01-08-2026

1. Munshi Premchand:

Context: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, paid tributes to renowned litterateur Munshi Premchand on his birth anniversary.

About Munshi Premchand:

- Munshi Premchand (born Dhanpat Rai Srivastava) was born on 31 July 1880 in Lamhi village near Varanasi and is regarded as the greatest writer of modern Hindi and Urdu literature.
- He was born to Munshi Ajaib Lal (post office clerk) and Anandi Devi, learned Urdu and Persian early, and later earned a B.A. (1919) from Allahabad University in English, Persian, and History.
- After an unsuccessful first marriage, he married Shivarani Devi, a child widow, in 1906, a progressive and socially reformist step; she later wrote the memoir Premchand Ghar Mein.
- From 1899 to 1921, he served as a school teacher and Deputy Sub-Inspector of Schools, resigning in 1921 in support of Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement.
- He initially wrote under the pen name "Nawab Rai", but adopted "Premchand" after the British banned his patriotic collection Soz-e-Watan in 1910.
- Honoured as "Upanyas Samrat" (Emperor of Novels) and "Magician of the Pen," he pioneered realism in Hindi and Urdu literature.
- He authored over 300 short stories and 18 novels, with classics such as Godan, Kafan, Pus Ki Raat, and Panch Parmeshwar, highlighting social injustice, rural life, and human values.
- He contributed to journals like Zamana, Saraswati, Madhuri, Maryaada, Chaand, and Sudha, and edited Jagran newspaper and Hans literary magazine.
- He purchased Saraswati Press, though it later closed due to financial losses, and subsequently moved to Mumbai to write film scripts.

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- He became the first President of the All-India Progressive Writers' Association in 1936, strengthening the progressive literary movement in India.
- The period 1918–1936 is known as the "Premchand Era" in Hindi literature, reflecting his enduring influence on themes of social justice, equality, and freedom.

2. 'Samudra Manthan':

Context: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved 'Samudra Manthan' – the National Offshore Exploration Scheme, a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas with an approved outlay of Rs.84,084 crore for implementation up to FY 2030–31.

About 'Samudra Manthan':

- The Scheme encompasses a comprehensive set of interventions across the offshore exploration value chain.
- It provides for large-scale acquisition, processing and interpretation of high-quality seismic data, accelerated deepwater and ultra-deepwater exploratory drilling, scientific drilling in frontier basins, development of common offshore production and evacuation infrastructure, and establishment of an integrated Oil & Gas Manufacturing and Services Zone.
- It also includes dedicated provisions for digital programme management, capacity building, technology adoption, stakeholder engagement and international outreach, creating an integrated ecosystem to accelerate offshore exploration and production in the country.
- Samudra Manthan is expected to catalyse reserve accretion of over 600 Million Metric Tons of Oil Equivalent(MMTOE), substantially increase offshore exploration activity

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3. Khelo India Scheme:

Context: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved an expanded Khelo India Scheme and enhanced Assistance to National Sports Federations (ANSFs) with a combined outlay of Rs.36,441 crore for the period 2026–27 to 2030–31, reaffirming the Government's commitment to harnessing the power of sports for youth development and nation-building.

About Khelo India Scheme:

- Khelo India is a scheme envisioned by Prime Minister Modi in 2017-18 to give a platform to grassroots athletes and build sports infrastructure across India.
- The Khelo India Scheme is the flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
- Twin objectives: Mass participation and promotion of excellence in sports
- Khelo India University Games is a national level multi-sport event held in India, where athletes from universities across the country compete in different sports disciplines.
- The inaugural edition held in Odisha started on 22 February and concluded on 1 March 2020.
- The Khelo India Youth Games is an annual multidisciplinary grassroot sporting event held at the national level in India It is conducted for 2 groups of students – 1. Students under 17 years of age in secondary school and 2. Students under 21 years of age in college It was started in 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the name of Khelo India School Games. In 2019, its name was changed to Khelo India Youth Games.
- The revamped scheme is designed to create a seamless pathway for every talented young Indian—from school playgrounds and village sports fields to the Olympic podium.
- It seeks to ensure that no sporting talent is left undiscovered because of geography, economic background or lack of opportunity.

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- Aligned with the vision of Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 and the National Education Policy 2020, the scheme integrates sports with education, fitness, technology and high-performance training while laying a strong foundation for India's long-term sporting ambitions, including the 2030 Commonwealth Games and the country's bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

4. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme:

Context: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme from 2026–27 to 2030–31. A total financial outlay of Rs.3.15 lakh crore has been approved for the Scheme during this period.

About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme:

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a centrally sector scheme launched on 24 February 2019 to provide assured income support to landholding farmer families with cultivable land nationwide.
- Under the scheme, each eligible farmer family receives annual financial assistance of ₹6,000, disbursed in three equal installments of ₹2,000 through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism into Aadhaar-seeded bank accounts.
- The benefits of the scheme are provided to farmers upon seeding of land records in the PM-KISAN portal, linking bank accounts with Aadhaar, and completing e-KYC verification.
- The scheme seeks to increase the income of small and marginal farmers by providing financial support for agricultural inputs, thereby improving crop health and productivity.
- State Governments play a central role in implementing the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi by identifying eligible farmer households and developing a comprehensive beneficiary database.
- In September 2023, the Government introduced Kisan-eMitra, an AI-enabled chatbot integrated with the PM-KISAN digital ecosystem.

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- Developed with technical support from the EkStep Foundation and BHASHINI, the chatbot provides farmers with real-time information on payments, registrations, and eligibility under the scheme in multiple Indian languages.

Key Achievements of the PM-KISAN Scheme:

- More than Rs.4.47 lakh crore has been transferred directly into farmers' bank accounts through 23 installments under the Scheme.
- Under the 23rd instalment, more than 9.49 crore farmers benefited, with over Rs.18,984 crore released.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, more than Rs.1.71 lakh crore was disbursed to provide financial assistance to farmers.
- Women farmers have received more than Rs.1.06 lakh crore under PM-KISAN, and nearly one out of every four beneficiaries is a woman farmer.

5. Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY)'

Context: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today approved the 'Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY)', a Scheme for the development of Floating Solar Photovoltaic (FSPV) Projects with Energy Storage Systems (ESS) with a total outlay of Rs.5,070 crore.

About Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY)':

- The scheme envisages the development of 5,000 MW of Floating Solar Photovoltaic projects with co-located Energy Storage Systems having a minimum storage capacity of two hours i.e.,10,000 MWh.
- The projects will be sanctioned during FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31, with disbursement of financial support continuing up to FY 2032-33.

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- Under the scheme, Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of Rs. One crore per MW will be provided for eligible Floating Solar Photovoltaic projects after successful commissioning.
- In addition, CFA of up to Rs.50 lakh per project will be available for undertaking feasibility studies, including bathymetry and hydrography assessments, environmental studies, and other preparatory activities required for de-risking the project development.
- The scheme would enhance the floating Solar PV capacity in the country by 5,000 MW, which is presently around 700 MW only.
- The scheme would help in the reduction of around 10 million tonnes of CO_2 emissions annually.
- It would help in the generation of approximately 16,000–17,000 full-time equivalent employment opportunities across the project value chain.
- The scheme would also promote domestic manufacturing of floatation systems as well as the entire value chain of the projects, like PV cells, modules, energy storage systems, etc., and support the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

6. Government e Marketplace (GeM):

Context: Government e Marketplace (GeM) today formally launched the 10-day celebrations leading up to its 10th Foundation Day, marking the beginning of a series of stakeholder engagement initiatives commemorating a decade of transforming public procurement through technology, transparency and inclusivity.

About Government e Marketplace (GeM):

- The Government e Marketplace Special Purpose Vehicle (GeM SPV), a Section 8 non-profit company under the Ministry of Commerce, was incorporated on 17 May 2017 under the Companies Act, 2013 to develop, manage and maintain the GeM platform.
- Over the years, GeM has emerged as a major digital public procurement platform, promoting ease of doing business and wider market access for sellers across the country.

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- It is an online platform for public procurement.
- It was launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I).
- It was created with the objective to create an open and transparent procurement platform for government buyers to facilitate the online procurement of goods and services.

7. Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan:

Context: Since its inception in 2016, more than 7.91 crore pregnant women received antenatal care services and more than 1.24 crore high-risk pregnancies have been identified India's Maternal Mortality Ratio has declined by 43 points from 130 per one lakh live births in SRS (2014–16) to 87 per one lakh live births in SRS (2022–24).

About Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan:

- Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) provides a fixed day, free of cost, assured and quality Antenatal Care on the 9th day of every month.
- It is launched in 2016, aiming at reducing maternal and infant mortality rates and ensuring safe pregnancies and deliveries.
- **Target Beneficiaries:** All pregnant women in their 2nd and 3rd trimesters of pregnancy. Women from underserved, semi-urban, poor, and rural areas are particularly focused on.
- Under PMSMA, all pregnant women are provided services including drugs, laboratory investigations, ultrasound, and antenatal check-up by the OBGY specialist/ Medical Officer at designated Public Health facilities including DH, SDH, CHC-FRUs, non-CHC-FRUs, and PHCs.
- Obstetricians/ physicians from private sector and retired OBGY specialists are encouraged to provide voluntary services at designated public health facilities on the 9th of every month.
- Group Counselling is also provided to all pregnant women for diet, sleep, regular ANC check-up, institutional delivery, and breastfeeding including awareness about supplementary nutrition.

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- Information Education & Communication (IEC), Inter-personal Communication (IPC) and Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) activities are undertaken.

Quick Bites:

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Seema on winning the Bronze medal in the Women's Discus Throw event at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Lovepreet Singh on winning the Silver medal in the Men's +110 kg weightlifting event at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026.
- APEDA Facilitates First-Ever Air Shipment of Karnataka's Neelam and Totapuri Mangoes to the Maldives.
- General Dhiraj Seth, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), today launched the indigenously developed Xtreme Weather Grade (XWG) Diesel in New Delhi. Developed jointly by the Indian Army and Oil Marketing Companies, the specialised fuel will enhance the mobility, safety and operational availability of combat and logistics vehicles in extreme climatic conditions. The technology also has wider civilian use in high-altitude and severe winter regions and represents a significant step towards Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- The Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) announced the successful go-live of the integration between the Maldives Instant Payment System, 'Favara', and India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) on 30th July 2026. This marks a transformative milestone in cross-border digital financial connectivity and bilateral economic cooperation between the Maldives and India.
- India's social protection systems now cover about 101 crore people, or over 68 per cent of the population, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports, said at the 4th Global Industrial Relations Summit in New Delhi today. This figure, the Minister said, had been highlighted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) the BRICS Labour Ministers' Meeting in Hyderabad last week.

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- The eCourts Mission Mode Project, under the National e-Governance Plan, is being implemented by Department of Justice in coordination with eCommittee, Supreme Court of India. As per the information provided by eCommittee, Supreme Court of India, an AI-based tool Legal Research Analysis Assistant (LegRAA) has been developed by the Artificial Intelligence Division of NIC and the Centre of Excellence for eCourts (CoEE), NIC to assist Hon'ble Judges in legal research and document analysis.
- Indian Railways has achieved a historic milestone in the field of healthcare by successfully transporting a live donor heart by train for the first time in India. The life-saving organ was transported from Surat to Ahmedabad aboard Train No. 20901 Mumbai Central-Gandhinagar Capital Vande Bharat Express, ensuring its safe and timely arrival for transplantation at the U.N. Mehta Institute of Cardiology & Research Centre, Ahmedabad.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, will observe World Breastfeeding Week 2026 from 1st to 7th August across the country. This year's theme is Breastfeeding for a Sustainable Start in Life: Strengthen What Works. The week-long campaign will create awareness among families, communities and healthcare providers about early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and continued breastfeeding up to two years and beyond alongside appropriate complementary feeding.
- The Mission Shakti App is a digital platform for women and child safety in India. It provides access to seven helpline services, including Women Helpline 181, Emergency Response Support System 112, National Cyber Crime Helpline 1930, Child Helpline 1098, and Tele-MANAS 14416.
- Two endangered tribal languages spoken by Mavila and Malaveduvan communities in north Kerala are being documented in dictionaries to preserve their linguistic heritage. The texts record the vocabulary, oral traditions and cultural identity of the communities with a combined population of around 60,000, spread across Kannur and Kasaragod. The Mavila dictionary has been completed and is scheduled for publication in the first week of August, while work on the Malaveduvan dictionary is under way. Together, the volumes will document more than 5,000 words.

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- In an international collaboration, astronomers from Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), along with their counterparts from India, Italy, France and the U.S., have discovered the formation of a Blue Straggler Star (BSS) whose origin and evolution has long puzzled astronomers. The BSS is a peculiar class of stars found in star clusters that appear hotter, brighter and more massive than their peers, and in a study published in the Astrophysical Journal Letters astronomers have provided direct evidence of how such stars are created.

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02-08-2026

1. Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana (PM-VBRY):

Context: Announced in August 2025, PM-VBRY is being implemented over a two-year period from 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2027, with an outlay of ₹99,446 crore. On 1 August 2026, the scheme completes one year of implementation, marking an important milestone in India's efforts to expand formal employment and social security coverage.

About Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana (PM-VBRY):

- PM-VBRY aims to generate employment for over 3.5 crore people, including 1.92 crore first-time employees.
- The scheme encourages young people to enter the organised workforce through EPFO registration.
- It also expands social security coverage across various sectors, particularly labour-intensive manufacturing. It complements the National Manufacturing Mission by promoting employment in new and expanding industries.

At the heart of PM-VBRY is a two-part incentive framework, with distinct provisions for employees and employers.

Part A: Incentive to First-Time Employees

- First-time employees earning up to ₹1,00,000 per month are eligible for this part.
- They receive a one-time incentive equivalent to one month's EPF wage, capped at ₹15,000.
- The incentive is paid in two instalments. The first is paid after six months of service and the second after twelve months of continuous service, following completion of a financial literacy programme.
- A portion of the incentive is invested in a designated savings instrument, encouraging financial security and savings. It can be withdrawn by the employee at a later date.

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Part B: Support to Employers

- Employers are eligible for incentives for employees with salaries of up to ₹1,00,000 per month.
- Employers receive up to ₹3,000 per month for two years for every eligible additional employee retained for at least six months.
- The support lowers hiring costs and encourages sustained employment generation.
- For the manufacturing sector, incentives are extended to the third and fourth years as well, owing to high employment generation potential.

2. Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026:

Context: Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah today presented the Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026 to National Security Advisor Shri Ajit Doval in Pune, Maharashtra.

About Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026:

- The award is conferred annually by the Lokmanya Tilak Smarak Trust and includes a memento, citation, and ₹1 lakh cash prize.
- Ajit Doval has been honoured for his exceptional contributions to national security, counter-terrorism, covert operations, and border security.
- His major contributions include Operation Black Thunder, the Doklam diplomatic negotiations, and the Balakot air strike.
- A 1968-batch IPS officer (Kerala cadre), Ajit Doval served in India's intelligence establishment for over three decades and later became the Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB).
- The award was instituted in 1983 by the Tilak Smarak Mandir Trust.
- This award is given every year on 1st August, the death anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak, to persons who have made remarkable and extraordinary contributions, working for the progress and development of the nation.

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About Lokamanya Tilak:

- Bal Gangadhar Tilak, popularly known as Lokmanya Tilak, was a leading nationalist, freedom fighter, social reformer, and educationist.
- He was born as Keshav Gangadhar Tilak and was later given the title "Lokmanya", meaning revered by the people.
- He was one of the strongest advocates of Swaraj (Self-Rule) and coined the famous slogan "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it."
- Tilak was regarded as an Extremist (Radical Nationalist), and the British called him the "Father of Indian Unrest."
- He joined the Indian National Congress in 1890 and emerged as a prominent nationalist leader.
- In 1916, he co-founded the All India Home Rule League with Annie Besant and G. S. Khaparde to demand self-government.
- He founded the newspapers Kesari (Marathi) and The Maratha (English) to spread nationalist ideas.
- His notable books include The Arctic Home in the Vedas and Shrimad Bhagavad Gita Rahasya (Gita Rahasya).
- He co-founded the Deccan Education Society in 1884, which established Fergusson College and the New English School.
- Tilak taught Mathematics at Fergusson College and strongly promoted modern education.
- He supported social reforms, including the eradication of untouchability and child marriage, and promoted women's education.
- Along with Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal, he formed the famous Lal–Bal–Pal trio.
- He was imprisoned several times for sedition, and during his 1908–1914 Mandalay imprisonment, he wrote Gita Rahasya.
- In 1916, Tilak concluded the Lucknow Pact with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, promoting Hindu–Muslim unity in the freedom struggle.

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3. National Handloom Day:

Context: The Ministry of Textiles will celebrate the 12th National Handloom Day on 7 August 2026 with a national function at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre (RBCC), New Delhi, to celebrate India's rich handloom heritage and recognise the contribution of the handloom weaving community to the nation's cultural and economic development

About National Handloom Day:



- National Handloom Day is observed on August 7 to honor handloom weavers and acknowledge their contributions to India's economy and culture.
- It commemorates the Swadeshi Movement launched on this day in 1905.
- The day aims to highlight the significance of the handloom sector in the Indian economy and to promote the use of handloom products.
- The first National Handloom Day was celebrated on August 7, 2015.

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4. Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2026:

Context: India is ranked 176th out of 177 countries in the Yale Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2026, with a score of 22.46, placing it second lowest globally (above Laos) and 7th among 8 South Asian countries, while Estonia topped the index with a score of 74.79.

More details about Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2026:

- Environmental Performance Index (EPI) is a biennial global index launched in 2000.
- It is jointly published by the Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy (YCELP) and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN).
- EPI 2026 evaluates 177 countries using 47 indicators across 12 environmental issue categories.
- The indicators are grouped under three policy objectives: Environmental Health, Ecosystem Vitality, and Climate Change.
- The index tracks global progress towards the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Top 3 countries (2026): Estonia, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom.
- India ranked 176th in EPI 2026, the same as in 2024.
- India's ranking trend: 141 (2016) → 177 (2018) → 168 (2020) → 180 (2022) → 176 (2024 & 2026).
- India has remained among the five worst-performing countries since 2022.
- Major concerns: Poor performance in environmental health, air quality, biodiversity, with declines in fishery, tree cover, and pesticide pollution.
- Areas of relative improvement: Better performance in climate change mitigation, waste management, and sanitation.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has criticized the EPI methodology for overlooking India's development stage, population, historical emissions, and the principle of CBDR, while relying on extrapolated and simplified comparisons.

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5. Shipki La:

Context: The cross-border trade between India and China through Shipki La, known as the ancient Silk Route joining India with Tibet, resumed on Saturday after a gap of six years.

About Shipki La:

- Shipki La is a high-altitude mountain pass on the India–China border in Kinnaur district, Himachal Pradesh.
- It lies at an altitude of 3,930 metres and is one of India's highest motorable passes.
- The pass serves as a boundary post on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China.
- It is located near Khab village and is an offshoot of the ancient Silk Road.
- Originally known as Pema La (Shared Gate/Shared Pass), it came to be called Shipki La after the 1962 India–China War, when the Indo-Tibetan Border Police adopted the name.
- The Sutlej River (Langqen Zangbo in Tibet) enters India through Shipki La from the Tibet Autonomous Region.
- Shipki La is India's third border trade pass with China, after Lipulekh Pass (Uttarakhand) and Nathu La Pass (Sikkim).

Quick Bites:

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has congratulated Yash Vir Singh on winning the Bronze medal in the Men's Javelin event at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Neeraj Chopra on winning the Silver medal in the Men's Javelin event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Yamini Maurya on winning the Silver medal in the 57 kg Judo category at the Commonwealth Games 2026.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Tejaswin Shankar on winning the Bronze medal in the Men's Decathlon event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.

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- Ceuta is a Spanish autonomous city located on the north coast of Africa, bordering Morocco near the Strait of Gibraltar. Although it is an integral part of Spain and the European Union (EU), Morocco claims sovereignty over Ceuta. Along with Melilla, Ceuta forms the European Union's only land border with Africa, making it a major hotspot for irregular migration, as thousands of migrants and refugees attempt to enter Europe through this route every year.
- Vizhinjam International Seaport is India's first deep-water container transshipment port, developed by the Government of Kerala to handle container transshipment, multi-purpose, and break-bulk cargo. The port has been developed under the PPP-DBFOT (Design, Build, Finance, Operate, Transfer) model in partnership with Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Limited. Strategically located just 10 nautical miles from the major Europe–Persian Gulf–Far East international shipping route, it is well positioned to attract global maritime traffic. The port has a natural draft of about 18 metres, enabling it to accommodate large container vessels without the need for capital dredging, making it one of India's most strategically significant maritime infrastructure projects.
- Asmita Dey and Harsh Singh won India’s first-ever judo gold medals at the Commonwealth Games on 31 July 2026 in Glasgow, Scotland. The medals were won at the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) during the Commonwealth Games 2026.
- The Pacific island nation of Nauru has officially adopted the name Republic of Naoero.

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03-08-2026

1. Pingali Venkayya:

Context: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, paid tributes to freedom fighter, Shri Pingali Venkayya on his 150th birth anniversary.

About Pingali Venkayya:

- Pingali Venkayya was born on 2 August 1876 at Bhatlapenumarru, near Machilipatnam, in present-day Andhra Pradesh.
- He pursued geology studies in Colombo and was proficient in Japanese, Urdu, and Sanskrit, reflecting his passion for languages.
- He worked briefly as a railway guard before dedicating himself to agricultural research, especially cotton cultivation, earning the title "Patti (Cotton) Venkayya."
- He served in the British Indian Army during the Second Boer War, where his nationalist ideas were strengthened.
- He became known as "Japan Venkayya" after delivering a speech in Japanese at Bapatla in 1913.
- A devoted follower of Mahatma Gandhi, he first met Gandhi in South Africa, beginning a lifelong association.
- Between 1918 and 1921, he campaigned for a national flag at Indian National Congress sessions while serving as a lecturer at Andhra National College.
- At the 1921 Indian National Congress session in Vijayawada (Bezawada), he presented the Swaraj Flag, initially consisting of saffron and green colours.
- On Gandhi's suggestion, the flag was modified by adding a white band and a charkha (spinning wheel), symbolizing peace, self-reliance, and progress.

