debate emerged after India abstained from voting on ILO Convention No. 193 (Decent Work in the Platform Economy) at the 114th International Labour Conference in Geneva.

About ILO Convention No. 193:

- ❖ ILO Convention No. 193, adopted on 12 June 2026, is the first legally binding international treaty providing a universal minimum set of rights for platform and gig workers.
- ❖ Coverage: It protects gig workers such as ride-hailing drivers, delivery partners, warehouse pickers, and data labelers, irrespective of whether they are classified as employees or independent contractors.
- ❖ Algorithmic Management: It introduces the first global standards on algorithmic management, requiring platforms to disclose automated decisions, provide written reasons for account deactivation, and ensure human oversight.
- ❖ India's Position: India abstained from adopting the Convention, following its policy of ratifying ILO conventions only after domestic laws fully align with international obligations.
- ❖ Reasons for Abstention: India cited reliance on the Code on Social Security, 2020, concerns over labour being a Concurrent List subject, and the complexities of implementing binding international obligations across States.

- ❖ **Key Concern:** India was reluctant to accept provisions requiring reclassification of platform workers based on actual work conditions, as they may conflict with the country's existing independent aggregator business model.

4. **DAANVEER initiative:**

Context: Shri Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, launched the DAANVEER initiative in New Delhi.

About DAANVEER initiative:

- ❖ DAANVEER is a digital platform that enables citizens, organizations, and the Indian diaspora to donate computers and other digital equipment directly to Gram Panchayats.
- ❖ **Nodal Ministry:** It is an initiative of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), Government of India.
- ❖ **Objective:** To bridge the digital infrastructure gap in nearly 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, making them digitally empowered and future-ready service delivery centres.
- ❖ **Meri Panchayat Integration:** Donors can contribute voluntarily through the Meri Panchayat mobile app, where Gram Panchayats list their technology requirements.
- ❖ **DigiHaat Integration:** The platform is linked with the DigiHaat marketplace, enabling donors to purchase and send pre-approved computer bundles directly to Panchayats.
- ❖ **Transparent Delivery:** DAANVEER provides end-to-end digital tracking, from dispatch to installation, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- ❖ **Digital Recognition:** Donors receive an officially verified digital certificate of appreciation after successful installation of the donated equipment.
- ❖ **Integration with Digital Governance:** The initiative works seamlessly with platforms such as e-GramSwaraj, Sabha Saar, AuditOnline, and Gram Manchitra, enabling immediate use of the donated digital infrastructure.

5. **AI Palletising:**

Context: According to Future Market Insights (FMI), the global AI palletising and depalletising market is projected to grow from \$1.8 billion in 2026 to \$9 billion by 2036

About AI Palletising:

- ❖ AI palletising and depalletising is an advanced industrial automation technology that uses robotic arms, computer vision, machine learning, and AI to automatically stack or unload goods from pallets.
- ❖ **How it differs:** Unlike traditional robots, AI systems can handle mixed-size, irregular, and damaged packages without manual reprogramming.
- ❖ **3D Computer Vision:** High-resolution cameras scan packages in real time to identify their size, orientation, and condition.
- ❖ **AI-Based Planning:** Machine learning algorithms determine the best gripping points and optimize stacking patterns for maximum stability and pallet utilization.
- ❖ **Adaptive Robotics:** Multi-axis robotic arms continuously adjust their movement, speed, and gripping force using real-time sensor feedback.
- ❖ **Mixed Load Handling:** The system efficiently manages multiple SKUs with different shapes, sizes, and weights on the same pallet.

- ❖ **Quality Inspection:** Built-in computer vision detects damaged or defective packages, reducing errors and preventing pallet collapse.
- ❖ **Continuous Learning:** AI models learn from operational data to improve stacking speed, gripping accuracy, and overall efficiency over time.

6. *Doxxing:*

Context: Following the protests at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi demanding the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as Union Education Minister, several women who took part in the movement have reported being subjected to online harassment. The Hindu has verified multiple such instances, including women facing doxxing (the circulation of personal information) and rape and death threats online.