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- The Swaraj Flag was adopted by the Indian National Congress in 1931, becoming the precursor to India's present National Flag (Tiranga).
- He actively participated in the Vande Mataram Movement and the Home Rule Movement, and was also known as "Diamond Venkayya" for his work in diamond mining. After Independence, he served as an advisor to the Government's Mineral Research Department and authored The Mother of Diamonds (1955).
- Pingali Venkayya passed away on 4 July 1963 and is remembered as the "Father of the Tiranga" for his pioneering role in designing India's National Flag.

2. Ujh Multipurpose Project:

Context: Dr Jitendra Singh reviews status of Ujh Multipurpose Project in Jammu & Kashmir.

About Ujh Multipurpose Project:

- The Ujh Multipurpose Project is being developed to maximize India's utilization of water rights under the Indus Waters Treaty.
- It is located in Kathua district, Jammu & Kashmir, on the Ujh River, a tributary of the Ravi River.
- The project will store about 781 million cubic metres (MCM) of water from the Ujh River.
- It aims to provide assured irrigation to farmers in Kathua district and generate hydroelectric power.
- The project will increase the utilization of waters from the Eastern Rivers (Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej) allocated to India under the treaty.
- It will help reduce the flow of unused water into Pakistan, enabling more effective use of India's allocated share for irrigation and development.

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3. Leptospirosis:

Context: Kerala reported a high leptospirosis burden. Kerala's unique environment, with heavy monsoons, frequent floods and year-round moisture and humidity, creates ideal survival conditions for Leptospira bacteria in soil and water bodies such as lakes and canals.

About Leptospirosis:

- Leptospirosis is a fatal bacterial zoonotic disease affecting both animals and humans.
- It is caused by the bacterium Leptospira interrogans.
- Humans become infected when the bacteria enter the body through cuts, abrasions, or cracks in the skin, especially on the feet.
- The disease is more common in warm, humid tropical and subtropical regions and occurs in both urban and rural areas.
- It is primarily an animal disease, with humans becoming infected under favourable environmental conditions.
- Major animal reservoirs include rodents, cattle, pigs, dogs, and other wild and domestic animals.
- The bacteria are shed in the urine of infected animals, contaminating soil and water, which become the main sources of human infection.
- Infected animals may continue to excrete the bacteria for months or even years, sustaining transmission.
- The first phase of illness presents with fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, and diarrhoea.
- The second phase (if it occurs) is more severe and can cause kidney failure, liver failure (Weil's disease), or meningitis.
- Leptospirosis is treatable with antibiotics, and early diagnosis and treatment significantly reduce complications and mortality.

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4. Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan:

Context: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today launched 'Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan'.

About Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan:

- **Launch:** The Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2 August 2026 from Varanasi as a nationwide anti-drug campaign.
- **Implementing Ministry:** The campaign is implemented by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports through Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat).
- **Objective:** Its primary objective is to eliminate substance abuse among youth, promote a drug-free India (Nasha Mukt Bharat), and support the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.
- **Target Group:** The campaign focuses on young people (15–29 years), encouraging them to become ambassadors against drug abuse.
- **Key Activities:** It includes awareness drives, anti-drug pledges, youth connect programmes, creative competitions, nukkad nataks, music, dance, short films, and slam poetry to spread awareness.
- **Three-Tier Competition:** The campaign follows a district → state → national competition format, culminating in the National Youth Summit in New Delhi.
- **Mass Participation:** More than one crore youth participated by taking the Nasha Mukti Pledge, making it a large-scale public movement.
- **Whole-of-Society Approach:** The campaign emphasizes participation by parents, teachers, educational institutions, youth organisations, and communities, transforming the fight against drugs into a Jan Andolan (people's movement).
- **Link with NMBA:** The initiative complements the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan, under which the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the nodal ministry for drug demand reduction, while MY Bharat leads youth mobilisation.

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5. Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPIs):

Context: After four straight months of selling, foreign investors turned net buyers of Indian equities in July, pumping in ₹20,200 crore, aided by attractive valuations, improving corporate earnings, and easing global headwinds. The latest inflow marks a sharp reversal from the preceding months when Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) withdrew ₹49,340 crore in June, ₹32,963 crore in May, ₹60,847 crore in April, and a massive ₹1.17 lakh crore in March.

About Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPIs):

- **Definition:** Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) refers to investments made by foreign investors in a country's financial assets, such as shares, bonds, and other securities.
- **Nature:** FPI is a passive investment, where investors do not seek management control over the company.
- **Investment Horizon:** It is generally short-term and aims at capital appreciation and portfolio diversification.
- **FPI vs FDI:** Unlike Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), FPI does not involve acquiring a controlling stake or significant management influence.
- **Importance:** FPI enhances market liquidity, capital availability, and efficiency in financial markets.
- **Economic Indicator:** FPI inflows are considered an indicator of foreign investor confidence in a country's economic stability and growth prospects.
- **FPI Limit in India:** Under India's FPI policy, a foreign portfolio investor can hold up to 10% of the paid-up equity capital of an Indian company; holdings above this are generally treated as FDI.
- **Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs):** FIIs are a subset of FPIs, comprising institutional investors such as mutual funds, pension funds, insurance companies, and hedge funds.
- **FPI vs FII:** All FIIs are FPIs, but not all FPIs are FIIs, as FPIs include both institutional and individual foreign investors.

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Quick Bites:

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Unnati Sharma on winning the Bronze medal in the Women's 63 kg Judo category at the Commonwealth Games 2026.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Gulveer Singh on winning the Bronze medal in the Men's 5000m event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Narender Berwal on winning the Silver medal in the Men's 90+ kg Boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Ankush Panghal on winning the Gold medal in the Men's 80 kg Boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Sachin Siwach on winning the Gold medal in the Men's 60 kg Boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Lovlina Borgohain on winning the Silver medal in the Women's 75 kg Boxing event at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Arundhati Choudhary on winning the Gold medal in the Women's 70 kg Boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Priya Ghangas on winning the Gold medal in the Women's 60 kg Boxing event at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Sakshi on winning the Gold medal in the Women's 51 kg Boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Soman Rana on winning the Gold medal in the Men's Shot Put F57 event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has congratulated Jasmine Lamboria on winning the Gold medal in the Women's 57 kg Boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has congratulated Preeti on winning the Gold medal in the Women's 54 kg Boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026.

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- The meeting of Heads of National Statistical Offices (NSO) of BRICS Countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)) is scheduled to be held under the Chairship of India from 03 to 04 August 2026, at Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.
- India is home to 13,703 species of lepidoptera — butterflies and moths — which is about 8.25% of the total lepidoptera found across the globe. Scientists of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have come out with a detailed "Catalogue of Lepidoptera (Butterflies & Moths) of India", which has been published in the peer-reviewed journal Zootaxa.

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04-08-2026

1. Glaw Lake:

Context: Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, today announced the designation of Glaw Lake in Arunachal Pradesh as India's 101st Ramsar Site, marking a significant milestone as the State gets its first Ramsar Site.

About Glaw Lake:

- Located within the Kamlang Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary, Glaw Lake is a pristine freshwater lake in the Eastern Himalayas and a biodiversity hotspot.
- The lake is fed by perennial mountain streams and is surrounded by lush vegetation, supporting rich floral diversity. The wetland has over 150 tree species and 49 orchid species recorded within the site and its catchment, underscoring the ecological significance of Glaw Lake.
- Glow Lake lies at an elevation of about 1,168 meters above sea level, making it a high-altitude natural lake.
- The lake spreads over an estimated area of around 8 square kilometers, making it relatively large and significant in the region.

About Ramsar sites:

- The Ramsar Convention provides guidelines for the conservation and wise use of wetlands worldwide.
- It is the only international environmental treaty focused on a specific habitat (wetlands).
- The Convention was adopted at Ramsar, Iran, in 1971 and came into force in 1975.
- Cobourg Peninsula (Australia) became the world's first Ramsar Site in 1974.

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- India's first Ramsar sites were designated on October 1, 1981. There were two sites recognized simultaneously: Chilika Lake in Odisha and Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Rajasthan.
- India joined the Ramsar Convention on February 1, 1982.
- The Montreux Record identifies Ramsar sites requiring priority conservation attention. The Montreux Record was adopted in Brisbane in 1996.
- Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur) were added to the Montreux Record in 1990 and 1993, respectively.

2. Kisan Credit Card scheme:

Context: Every ₹1 invested under Kisan Credit Card– Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (KCC-MISS) contributes ₹2.30 to net value addition in the agriculture & allied sector, Third-party Assessment says

About Kisan Credit Card scheme:

- Kisan Credit Card Scheme was launched in 1998 based on the recommendations of R.V. Gupta Committee.
- It aims to simplify and speed up farmers' access to short-term institutional credit for crop production.
- The scheme provides working capital and investment credit for farming activities.
- It also covers post-harvest expenses and marketing costs, supporting overall farm income.
- The government introduced the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) in 2006–07 as a Central Sector Scheme to make KCC credit more affordable.
- MISS ensures low-interest institutional loans for farmers through KCC.
- The scheme helps farmers recover from natural calamities and encourages timely loan repayment.
- Over time, the scheme expanded to include allied agricultural and non-farm activities.

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- The Revised Kisan Credit Card Scheme 2020 introduced integrated single-window credit support.
- The revised KCC provides a RuPay-enabled card for flexible withdrawals and digital payments.
- The credit covers cultivation, post-harvest needs, allied activities, and non-farm activities.
- The scheme is implemented through commercial banks, regional rural banks, and cooperative banks for wider outreach.
- Under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC), term loans and composite credit limits are structured differently for marginal and non-marginal farmers, taking into account their landholding size, investment capacity, and livelihood requirements.
- While non-marginal farmers are provided asset-linked term loans for long-term agricultural and allied investments, marginal farmers are provided with flexible, need-based credit limits.

3. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM):

Context: Over 54 Lakh Beneficiaries Enrolled Under PM-SYM Across the Country.

About Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM):

- **Launched by:** Ministry of Labour & Employment as a Central Sector Scheme to provide old-age social security to unorganised sector workers.
- **Target Beneficiaries:** Unorganised workers (e.g., street vendors, construction workers, agricultural labourers, domestic workers, beedi workers, handloom workers, rag pickers, etc.) with monthly income up to ₹15,000.
- **Eligibility:** Entry age 18–40 years; not covered under NPS, EPFO, or ESIC; should not be an income tax payer.
- **Nature of Scheme:** A voluntary and contributory pension scheme with 50:50 contribution by the subscriber and the Central Government.
- **Contribution:** Monthly contributions are auto-debited from the subscriber's savings bank or Jan-Dhan account until the age of 60 years.

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- **Pension Benefit:** Provides a minimum assured pension of ₹3,000 per month after the subscriber attains 60 years of age.
- **Family Pension:** On the death of the pensioner, the spouse receives 50% of the pension as a family pension.
- **Death/Disability Before 60 Years:** The spouse may continue the scheme by paying contributions or exit and withdraw the accumulated contributions with applicable interest.
- **Default in Contribution:** Subscribers can regularise missed contributions by paying outstanding dues along with applicable penalty.
- **Implementation:** Implemented through LIC (Pension Fund Manager & Pension Payout Authority) and CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. (enrolment and operations partner).
- **Fund Management:** Contributions are invested as per the Government of India's approved investment pattern; after the death of both the subscriber and spouse, the accumulated corpus is credited back to the PM-SYM Fund.

4. Satpura–Melghat Tiger Corridor:

Context: Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) Grants In-Principle Approval to Railway Line Project through Satpura–Melghat Tiger Corridor.

About Satpura–Melghat Tiger Corridor:

- **Location:** The Satpura–Melghat Tiger Corridor connects the Satpura Tiger Reserve with the Melghat Tiger Reserve across the Satpura–Maikal landscape.
- **States Covered:** The corridor spans Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, facilitating wildlife movement across state boundaries.
- **Landscape:** It is part of the Central Indian Highlands and Satpura landscape, one of India's most important tiger conservation regions.

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- **Habitat Type:** The corridor consists mainly of tropical dry deciduous and moist deciduous forests, dominated by teak (Tectona grandis), bamboo, and mixed hardwood species.
- **Purpose:** It enables the movement, dispersal, and genetic exchange of tigers and other wildlife, reducing the risk of inbreeding.
- **Key Wildlife:** Besides tigers, the corridor supports leopards, sloth bears, Indian gaur, wild dogs (dholes), sambar, chital, and numerous bird species.
- **Ecological Importance:** It maintains landscape connectivity, ensures recolonization of habitats, and improves the long-term viability of tiger populations.



5. Pamba River

Context: Heavy rainfall (up to 339 mm) in the Sabarimala forest catchment triggered severe flooding and Pamba River overflowed its banks.

About Pamba River:

- Pamba (Pampa) River is the third longest river in Kerala, after the Periyar and Bharathappuzha rivers.

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- It is popularly known as the "Dakshina Bhageerathi" (Ganga of Kerala) due to its deep religious significance, especially its association with the Sabarimala Temple.
- **Origin:** It originates at an elevation of about 1,650 m from Pulachimalai Hill on the Peerumedu Plateau in the Western Ghats.
- The entire river basin lies within Kerala, bounded by the Western Ghats in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west.
- The river flows westward and empties into the Arabian Sea through a network of distributary channels.
- Major tributaries include Kakki Ar, Azhuta Ar, Kakkad Ar, Kallar, Manimala, and Achenkovil.
- The Pamba River is ecologically and culturally important, supporting agriculture, biodiversity, drinking water needs, and pilgrimage activities in Kerala.

6. Pygmy Hog:

Context: The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) recommended adding the pygmy hog to the list of critically endangered species under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

About Pygmy Hog:



- The Pygmy Hog is the smallest and rarest wild pig species in the world and is endemic to India.
- It is one of the few mammals that builds its own roofed nest using grasses for shelter and breeding.
- It is an indicator species, as its presence signifies healthy, undisturbed tall grassland ecosystems.

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- **Habitat:** Prefers early successional riverine tall grasslands with dense grasses, herbs, shrubs, and young trees.
- **Distribution:** Currently found only in the Manas National Park and Orang National Park grasslands of Assam.
- **Diet:** Feeds on roots, tubers, shoots, grasses, worms, termites, and other small invertebrates.
- **Ecological Role:** Improves soil aeration and fertility through digging and aids seed dispersal, contributing to grassland regeneration.
- **Conservation Status:** Listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN and protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (now Schedule I under the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022).

7. Nagarjunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR):

Context: Three tiger deaths reported within less than three weeks in July have raised fresh concerns over wildlife protection in Andhra Pradesh, prompting the State government to order a high-level inquiry into the incidents in the Nagarjunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR).

About Nagarjunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR):

- **Location:** Situated in the Nallamala Hills across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, covering five districts; it is the largest tiger reserve in India.
- **Formation:** Established in 1978 and brought under Project Tiger in 1983. It comprises the Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Rivers & Reservoirs:** The Krishna River flows through the reserve, and the Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar reservoirs are located within it.
- **Topography:** Characterized by plateaus, ridges, deep valleys, gorges, and rugged hill terrain of the Nallamala ranges.

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- **Vegetation:** Dominated by Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests, along with Southern Thorn Forests, bamboo thickets, and grasslands.
- **Flora:** Rich in endemic plant species such as Andrographis nallamalayana, Eriolaena lushingtonii, Dicliptera beddomei, Premna hamiltonii, and other rare taxa.
- **Fauna:** Supports Bengal Tiger, Leopard, Indian Wolf, Dhole (Wild Dog), Jackal, Rusty-spotted Cat, Pangolin, Mugger Crocodile, Indian Rock Python, Sambar, Chital, Chowsingha, Chinkara, Mouse Deer, Wild Boar, Porcupine, and diverse birdlife.
- **Cultural Importance:** Houses the famous Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple and important Buddhist archaeological remains at Nagarjunakonda, making it significant for both biodiversity and heritage.

Quick Bites:

- The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the Jagadguru Kripalu University at Cuttack, Odisha.
- India secured an impressive fourth position in the Commonwealth Games medal tally, winning 39 medals overall, comprising 13 Gold, 17 Silver and 9 Bronze medals. Our para-athletes scripted history by registering their best-ever performance at the Commonwealth Para Games with 7 medals, including 3 Gold, 2 Silver and 2 Bronze medals.
- The country has achieved near-universal banking coverage, with 99.92% of inhabited villages (6,00,868 out of 6,01,328) now served by a banking outlet (Bank branch / Business Correspondent / India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)) within a radius of 5 km, as per the data uploaded by banks on Jan Dhan Darshak (JDD) App.
- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Government of India, will host the Second Meeting of the BRICS Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) and the Second Meeting of the BRICS Expert Network on Asset Recovery in Hyderabad, Telangana, on 4–5 August 2026, under India's BRICS Presidency 2026.

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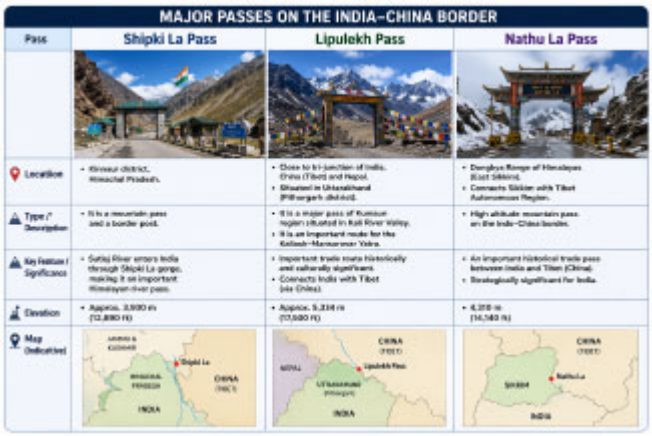
- Agrivoltaics is the simultaneous use of the same land for agriculture and solar photovoltaic (PV) power generation, enabling clean energy production without compromising food cultivation. The concept was coined in 1981 by German scientists Adolf Goetzberger and Armin Zastrow. In this system, solar panels are installed on elevated structures, allowing crops to grow and farm machinery to operate beneath them, while the partial shade can improve water-use efficiency and benefit certain crops. It is increasingly viewed as a sustainable solution to meet rising energy demands while ensuring food security.
- Dhimsa is a traditional tribal folk dance of the Araku Valley hill tribes in North Andhra Pradesh, usually performed by 15–20 tribal women dressed in traditional attire and ornaments. It is a circular group dance featuring graceful, synchronized movements to the rhythm of indigenous instruments such as the Mori (wind instrument), Thudum (drum), and Dappu (percussion). Dhimsa is commonly performed during weddings, harvest festivals, and community celebrations, symbolizing unity, joy, and the rich cultural heritage of Andhra Pradesh. Recently, over 13,000 tribal women and girl students set a Guinness World Record by performing the largest Dhimsa dance at Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport, Bhogapuram (Visakhapatnam).



- The Indian Air Force concluded Exercise ROTOR CLAP III at the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan, on 1–2 August 2026. The rotary-wing exercise was themed Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems and involved multiple helicopter units of the Indian Air Force.

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05-08-2026

1. Indigenous African Swine Fever (ASF) Vaccine:

Context: Scientists at ICAR–National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (ICAR-NIHSAD), Bhopal, have developed India's first indigenous MA-104_Cell_Line-Based Live Attenuated African Swine Fever (ASF) Vaccine for pigs. Developed using a novel attenuated ASFV Genotype II virus with unique gene deletions in the MA-104 cell line, the vaccine is a major breakthrough in veterinary research and is well suited for large-scale production.The indigenous vaccine is expected to substantially reduce pig mortality, minimise economic losses and improve the livelihoods of pig farmers across the country.

About African Swine Fever (ASF):

- African Swine Fever (ASF) is a highly contagious viral hemorrhagic disease affecting domestic pigs and wild boars.
- Not a zoonotic disease – it does not infect humans or other livestock species.
- It causes very high morbidity and mortality (up to 90–100%), leading to severe economic losses in the pig farming sector.
- **Origin & Distribution:** First identified in sub-Saharan Africa; now widespread across Europe, Asia, and Africa.
- **India:** The first ASF outbreak was reported in January 2020 in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Transmission:** Spreads through direct contact with infected pigs, soft ticks (in some regions), contaminated feed, pork products, and contaminated clothing, vehicles, equipment, and other fomites.

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- **Symptoms:** High fever, weakness, loss of appetite, red skin, inflamed eyes, bloody diarrhea, vomiting, and sudden death; symptoms resemble Classical Swine Fever (CSF).
- **Prevention:** No effective treatment or commercially available vaccine; control relies on strict biosecurity, surveillance, movement restrictions, and culling of infected/exposed animals.

2. Yuva Sangam:

Context: The Ministry of Education today opened the online registration portal for Yuva Sangam Phase VII under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) initiative. Interested youth aged 18–30 years, including students of Higher Education Institutions, NSS/NYKS volunteers, and young professionals, are eligible to register.

About Yuva Sangam:

- Yuva Sangam is a flagship Youth Exchange Programme of the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, aimed at strengthening emotional bonds and fostering mutual understanding among young citizens from different States and Union Territories.
- The initiative promotes the spirit of "Unity in Diversity" by facilitating structured exposure visits between paired States and Union Territories, enabling participants to experience India's rich cultural, linguistic, educational and developmental diversity firsthand.
- The programme is structured around the five thematic pillars (5 Ps) of Paryatan (Tourism), Parampara (Traditions & Culture), Pragati (Development & Governance), Paraspar Sampark (People-to-People Connect), and Prodyogiki (Technology & Innovation).
- Through these thematic engagements, participants develop a deeper appreciation of India's cultural diversity while fostering mutual understanding and national unity, in alignment with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

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- Yuva Sangam is implemented through a collaborative "Whole of Government" approach with active support from participating Ministries, Departments, State Governments and partner Higher Education Institutions.

3. Clouded Leopard:

Context: On the occasion of International Clouded Leopard Day (August 4th), India has reaffirmed its commitment to the conservation of one of Asia's most elusive wild cats through the newly launched Clouded Leopard Conservation Action Plan (CAP). Prepared under the Government of India–GEF–UNDP initiative, the Action Plan CAP was released during the 91st meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wild Life (SCNBWL), held in the second week of July 2026, at Coimbatore.

About Clouded Leopard:

- Clouded Leopard is a medium-sized wild cat inhabiting dense forests from the Himalayas through Southeast Asia to South China.
- There are two species: Clouded Leopard (Neofelis nebulosa) – Mainland Southeast Asia and Sunda Clouded Leopard (Neofelis diardi) – Sumatra and Borneo.
- It is an ancient cat lineage, but is neither a true big cat nor a true small cat, as it cannot roar or purr.
- **Distribution:** Found from Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Indochina, southern China, Sumatra, and Borneo; also occurs at high elevations in the Himalayas.
- **Distribution in India:** Present in Sikkim, North Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura; it is the State Animal of Meghalaya.
- **Habitat:** Prefers lowland tropical rainforests, but also inhabits dry woodlands, secondary forests, and mangrove swamps (especially in Borneo).
- **Physical Features:** Measures 60–110 cm in length, weighs 11–20 kg, and has distinctive cloud-shaped dark markings on a pale yellow to brown coat.

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- **Unique Adaptations:** Possesses an exceptionally long tail for balance, short legs, broad paws, and tiger-sized canine teeth relative to its body size.
- It is an arboreal and nocturnal predator, capable of climbing down trees headfirst, hanging upside down, and hunting in trees—a rare ability among cats.
- It is shy, elusive, and solitary, with an average lifespan of 13–17 years.
- Conservation Status: Classified as Vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List.

4. PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana:

Context: PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana Achieves Milestone of Over 50 Lakh Rooftop Solar Installations.

About PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana:

- **PM Surya Ghar:** Muft Bijli Yojana was launched by Narendra Modi on 13 February 2024 with an outlay of ₹75,021 crore.
- The scheme aims to install rooftop solar systems and provide up to 300 units of free electricity per month to one crore households.
- It offers Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of 60% for systems up to 2 kW and 40% for additional capacity between 2–3 kW, capped at 3 kW.
- Beneficiaries can apply for subsidies through the National Portal and select approved vendors for installation.
- Households can avail collateral-free loans at around 7% interest for residential rooftop solar systems up to 3 kW.
- The scheme includes a "Model Solar Village" component to establish one model village per district to promote rural solar adoption.

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- ₹800 crore has been allocated for Model Solar Villages, with ₹1 crore awarded to each selected village to promote energy self-reliance.
- Launched on 13 February 2024 with an outlay of ₹75,021 crore, PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana has become the world's largest domestic rooftop solar programme.
- Over 1 crore households have registered on the National Portal, with more than 33 lakh rooftop systems installed as of May 2026, adding over 12 GW capacity.

5. National Handloom Awards:

Context: The President of India will present the prestigious Handloom Awards during the National Handloom Day celebrations on 7 August 2026. The function will be attended by the Union Minister of Textiles, Shri Giriraj Singh, senior dignitaries, representatives of the handloom industry, master weavers, designers, exporters, artisans, and other distinguished guests. A total of 22 awardees, comprising 3 Sant Kabir Handloom Awardees and 19 National Handloom Awardees, will be honoured for their exceptional contribution towards preserving, promoting and advancing India's rich handloom traditions.

More details:

- Ministry of Textiles announced the recipients of the Sant Kabir Handloom Awards and National Handloom Awards 2025.
- These awards are the highest national recognition for excellence in India's handloom sector.
- They are instituted under the Handloom Marketing Assistance (HMA) component of the National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP).
- The awards recognize excellence in weaving, innovation, design development, marketing initiatives, start-ups, and producer companies associated with the handloom ecosystem.
- The awards will be presented during the National Handloom Day celebrations.

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- The objective is to honour individuals and organisations that have strengthened India's handloom heritage and improved its domestic and global competitiveness.

Sant Kabir Handloom Award

- It is the highest honour for handloom weavers in India.
- It recognizes extraordinary craftsmanship, lifelong dedication, and the preservation and promotion of traditional weaving traditions.
- Selection criteria include technical excellence, innovation, sustained contribution, promotion of traditional weaving, mentoring artisans, and community development.
- Award Components: Gold Coin (Mounted), Tamrapatra, Shawl, and Certificate.

National Handloom Award

- It honours handloom weavers and other stakeholders for creativity, quality, innovation, and excellence in the handloom sector.
- It encourages product diversification, design innovation, superior craftsmanship, and expanded market outreach while preserving India's diverse handloom traditions.
- Award Components: Tamrapatra, Shawl, and Certificate.
- Both awards aim to promote innovation, preserve traditional skills, and support the socio-economic development of weaving communities across India.

6. Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) communication technology:

Context: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has proposed mandating Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) communication systems in all new vehicles in a phased manner from October 2027 to enhance road safety.

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About Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) communication technology:

- Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) is a wireless communication technology that enables vehicles to exchange real-time information such as speed, location, acceleration, braking, and direction.
- It is a subset of Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) technology and forms part of the Intelligent Transport System (ITS) framework.
- V2V is a key component of Vehicular Ad Hoc Networks (VANETs), supporting short- to medium-range and multi-hop communication between vehicles.
- **Working:** Vehicles are equipped with an On-Board Unit (OBU) (costing about ₹5,000–₹7,000) that wirelessly exchanges data with nearby vehicles within a range of about 300 metres.
- **Communication Technologies:** Uses Dedicated Short-Range Communication (DSRC), 4G/5G cellular networks, Wi-Fi, and WiMAX.
- **Benefits:** Provides real-time alerts on sudden braking, collision risks, black spots, accident-prone zones, fog, obstacles, and parked vehicles, thereby reducing accidents and traffic congestion.
- The technology is inspired by aviation safety systems, where aircraft continuously broadcast their position and speed to nearby aircraft and ground stations.

7. Chandipura Virus (CHPV):

Context: In Gujarat, 22 children died during the current monsoon season, 35 children tested positive from 184 suspected cases, and 11 sample results remained pending as of 3 and 4 August 2026 due to Chandipura Virus (CHPV).

About Chandipura Virus (CHPV):

- The Chandipura virus (CHPV) is a member of the Rhabdoviridae family, known to cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) in humans.
- It was first identified in 1965 after being isolated from the blood of two patients from Chandipura village in Maharashtra.

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- It affects mostly children and is characterized by influenza-like illness and neurologic dysfunctions.
- **Transmission:** Spread by vectors like mosquitoes, ticks, and sandflies.
- **Symptoms:** Fever, flu-like illness, and acute encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) .
- **Diagnosis:** Real-time reverse-transcriptase PCR assay helps diagnose the virus .
- **Treatment:** No specific treatment exists, with supportive care being the mainstay of management.
- **Prevention:** Avoiding mosquito, tick, and sandfly bites through repellents and protective clothing is crucial.

Quick Bites:

- Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, along with Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, today co-chaired the second Investors' Meet in Mumbai for India's first and only Telecom Manufacturing Zone (TMZ) in Gwalior, securing fresh investment commitments worth ₹2,000 crore for the initiative.
- Bhartiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) has so far introduced seeds of 18 crops and 124 varieties in the market under the 'Bharat Beej' brand for distribution across the country. BBSSL distributes its seeds through its nationwide network of member cooperative societies, private distributors and dealers, as well as through State Seed Federations and Seed Corporations under various government schemes.
- The Ministry of Education, under India's BRICS chairship 2026, is scheduled to host the 13th BRICS Education Ministers' Meeting and the 3rd BRICS Senior Officials' Meeting from August 5–7, 2026 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- The Government of India is promoting balanced and sustainable fertilizer use through the PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness Generation, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth (PM-PRANAM), while simultaneously expanding organic farming, natural farming and

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precision nutrient management to improve soil health, reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers and promote environmentally sustainable agriculture.

- Nitrosamines (N-nitrosamines) are a class of chemical compounds formed when amines react with nitrites or nitrates under conditions such as high heat, acidic pH, or oxidising environments. They can be generated during food processing, storage, cooking, water disinfection, and even inside the human stomach. Growing consumption of processed foods, pharmaceuticals, and chemically treated water has increased concern over human exposure to nitrosamines. Long-term exposure to these compounds is associated with an increased risk of cancer, making their monitoring and regulation an important public health priority.
- Agratas, the battery arm of Tata Group, is developing proprietary lithium iron phosphate (LFP) cell technology for its factory at Sanand in Gujarat. Lithium iron phosphate is a lithium-ion battery chemistry that uses lithium iron phosphate as the cathode material. LFP cells are known in battery engineering for thermal stability, long cycle life, and lower reliance on nickel and cobalt than nickel manganese cobalt (NMC) cells.
- IIT Hyderabad and Crimson Energy Experts Pvt. Ltd. launched ANUGYAN, the Nuclear Technology Orientation Programme, on 3 August 2026. The three-month residential programme is India's first industry-academia course for engineers and industry professionals in the civil nuclear energy sector.

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06-08-2026

1. Antariksh Venture Capital Fund (AVCF):

Context: The Fund is in operation after getting SEBI approval on 31-10-2025. The total contributions made by IN-SPACe to the "Antariksh Venture Capital Fund" in accordance to Contribution Agreement stands at ₹188.93 Crores (inclusive of ₹182.87 Crore of current FY. i.e.,2026-27) as on 24-07-2026. The Investment Committee of the Antariksh Venture Capital Fund has selected three startups for investment.

About Antariksh Venture Capital Fund (AVCF):

- It is a SEBI-registered Category II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) with a closed-ended structure.
- Sponsored by SIDBI Venture Capital Limited to promote investments in the Indian space ecosystem.
- **Key investor:** Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) under the Department of Space.
- **Objective:** Provide growth capital to space startups and companies at various stages of development.
- Supports scaling of operations, commercialization of technologies, and innovation in the space sector.
- Invests exclusively in Indian space companies with Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4 or above (technology validated in laboratory).
- Aims to strengthen India's private space industry, enhance indigenous capabilities, and contribute to national space ambitions.

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2. Vidyanjali Initiative:

Context: During the last one year, 1,27,884 schools, 32,581 volunteers and 1,126 CSR organisations/NGOs/institutions were newly registered on the Vidyanjali Portal.

About Vidyanjali Initiative:

- **Launched:** September 2021, in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education.
- **Objective:** Strengthen government and government-aided schools through community and private sector participation.
- **Dedicated Portal:** Connects volunteers, alumni, institutions, NGOs, and CSR partners with schools based on identified needs.
- Enables contributions in the form of services, expertise, assets, materials, and equipment.
- Promotes holistic student development by supporting co-curricular, vocational, and life-skill activities beyond academics.
- Acts as a bridge between schools and volunteers, facilitating need-based participation and support.
- Provides a monitoring dashboard for the Ministry to track schools onboarded, volunteers, activities, and contributions.

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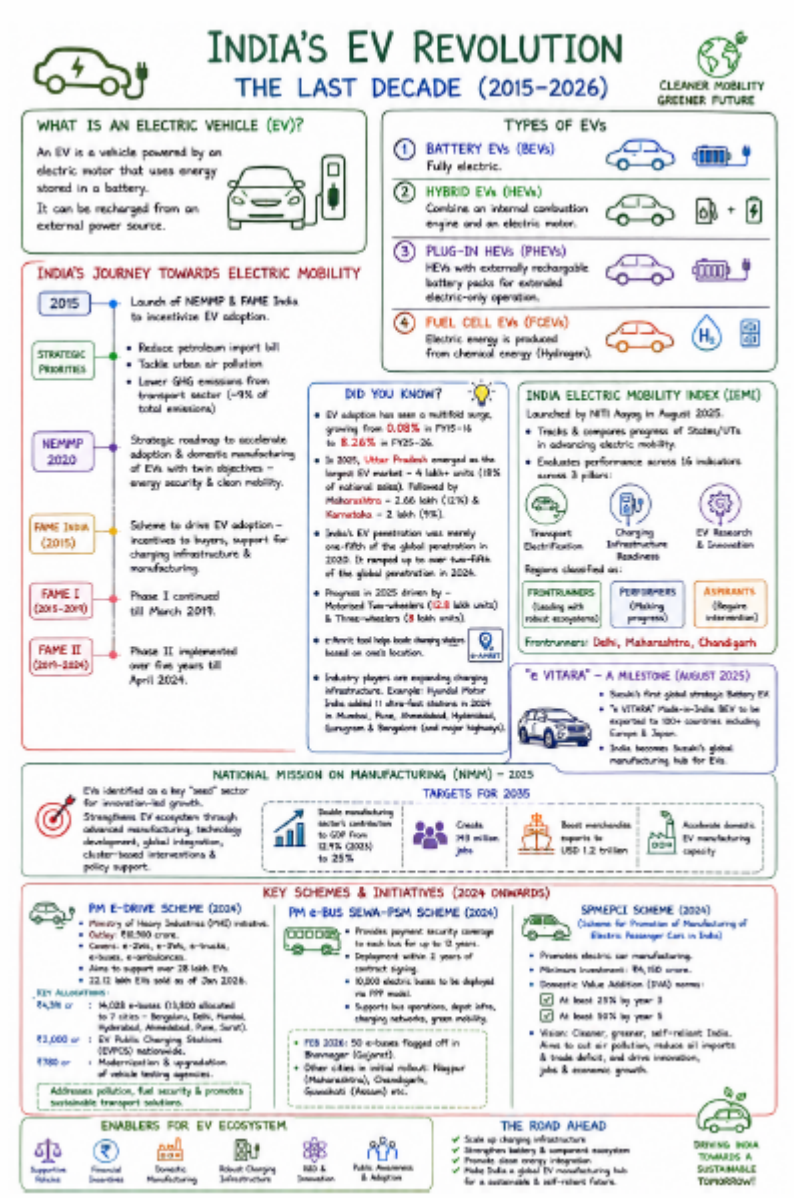
3. India's EV development in last decade:



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4. South-East Asia Regulatory Network (SEARN):

Context: Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) Recognized by WHO SEARN as Regional Centre of Excellence in Pharmacovigilance and Technical Centre in Quality of Medicines. Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India participated in the 10th Anniversary Meeting of the South-East Asia Regulatory Network (SEARN) held in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 4–5 August 2026.

About South-East Asia Regulatory Network (SEARN):

- Launched in 2016 by WHO South-East Asia Region (SEARO) Member States.
- A voluntary network of National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) responsible for regulating medical products.
- Covers regulation of medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, and medical devices.
- **Objective:** Enhance regulatory collaboration, information sharing, convergence, and reliance among member countries.
- Aims to ensure timely access to affordable, safe, quality, and effective medical products.
- Supports capacity building of NRAs by improving technical expertise, regulatory skills, and systems.
- Promotes harmonization of regulatory standards based on international best practices.
- Encourages work-sharing and reliance mechanisms to optimize resources and speed up regulatory decisions.
- WHO provides the initial secretariat, with the goal of making SEARN a self-sustaining inter-country network.
- **Steering Group:** Three permanent members—India, Indonesia, and Thailand—plus two rotating members.

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- **Current members:** Bangladesh, Bhutan, DPR Korea, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Timor-Leste.

5. Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project:

Context: A significant industrial dispute involving workers engaged by L&T Construction through Sub-contractors at the Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project, Kishtwar, Jammu & Kashmir, has been amicably resolved through the sustained conciliation efforts of the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central), Jammu, under the Office of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India. The settlement has benefited 210 workers engaged by L&T Construction at the Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project. As a result, the workers received terminal benefits.

About Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project:

- Pakal Dul is a 1,000 MW (1 GW) run-of-the-river hydropower project under construction on the Marusudar River, a tributary of the Chenab River, in Kishtwar district, Jammu & Kashmir.
- It features a 167 m-high concrete-face rockfill dam and an underground powerhouse.
- The powerhouse will house four 250 MW Francis turbine units operating at a net head of 397.3 m.
- The project is expected to generate about 3,330 million units (MU) of electricity annually.
- It is being developed by Chenab Valley Power Projects Pvt. Ltd. (CVPPL).
- CVPPL is a joint venture of NHPC Ltd. (49%), J&K State Power Development Corporation (49%), and PTC India (2%).
- Jammu & Kashmir will receive 12% free power for the first 10 years, waiver of water usage charges, and the first right to purchase NHPC and PTC's allocated power.

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6. Hexavalent Vaccine:

Context: A study by the Union Health Ministry and partner organisations says introducing the hexavalent vaccine under the Universal Immunisation Programme could improve India's immunisation programme.

About Hexavalent Vaccine:

- A hexavalent (six-in-one) combination vaccine that protects infants against six diseases through a single injection.
- Provides protection against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (whooping cough), Hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), and Polio (IPV).
- Introduced in line with WHO recommendations to simplify and strengthen childhood immunization.
- Immunization schedule: Three primary doses at 6, 10, and 14 weeks, followed by a booster between 12–24 months.
- Reduces the number of injections and clinic visits, improving comfort and parental acceptance.
- Enhances immunization coverage and timely completion of the vaccination schedule.
- Simplifies vaccine storage, handling, and administration, while reducing healthcare costs through efficient vaccine delivery.

7. Monetary Policy Committee:

Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held its bi-monthly meeting from 3 August 2026 to 5 August 2026. On 5 August 2026, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra announced that the repo rate would remain unchanged at 5.25%, marking the fourth consecutive meeting at this level since December 2025.

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About Monetary Policy Committee:

- The RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is a statutory body constituted under the RBI Act, 1934 by the Central Government.
- The RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) was established based on the recommendations of the Urjit Patel Committee.
- It was formed with the objective of fixing the benchmark policy interest rate to keep inflation within a specified target range.
- The RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is a six-member committee.
- It consists of three internal members from the RBI and three external experts nominated by the Central Government.
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is required to meet at least four times a year.
- The quorum required for an MPC meeting is four members.
- Each member of the MPC has one vote, and in the event of a tie, the RBI Governor has a casting vote.
- Once every six months, the Reserve Bank of India is required to publish a document called the Monetary Policy Report.

8. Merchant Discount Rate (MDR):

Context: The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 removes the earlier blanket ban on charging Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on UPI transactions. Instead of permanently prohibiting such charges, the Bill gives the Central Government the power to decide and notify which types of UPI transactions can attract MDR in the future, providing greater flexibility in setting payment policy.

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About Merchant Discount Rate (MDR):

- **Definition:** Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) is the fee paid by merchants to payment service providers for accepting digital payments through credit cards, debit cards, UPI, etc.
- **Purpose:** MDR compensates the issuing bank, acquiring bank (PoS provider), payment network, and payment gateway for processing digital transactions.
- **Nature of Charge:** It includes all processing charges and applicable taxes involved in electronic payment transactions.
- **Rate:** MDR is generally charged as a percentage of the transaction value, typically ranging from 1% to 3%, depending on transaction volume, card type, and average ticket size.
- **Merchant Agreement:** Merchants must register for payment acceptance services and agree to the applicable MDR before accepting digital payments.
- **Settlement:** MDR is automatically deducted from the merchant's account during transaction settlement.
- **RBI Rule:** As per RBI guidelines, merchants cannot pass MDR charges on to customers; the cost must be borne by the merchant.

9. Urban cooperative banks (UCBs):

Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is set to resume licensing of urban cooperative banks (UCBs) after a pause of more than two decades as part of developing a vibrant co-operative sector in the country.

About Urban cooperative banks (UCBs):

- **Definition:** Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) are primary cooperative banks operating mainly in urban and semi-urban areas, though they are not formally defined in law.

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- **History:** The first urban cooperative credit society, Anyonya Sahakari Mandali, was established in 1889 at Baroda, while the Co-operative Credit Societies Act, 1904 (during Lord Curzon's tenure) provided the first legal framework, followed by the Co-operative Societies Act, 1912.
- **Objective:** UCBs provide affordable banking services to small borrowers, traders, self-employed persons, MSMEs, and small-scale industries.
- **Functions:** They offer deposits, housing loans, personal loans, MSME credit, and other banking services.
- **Registration:** UCBs are registered under the State Cooperative Societies Act or the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.
- **RBI Regulation:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regulates and supervises their banking functions under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- **Division of Powers:** While RBI oversees licensing, branch expansion, interest rates, and banking operations, State Governments regulate management, audit, elections, and liquidation under respective cooperative laws.
- **Licensing:** RBI grants banking licences under Sections 22 and 23 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, for carrying on banking business and opening new branches.

Quick Bites:

- Under the Nuclear Energy Mission announced in the Union Budget 2025–26, a total budgetary provision of Rs.20,000 crore has been allocated for the design, development and deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). This allocation is aimed at supporting India's objective of developing and operationalising at least five indigenous SMRs by 2033.
- The Government operationalised an Inventory-based Cross-border E-Commerce Export Framework under FTP 2023, enabling export-only inventory operations through registered Exporters-on-Record to boost exports by Indian manufacturers, artisans, and MSMEs. It is a model in which an e-commerce entity maintains inventory of goods in India and exports them directly to

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overseas customers through a registered Exporter-on-Record (EOR) after procuring goods from Indian sellers.

- The Government of India has established three Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in Artificial Intelligence (AI) as part of the vision to "Make AI in India and Make AI work for India" in the areas of Agriculture, Sustainable Cities and Healthcare following the announcement in the Union Budget 2023-24. These AI-CoEs are being led by IIT Ropar, IIT Kanpur, and IISc Bangalore respectively. The total budget outlay for the three AI-CoEs is 990 crores.
- The GI & Beyond 2.0 Summit, organised by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, in association with the Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC), concluded successfully today at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi. The Summit showcased India's rich GI-tagged handloom and handicraft products and brought together policymakers
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, is observing World Breastfeeding Week 2026 from 1st to 7th August across the country under the theme “Breastfeeding for a Sustainable Start in Life: Strengthen What Works”. The observance is being carried forward under POSHAN Abhiyaan with Anganwadi Centres, healthcare institutions, community outreach platforms and digital media across States and Union Territories anchoring awareness activities through the week.
- Asan Wetland Conservation Reserve is Uttarakhand's first Ramsar Site, located at the confluence of the Asan and Yamuna rivers. Situated along the Central Asian Flyway, it serves as a vital habitat for numerous resident and migratory bird species. Recently, the Supreme Court clarified that its direction prohibiting mining activities within a 10 km radius of the Asan Wetland Conservation Reserve should be applied uniformly to all wetland conservation reserves across India to ensure parity.
- The World Development Report (WDR) 2026 by the World Bank highlights Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a transformative technology for accelerating inclusive economic growth in developing

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countries. The report notes that only 4.5% of jobs are at risk of AI-driven automation, while 16.2% of jobs are expected to experience productivity enhancement through AI. It recommends a three-step strategy for developing nations: adopt existing AI technologies, adapt them to local needs through "Small AI" solutions, and advance frontier AI capabilities to drive long-term innovation and competitiveness.