About Doxxing:

- ❖ The act of digitally publicising a person's private details is called doxxing.
- ❖ Doxxers generally publicise highly personal data such as other people's home addresses, phone numbers, private email IDs, medical conditions etc.
- ❖ Adjust social media settings, use strong passwords, report through National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, etc., can be the measures taken to address doxxing.

7. *Suez Canal:*

Context: A drone strike on gas vessels in Egypt's Mediterranean port of Damietta signalled a potential new front in the U.S.-Iran war, raising the prospect of threats to navigation through the Suez Canal, a last remaining safe export route for Saudi oil.

About Suez Canal:



- ❖ The Suez Canal connects Port Said (Mediterranean Sea) to Suez (Red Sea) in northeastern Egypt.
- ❖ It links Europe and Asia without requiring ships to sail around the Cape of Good Hope (Africa).
- ❖ The canal is 193 km long and crosses the Isthmus of Suez, separating Africa from the Sinai Peninsula.
- ❖ Construction began under the Universal Suez Ship Canal Company (1858) and the canal opened in 1869.
- ❖ Britain controlled the canal until Egypt nationalized it in 1956 during the Suez Crisis.
- ❖ Since 1957, the canal has been managed by the Suez Canal Authority and remains open for international navigation.
- ❖ The canal carries about 12% of global trade, 7% of world oil trade, and around 30% of global container traffic.
- ❖ It is a lock-free canal, allowing the passage of large vessels, including aircraft carriers.
- ❖ The Suez Canal significantly reduces travel distance, fuel consumption, transit time, and transportation costs, making it one of the world's most strategic maritime trade routes.

- ❖ The Suez Canal has only one bordering country: Egypt. It is entirely located within Egypt, running north-to-south across the Isthmus of Suez to connect the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.

8. *Pellet Guns:*

Context: The Supreme Court on Thursday said the use of pellet guns by the police in “exceptional circumstances” was part of a graded approach to break civilian protests.

About Pellet Guns:

- ❖ Definition: Pellet guns are modified pump-action shotguns that fire cartridges containing hundreds of small metallic pellets.
- ❖ Pellets: The pellets are usually made of lead or other metals and may be spherical or irregular in shape.
- ❖ Purpose: They are classified as less-lethal weapons, intended to reduce fatalities compared to conventional firearms.
- ❖ Working Mechanism: Pulling the trigger ignites the propellant, generating high-pressure gases that propel the pellets through the barrel.
- ❖ Spread Pattern: Unlike a single bullet, the pellets scatter over a wide area, making individual impacts difficult to control.
- ❖ Range: Depending on the weapon and ammunition, pellet guns can be effective up to about 500 yards.
- ❖ Risks: Despite being less-lethal, they can cause serious injuries, especially to the eyes, face, and head, and may lead to permanent disability.
- ❖ India: Pellet guns used by security forces have been associated with Ordnance Factory, Ishapore, for their production.

9. *Mahanadi:*

Context: Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday expressed confidence that the long-standing Mahanadi river water dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh would be resolved within the next three months. An important meeting held in New Delhi was attended by Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bishnu Deo Sai, Mr. Majhi, and senior officials from both States and the Centre.

About Mahanadi river:

- ❖ Recent Update: Odisha and Chhattisgarh have expressed willingness to resolve the Mahanadi water dispute amicably.
- ❖ Dispute: In 2016, Odisha alleged that Chhattisgarh's upstream barrages reduced downstream water flow during the non-monsoon season.
- ❖ Tribunal: The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDT) was constituted in 2018 under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956; the final award is still pending.
- ❖ About the River: The Mahanadi is the third-largest peninsular river (after Godavari and Krishna) and the largest river of Odisha.
- ❖ Source & Basin: It originates near Sihawa (Chhattisgarh) and drains parts of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra.
- ❖ Major Tributaries: Left bank – Seonath, Hasdeo, Mand, Ib; Right bank – Ong, Tel, Jonk.