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) developed India's first fully annotated telomere-to-telomere (T2T) reference genome of pigeonpea variety 'Asha'. The genome assembly, designated NIPB_CcT2T_4, was released on 20 April 2026. A T2T genome is a complete chromosome-level DNA sequence that extends from one telomere to the other.
- Operation Trishul is an Indian fugitive-tracking and extradition initiative linked to the return of 274 fugitives from 36 countries since 2019. The fugitives were wanted in cases involving terrorism, organised crime, narco-terrorism, sexual offences, financial fraud, murder, and human trafficking. Operation Trishul uses satellite imagery, surveillance inputs, and digital footprints to locate fugitives who change names or identities abroad. The operation involves coordination among the Intelligence Bureau, Central Bureau of Investigation, Research and Analysis Wing, state police forces, and Interpol.
- Nauru launched the Nauru Economic and Climate Resilience Citizenship Program (ECRCP) on 1 January 2025 as a citizenship-by-investment scheme linked to climate adaptation finance. The programme offers Nauruan citizenship and a passport in return for a financial contribution, and it is connected to relocation and infrastructure plans for the island state.
- Meghalaya has launched a dedicated programme for its State animal—the mainland clouded leopard (Neofelis nebulosa). On Tuesday, Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma unveiled Mission Clouded Leopard. "The mission covers habitat protection and restoration, scientific research and long-term monitoring, stronger protection measures, landscape connectivity, capacity building of frontline staff, community participation, and public awareness. It will be guided by the Meghalaya Clouded Leopard Action Plan, now being prepared by the Forest and Environment Department.

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07-08-2026

1. Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan):

Context: Union Cabinet approved GOBARdhan, the National Circular Bioenergy Scheme, with a total outlay of ₹23,731 crore on 06 August 2026.

About Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan):

- Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan) was originally launched under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) in 2018 as an integral component of Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SWM), converting bio-waste - animal waste, kitchen leftovers, crop residue and market waste, into biogas and bio-slurry, thereby ensuring cleanliness in villages and improving rural lives.
- Earlier, the Compressed Biogas (CBG) ecosystem was spread across four different ministries. To ensure better coordination and accelerate the sector's growth, the Government has consolidated the entire scheme under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG).
- **Implementation Period:** FY 2026–27 to FY 2035–36 with a total outlay of ₹23,731 crore.
- **Objective:** To establish Compressed Biogas (CBG) as a major pillar of India's future clean energy mix.

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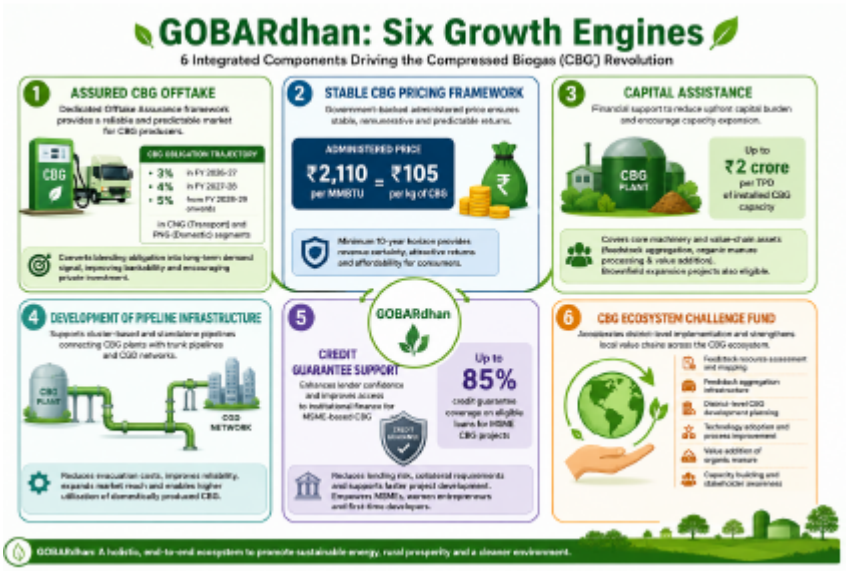

- **Key Support Measures:** Assured demand, remunerative and stable pricing, capital assistance, pipeline infrastructure, credit guarantee, and technology development.
- **Production Target:** Increase domestic CBG production nearly ten-fold and accelerate nationwide expansion of the CBG sector.
- **Economic & Environmental Goals:** Mobilize large-scale private investment, promote waste-to-wealth initiatives, and develop a circular bioeconomy.
- **Vision:** Convert India's waste into clean energy, transform villages into clean energy hubs, and make farmers key partners in India's energy security.

2. Agni missiles:

Context: Medium Range Ballistic Missile 'Agni-4' was successfully test-fired from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur in Odisha on August 06, 2026. The launch validated all operational and technical parameters. The test was carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command.

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About Agni missiles:

- Agni-4 is an ingeniously built advanced surface-to-surface ballistic missile.
- It is a fire-and-forget missile, which cannot be stopped without an interceptor missile.
- Agni-1 to 5 missiles are designed & developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Agni I:** Range of 700-800 km.
- **Agni II:** Range more than 2000 km.
- **Agni III**: Range of more than 2,500 Km
- **Agni IV:** Range is more than 3,500 km and can fire from a road mobile launcher.
- **Agni-V:** The longest of the Agni series, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 km.

3. The India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway and Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project:

Context: The Act East Policy places the North Eastern Region (NER) at the centre of India's engagement with Southeast Asia. A central focus of the Act East Policy is development of cross-border connectivity infrastructure. The India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway and Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project are flagship projects under this framework.

About India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway:

- **Regional Connectivity Project:** A major connectivity initiative linking India, Myanmar, and Thailand by road to enhance trade, tourism, and people-to-people ties.
- **Route & Length:** The highway is approximately 1,360 km (845 miles) long, connecting Moreh (Manipur, India) → Myanmar → Mae Sot (Thailand).
- **Origin:** The project was proposed by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and approved in April 2002 during a ministerial meeting of India, Myanmar, and Thailand.

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- **Construction:** Work on the highway commenced in 2012 and is being executed in multiple phases.
- **First Segment:** The India–Myanmar Friendship Road forms the initial stretch, connecting Tamu/Moreh – Kalemyo – Kalewa in Myanmar.
- **Implementation:** On the Indian side, the project is implemented by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in coordination with Myanmar and Thailand, with funding support from the Ministry of Finance.
- **Significance:** The highway is a key pillar of India's Act East Policy, strengthening connectivity with ASEAN, boosting regional trade, economic integration, and strategic cooperation in Southeast Asia.

About Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project:



- Kaladan Project would link India and Myanmar via the Bay of Bengal.
- It aims to create a multi-modal mode of transport for the shipment of cargo from the eastern ports of India to Myanmar as well as to the North-Eastern part of India through Myanmar.
- Once completed, it will link Kolkata with the Sittwe seaport in Rakhine state in Myanmar, primarily over the Bay of Bengal – covering over 500 km.

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- The project envisaged four important stages: Kolkata to Sittwe waterway; Sittwe to Paletwa inland (River Kaladan) waterway; Paletwa to India-Myanmar border post in Myanmar; finally, linking the road to Lawngtlai in Mizoram as part of the project's last leg.

4. Prime Minister Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM-YASASVI):

Context: Demonstrating how targeted financial assistance can transform lives, Rajan Kumar, a 25-year-old student from the Other Backward Class (OBC) community, successfully completed his Master of Business Administration (MBA) with support under the PM-YASASVI Scheme – Top Class Education for OBC, EBC and DNT Students.

About PM-YASASVI:

- PM-YASASVI is an umbrella scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, implemented by the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, providing scholarships and hostel facilities for socially and educationally backward students.
- It aims to promote educational empowerment of students belonging to OBC, EBC, and DNT communities by providing scholarships and hostel facilities, enabling them to overcome financial and geographical barriers and complete quality education.
- Evolution: The hostel component began in 1998–99, was revised in 2017–18, and later consolidated into the PM-YASASVI umbrella scheme.
- Objective: To remove financial and geographical barriers and ensure equitable access to secondary and higher education.
- Beneficiaries: Students belonging to OBCs, EBCs, and Denotified, Nomadic & Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs); OBC applicants must belong to the Non-Creamy Layer.
- Scholarship Components: Covers Pre-Matric Scholarship, Post-Matric Scholarship, Top Class Education in Schools, and Top Class Education in Colleges.

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- Hostel Provisions: Priority is given to rural post-matric and undergraduate students, with 5% reservation for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).
- Hostel Construction Norms: Per-seat cost is ₹3.50 lakh (North-East), ₹3.25 lakh (Himalayan States), and ₹3.00 lakh (Rest of India), with completion mandated within 18 months to 2 years.
- Implementation Features: Allows hostel construction on existing government campuses/projects, avoiding the need for new land acquisition.
- Fund Release & Monitoring: Central assistance is released in a 50:45:5 ratio, with the final installment linked to occupancy verification; 0.25% of the budget is earmarked for third-party quality audits and impact assessment.

5. Dhansiri River:

Context: The flood situation in Assam remained grim in affected areas due to the continuous rise in the water level of the Dhansiri river.

About Dhansiri River:

- Dhansiri is the main river of Golaghat District (Assam) and Dimapur District (Nagaland) and is an important tributary of the Brahmaputra River.
- It originates from Laisang Peak in Nagaland.
- The river first flows northwest (about 40 km), then northeast (about 76 km) to Dimapur, and later flows northward before turning northwest near Golaghat.
- It finally joins the Brahmaputra River at Dhansirimukh in Assam.
- The river has a total length of about 352 km and a catchment area of around 1,220 sq. km.
- It flows along the Nagaland–Assam border, supporting rich biodiversity.
- The river corridor is flanked by Dhansiri Reserved Forest on one side and Intanki National Park on the other, making it an ecologically significant landscape.

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Quick Bites:

- Bhubaneswari Opencast Project (MCL), Odisha is a 30 MTPA coal mine in the Talcher Coalfield, integrating high productivity with sustainability and technology. In FY 2025–26, it produced 26.477 MT (105.98% of target), with a cumulative production of 370.4 MT, significantly supporting India's energy security.
- India successfully concludes the Tenth BRICS Industry Ministers' Meeting in Jaipur under its BRICS Chairship 2026.
- Union Education Minister Shri Pralhad Joshi will participate in the 13th BRICS Education Ministers' meeting to be held tomorrow in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The Meeting will deliberate on key priorities including Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), skill development, research and innovation, mutual recognition of qualifications and academic leadership.
- The IndiaAI Mission, under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, organised the AIKosh University Engagement Programme (UEP) at Chitkara University, Rajpura, Punjab on August 6, 2026. The programme aimed to strengthen AI awareness, democratise access to AI resources, and equip students with the knowledge and tools required to participate in India's rapidly growing artificial intelligence ecosystem.
- The 82.15 Km long India's first Namo Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor namely, Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor (which includes 23 km of Meerut metro network on same infrastructure) has become fully operational since February, 2026. National Capital Region Transport Corporation Ltd. (NCRTC), the implementing agency for Namo Bharat RRTS, has informed that as on date, over 3.8 crores commuters have availed the Namo Bharat services since beginning of operation with a punctuality level of over 99%.
- BRICS WAVES Bazaar, a premier international marketplace for the creative economy brings together over 500 delegates from BRICS member and partner countries in Mumbai.
- Lesotho, with its capital at Maseru, is a landlocked country completely surrounded by South Africa and is popularly known as the "Kingdom in the Sky" or "Mountain Kingdom". It is the only

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country in the world where the entire territory lies above 1,400 m in elevation. Its major mountain systems are the Drakensberg and Maloti ranges, and its highest peak is Thabana Ntlenyana (3,482 m). The Orange River originates in the Lesotho Highlands. The country also shares the transboundary Maloti-Drakensberg Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site comprising Sehlathebe National Park in Lesotho and Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg National Park in South Africa.

- The Falcon 9 is a reusable, two-stage orbital launch vehicle designed and manufactured by SpaceX to transport astronauts and payloads into Earth orbit and beyond. It is the world's first orbital-class reusable rocket, with its reusable first stage significantly reducing the cost of space missions by enabling multiple flights. In 2025, a Falcon 9 launched two commercial robotic lunar landers; after mission completion, the first stage successfully returned to Earth, while the second stage remained in space and eventually crashed into the Moon's surface, as announced by NASA.
- The Cabinet Secretariat functions directly under the Prime Minister and is headed by the Cabinet Secretary, the senior-most civil servant in India and ex-officio Chairman of the Civil Services Board. It administers the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961 and the Allocation of Business Rules, 1961, provides secretarial assistance to the Cabinet and its Committees, ensures inter-ministerial coordination by resolving differences through Committees of Secretaries, facilitates policy formulation and the smooth conduct of government business, and coordinates the management of major national crises and emergencies by ensuring effective cooperation among various ministries.
- The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism launched the ‘As Seen on Netflix’ section on the Incredible India portal on 5 August 2026. The feature was developed with Netflix India to connect films and series with real locations, cultural traditions, and travel experiences in India.
- Massachusetts declared August 15, 2026, as India Day across the state, and Boston issued a similar proclamation for the same date. The observance coincides with the 79th anniversary of India’s independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

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- Boleng in Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh will host the Asian Rafting Championships 2026 from 5 October to 9 October 2026. The five-day event will take place on the Simang River, a Class III+ tributary of the Siang River, and will bring paddlers from across Asia to compete in white-water rafting events.
- The Bharat International Rice Conference (BIRC) 2026 is the second edition of the event and will be held from 23 to 25 October 2026 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The Indian Rice Exporters' Federation (IREF), which represents over 8,000 rice exporters, is organising the conference.
- India's non-fossil fuel electricity generation capacity has crossed 300 GW and the country is on track to achieve its target of 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Thursday.

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08-08-2026

1. Government e Marketplace (GeM):

Context: The Government e Marketplace (GeM) will complete ten years of operations on 9 August 2026. Marking a decade of transforming public procurement through technology, transparency, efficiency and good governance, the platform has facilitated a cumulative Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) of over ₹20 lakh crore through more than 3.78 crore orders, underscoring its growing role in India's public procurement ecosystem.

About Government e Marketplace (GeM):

- The Government e Marketplace Special Purpose Vehicle (GeM SPV), a Section 8 non-profit company under the Ministry of Commerce, was incorporated on 17 May 2017 under the Companies Act, 2013 to develop, manage and maintain the GeM platform.
- Over the years, GeM has emerged as a major digital public procurement platform, promoting ease of doing business and wider market access for sellers across the country.
- It is an online platform for public procurement.
- It was launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I).
- It was created with the objective to create an open and transparent procurement platform for government buyers to facilitate the online procurement of goods and services.

2. Asiatic Wild Water Buffalo:

Context: Chhattisgarh plans to translocate wild buffaloes from Assam to revive its declining wild buffalo population.

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About Asiatic Wild Water Buffalo:

- Largest wild bovine in the world, also known as Wild Water Buffalo, Asiatic Buffalo, or Wild Asian Buffalo; inhabits swamps, flooded grasslands, wetlands, alluvial plains, and river valleys.
- **Distribution:** Found in Nepal, India, Bhutan, and Thailand. India holds over 90% of the global population (3,500–3,700 individuals), mainly in Assam, with smaller populations in Meghalaya, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra.
- **Behaviour & Diet:** Both diurnal and nocturnal; herbivorous, feeding on grasses, aquatic plants, herbs, leaves, bark, and agricultural crops.
- **Reproduction:** Males attain sexual maturity at 1.5 years, while females mature at around 3 years.
- **Major Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation, hunting, diseases and parasites, and hybridization with domestic buffaloes, leading to genetic dilution.
- **Conservation Status:** IUCN Red List – Endangered; protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

3. mRNA vaccine:

Context: Recently, the U.S. FDA approved the world's first mRNA vaccine for seasonal influenza. mRNA vaccines use messenger RNA (mRNA) carrying genetic instructions that enable the body's cells to produce a harmless pathogen-specific protein (antigen).

mRNA vaccines vs Traditional vaccine:

Feature	mRNA Vaccines	Traditional Vaccines
Principle	Deliver messenger RNA (mRNA) encoding a pathogen's antigen, which host cells translate into proteins to trigger an immune response.	Introduce the antigen itself in the form of weakened, killed, protein subunit, or toxoid to stimulate immunity.

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Composition	Synthetic mRNA enclosed in lipid nanoparticles (LNPs).	Live-attenuated, inactivated, subunit, conjugate, toxoid, or viral components.
Mechanism of Action	Host cells produce the antigen after receiving mRNA, activating both B-cell and T-cell responses.	The administered antigen directly stimulates the immune system to produce antibodies and memory cells.
Genetic Material	Contains mRNA only; does not enter the nucleus or alter DNA.	Usually contains no genetic material (except some live vaccines containing weakened organisms).
Development Time	Rapid; sequence can be designed quickly after pathogen identification.	Longer; requires culturing or producing the pathogen/antigen.
Manufacturing	Cell-free, laboratory synthesis; easier to modify for new variants.	Requires cultivation of pathogens or purification of antigens, making production more complex.
Immune Response	Strong humoral and cellular immunity.	Immune response varies depending on vaccine type; some mainly induce antibody responses.
Safety	No risk of causing the disease since it contains no live pathogen.	Live-attenuated vaccines carry a small risk in immunocompromised individuals.
Storage	Generally requires ultra-cold or cold-chain storage (though newer formulations are improving).	Most require standard refrigeration (2–8°C); some are more heat-stable.
Booster Requirement	Boosters may be needed as immunity wanes or variants emerge.	Booster needs vary by vaccine type (e.g., tetanus boosters, MMR usually long-lasting).

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4. NITI Aayog School Education Index:

Context: Punjab secured the first rank in the NITI Aayog School Education Quality Index 2026, ahead of states such as Kerala. The state government placed the ranking alongside school infrastructure upgrades, learning outcomes, teacher training, and examination support programmes in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha in Chandigarh on 6 August 2026.

Major highlights of NITI Aayog School Education Index:

- Punjab ranked 1st among States in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0, while Chandigarh topped among Union Territories.
- Punjab recorded the highest learning outcomes in PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024.
- Kerala achieved the highest Higher Secondary Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at around 89.5%, followed by West Bengal.
- Karnataka registered the highest improvement in Higher Secondary GER between 2014 and 2024.
- Kerala emerged as one of the leading states in school infrastructure, particularly in electricity and basic facilities.
- India has 14.71 lakh schools catering to 24.69 crore students, making it the largest school education system in the world.
- Around 94,000 government schools have closed over the past decade due to school consolidation and declining enrolment.
- Government school enrolment declined by 2.26 crore students during the last decade.
- Nearly 1.19 lakh schools in India still do not have electricity.
- About 1.04 lakh schools function as single-teacher schools, predominantly in rural areas.
- Teacher vacancies are highest in Bihar, followed by Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.
- The report recommends strengthening Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), improving teacher availability, expanding digital and physical infrastructure, and adopting data-driven governance through measurable performance indicators.

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5. EVEREST engine:

Context: Astrobase, a Bengaluru-based space company unveiled India's first privately built 800 kN Full-Flow Staged Combustion (FFSC) LOX-Methane rocket engine on Friday.

About EVEREST engine:

- **Developer:** Bengaluru-based space start-up Astrobase Space Technologies unveiled EVEREST, an 800 kN-class Full-Flow Staged Combustion (FFSC) rocket engine, described as India's first privately developed engine of this type.
- **Propellants:** EVEREST uses Liquid Oxygen (LOX) as oxidiser and liquid methane as fuel, a combination known as methalox, which is well suited to reusable launch systems.
- **Thrust:** The engine is designed to generate 800 kN of vacuum thrust, placing it in the 80-tonne-class propulsion category.
- **FFSC technology:** In the Full-Flow Staged Combustion cycle, both the fuel and oxidiser are completely routed through separate preburners/turbines before entering the main combustion chamber, enabling very high efficiency and chamber pressure.
- **Why it matters:** FFSC is considered one of the most advanced and technically challenging liquid-rocket engine cycles because it can provide high efficiency, lower turbine temperatures and improved durability—important for reusable rockets.
- **Reusability focus:** Astrobase intends to use EVEREST as the propulsion system for reusable medium-lift launch vehicles, with the company targeting lower launch costs and faster turnaround.
- **Indigenous capability:** The engine has been designed, manufactured and integrated in India, with core components including 3D-printed parts, supporting India's goal of developing sovereign rocket-propulsion and space-manufacturing capabilities.
- **IN-SPACe support:** Astrobase was selected under IN-SPACe's Technology Adoption Fund (TAF) in June 2026 to accelerate development of the indigenous 800 kN LOX–methane FFSC engine.

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6. Opposition wants FCRA Bill scrapped or referred to JPC:

- **New Rules:** MHA notified the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2026, introducing stricter compliance for NGOs and associations receiving foreign funds.
- **Activity-Based Registration:** NGOs must specify their exact activities and operational States/UTs, with separate fees for each category and jurisdiction.
- **Existing NGOs:** FCRA-registered organisations get one year to specify the activities and States/UTs they wish to retain.
- **Religious Activities:** Foreign contributions may fund worship, religious education, heritage preservation and community kitchens, but not proselytisation.
- **Religious Conversion:** The rules explicitly exclude proselytisation/conversion-oriented activities from permissible religious activities.
- **Article 25:** While Article 25 protects the right to profess, practise and propagate religion, the Supreme Court held in Rev Stainislaus v. State of Madhya Pradesh (1977) that propagation does not include a fundamental right to convert another person.
- **Foreign Functionaries:** Associations having foreign nationals, except PIOs, as key functionaries will ordinarily not be considered for FCRA registration or prior permission.
- **Key Functionaries:** The definition is expanded to include directors, partners, trustees and Karta of an HUF, besides office-bearers.
- **Fund Utilisation:** NGOs must utilise at least 75% of previously received funds before receiving further instalments.
- **Renewal Condition:** Organisations must spend at least ₹10 lakh on approved activities over two years to qualify for renewal.
- **Donor Disclosure:** NGOs must disclose the ultimate donor to improve transparency and accountability.
- **Digital Transparency:** Organisations are required to disclose their official websites, social-media accounts and publications.

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- **FCRA 2010:** The FCRA regulates the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions and foreign hospitality in India.
- **Origin:** The original FCRA was enacted in 1976 during the Emergency and was replaced by the FCRA, 2010.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) administers and monitors the FCRA as part of India's national-security framework.
- **Registration:** Organisations need FCRA registration or prior permission from the Central Government to legally receive foreign contributions.
- **SBI Account:** Foreign contributions must initially be received through the designated FCRA account at SBI, New Delhi Main Branch.
- **Transfer Restriction:** The 2020 amendment prohibited FCRA-registered organisations from transferring or sub-granting foreign contributions to other persons or organisations.

Quick Bites:

- Myoglobin is an oxygen-binding protein found in the muscle cells of animals, including humans, where it stores oxygen to ensure a continuous supply during muscle activity. It is responsible for the red colour, characteristic taste, and aroma of meat and is a rich source of heme iron, which is more readily absorbed by the human body than non-heme iron. Recently, researchers successfully engineered lettuce and tobacco plants to produce myoglobin, enabling plant-based foods to better replicate the nutritional value and sensory qualities of meat while enhancing their iron content.
- The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) is an autonomous apex research body under the Ministry of Ayush, responsible for the formulation, coordination, development, and promotion of scientific research in Ayurveda. To strengthen evidence-based Ayurveda, it has launched CCRAS-PARAMPARA, a flagship initiative aimed at the systematic documentation, evaluation, and scientific validation of India's Local Health Traditions (LHTs),

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ethnomedical practices, and traditional veterinary knowledge, thereby preserving and integrating traditional knowledge with modern scientific research.

- India observed the 12th National Handloom Day on 7 August 2026. The observance was first declared in 2015 to honour the weaving community and to mark the Swadeshi Movement launched on 7 August 1905.
- Ladakh approved India's first guided high-altitude wildlife safari on 6 August 2026. The plan covers snow-leopard and bird-watching trails in Hemis National Park, Changthang, Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary, Nubra, Zanskar, Sham, Kargil and Drass.
- A 1.5-hectare wildfire broke out on 5 August 2026 near the Sugar Mountain Trail in təmtəmíxʷtən/Belcarra Regional Park in the Metro Vancouver region of British Columbia, Canada. The fire led to tactical evacuations for two homes on Fern Drive in the Village of Anmore and evacuation alerts for 35 additional properties.
- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, organised BIOFACH INDIA 2026 with NuernbergMesse India on 6 August 2026. The three-day international trade fair is scheduled from 6 to 8 August 2026 at the India Expo Centre & Mart in Greater Noida, Delhi-NCR.
- Indian-origin NASA astronaut Anil Menon completed his first extravehicular activity on 6 August 2026 during a spacewalk outside the International Space Station.
- IIT Guwahati developed "E-Eye", a low-cost portable optical sensing device for rapid detection of toxicants and cancer-causing heavy metals in water and biological samples. The device was announced on 6 August 2026 and was designed for on-site testing with digital output and wireless data transmission.
- India's forex reserves jumped by $10.512 billion to $692.866 billion during the week ended July 31, the RBI said on Friday. The overall kitty had jumped by $6.118 billion to $682.354 billion in the previous reporting week. Reserves had expanded to an all-time high of $728.494 billion during the week ended February 27 this year before the onset of the West Asia conflict, which led to

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several weeks of drop as the rupee came under pressure and the RBI had to intervene in the forex market through dollar sales.

- The U.S. has "today" become India's largest supplier of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), accounting for 67% of its LPG imports.
- Amid surge in applications for solar, wind and hybrid renewable energy projects in border areas, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued new national security guidelines, introducing a blanket ban on such projects within 1 km of the international border and mandating security clearance for projects located up to 50 km away. Under the guidelines, all solar, wind and hybrid energy projects proposed within 50 km of the Line of Control (LoC), Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the international border will require security clearance from the MHA. Projects located in the first kilometre from these borders have been declared a "restricted area", where no project activity will be permitted.

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09-08-2026

1. Makhana:

Context: APEDA Facilitates First-Ever Export of GI-tagged Mithila Makhana by Sea Route from Bihar to Australia.

About Makhana:

- **Botanical Name:** Makhana or foxnut is an aquatic flowering crop scientifically known as Euryale ferox, commonly called the prickly water lily.
- **Climate:** It grows best in tropical and subtropical climates.
- **Temperature & Humidity:** Suitable temperature is around 20–35°C, with 50–90% relative humidity.
- **Rainfall & Soil:** Requires about 100–250 cm annual rainfall and prefers smooth loamy soil.
- **Origin:** It is considered native to South-East Asia and China.
- **Special Name:** Makhana is called the "Black Diamond" because of its dark outer covering.
- **Major Producer:** Bihar is India's leading producer, contributing approximately 90% of India's makhana production; other producing states include West Bengal, Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.
- **Global Distribution:** It is also cultivated in Nepal, Bangladesh, China, Japan, Russia and Korea.
- Importance: Makhana is increasingly recognised as a nutritious "superfood" with growing commercial importance.

2. DigiLocker:

Context: DigiLocker Partners with AAERI to Fast-Track Document Verification for Indian Students Heading to Australia. National e-Governance Division (NeGD) under the Ministry of

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Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has partnered with the Association of Australian Education Representatives in India (AAERI) to launch 'AAERI Verify'.

About DigiLocker:

- The DigiLocker platform, launched in 2015, operates as an app to store users' digital records.
- The app can be used when applying for a passport, reviewing marksheets, or proving one's identity during travel.
- The app is part of the Indian government's paper-free initiative aimed at letting users access, verify, and store essential documents in a digital wallet so that they are easy to retrieve and present to officials when required.
- DigiLocker is a paperless solution meant to ensure that a user can access the latest and updated versions of their documents online in order to prove their identity and their credentials at any given moment.
- To the verifying officials, this helps in keeping at bay fake, poor quality print copies, and outdated documents that miss key details.
- Also, for the user, this app helps eliminate the need to carry separate sets of documents while they are on the move.
- DigiLocker is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY) under the Digital India programme.
- It is a government approved application and is ideally maintained with strict security protocols framed by officials.

3. Modified Mix Seal Surfacing Plus (MSS+) Technology:

Context: In a significant step towards promoting sustainable, cost-effective and environmentally friendly road construction and maintenance technologies, CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI), New Delhi, presented its indigenously developed Modified Mix Seal Surfacing Plus

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(MSS+) Technology before Mr. V. Srinivas, IAS, Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan at Rajasthan Secretariat.

About Modified Mix Seal Surfacing Plus (MSS+) Technology:

- **Technology:** MSS+ is an innovative road-surfacing technology designed to improve the durability and performance of roads.
- **Basic Principle:** It uses a modified bituminous mix to create a durable surface layer over existing road pavement.
- **Purpose:** It aims to provide better resistance to wear, cracking, water infiltration and deformation.
- **Material Efficiency:** MSS+ can reduce the requirement for conventional pavement materials, helping to optimise resource use.
- **Durability:** The modified mix improves the strength and service life of the road surface compared with conventional surfacing methods.
- **Maintenance:** It can help reduce the frequency and cost of road maintenance by improving pavement performance.
- **Sustainability:** Lower material consumption and longer pavement life can contribute to reduced environmental impact and carbon emissions.
- **Application:** It is particularly relevant for road resurfacing and upgrading existing pavements, offering a relatively efficient approach to improving road quality.
- **Significance:** MSS+ represents the use of advanced pavement technology for cost-effective, durable and sustainable road infrastructure.

4. Eco-Educational Hub:

Context: Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh dedicates to the nation first-of-its-kind 'Eco-Educational Hub' developed by CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (CSIR-NBRI) at Lucknow.

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About Eco-Educational Hub:

- **Location & Institution:** The first-of-its-kind CSIR-NBRI Eco-Educational Hub, 'Prakriti Gyan Dham' was dedicated at the Maharishi Parashar Bioresource Centre (MPBC), Banthra, Lucknow.
- **Core Concept:** It integrates scientific research, environmental education, biodiversity conservation, botanical heritage and cultural interpretation.
- **Living Repository:** The Hub serves as a living repository of India's botanical and cultural heritage, designed for students, researchers, educators, nature enthusiasts and the general public.
- **PAaVan Path:** The PAaVan Path (Plants and Associated Vegetations for Appreciating Nature) is the central interpretive heritage trail, showcasing curated plant collections representing diverse ecological regions.
- **Indian Heritage Garden:** It conserves heritage trees propagated from historically significant locations, including Bawan Imli of Fatehpur, Mother Dussehri Mango of Lucknow, Patalpuri Banyan of Prayagraj and Gandhi-planted Mango of Bhitiharwa.
- **Digital Interpretation:** QR-enabled audio systems provide visitors with historical, cultural and botanical information about heritage trees through smartphones.
- **Threatened & State Plants:** Vibhav Enclave showcases rare, endangered and threatened plants, while Bhairav Enclave presents the officially designated State Plants of States and UTs.
- **Bamboosteum:** Houses 43 indigenous and exotic bamboo species, highlighting bamboo's role in carbon sequestration, ecological restoration, soil conservation, sustainable livelihoods and green infrastructure.

5. Slender-billed vultures (Gyps tenuirostris):

Context: Five captive-bred slender-billed vultures at the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)'s facility in Assam were released into the wild for the first time globally. Vultures were transported from Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre, Guwahati and released at Jatayu Soft Release Centre in Kaziranga National Park.

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About Slender-billed vultures (Gyps tenuirostris):

- **Habitat:** An Old World vulture of the sub-Himalayan region, inhabiting wetlands, wooded areas and open countryside.
- **Distribution:** Found in India from the Gangetic plains to Himachal Pradesh, potentially extending to northern Odisha, and eastwards through Assam; also occurs in Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Cambodia.
- **Identification:** Characterised by a long, slender neck, pale underparts and a dark, thin bill; generally less associated with human habitation than other vultures.
- **Diet & Behaviour:** Primarily a carrion feeder; often forms large flocks around carcasses and is an efficient glider, undertaking long search flights for food.
- **Major Threat:** Population decline is strongly associated with diclofenac and other NSAIDs, which enter vultures when they consume carcasses of livestock treated with these drugs before death.
- **IUCN Status:** Classified as Critically Endangered (CR) on the IUCN Red List, reflecting its severe population decline.
- **Legal Protection:** Listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, receiving the highest level of legal protection in India.

Quick Bites:

- The XI BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting was held in Bhopal today under India's BRICS Chairship and concluded with the adoption of the Bhopal Declaration, providing a practical and forward-looking framework for strengthening cultural cooperation among BRICS Member States and partner countries.
- India took a major step towards digitising maritime governance with the launch of E-Samudra, a comprehensive digital platform that integrates services for seafarers, shipping companies, ports and other maritime stakeholders, while announcing a series of reforms to strengthen seafarer welfare, security and service delivery.

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- The Boss Scam, also known as CEO impersonation fraud, is a cyber-enabled financial fraud in which criminals impersonate a senior executive, typically using a genuine compromised WhatsApp account or saving an attacker-controlled number under the name of the "CEO" on a compromised device. The fraudsters then send urgent instructions to accounts or finance personnel to transfer funds to mule bank accounts, exploiting the authority of senior executives and the pressure of urgency to induce employees to bypass normal verification procedures.
- The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement was signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye in Mecca, establishing a collective-defence framework under which an armed attack on any one member will be regarded as an attack on all, with the aim of strengthening collective deterrence against aggression.
- India plans to introduce a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for polysilicon manufacturing to reduce its dependence on China, from which it currently sources polysilicon entirely. Polysilicon, an ultra-high-purity form of silicon refined from metallurgical-grade silicon, is the key raw material for solar PV cells, semiconductor chips and electronic devices; it is produced through energy-intensive processes such as the Siemens process, using high-purity quartz.
- The 10th India International Footwear Fair (IIFF) 2026 was held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, from 6 August to 8 August 2026.
- Indian gymnast Ariha Pangambam of Imphal, Manipur, won India's first senior gold medal in the individual women's category at the Aerobic Gymnastics Asian Championships on 7 August 2026. The championship was held in Tagaytay City, Philippines, from 4 August to 7 August 2026 under the sanction of the Asian Gymnastics Union.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Param Pragya, an AI-powered high-performance supercomputing facility, at the Sonipat Campus of the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi on 8 August 2026. The inauguration took place during the 57th Convocation Ceremony of IIT Delhi, where the Prime Minister was the chief guest.

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10-08-2026

1. August Kranti Diwas:

Context: Vice-President Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan today inaugurated the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan' by hoisting the National Flag at Flag Point, Sri Vijaya Puram, on the occasion of August Kranti Diwas, commemorating the Quit India Movement of 1942.

About August Kranti Diwas:

- Quit India Movement Day (August Kranti Diwas), observed every year on 8 August, does not have an officially announced national theme.
- Instead, the observance is dedicated to commemorating the historic Quit India Movement of 1942, honouring the sacrifices of India's freedom fighters, and reaffirming Mahatma Gandhi's powerful "Do or Die" call that inspired millions to fight for India's independence.

About Quit India Movement:

- **Launched:** 8 August 1942 during the Bombay Session of the AICC at Gowalia Tank Maidan (now August Kranti Maidan), Mumbai.
- **Background:** It was launched against the backdrop of World War II, growing nationalist pressure, and the failure of the Cripps Mission (1942).
- **Leadership:** The movement was led by the Indian National Congress under Mahatma Gandhi.
- **Main Demand:** The immediate withdrawal of British rule from India and achievement of complete independence.
- **"Do or Die" Call:** Gandhi gave the historic "Do or Die" slogan, urging Indians to continue the struggle until independence was achieved.

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- **British Repression:** On 9 August 1942, Gandhi and major Congress leaders were arrested, leading to widespread spontaneous protests.
- **Mass Participation:** Students, workers, peasants, women and ordinary citizens participated through strikes, demonstrations and underground activities.
- **Significance:** Though brutally suppressed, the movement demonstrated the mass rejection of British rule and became a major final phase of the freedom struggle, contributing to India's independence in 1947.

2. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:

Context: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U) has achieved another significant milestone with the sanction of over 1.25 crore houses under PMAY-U and PMAY-U 2.0, of which more than 1 crore houses have been completed and delivered to beneficiaries across the country. Building on this milestone, the Government continues to accelerate the implementation of PMAY-U 2.0 to expand access to affordable housing for eligible urban families.

About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:

- It was launched in June 2015, by the Government of India under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- It was aimed at providing all weather pucca houses to all eligible beneficiaries in the urban areas of the country by the year 2022.
- The Mission promotes women empowerment by providing ownership of houses in the name of female member or in joint name.
- PMAY is a centrally sponsored scheme both the Union and the State governments are supposed to financially contribute to it.
- Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) is a sub-scheme under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U).

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- This will provide ease of living to urban migrants/ poor in Industrial Sector as well as in non-formal urban economy to get access to dignified affordable rental housing close to their workplace.
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin, Ministry of Rural development is the nodal agency of implementing the scheme.
- It aims to provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families, who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses.
- **Beneficiaries:** People belonging to SCs/STs, freed bonded labourers and non-SC/ST categories, widows or next-of-kin of defence personnel killed in action, ex servicemen and retired members of the paramilitary forces, disabled persons and minorities.
- **Selection of Beneficiaries:** Through a three stage validation - Socio Economic Caste Census 2011, Gram Sabha, and geo-tagging.
- **The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U)** completion deadline has been extended to September 30, 2026, allowing the completion of older, under-construction houses without changing the original funding rules. Meanwhile, the new PMAY-U 2.0 runs from 2024 to 2029, and PMAY-Gramin (PMAY-G) runs through March 2029.

3. Installed electricity generation capacity in India:

Context: India Achieves Landmark 300 GW Non-Fossil Fuel Power Capacity.

More details:

- **300 GW milestone:** India crossed 300 GW of non-fossil fuel-based installed electricity capacity, reaching 300.50 GW as of 31 July 2026.
- **2030 target:** This represents over 60% of India's 500 GW non-fossil capacity target for 2030.
- **Capacity composition:** Solar – 164.59 GW, Wind – 58.14 GW, Hydro – 57.24 GW, Bio-power – 11.75 GW, and Nuclear – 8.78 GW.

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- **Overall share:** Non-fossil sources now account for over 54% of India's total installed electricity generation capacity, which is around 552 GW.
- **Solar leadership:** Solar power is the major growth driver, rising from just 2.8 GW in 2014 to 164.59 GW in 2026.
- **Wind growth:** Wind capacity increased from around 21 GW in 2014 to 58.14 GW in 2026, reflecting rapid expansion of renewable energy.
- **Record addition:** During 2025–26, India added a record 55.29 GW of non-fossil capacity, including 44.6 GW solar and 6 GW wind.
- **Rising generation:** Renewable energy generation increased substantially from 190.96 billion units (BU) in 2014–15 to 477.79 BU in 2025–26, strengthening India's transition towards a cleaner and more self-reliant energy system.

4. Delimitation:

Context: According to the existing Constitutional provisions, a fresh delimitation is possible only after the data of the 2027 Census is published, and reservation for women can be rolled out only along with it.

About Delimitation:

- Delimitation means the process of fixing the number of seats and boundaries of territorial constituencies in each State for the Lok Sabha and Legislative assemblies.
- This 'delimitation process' is performed by the 'Delimitation Commission' that is set up under an act of Parliament.
- Article 82 and 170 of the Constitution provide that the number of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative assemblies as well as its division into territorial constituencies.
- It also envisages that they shall be readjusted after each Census.

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- The seat distribution was frozen as per the 1971 Census. This is to encourage population control measures so that States with higher population growth do not end up having higher numbers of seats.
- This was done through the 42nd Amendment Act till the year 2000 and was extended by the 84th Amendment Act till 2026.
- The boundaries of territorial constituencies were readjusted and seats for SC and ST were determined as per the 2001 Census and will again be carried out after 2026.

5. NEERI-ZAR:

Context: A set of specialised water purifiers developed during the 2006 deluge in Barmer, Rajasthan, have been delivered to the flood-hit districts of Charaideo, Jorhat, and Sivasagar in eastern Assam. On Sunday, two scientists from the Nagpur-based Council of Scientific and Industrial Research–National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) began distributing 100 units of the emergency insta-portable water purification system. The system is called NEERI-ZAR.

About NEERI-ZAR:

- **Origin:** NEERI-ZAR is an emergency portable water purification system developed by CSIR-NEERI in 2006 during the Barmer floods in Rajasthan.
- **Working Principle:** It is a gravity-based, electricity-free system that can purify water from rivers, ponds and wells by removing suspended matter, turbidity and microbial contamination.
- **Capacity:** During the Assam floods, 100 units were deployed—25 community units and 75 household units—with a combined purification capacity of 2,500 litres/hour.
- **Disaster Applications:** The technology has been used during several disasters, including the 2009 Sundarbans cyclone, Uttarakhand floods (2013), Chennai floods (2015), Kerala floods (2018) and Bihar floods (2019).

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- **Environmental Advantage:** NEERI-ZAR provides safe drinking and cooking water without electricity or operational costs, while reducing dependence on plastic bottled water and the associated plastic waste during disasters.

Quick Bites:

- Under India's BRICS Chairship 2026, the Meeting of Heads of BRICS Competition Authorities was organised by the Competition Commission of India (CCI), on 8th August, 2026 in Udaipur, Rajasthan.
- The Indian Navy–US Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Exercise 2026 is scheduled to be conducted at Southern Naval Command, Kochi, from 10 to 14 Aug 2026. The bilateral exercise aims to enhance interoperability and strengthen professional cooperation between the specialist diving and EOD teams of the two navies.
- At least 11 persons were killed in Houthi strikes in Yemen's port city of Mokha on Sunday while a drone salvo by the Iran-aligned rebels targeted a Saudi Arabian oil refinery on the Kingdom's Red Sea coast.
- Ashmita Chaliha produced a gritty show to secure her maiden BWF World tour title with a fighting win over fourth seed Han Qian Xi of China in the women's singles final of the Korea Masters Super 300 badminton tournament
- Stepping up efforts to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts, the Gujarat forest department is establishing a 100-hectare enclosure at the Ambardi Safari Park in Amreli district to house Asiatic lions that have attacked humans.
- Typhoon Dolphin made landfall in densely populated eastern China on Sunday, meteorological authorities said, after the storm triggered more than 1,000 flight cancellations, evacuations and a top-level alert.

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11-08-2026

1. Vande Mataram:

Context: The Nation will mark its 80th Independence Day on August 15, 2026, with Prime Minister leading the celebrations from the historic Red Fort in Delhi. 2026 marks 150 years of 'Vande Mataram', the National Song that inspired millions during the freedom struggle will be sung from the ramparts of the Red Fort for the first time as a tribute to its enduring legacy.

About Vande Mataram:

- The 150-year celebrations of Vande Mataram were inaugurated by Narendra Modi on 7 November 2025.
- The song was composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee on Akshaya Navami, 7 November 1875.
- It was first published in Bangadarshan and later included in the novel Anandamath (1882).
- The music for Vande Mataram was composed by Rabindranath Tagore.
- The song symbolizes unity, sacrifice, and devotion to the motherland.
- The first two verses were adopted as the National Song in 1937 by the Indian National Congress.
- On 24 January 1950, Rajendra Prasad declared it would be honoured equally with the National Anthem Jana Gana Mana.
- Though not mentioned in the Constitution, Article 51A(a) emphasizes respect for national symbols.
- Vande Mataram became a powerful slogan of resistance against British colonial rule.
- In 1896, Rabindranath Tagore first sang it at the Kolkata session of the Congress.
- The English daily Bande Mataram was started in 1906 by Bipin Chandra Pal, later joined by Sri Aurobindo.
- The song became a rallying cry during the Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement.
- It was first used as a political slogan on 7 August 1905 in Calcutta protests.