- ❖ Major Projects: Important projects include Hirakud Dam (India's longest dam), Ravishankar Sagar, Dudhawa, Sondur, Hasdeo Bango, and Tandula.
- ❖ Major Cities: The river basin includes important urban centres such as Raipur, Durg, and Cuttack.
- ❖ Economic Importance: The basin supports iron & steel (Bhilai), aluminium (Hirakud, Korba), paper, cement, sugar, textiles, and coal, iron, and manganese mining, making it a major industrial region.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Dilip Mahadu Gavit on winning the Gold medal in the Men's 100m T47 event at the Commonwealth Games 2026.
- ☐ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Mohammed Basil Morssinganakath on winning the Silver medal in the Men's para 100m T47 event at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026.
- ☐ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Sreeshankar on winning the Silver in long jump medal at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026.
- ☐ APEDA Facilitates First-Ever Sea Shipment of Value-Added Flavoured Makhana from Bihar to Canada.
- ☐ India has advanced 25 places in the global rankings, from 82nd to 57th, reflecting significant progress in structural and pro-competitive reforms between 2010 and 2023, according to the report India's Next Growth Frontier: Reducing Anti-Competitive Market Distortions to Build on India's 2010–2023 Reform Progress, released by the Competere Foundation. The report assesses India's performance under its Market Distortions Performance Index, examining the country's reform trajectory between 2010 and 2023
- ☐ Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, on July 30, 2026, felicitated the nine women officers of the three Services, who returned home after successfully completing the first-ever Tri-service all-women circumnavigation sailing expedition 'Samudra Pradakshina' onboard the Indian Army Sailing Vessel (IASV) Triveni.
- ☐ In a major step towards building a technology-driven, future-ready handloom ecosystem, the Union Minister of Textiles Shri Giriraj Singh will inaugurate the Centre of Excellence for Handloom Technology (CoE-HT) at IIT Delhi on 3 August 2026.
- ☐ Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and the UAE released 672 captive-bred Houbara Bustards (*Chlamydotis macqueenii*) into Karakalpakstan's Aral Sea region. Houbara Bustard (*Chlamydotis macqueenii*): The Asian Houbara Bustard is a medium-to-large migratory, ground-dwelling bird of the bustard family (Otididae), specially adapted to arid and semi-arid desert ecosystems. It inhabits sandy deserts, gravel plains, dry steppes, and shrublands across Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of South Asia, including the Thar Desert and Rann of Kutch. It is renowned for its elusive nature and remarkable adaptation to harsh desert environments.
- ☐ The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration issued a compliance order on 28 July 2026 to regulate the sale, advertisement, and free distribution of High Fat, Sugar, and Salt food items near

schools. The order applies within 50 metres of school premises and covers children from 22 months of age up to Class 12 students in Maharashtra.

- ☐ India and Nepal jointly inaugurated the restored Shree Gusthal Mahavihar and Agam of Prathamshree Mahavihar at Guita Tole in Patan, Lalitpur, on 28 July 2026. The project was funded by a Government of India grant of about NPR 12 crores and was executed by Nepal's Central Level Project Implementation Unit under the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction
- ☐ Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) delivered Nipun, a state-of-the-art Diving Support Vessel (DSV), to the Indian Navy. Nipun boasts an indigenous content exceeding 80 per cent. The vessel features advanced dynamic positioning systems, saturation diving equipment, submarine rescue machinery, and deep-sea intervention tools.

Practice questions:

Objective questions:

In the context of recent defence initiatives, 'Samudra Pradakshina' is associated with:

- (a) India's first all-women mountaineering expedition
- (b) Antarctic scientific expedition
- (c) Indian Navy submarine mission
- (d) India's first All-women sailing expedition

'Nipun', recently delivered to the Indian Navy by Hindustan Shipyard Limited, is a:

- (a) Missile Corvette
- (b) Survey Vessel
- (c) Diving Support Vessel
- (d) Landing Ship Tank

Consider the following countries

1. Israel
2. Egypt
3. Jordan
4. Ethiopia

How many of the above nation(s) share boundary with Suez Canal?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

With reference to the DAANVEER initiative, consider the following statements:

1. It enables citizens and the Indian diaspora to donate digital equipment directly to Gram Panchayats.
2. It aims to bridge the digital infrastructure gap in Gram Panchayats.
3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

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