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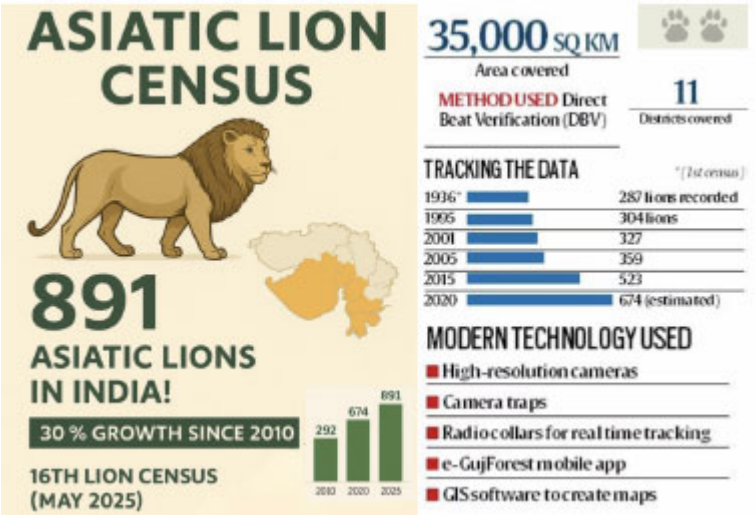
2. Asiatic Lion:

Context: On World Lion Day 2026, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, celebrated India's remarkable journey in lion conservation and reaffirmed the country's unwavering commitment to protecting wildlife and biodiversity. In a post on social media, the Minister noted that the Asiatic Lion population has steadily increased from 523 in 2015 to 891 in 2025.

About Asiatic Lion:

- **Habitat:** Inhabits grasslands, savannas, dense scrub, and open woodlands.
- **Range:** Primarily found in Gir National Park, with Barda Wildlife Sanctuary emerging as a second habitat (both in Gujarat).
- **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable.
- **Legal Protection:**Schedule I & IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Appendix I of CITES



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3. Ozone layer:

Context: Scientists have detected an unusually high concentration of ozone in the upper atmosphere over the North Bay of Bengal. This unexpected finding is helping researchers better understand how air currents transport ozone through the stratosphere.

About Ozone layer and its depletion:

- Ozone (O_3) is a molecule made of three oxygen atoms and occurs naturally in the atmosphere.
- About 90% of atmospheric ozone is present in the stratosphere, mainly between 15–30 km above Earth.
- Stratospheric ozone forms the ozone layer, while tropospheric ozone near the ground is a harmful air pollutant and contributes to smog.
- The ozone layer was discovered in 1913 by Charles Fabry and Henri Buisson.
- The ozone layer absorbs about 97–99% of the Sun's harmful UV-B and UV-C radiation (roughly 200–315 nm), protecting life on Earth.
- Ozone thickness varies geographically and seasonally: it is generally thinner near the equator and thicker toward the poles, due mainly to atmospheric circulation and solar intensity.
- Most ozone is produced in the tropics when UV radiation splits oxygen molecules; stratospheric circulation then transports ozone toward higher latitudes.
- Ozone depletion is the thinning of the stratospheric ozone layer mainly due to chlorine- and bromine-containing ozone-depleting substances (ODS) released by human activities.
- Important ODS include CFCs, HCFCs, carbon tetrachloride, methyl chloroform, halons and methyl bromide. In the stratosphere, UV radiation releases chlorine/bromine, and one chlorine atom can destroy more than 100,000 ozone molecules.
- Volcanic eruptions can temporarily enhance ozone destruction by producing stratospheric aerosols, while severe seasonal ozone depletion over Antarctica produces the "ozone hole." Significant, though less severe, depletion can also occur over the Arctic and parts of Europe.

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4. PAIMANA (Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring and Analytics for Nation-Building):

Context: Efficient monitoring of infrastructure projects is essential for timely implementation, transparency and governance. To support this, PAIMANA (Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring and Analytics for Nation-Building) was launched on 25 September 2025 as a web-based platform for monitoring Central Sector infrastructure projects in India. The platform replaces the earlier OCMS-2006 (Online Computerized Monitoring System).

About PAIMANA:

- Developed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), PAIMANA is used for monitoring ongoing Central Sector infrastructure projects costing ₹150 crore or more.
- It is a digital platform for monitoring infrastructure projects, particularly their implementation and progress.
- It uses technology, data and analytics to assess the status of projects and identify delays or bottlenecks.
- It helps in evidence-based decision-making by providing information on project progress, costs and implementation.
- The platform promotes greater transparency and accountability in the execution of infrastructure projects.
- PAIMANA has expanded its role to support infrastructure performance monitoring through a dedicated Performance Monitoring Dashboard.
- Launched on 16th April, 2026, the dashboard tracks infrastructure performance across major sub-sectors through a comprehensive set of indicators. It marks a significant advancement towards data-driven governance and evidence-based policymaking.

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5. Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR):

Context: Angry outbursts and tears of desperation swept the hillsides in the Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR), particularly in Theni. In the last few weeks, the Forest Department has issued eviction notices to thousands of households on the Tamil Nadu side alleging they had encroached on forest land.

About Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR):

- Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve (ABR) is located in the southern Western Ghats, spanning Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- It was established in 2001 and included in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2016.
- It covers about 3,500 sq km, with elevations reaching up to 1,868 m, and consists of mountains, valleys, forests and river systems.
- It covers parts of Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam (Kerala) and Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari (Tamil Nadu).
- Important rivers originating in the region include Thamirabarani, Neyyar and Karamana, making it important for water resources and agriculture.
- The region has a tropical monsoon climate, with heavy rainfall supporting dense forests and high biodiversity.
- It is part of the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot and contains numerous endemic species; the reserve has about 2,254 plant species, including nearly 400 endemic species.
- Its fauna includes around 79 mammals, 337 birds, 88 reptiles and 45 amphibians; notable species include tiger, Asian elephant, Nilgiri tahr and lion-tailed macaque.
- Major vegetation types include tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen, moist deciduous, montane rainforests and shola-grassland ecosystems.

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- The reserve acts as a genetic reservoir for economically important plants such as cardamom, pepper, nutmeg, jamun and plantain, and is known for medicinal plants such as Arogyapacha.
- Important protected areas within/associated with the reserve include Shendurney, Peppara and Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuaries and Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve.
- The Kani tribal community inhabits the region and possesses extensive traditional knowledge of medicinal plants, forest resources and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Quick Bites:

- APEDA facilitated the first-ever export of 1 Metric Tonne of Mustard Honey by Dergang Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) from Tripura to Dubai. The export marks a new milestone for the FPO and the region by creating an opportunity for local beekeepers and farmers to access international markets through organised export-oriented production.
- US Senate passed a bill (Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, 2026) to sanction Russia and key buyers of its petroleum products, including India. It has yet to be ratified in House of Representatives.
- Bank in a Box is a plug-and-play integrated banking platform launched by the Union Minister of Cooperation to provide Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) with core banking and modern banking facilities on a single platform. It enables banks to deploy and operate banking services efficiently, often through cloud-based technology, reducing costs and improving digital banking capabilities.
- Exercise Talisman Sabre 2027 is a major multinational military exercise led by Australia and the United States, scheduled from 9–22 August 2027. It aims to enhance joint operations, interoperability and combined planning among Indo-Pacific partner nations. India's enhanced participation was formally welcomed during the 2nd India-Australia Defence Ministers' Dialogue on 1 June 2026, co-chaired by Rajnath Singh and Richard Marles.
- Indian physicist Deepak Dhar was awarded the 2026 Dirac Medal by the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) on 8 August 2026, sharing it with Bernard

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Derrida, Marc Mézard and Haim Sompolinsky for their contributions to statistical mechanics. Established in 1985, the Dirac Medal is awarded annually on 8 August, the birth anniversary of physicist Paul Dirac, and carries a US$5,000 prize. Statistical mechanics uses probability and statistical methods to understand systems containing large numbers of particles, including phase transitions and collective behaviour.

- A wildfire broke out on 3 August 2026 inside Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park in East Java, Indonesia, and affected the Gunung Bromo Watu Gede and Jantur areas. The fire later spread near the volcano's caldera, and emergency agencies deployed helicopters, fire trucks, and drones for containment.
- Russula griseopurpurata: New Mushroom Species Found in Meghalaya Russula griseopurpurata is a newly described mushroom species from India and belongs to the genus Russula, which includes about 2,000 species worldwide.
- Taiwan tests Internet 'throttling' for first time in war exercise. Taiwan slowed the mobile internet in a large swathe of the central part of the island on Monday for the first time during annual war games, simulating communication disruption in the event of a Chinese attack or natural disaster.
- India won 17 medals, including four gold, four silver and nine bronze, on the opening day of the U-23 Commonwealth Fencing Championship in Lagos, Nigeria.

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12-08-2026

1. Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Awards:

Context: The Hon'ble President of India will confer the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Awards for the years 2024 and 2025 to 115 artists in a special investiture ceremony scheduled for Thursday, 13 August 2026 at 11:30 a.m. at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

About Sangeet Natak Akademi awards:

- The Akademi Awards have been conferred since 1952.
- These honours not only symbolize the highest standard of excellence and achievement, but also recognize sustained individual work and contribution.
- The Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards are the highest national recognition conferred on practising artists.
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards are given to the artists from the field of Music, Dance, Theatre, Traditional/Folk/Tribal Music /Dance/Theatre, Puppetry and Overall contribution/scholarship in the Performing Arts etc.

About Sangeet natak academy:

- The Sangeet Natak Akademi is India's national academy for music, dance and drama.
- It was created by a resolution of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, in 1952 with Dr P.V. Rajamannar as its first Chairman.
- It is presently an Autonomous Body of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and is fully funded by the Government for implementation of its schemes and programmes.

- The Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship is the highest honour conferred by Sangeet Natak Akademi without distinction of nationality, race, caste, religion, creed, or sex.

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- The honour of Akademi Fellow carries a purse money of Rs.3,00,000/- while the Akademi Award carries a purse money of Rs 1,00,000/- , besides a Tamrapatra and Angavastram.

2. Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE):

Context: The Central Government has taken comprehensive measures to strengthen the care, rehabilitation and social reintegration of persons engaged in begging through the Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) – Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging (SMILE-Beggary) Scheme. Since inception of the SMILE-Beggary Scheme on 23 October 2023 and up to 31 July 2026, a total of ₹45.59 crore has been released under the Scheme. This includes ₹40.04 crore released to implementing authorities/cities, with the balance utilised towards administrative and other scheme-related expenditure.

About SMILE scheme:

- It is a Central Sector Scheme of the Government of India.
- **Objective:** To provide comprehensive rehabilitation of persons engaged in begging through a dignity-based and livelihood-oriented approach.
- **Coverage:** Currently operational in 216 cities, with a target to expand to 295 cities and rehabilitate 35,000 persons by FY 2030–31.
- **Two Sub-Schemes:** Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons and Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging.
- **Comprehensive Rehabilitation:** Includes identification, rescue, shelter, healthcare, counselling, and rehabilitation of beneficiaries.
- **Livelihood & Social Reintegration:** Provides skill development, education, sustainable employment, and supports mainstreaming beneficiaries with dignity and self-reliance.

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- **Convergence-Based Implementation:** Implemented through coordination among the Central Government, States/UTs, District Administrations, with convergence with schemes such as DAY-NULM, NRLM, and Mission Vatsalya.
- **Digital Monitoring:** Uses the SMILE-Beggary National Portal for registration, monitoring, and tracking of rehabilitation centres and beneficiaries. 4. Kolleru Lake: Context: The Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has issued directions over.

3. National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):

Context: As per Government data, more than 80 % of NCAP cities continue to exceed prescribed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) limits. Cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Surat, Ahmedabad, Pune and Guwahati have exceeded NAAQS continuously since 2023.

About National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):

- **Launch:** MoEFCC launched NCAP in 2019 as a national strategy to improve ambient air quality.
- **Coverage:** It covers 130 cities across 24 States/UTs, including 122 non-attainment cities and 8 million-plus cities.
- **Strategy:** Implements city-specific Clean Air Action Plans, performance-linked funding, inter-ministerial convergence and a Jan Andolan approach.
- **Target:** Aims for up to 40% reduction in PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations or achievement of NAAQS by 2025–26.
- **NAAQS:** CPCB notified the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in 2009, covering 12 pollutants, including PM10 and PM2.5; annual standards are 60 µg/m³ for PM10 and 40 µg/m³ for PM2.5.
- **PRANA:** Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in NAC (PRANA) was launched to monitor and track implementation of NCAP.

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4. Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational Training for Young Adolescent Girls (NAVYA):

Context: The government is strengthening skill development and employability among adolescent girls through the NAVYA programme.

About NAVYA Programme:

- Launched in 2025 as a joint initiative of MSDE and MWCD, implemented under PMKVY 4.0.
- Targets adolescent girls aged 16–18 years through industry-relevant vocational and career-oriented training.
- Provides On-the-Job Training (OJT) and focuses on futuristic job roles.
- Includes a Holistic Development Module covering digital literacy, financial literacy, career readiness and entrepreneurship.
- Expanded to 100 Aspirational Districts to improve skill development and employment opportunities for adolescent girls.

5. QS World University Rankings 2027:

Context: The QS World University Rankings 2027 listed 52 Indian higher education institutions, up from 11 in the 2015 edition. The rankings were released on 18 June 2026, and the Indian government linked the rise in representation to the National Institutional Ranking Framework, launched in 2015.

Highlights of QS World University Rankings 2027:

- The QS World University Rankings 2027 were released by QS Quacquarelli Symonds.
- Universities are assessed across five broad parameters: Research & Discovery, Employability & Outcomes, Global Engagement, Learning Experience, and Sustainability.
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) secured the 1st rank globally for the 15th consecutive year.

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- India has 52 universities in the rankings, making it the world's fifth most represented higher education system.
- Indian Institute of Technology Delhi ranked 118th globally and became India's highest-ranked institution in the 2027 edition.
- Indian Institute of Technology Bombay and Indian Institute of Technology Madras also featured among the top 200 universities globally.
- The rankings serve as a globally recognized benchmark for assessing the quality, reputation, and international competitiveness of higher education institutions.

6. National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge:

Context: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) announced the final winners of the National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge on 10 August 2026.

About National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge:

- The National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge was designed around digital tools for climate risk assessment in agriculture.
- The solutions used satellite data, artificial intelligence, and climate modelling to build applications for rural decision-making.
- The challenge was organised with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Dalberg Advisors and used the Data in Climate Resilient Agriculture (DiCRA) framework.
- SatSure Analytics India Private Limited won the first prize of ₹15 lakh for a climate vulnerability index that ranks villages across India by weather risk exposure.
- EXPERIQS Private Limited won the second prize of ₹10 lakh for a platform that monitors drought conditions and forecasts their impact on crop cycles.
- VARSAPRADAYA Private Limited won the third prize of ₹5 lakh for a digital engine that provides hazard scoring and irrigation planning inputs.

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7. Moon Base Programme:

Context: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has invited the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to join its Moon Base programme. The formal invitation was extended by the U.S. space agency at the ninth meeting of the India-U.S. Civil Space Joint Working Group (CSJWG), held recently in Bengaluru.

About Moon Base Programme:

- **Lunar South Pole:** Targeted because permanently shadowed regions (PSRs) may contain water ice, useful for life support, oxygen and fuel production.
- **International Collaboration:** The programme promotes cooperation among allied countries, with NASA inviting partners including ISRO to contribute expertise and technology.
- **Key Infrastructure:** Major components include lunar landers, habitats, power systems and in-situ resource utilisation (ISRU) technologies.
- **Public–Private Partnership:** Several technologies and systems are expected to be developed through public-private partnerships, reducing costs and accelerating innovation.
- **Artemis Accords:** The programme is aligned with the Artemis Accords, providing principles for peaceful exploration, transparency, data sharing and responsible resource utilisation.
- **India's Contribution:** ISRO's Chandrayaan experience and cost-effective mission capabilities could strengthen the scientific and technological aspects of lunar exploration.
- **Benefits to India:** Participation can enhance India's capabilities in human spaceflight, lunar science, deep-space exploration and advanced space technologies.

Artemis Accords:

- Artemis, named after the Greek Moon goddess, is a comprehensive agreement drawn up by the US to bring together nations that share a common vision for civil space exploration.

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- It serves as a framework for cooperation and collaboration in space exploration, building upon the foundation of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967.
- The Artemis Accords were jointly launched by the United States Department of State and NASA on October 13, 2020, with seven partner countries, such as Canada, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, UAE, and the UK.
- On June 21, 2023, India became the 27th nation to sign the Artemis Accords.
- The Artemis programme includes plans for a base on the lunar surface, multiple spacecraft to ferry humans and cargo, an orbiting space station, and a constellation of satellites to help with navigation and communication.

Quick Bites:

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will release the autobiography of former President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, titled "Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My Struggles", on 12 August, 2026, at 9:30 AM at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.
- The Ayush Grid project, launched by the Ministry of Ayush, has been envisaged as a comprehensive IT backbone for the Ayush sector with the objective of digitizing service delivery and strengthening transparency, efficiency and governance across healthcare, research, education, drug administration, capacity building and medicinal plants.
- PRAYATNA is a flagship initiative of the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) to foster scientific writing skills among Ayurveda PG/Ph.D Scholars. The scheme is aimed at improving the quality of publications in the Ayurveda sector for effective dissemination and high-impact publications.
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has taken up a program of National Importance namely, Network Program on Precision Agriculture (ICAR - NePPA) having 16 ICAR Research Institutes of different domains. Under this program, technologies are developed using sensors,

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remote sensing at different platforms (ground, airborne -Drone and satellite platforms), AI and ICTs in line with international best practices in precision agriculture.

- The "Tribhuvan" Sahkari University Act, 2025, mandates the University to provide qualified and trained manpower to meet the present and future needs of the co-operative sector by establishing its own schools and through affiliating institutes and also to standardise the course design and content, pedagogy, course delivery in co-operative education and training for professionalisation of workforce in the cooperative sector.
- The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries Animal Husbandry and Dairying has been implementing a Central Sector Sub-scheme namely the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) under the ongoing Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) for a period of four years from FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27 at an estimated outlay of ₹6000 crore.
- Anemia Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan is a Government of India initiative aimed at reducing anemia through a 7×7×7 strategy, replacing the earlier 6×6×6 approach. Its key components include universal Hb testing using digital invasive hemoglobinometers, prophylactic and targeted therapeutic management based on anemia category, and segregation of nutritional and non-nutritional anemia for appropriate case-based treatment. It introduces a robust digital tracking system by shifting from the T3 approach—Test, Treat and Talk—to T4—Test, Treat, Talk and Track. The programme also promotes dietary diversification through the Eat Right approach and locally available iron-rich foods, adopts a whole-of-government convergent approach involving multiple ministries, and emphasizes Jan Bhagidari to transform anemia awareness from passive acceptance to active community ownership.
- To promote inland water transport in the country, 111 inland waterways across India have been declared as National Waterways (NWs) vide the National Waterways Act, 2016. As on date, 32 NWs are operational for the purpose of cargo and passenger movement. Further, in pursuance of the budget announcement for 2026-27 and based on studies, 19 additional new NWs have been identified predominantly for cruise tourism and passenger ferry operations over the next five years.

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- India's exports of textiles and apparel, including handicrafts, registered a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about 4.5% during the period from 2019–20 to 2025–26, increasing from ₹2,49,250 crore in 2019–20 to ₹3,25,339 crore in 2025–26.
- PM MITRA Parks are a government initiative with scheme outlay of Rs. 4,445 Crore for the period 2021-22 to 2027-28 to create world-class, integrated textile manufacturing hubs across seven states in India to boost investment, employment, and exports. These parks are inspired by the '5F' vision (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign) and aim to develop a complete textile value chain, from spinning to garmenting, with modern infrastructure and facilities. The seven selected locations are in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra.
- Lake Mead is the largest reservoir in the U.S. by water-storage capacity and is located in the Mojave Desert. It is an artificial reservoir created in the 1930s by the construction of Hoover Dam on the Colorado River. The Colorado River also forms part of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico. Recently, Lake Mead reached its lowest water level since its filling nearly 90 years ago, reflecting the severe water stress affecting the Colorado River Basin.
- The National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), a constituent of the Quality Council of India (QCI), launched India's first accreditation scheme for mobile food testing laboratories on 10 August 2026. The scheme was unveiled at the "Gunvatta Samanvaya – A Multilateral MoU Exchange Ceremony" held at Hotel Ashoka in New Delhi.
- V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, became India's first major port to achieve Scope-2 Emission-Free status on 10 August 2026. The port also became the first in India to secure ISO 50001:2018 certification for its Energy Management System. Scope-2 emissions are indirect greenhouse gas emissions from purchased electricity, steam, heating, or cooling. A port can record zero Scope-2 emissions when its renewable energy generation exceeds its total electricity consumption during a defined period.

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- India won one gold medal, three bronze medals, and one Honourable Mention at the 23rd International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) held in Bucharest, Romania, in 2026. The eight-member Indian student contingent competed in the individual contest, where medals were awarded for solving language-analysis problems based on logic, grammar, and pattern recognition. Indian student Shrilakshmi Venkatraman won the individual gold medal with a score of 70.0.
- Lebanon's Parliament voted on 11 August 2026 to formally abolish the death penalty and replace it with life imprisonment with aggravated hard labour for future offences.

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13-08-2026

1. World Elephant Day:

Context: World Elephant Day, observed annually on 12 August, highlights the need for sustained global action. India's conservation efforts address habitat loss, fragmentation, poaching, illegal wildlife trade and human-elephant conflict. The country combines legal protection, habitat conservation, scientific monitoring and community participation as part of its conservation efforts.

More details:

- India is home to nearly 60% of the world's wild Asian elephants, highlighting its vital role in global elephant conservation.
- The Synchronous All India Population Estimation of Elephants (SAIEE) 2021–25 estimates India's wild elephant population at 22,446. These elephants are protected across 33 Elephant Reserves and 150 identified corridors.
- They are migratory in nature, with home ranges spanning 100–3,000 km². As they move long distances, they create pathways and water holes that benefit other wildlife.
- Project Elephant is the Government of India's flagship initiative for elephant conservation. Implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), the programme provides financial and technical support to States for protecting elephant habitats, conserving captive elephants and mitigating human-elephant conflict.
- Under Project Elephant, the Government has identified and validated elephant corridors across 14 elephant-range states.
- According to Elephant Corridors of India, 2023, prepared with technical support from the Wildlife Institute of India, these corridors span across four regions.

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- The East-Central region has 52 corridors, followed by the North-East (48), Southern (32) and Northern (18) regions. West Bengal has the highest number, with 26 corridors.
- The network includes 19 inter-state corridors and six transboundary corridors connecting India and Nepal.

2. PRAHAAR:

Context: The Ministry of Home Affairs has unveiled 'PRAHAAR' as India's first comprehensive National Counter Terrorism Policy & Strategy on 23rd February, 2026.

About PRAHAAR:

- PRAHAAR provides a national counter-terrorism framework for preventing and responding to terrorism and radicalization.
- It follows a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, shifting India from a reactive to a proactive, intelligence-led strategy.
- Its seven pillars focus on prevention, swift response, inter-agency coordination, human rights & rule of law, counter-radicalization, international cooperation, and recovery & resilience.
- It strengthens real-time intelligence sharing through the Multi Agency Centre (MAC) and improves coordination between State Police/agencies and specialised central forces such as NSG.
- The strategy emphasises critical infrastructure protection, technology integration, and coordinated command mechanisms for rapid response.
- It addresses the terror ecosystem and radicalization through community participation while ensuring human rights and rule-of-law-based processes.
- It targets terror financing through measures such as tracking crypto wallets, disrupting dark-web financing and asset seizure, aligned with FATF standards and international cooperation.
- Implementation is phased and continuously monitored, with the NIA's Annual Anti-Terror Conference (ATC) serving as a platform to review and strengthen counter-terrorism measures.

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3. Kavach system:

Context: Indian Railways has approved the provision of Kavach Version 4.0 on 660 Route Km of the Izzatnagar Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) at an estimated cost of ₹295 crore.

About Kavach system:

- Kavach is an indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system for Indian Railways.
- It assists the Loco Pilot in maintaining prescribed speed limits and automatically applies brakes if the pilot fails to do so.
- It enhances train safety, including during adverse/inclement weather conditions.
- Kavach is certified to Safety Integrity Level-4 (SIL-4), indicating a very high level of safety and reliability.
- It was adopted as the National ATP system in July 2020 and was developed by RDSO (Research Designs & Standards Organisation).
- Kavach Version 4.0 incorporates major improvements such as better location accuracy and improved information on signal aspects in large yards.
- Version 4.0 enables Station-to-Station Kavach communication through OFC and direct integration with existing Electronic Interlocking Systems.
- These improvements enable large-scale deployment of Kavach across the Indian Railways network, marking a major advancement in railway safety.

4. Compounded annual growth rate of Manufacturing GVA:

Context: The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has revised the base year of the National Accounts Statistics from 2011–12 to 2022–23, and the revised series was released in February 2026.

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More details:

- The compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of Manufacturing GVA at constant prices (2022-23 base) as per the revised series during 2022-23 to 2025-26 is 10.88%.
- As per the revised series (2022–23 base), the contribution of the Manufacturing sector to India's Gross Value Added (GVA) at current prices and the growth rate of Manufacturing GVA at constant prices during the period 2022–23 to 2025–26 are given below:

Indicator	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (FRE)	2025-26 (PE)
Share of Manufacturing in total GVA (in %)	14.7	14.7	14.5	14.8
Change over previous year (in %)	-	(+)12.7	(+)9.3	(+)10.7

5. Mullaperiyar Dam:

Context: The Tamil Nadu government has in the Supreme Court flagged Kerala's "obstructionist attitude", which has "stalled" the implementation of a 12-year-old top court judgment in the Mullaperiyar dam dispute allowing Tamil Nadu to raise the reservoir water level to 142 feet.

About Mullaperiyar Dam:

- It is a masonry gravity dam situated on the Periyar River in Thekkady, Idukki district, in Kerala.
- It is located 881 m above sea level, on the Cardamom Hills of the Western Ghats.
- The dam is built at the confluence of the Mullayar and Periyar rivers.
- The dam's purpose was to divert the waters of the west-flowing River Periyar eastward to the arid rain shadow regions of the Theni, Madurai, Sivaganga, and Ramanathapuram districts of Tamil Nadu.
- The Periyar National Park is located around the dam's reservoir.
- It is located in Idukki district of Kerala. It was given to British-ruled Madras Presidency on a 999-year lease in 1886 by the raja of travancore.
- The agreement granted full rights to the Tamil Nadu to construct irrigation projects on the land.

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- After the independence, the Kerala government said that the earlier agreement signed between British Raj and Travancore was invalid and needed to be renewed.
- As a result, the agreement was renewed in the 1970s.
- Tamil Nadu was given rights to the land and the water from the dam as well as the authority to develop hydro-power projects at the site. Kerala received rent in return.

6. Cloud Seeding:

Context: To tackle the severe droughts and water shortages that plague the country, Kazakhstan has resorted to cloud seeding, a weather modification method previously unseen in Central Asia.

About Cloud Seeding:

- **Definition:** Cloud seeding is a weather modification technique used to enhance rainfall or snowfall from existing clouds.
- **Seeding Agents:** Substances such as silver iodide, potassium iodide, sodium chloride and dry ice are dispersed into clouds, usually using aircraft.
- **Mechanism:** These particles act as cloud condensation nuclei (CCN) or ice nuclei (IN), promoting the freezing of supercooled water droplets into ice crystals.
- **Precipitation Formation:** Ice crystals grow larger and heavier through coalescence, eventually falling to the ground as rain or snow.
- **Key Limitation:** Cloud seeding cannot create clouds; it requires naturally formed clouds with adequate moisture.

Quick Bites:

➢ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today released the autobiography of former President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, titled “Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My Struggles”, at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

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- Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), a constituent unit of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), has carried out exploration in the coastal tracts of Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu, for Beach Sand Minerals (BSM) and established a BSM deposit, viz. "Pudupuram-Cuddalore BSM deposit", containing 1.912 Million tonnes (Mt) of Total Heavy Minerals (THM), including Monazite (0.005 Mt), Ilmenite (0.926 Mt) and Zircon (0.063 Mt).
- Molybdenum-99 (Mo-99), Iodine-131(I-131) and Lutetium-177 (Lu-177) are the most important reactor-produced medical radioisotopes, accounting for nearly 90% of all Nuclear Medicine applications. Owing to their relatively short half-lives, these medical radioisotopes are produced at regular intervals, typically on a weekly or fortnightly basis in the Dhruva reactor, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).
- The Sanchar Mitra Scheme envisions to engage the Yuva Shakti- India's youth, as catalysts for digital empowerment and societal outreach. The students nominated as Sanchar Mitra actively conduct awareness drives in communities, educational institutions, public spaces, etc., focusing on key telecom-related issues, like citizen-centric telecom services, prevention of telecom frauds and mobile security - promoting digital safety, and foster responsible telecom usage.
- The Government of India will launch the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)-based Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) in the Union Territories of Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli on 14 August 2026.
- Bharat Taxi, a cooperative-led digital App mobility platform operated by Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Limited (STCL), a multistate cooperative society is officially launched in the cities of Delhi-NCR, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.
- The Startup Accelerator of MeitY for Product Innovation, Development, and Growth (SAMRIDH) programme, designed to accelerate around 300 Startups through existing and upcoming Accelerators in Health-tech, Ed-tech, Agri-tech, Consumer-tech, Fin-tech, Software as a Service (SaaS) and sustainability sectors. The programme successfully concluded on 31st January, 2026.

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- The Atmanirbhar Panchayat Programme is a four-year initiative aimed at making Panchayats financially self-sufficient by generating Own Source Revenue (OSR) through projects that utilize unexplored local assets. Proposals are selected through a State and National level open challenge system, with 50 projects taken up in the first year and 100 each in the following three years.
- In accordance with the legal mandate under Section 162 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, the PM-RAHAT (Road Accident Victims' Hospitalisation and Assured Treatment) scheme was launched for nationwide implementation on 13.02.2026, with the primary objective of reducing fatalities due to road accidents by ensuring timely and uninterrupted medical care to road accident victims including during the critical Golden Hour i.e., the time period lasting one hour following a traumatic injury during which there is highest likelihood of preventing death by providing prompt medical care.
- The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, will organise 'Srijan: Voices from the Loom', a special gathering celebrating the women behind India's handlooms and recognising their inspiring journeys, voices and contributions to the weaving heritage of the country. The programme will be held on 13 August 2026, at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, today organised IIHT SUTRA 2026 – The Inaugural National Conclave of the Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi. Conceived as a first-of-its-kind national platform, IIHT SUTRA 2026 brought together policymakers, academia, industry leaders, research institutions, distinguished alumni and students to deliberate on the future of handloom education and its role in strengthening India's handloom ecosystem.
- India increased urea imports from Egypt, Algeria, Nigeria and Georgia in 2026 to support domestic fertiliser availability during supply disruptions linked to the West Asia war.
- The Indian Navy's second Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV), named Shruti and designated Yard 3037, was launched on 11 August 2026 by Garden Reach Shipbuilders &

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Engineers Ltd (GRSE) in Kolkata, West Bengal. The NGOPV programme is an 11-ship Indian Navy project for offshore patrol duties. The Ministry of Defence signed the contract on 30 March 2023 for ₹9,781 crore, with seven ships assigned to Goa Shipyard Limited and four ships assigned to GRSE.

- Colletes bhutanicus, a rare solitary Himalayan bee, was recorded in India for the first time in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh on 12 August 2026. The species was documented by scientists from the Zoological Survey of India during a survey in the Eastern Himalayas, and its first Indian record expanded its known range beyond Bhutan and China.
- Russia began importing gasoline from India in 2026 for the first time in history amid a domestic fuel shortage caused by repeated Ukrainian drone strikes on Russian refineries. The first physical cargo of Indian gasoline reached Russia in August 2026, after a shipment loaded at the Vadinar refinery in Gujarat was routed through the Egyptian port of Damietta.
- India and the five-member Southern African Customs Union signed terms of reference on Wednesday to start talks on a preferential trade agreement, as New Delhi seeks lower tariffs on exports including cars, pharmaceuticals and industrial machinery. The move revives talks between India and SACU, comprising South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Eswatini, after five rounds of negotiations between 2002 and 2010 ended without a deal.
- India's first private branded train, the IRCTC Tejas Express operating between Lucknow and Delhi, will be branded as the 'Sprite Tejas Express' for six months after IRCTC awarded train-branding advertisement rights to Sprite. The branding will be displayed at originating and en-route stations on both sides of the journey. Launched as India's first private train in December 2021, the fully air-conditioned superfast Tejas Express offers modern facilities, including on-board food, beverages and infotainment services.

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14-08-2026

1. 'GARUD':

Context: India Optel Limited (IOL), a Mini Ratna Category-I Defence Public Sector Undertaking under the Department of Defence Production, has launched the indigenous 'GARUD' High Resolution Binoculars for the civil market.

About GARUD:

- GARUD offers 8x magnification and a wide 7.6-degree field of view, enabling clear observation of distant objects while retaining a broad viewing perspective.
- The binocular features ±5 diopter adjustment to accommodate individual eyesight, soft-touch eyecups for comfortable extended viewing and a secure, ergonomic grip.
- Its weather-resistant construction enables reliable use across varied outdoor conditions.
- Weighing approximately 610 grams, GARUD combines portability with dependable performance in a compact design.
- It is suited for a wide range of applications, including birdwatching, wildlife observation, nature exploration, travel, sports, forestry, marine activities and security-related applications.

2. Eco sensitive zones:

Context: Kaziranga eco-sensitive zone to be cut from 10km to 1km as per SC guidelines.

About Eco sensitive zones:

- ESZs are ecologically fragile areas around protected areas (PAs) designated so under the Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1986

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- Land within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries is to be notified as eco-fragile zones or Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ).
- While the 10-km rule is implemented as a general principle, the extent of its application can vary.
- These were issued by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change under the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016)
- Eco-Sensitive Zones are created as "shock absorbers" for the protected areas, to minimize the negative impact on the "fragile ecosystems" by certain human activities taking place nearby.
- These areas are meant to act as a transition zone from areas requiring higher protection to those requiring lesser protection.
- They are not meant to hamper the daily activities of people living in the vicinity, but are meant to guard the protected areas and "refine the environment around them".
- **Prohibited activities:** Commercial mining, saw mills, commercial use of wood, etc., apart from regulated activities like felling of trees.
- **Permitted activities:** Ongoing agricultural or horticultural practices, rainwater harvesting, organic farming, among others.
- India has more than 600 Ecologically Sensitive Zones declared across different states.

3. Voyager 2:

Context: NASA's Voyager 2 mission extended by a year.

About Voyager 2:

- **Launch:** NASA's Voyager 2 was launched on 20 August 1977, a few weeks before its sister spacecraft, Voyager 1.
- **Primary Mission:** It was designed to study the outer planets—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune—and their moons before continuing into interstellar space.

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- **Planetary Firsts:** Voyager 2 is the only spacecraft to have visited Uranus and Neptune and the only one to study all four giant planets at close range.
- **Major Discoveries:** It discovered new moons and rings, including 10 new moons and 2 rings around Uranus, and 5 moons and 4 rings around Neptune, including Neptune's Great Dark Spot.
- **Golden Record:** The spacecraft carries the Golden Record, containing sounds and images from Earth intended as a message to potential extraterrestrial civilizations.
- **Interstellar Space:** Voyager 2 entered interstellar space on 10 December 2018, becoming the second human-made object to do so after Voyager 1.
- **Current Significance:** It continues its journey through interstellar space and transmits scientific data about the interstellar medium and heliosphere; it remains the second-most-distant human-made object from Earth.

4. Kuril Islands:

Context: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday made his first visit to the Kuril Islands, a Moscow-controlled Pacific archipelago that also is claimed by Japan, which voiced a diplomatic protest over the trip. Japan asserts territorial rights to the four southernmost islands of the chain, which it calls the Northern Territories. The Soviet Union took them from Japan in the final days of the Second World War, and the dispute kept the countries from signing a peace treaty formally ending their hostilities.

About Kuril Islands:

- **Location:** The Kuril Islands are an archipelago in the Russian Far East, forming a natural boundary between the Pacific Ocean and Sea of Okhotsk.
- **Extent:** They stretch about 1,300 km from the southern tip of Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula to northeastern Hokkaido, Japan.

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- **Composition:** The archipelago consists of 56 islands and numerous islets and rocks, covering over 15,600 sq. km, and is divided into Greater and Lesser Kuril Chains.
- **Volcanic Activity:** Located in the Pacific Ring of Fire, the islands contain over 100 volcanoes, including around 35 active volcanoes, along with numerous hot springs.
- **Climate & Vegetation:** The region has long, cold and snowy winters and cool, wet, foggy summers; vegetation ranges from tundra in the north to dense forests in the south.
- **Administration:** Russia administers the islands as part of Sakhalin Oblast. Important settlements include Kurilsk, Severo-Kurilsk and Yuzhno-Kurilsk.
- **Kuril Islands Dispute:** Japan claims the four southernmost islands—the Northern Territories—while Russia administers them. The dispute has contributed to Russia and Japan not formally concluding a World War II peace treaty.

5. Kanwar Yatra:

Context: The Haridwar administration has launched a major clean-up drive to remove about 7,000 tonnes of waste left behind by Kanwariyas across the city and on the ghats of the Ganga. About 50 million pilgrims had undertaken the 12-day Kanwar Yatra.

About Kanwar Yatra:

- It is an annual pilgrimage undertaken by millions of Hindu devotees, primarily dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- During this sacred journey, devotees, known as Kanwariyas, travel to the holy rivers, primarily the Ganges, to fetch holy water.
- Typically occurs during the Hindu month of Shravan, which usually falls in July.
- This water, carried in earthen pots called Kanwars, is then offered to Shiva lingams at various temples.

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- Kanwariyas often travel long distances, with popular destinations including Haridwar, Gaumukh, Gangotri in Uttarakhand and Sultanganj in Bihar.

6. Parliamentary privileges under Article 105:

Context: The Supreme Court has said a seven-judge Constitution Bench would commence hearing from October 6 a series of long-pending petitions questioning whether legislative privileges can override citizens' fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression.

About Parliamentary privileges:

- Freedom of Speech: Article 105(1) guarantees freedom of speech in Parliament, subject to the Constitution and parliamentary rules.
- Immunity for Speech: Under Article 105(2), an MP cannot face court proceedings for anything said in Parliament or in its committees.
- Immunity for Vote: MPs cannot be held legally liable for any vote given in Parliament or its committees.
- Publication Immunity: No person is liable for publication of reports, papers, votes or proceedings when published by or under the authority of either House.
- Other Privileges: Article 105(3) provides for the powers, privileges and immunities of Parliament, its members and committees.
- Privileges by Law: Parliament may define these privileges by legislation. Until Parliament makes such a law, the applicable privileges continue according to the constitutional provision.
- Persons Other Than MPs: Article 105(4) extends the relevant protections under clauses (1), (2) and (3) to persons who have a constitutional right to speak and participate in parliamentary proceedings, even though they are not MPs.

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Quick Bites:

- NITI Aayog has released the report titled "Key Sectors to Position India as a Global Manufacturing Hub", which through a structured and data-driven framework identifies major sectors that can fuel India's ambition to become global manufacturing powerhouse. This report has extensively analyzed four sectors viz. Chemicals, Telecom & Networking Equipments, Textiles and Solar Photo Voltaic manufacturing.
- Dr. Padma Gurmet, Director, National Institute of Sowa-Rigpa, Leh, has been conferred the UT Ladakh State Award for the year 2025 in recognition of his contribution to the preservation, promotion and development of the Sowa-Rigpa system of medicine in Ladakh.
- 'Vigyan Tech', a first of its kind national initiative was organized by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), on National Technology Day, 11 May 2026 at BRIC-National Institute of Immunology (BRIC-NII), N. Delhi. The purpose was to promote a whole-of- Government approach for science, technology and innovation.
- Union Minister of Textiles Shri Giriraj Singh will inaugurate Handloom Haat: The Handloom Experience Centre at Janpath, New Delhi, on 14 August 2026, marking a significant step towards creating a distinctive public destination for experiencing, understanding and engaging with India's rich handloom heritage. The re-envisioned Handloom Haat will bring together heritage, knowledge, contemporary design, enterprise and retail under one roof.
- Parliament has passed the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, seeking to change the State's name from "Kerala" to "Keralam". Under Article 3, Parliament can alter the name, area or boundaries of a State. Such a Bill can be introduced in either House only on the President's recommendation; if it affects a State's name, area or boundaries, the President refers it to the concerned State Legislature for its views, which are not binding on Parliament, followed by passage in Parliament and President's assent.
- Russia has appointed former Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud as its arbitrator in an investment treaty arbitration filed by Ukraine's state-owned Oschadbank. The dispute concerns

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assets and operations that Oschadbank says it lost in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions after Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

- Gujarat has received approval for the Desert Zoological Park and Night Safari at Juna Deesa in Banaskantha district. The project will be developed on about 103 hectares of contiguous government land and is planned as Asia's first desert-themed drive-through night safari.
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) commenced the bilateral air exercise Udara Shakti 2026 on 10 August 2026. The five-day exercise is scheduled to continue until 14 August 2026 at Subang Air Base in Malaysia.
- The 8th Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Ocean and Polar Science and Technology (OPST) began in Goa on 12 August 2026.
- The Gaj Gaurav Awards 2026 were conferred on 13 August 2026 during the national celebrations of World Elephant Day in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The ceremony was hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and recognised frontline contributions to elephant conservation and management in India. Seven mahouts from Jaldapara National Park in West Bengal received the 2026 award for flood-rescue work.
- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru released SraVaani on 13 August 2026 as an open-source multilingual speech-recognition model. The model was developed by the SPIRE Lab in collaboration with ARTPARK and with support from Google.
- Indian fencers claimed five team gold medals in men's sabre, women's sabre, men's epee, women's epee and women's foil, as well as a silver in men's foil on the fourth day of the Commonwealth fencing championship in Lagos, Nigeria, on Wednesday. With 35 medals, including 13 gold and eight silver, India was declared overall champion and awarded Wilkinson Sword Trophy.

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15-08-2026

1. Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY):

Context: The Government of India launched the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)-based Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) in the Union Territories of Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli. Under the new system, the food subsidy will be transferred directly into the beneficiary's Digital Rupee wallet, instead of a conventional bank account. The beneficiary can then use the purpose-bound digital subsidy to purchase foodgrains from empanelled merchants through a secure and traceable digital payment mechanism.

About Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY):

- **Launched:** April 2020 as a COVID-19 relief measure under the broader Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP).
- **Objective:** To ensure food security and protect poor, migrant and vulnerable households during crisis periods.
- **Beneficiaries:** Covers Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households (PHH) under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.
- **Food Grain Benefit:** Provides free food grains — 5 kg per person per month for PHH and 35 kg per month per AAY household.
- **Implementation:** Food grains are distributed through the Public Distribution System (PDS) across the country.
- **PHH Identification:** Priority Households are identified by State Governments/UT Administrations based on their prescribed criteria.

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- **AAY Coverage:** Includes vulnerable households such as those headed by widows, elderly, disabled or terminally ill persons and those without assured livelihood.
- **Other Vulnerable Groups:** Includes primitive tribal households, landless agricultural labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans, slum dwellers and informal-sector workers.
- **Significance:** Helped reduce hunger and strengthen food security among vulnerable sections during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Recent Rice Reform:** Raw rice supplied under PMGKAY will contain up to 10% broken grains instead of 25%; parboiled rice up to 5% instead of 16%.
- **Productive Use & Quality:** Broken rice generated during milling will be separated and used productively, ensuring better-quality edible rice reaches beneficiaries.
- **QR-Code Traceability:** QR-code tagging of rice bags will enable end-to-end tracking, improving transparency, accountability, inventory management and prevention of leakages in the PDS.

2. Gallantry awards:

Context: President Smt Droupadi Murmu has approved 78 Gallantry awards, including 13 posthumous, to the personnel of the Defence Forces and Central Armed Police Forces on the eve of Independence Day 2026.

About Gallantry awards:

- **Purpose:** Gallantry Awards honour acts of bravery and sacrifice by Armed Forces personnel, other lawfully constituted forces and civilians.
- **Announcement:** These awards are announced twice a year — on Republic Day and Independence Day.
- **Categories:** Gallantry Awards are divided into two categories — Gallantry in the Face of Enemy and Gallantry Other than in the Face of Enemy.

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- **Gallantry in the Face of Enemy:** Param Vir Chakra (PVC), Maha Vir Chakra (MVC) and Vir Chakra.
- **Gallantry Other than in the Face of Enemy:** Ashoka Chakra, Kirti Chakra and Shaurya Chakra.
- **First Three Awards:** Param Vir Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra and Vir Chakra were instituted on 26 January 1950.
- **Ashoka Chakra Series**: Ashoka Chakra Class-I, Class-II and Class-III were instituted on 4 January 1952.
- **Renaming:** In January 1967, Ashoka Chakra Class-I, Class-II and Class-III were renamed Ashoka Chakra, Kirti Chakra and Shaurya Chakra, respectively.
- **Highest Award:** Param Vir Chakra is India's highest military gallantry award for bravery in the face of the enemy.

3. Ken–Betwa Link Project:

Context: The Government clarified that reports of tribal displacement without compensation or rehabilitation under the Ken–Betwa Link Project are incorrect and misleading. Most eligible families have already received full compensation and rehabilitation benefits, with only a few procedural formalities pending.

About Ken–Betwa Link Project:

- Under the project, the transfer of excess water from the River Ken to the Betwa basin was envisaged. Both are tributaries of Yamuna river
- It aims to provide irrigation to the Bundelkhand region, which is one of the worst drought-affected areas in India.
- The project involves building a 77-metre tall and a 2-km wide Dhaudhan dam (to be built within Panna Tiger Reserve) and a 230-km canal.

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- A Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Centre and the governments of U.P and M.P for the project.
- A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) called Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA) was set up to implement the project.
- The project will ensure irrigation for 10.62 lakh hectares, drinking water for nearly 62 lakh people, and 103 MW of hydropower generation.
- Of the total estimated cost of ₹44,604.99 crore, ₹12,445.85 crore has been spent up to July 2026. The project is being implemented by the Ken–Betwa Link Project Authority.

4. PM Vishwakarma scheme:

Context: The Government of India has invited 100 beneficiaries of PM Vishwakarma from the Delhi-NCR region as 'Special Guests' to witness the 80th Independence Day Ceremony at the Red Fort, Delhi, on 15th August, 2026.

About PM Vishwakarma scheme:

- **Launched:** Central Sector Scheme launched on 17 September 2023 for traditional artisans and craftspeople engaged in manual/tool-based work.
- **Eligibility:** Artisans above 18 years, working in 18 family-based traditional trades in the unorganised sector on a self-employment basis.
- **Family & Loan Condition:** One member per family can benefit; government employees and their families are excluded. Applicants should not have availed PMEGP, MUDRA or PM SVANidhi loans in the previous 5 years, subject to the specified repayment exception.
- **Recognition:** Beneficiaries receive a PM Vishwakarma Certificate and ID Card.
- **Skill Training:** Basic training (5–7 days/40 hours) and advanced training (15 days) with ₹500/day stipend.
- **Toolkit Incentive:** Up to ₹15,000 through e-RUPI/e-vouchers for modern tools.

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- **Credit Support:** Collateral-free Enterprise Development Loans — ₹1 lakh first tranche and ₹2 lakh second tranche, with interest subvention.
- **Digital Empowerment:** ₹1 per digital transaction, up to 100 transactions/month, directly credited to beneficiaries.
- **Market Support:** ₹250 crore corpus for quality certification, branding, advertising, publicity and other marketing activities.

5. Rub' al Khali:

Context: Oman and Saudi Arabia have signed a cross-border freight deal as an alternative to chokepoints like Strait of Hormuz. This deal utilizes the direct overland road through the Rub' al Khali.

About Rub' al Khali:

- **Location:** Arabian Peninsula; mainly in Saudi Arabia, extending into Oman, UAE and Yemen.
- **Area:** About 650,000 km² — the world's largest continuous sand desert.
- **Relief:** Dominated by vast sand seas, dunes and sand sheets; some dunes rise to ~250 m.
- **Climate:** Extremely arid; annual rainfall is generally <30 mm.
- **Temperature:** Summer temperatures can exceed 50°C, with large diurnal temperature variation.
- **Drainage:** No permanent rivers; drainage is mainly through ephemeral channels/wadis.
- **Vegetation:** Very sparse xerophytic vegetation due to extreme aridity.
- **Human life:** Traditionally inhabited/traversed by Bedouin communities, particularly around desert margins and oases.
- **Geomorphology:** Strong aeolian processes produce extensive dune systems.
- **Significance:** Important for petroleum and natural gas resources, particularly in the wider Arabian Peninsula.

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- **Name:** Rub' al Khali literally means "Empty Quarter", referring to its vast, sparsely inhabited terrain.

Quick Bites:

- In a unique celebration of patriotism, public service and technological innovation, the Department of Posts today delivered the National Flag, the Tiranga, through a drone from Mandi Head Post Office to Rehardhar Branch Post Office in Himachal Pradesh, marking the first-ever drone delivery of the Tiranga by India Post.
- United States Central Command (CENTCOM) announced Task Force Falcon Strike on 13 August 2026 as its first multinational, multi-domain attack drone task force for operations in West Asia. The unit is designed around low-cost, one-way attack drones and includes unmanned systems operating above, on, and below the sea.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is implementing measures to reduce space debris from Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellations. The measures include the Debris Free Space Mission (DFSM), Active Debris Removal (ADR), post-mission disposal practices, and orbital decay norms for Indian space actors.
- The inaugural India-Israel Hackathon concluded on 14 August 2026 with the theme of Restorative Healthcare. The event brought together 1,300 young innovators from India and Israel in mixed cross-country teams to work on 14 problem statements linked to rehabilitation and patient mobility.
- India won its maiden overall title at the Commonwealth Fencing Championships 2026 in Lagos, Nigeria, after finishing with 35 medals across the Under-23 and Senior divisions. The final tally included 13 gold, 8 silver, and 14 bronze medals, and India won the Wilkinson Sword Trophy for the best overall performance.
- The Australian Institute of Marine Science released the 2025/26 Long-Term Monitoring Program Annual Summary Report on 11 August 2026. The report recorded a rebound in hard coral cover in parts of the Great Barrier Reef after severe bleaching in earlier years. The Great Barrier Reef is the

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world's largest coral reef system and lies off the north-eastern coast of Australia in the Coral Sea. Hard coral cover is a standard monitoring measure used to assess the proportion of reef surface occupied by living hard corals.

- India is once again in U.S. crosshairs, this time for allegedly allowing China to evade U.S. tariffs by routing its exports through the country. The latest allegations are part of a new White House report called 'The Great Transshipment Scam'. In particular, the U.S. has named "the Pune-Gujarat-Chennai belt" as one of the areas "enabling" China to evade tariffs to the detriment of supply chains in the U.S.
- India's current account deficit (CAD) widened to $6.2 billion in June from a surplus of $1.2 billion in the year-ago month, according to preliminary data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday. The CAD was primarily driven by a widening merchandise trade deficit, which rose to $30.2 billion in June 2026 from $19.2 billion a year earlier. Merchandise exports increased to $41.2 billion in June from $35.3 billion in the year-ago month, while imports rose at a faster pace to $71.4 billion from $54.5 billion.

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16-08-2026

1. 'VIHAAN':

Context: DLI Scheme-backed Chip Design Startup - Aheesa Digital Innovations Achieved First-Pass Silicon Success With 'VIHAAN', a Broadband Chip Built Using the Indigenous VEGA Microprocessor

More details:

- VIHAAN, a networking System-on-Chip (SoC) designed specifically for fibre broadband.
- **Milestone:** VIHAAN was taped out on Republic Day and achieved first-pass silicon success on Independence Day 2026.
- **Next step:** Proceeding towards production tape-out, targeted for 2027.
- **Significance:** Supports India's growing need for indigenously designed semiconductor solutions.
- **Application context:** Optical fibre, 5G, and broadband-led digital infrastructure.
- **Government support:** Aheesa is receiving support through the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme.
- **Strategic importance:** Contributes to India's semiconductor self-reliance and indigenous networking technology.

2. Sapta Dhara:

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced the seven-pillar Sapta Dhara framework during the 80th Independence Day address from the Red Fort in New Delhi on 15 August 2026.

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About Sapta Dhara:



3. Windfall gains tax:

Context: India reduced the windfall gains tax on exports of petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) through a notification issued by the Ministry of Finance on 15 August 2026. The tax is officially called the Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) and is levied on selected petroleum exports in India.

About Windfall gains tax:

- A windfall tax is a higher tax imposed on specific industries when they make unusual and above-average profits.
- A higher tax on abnormal or super-normal profits earned by certain industries.
- "Windfall" refers to unexpected gains not due to business effort.
- Levied when profits arise from external factors like wars, pandemics, or policy changes.
- Targets sectors like oil, gas, and mining with sudden profit surges.
- Not linked to investment, innovation, or expansion by firms.

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- Can also apply to inheritance, lottery, or game-show winnings.
- Aims to redistribute excess profits for public welfare.
- Justified as gains arise from favourable external conditions, not company efficiency.
- Acts as a supplementary revenue source for governments.

4. Rohingyas:

Context: Myanmar's military-backed government said on Saturday that more than 300,000 Rohingya refugees living in camps in Bangladesh are former residents of western Rakhine state and that it will accept their return once security conditions improve. The statement comes as the Rohingya refugee crisis enters its ninth year.

About Rohingyas:

- The Rohingya are a stateless Indo-Aryan, predominantly Muslim ethnic group from Rakhine State, Myanmar.
- They are among the world's most persecuted minorities and were stripped of citizenship under Myanmar's 1982 nationality law.
- Systematic discrimination includes restrictions on movement, education, employment and political rights.
- International bodies have described the persecution as ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and possible genocide.
- The Rohingya claim indigenous roots in western Myanmar dating back over a thousand years.

5. Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers-Disclosure Scheme (FAST-DS):

Context: The Income Tax Department on Saturday notified a new voluntary disclosure scheme allowing small taxpayers to declare certain undisclosed foreign assets and income by paying an effective 60% tax, as the government seeks to bring overseas holdings into the tax net without

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exposing eligible individuals to further penalties or prosecution. The Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers-Disclosure Scheme (FAST-DS), announced in the Union Budget this year, will take effect from Sunday, with online declarations open until December 31, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said.

About Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers-Disclosure Scheme (FAST-DS):

- **Launch:** One-time voluntary disclosure scheme under the Finance Act, 2026, effective 16 August 2026; declarations open till 31 December 2026.
- **Purpose:** Allows small taxpayers to voluntarily disclose undisclosed foreign assets/income and regularise their tax position.
- **Category 1:** Covers undisclosed foreign assets/income up to ₹1 crore that were not previously offered to tax.
- **Tax Liability:** Category 1 attracts 30% tax + an additional amount equal to the tax, making the effective levy 60%.
- **Category 2:** Covers foreign assets up to ₹5 crore that were already acquired from taxed income or while the taxpayer was a non-resident but were not reported in the relevant ITR schedule.
- **Category 2 Fee:** A flat ₹1 lakh fee applies, irrespective of asset value, provided it remains within the ₹5 crore limit.
- **Eligibility:** Covers Indian residents and certain non-residents/RNORs who were based in India in the relevant year of undisclosed income or acquisition of the asset.
- **Eligible Defaults:** Declaration is possible where the taxpayer did not file a return, failed to disclose the foreign asset/income, or the income escaped assessment under Section 147.
- **Valuation Date:** Foreign assets are generally valued as on 31 March 2026, based on fair market value, with specific rules for determining the value of foreign bank accounts.

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6. Vishnugad–Pipalkoti Hydroelectric Project:

Context: On 13 August 2026, a major accident occurred in an under-construction tunnel of the 444-MW Vishnugad–Pipalkoti Hydroelectric Project at Mayapur near Pipalkoti, Chamoli, Uttarakhand, when land subsidence/landslide caused a sudden inflow of water, mud and debris, trapping 22 workers inside the tunnel. Rescue teams evacuated most workers, but 8 workers had died and 2 remained trapped as of 15 August, with multi-agency rescue operations continuing.

About Vishnugad–Pipalkoti Hydroelectric Project:

- **Type:** Run-of-the-river hydropower project on the Alaknanda River, a major tributary of the Ganga.
- **Location:** Chamoli district, Uttarakhand.
- **Capacity:** 444 MW (4 × 111 MW) installed capacity.
- **Purpose:** Designed to provide peaking power to India's Northern Grid.
- **Annual Generation:** Estimated 1,665 GWh in a typical year.
- **Diversion Dam:** Includes a 65-metre-high diversion dam.
- **Water Return:** Diverted river water will be returned to the Alaknanda about 18 km downstream of the diversion point.
- **Developer**: Being developed by Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Limited.
- **Financing:** Supported by a US$648 million World Bank loan.
- **THDC Ownership:** THDC is a Joint Venture of the Government of India and Government of Uttar Pradesh.

Quick Bites:

➢ As part of India's BRICS Chairship for 2026, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) will lead and organise the BRICS ICT Track (Information and Communication Technologies Track) in

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Pune from 17 to 21 August 2026, under the theme "Innovate, Cooperate and Transform (ICT) for a Resilient Future."

- The Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for 2025 was conferred on Odissi exponent Shubhada Varadkar at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on 13 August 2026. The award included a purse of Rs. 1,00,000, a Tamrapatra, and an Angavastram. The Sangeet Natak Akademi is India's national academy for music, dance, and drama, and the Akademi Puraskar is one of its highest honours for performing arts.
- India has set a target of 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047. The plan combines expansion of indigenous reactor fleets, deployment of Small Modular Reactors, and new regulatory provisions for private participation in the civil nuclear sector.
- The Black-necked Crane, Ladakh's State Bird, is the world's only exclusively alpine crane, breeding in high-altitude Trans-Himalayan wetlands (2,600–4,900 m). Found in India, China, Bhutan and Nepal, it is IUCN Near Threatened. BNHS, with the Army and local authorities, has sterilised 2,950+ free-ranging dogs in Ladakh since 2022 to reduce predation on cranes and chicks.
- The Bar Council of India (BCI) is the apex statutory body regulating the legal profession and legal education in India, established in 1961 under Section 4 of the Advocates Act, 1961. It was constituted following the recommendations of the All India Bar Committee (1953) headed by Justice S.R. Das and the 14th Law Commission Report (1958). Its key functions include setting standards of professional conduct and ethics, regulating and inspecting legal education, safeguarding advocates' statutory rights and welfare, and maintaining discipline and standards within the Indian legal profession.
- Under the Indian Independence Act, 1947, both India and Pakistan legally became independent Dominions on 15 August 1947. Lord Mountbatten advanced the transfer of power from June 1948 to August 1947 and chose 15 August because it marked Japan's surrender in Singapore in 1945. Pakistan later celebrated 14 August because Mountbatten travelled to Karachi on that day to

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transfer power to Jinnah, while 27th Ramadan (Laylat al-Qadr) also coincided with 14 August in 1947.

- Vaishya Tekri is a large archaeological mound near Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, believed to contain a massive Buddhist stupa, possibly larger than the Sanchi Stupa. Partially excavated in 1938–39, the site revealed the main stupa and two smaller stupas. Tentatively dated to the Mauryan period (3rd century BCE), it is traditionally associated with Emperor Ashoka and the ancient Kanipura/Kanakgiri Buddhist establishment.

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17-08-2026

1. National Anubhav Awards:

Context: The Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, will organise the 9th National Anubhav Awards Ceremony and the 60th Pre-Retirement Counselling (PRC) Workshop on August 17, 2026, at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

About National Anubhav Awards:

- **Purpose:** Recognises the contribution of retired government officials to nation-building and documents India's administrative history through their experiences.
- **Launched:** March 2015 by the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.
- **Platform:** Enables retiring and retired Central Government employees to share their professional experiences and suggestions online.
- **Objectives**: Creates a database of significant experiences and replicable suggestions and utilises the expertise of retiring employees for nation-building.
- **Government Use:** Ministries/Departments can use useful suggestions to improve governance and administrative practices.
- **Eligibility:** Employees can submit write-ups from 8 months before retirement up to 1 year after retirement.
- **Recognition:** Selected write-ups are considered for ANUBHAV Awards and Jury Certificates after assessment by concerned Ministries/Departments.
- **Award:** ANUBHAV Awardees receive a medal, certificate and ₹10,000 prize, while Jury Certificate winners receive a medal and certificate.

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2. Critical minerals:

Context: The Ministry of Mines, Government of India, is organising a Roadshow on the 8th Tranche of Auction of Critical and Strategic Mineral Blocks and a Workshop on the National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT) on 17 August 2026 in Patna, Bihar.

About Critical minerals:

- **Definition:** Critical minerals are metallic or non-metallic elements essential for modern technology, economic development and national security, with a high risk of supply disruption.
- **Supply Risk:** A mineral is considered critical when its supply shortage risk and economic impact are relatively higher than those of other raw materials.
- **Country-specific:** Each country prepares its own critical minerals list based on its strategic and economic requirements.
- **India's List:** India's first report on "Critical Minerals for India" identified 30 critical minerals.
- **Key Minerals:** Include lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper, graphite, REEs, PGE, titanium, vanadium, tungsten, gallium, germanium and silicon, among others.
- **Strategic Uses:** Critical minerals are vital for clean technologies (EVs, wind turbines, solar panels), ICT and semiconductors, and advanced manufacturing and defence.
- **Strategic Importance:** Securing critical minerals is essential for supply-chain resilience, technological development, energy transition and national security.

3. South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA):

Context: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), in a month-long intelligence-led operation, has dismantled a major network involved in importing South-East Asian areca nuts into India by falsely declaring them as Bangladeshi origin and fraudulently availing concessional duty benefits under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). The investigation has so far revealed a potential revenue loss of more than Rs. 2,500 crore. The import of areca nuts into India attracts a

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Basic Customs Duty (BCD) of 100%. However, eligible imports of areca nuts made under SAFTA agreement are fully exempt from customs duty. The areca nuts originating from Bangladesh are entitled to exemption under SAFTA if imports meet the prescribed Rules of Origin criterion.

About South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA):

- **Meaning:** SAFTA is the South Asian Free Trade Area, the free-trade arrangement of SAARC.
- **Effective:** It came into force in 2006, replacing the 1993 SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA).
- **Members:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- **Key Objective:** To remove trade barriers, facilitate cross-border movement of goods and promote mutual trade and economic cooperation.
- **Fair Trade:** Seeks to promote fair competition and equitable benefits, considering differences in economic development among member states.
- **LDCs:** Recognises the need for special and differential treatment for Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
- **Institutional Mechanism:** Provides mechanisms for implementation, joint administration, dispute resolution and further regional economic cooperation.

4. CYBER KUSHTI 2026:

Context: The National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, launched CYBER KUSHTI 2026 on August 15, a national cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence (AI) hackathon designed to test and recognise human judgment in cybersecurity assessment.

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About Cyber Kushti:

- The hackathon was formally launched by Prof. (Dr.) M. M. Tripathi, Director General, NIELIT and Vice Chancellor, NIELIT Deemed to be University, as the official parallel technical track of the 3rd National Conference on Cyber Security, Digital Forensics and Intelligence (NCCDFI 2026).
- The competition is being conducted in collaboration with the Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC Foundation) under the National Security Database (NSD), with CERT-In as the Knowledge Partner.
- Unlike conventional cybersecurity competitions that primarily focus on vulnerability discovery or Capture The Flag (CTF) challenges, CYBER KUSHTI 2026 is designed to assess the ability of participants to evaluate, prioritise and defend cybersecurity decisions.
- The winning team will be awarded the title "Cyber Kesari 2026" and presented the traditional Gada. The runners-up will be recognised with the titles "Rustam" and "Pahalwan."

5. Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity (SHANTI):

Context: India recently launched its campaign to serve the two-year (2028-29) term on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). If elected, this will be India's 9th time on the UNSC. The election will be held in June 2027. The other contestant for the one seat from Asia is Tajikistan.

More details:

- The United Nations is divided into five regional groups representing Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe & Others (WEOG). The latter comprises the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Israel.
- The Eastern Europe group is reminiscent of the Cold War era, with the UNSC's permanent membership (P5) of the United States, United Kingdom, France and Russia also representing the victorious Allied powers, plus China.

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- The UNSC also has 10 non-permanent members elected by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms. These include three from Africa, one from Eastern Europe, and two each from Asia, Latin America and WEOG.
- **SHANTI:** Stands for Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity and is India's diplomatic campaign for the UNSC 2028–29 term.
- **UNSC Election:** India will contest the sole Asia-Pacific seat against Tajikistan in the 2027 election.
- **Multilateralism:** Focuses on reformed multilateralism, UN reforms and strengthening the Voice of the Global South.
- **Peace & Security:** Seeks to strengthen UN peacekeeping through technology and promote maritime security and protection of global commons.
- **Emerging Technologies:** Advocates human-centric governance of Artificial Intelligence and responsible technological development.
- **Counter-Terrorism:** Prioritises stronger international cooperation against terrorism and terror financing, while promoting a rules-based international order.

Quick Bites:

- India is set to host the 12th BRICS Environment Ministers Meeting in New Delhi on 18.08.2026, preceded by the BRICS Senior Officers' Meeting of the Environment Working Group and Contact Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development on 17.08.2026. The event would be held under the overarching theme of India's BRICS Chairship 2026 - 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- Iran and Oman reached an agreement on a shipping route map for traffic through the Strait of Hormuz on 15 August 2026. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow maritime passage between Iran and Oman that connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

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- The Indian government's "Suryapath Tiranga" global relay completed its journey on 15 August 2026 across 54 Indian diplomatic missions and posts in 54 countries. The 19-hour relay was organised under the "Har Ghar Tiranga 2026" campaign to mark India's 80th Independence Day.
- The Hara forests are a vital ecological treasure of the Persian Gulf. Spanning the Strait of Hormuz, these mangrove forests consist mainly of grey mangrove trees (Avicennia marina), which have a special filtration system in their roots that allows them to thrive in saline conditions. The same roots also protect the coast against erosion and are voluminous carbon sinks, sequestering significantly more carbon than terrestrial forests. The forests are a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and serve as an important nursery for marine life as they shelter shrimp, crabs, and numerous fish species that sustain the region's fisheries.

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18-08-2026

1. MAITREE-XV (2026):

Context: The Indian Army contingent departed today for Thailand to participate in the 15th edition of the India-Thailand Joint Military Exercise MAITREE-XV (2026).

About Exercise MAITREE:

- **Location & dates:** Held from 18–31 August 2026 at Vibhavadi Rangsit Camp, Surat Thani, Thailand; previous edition was at Umroi, Meghalaya (September 2025).
- **Participants:** 85 personnel each from the Indian Army and Royal Thai Army.
- **Indian contingent:** Primarily represented by troops from 9 Gorkha Rifles; Thailand by 3rd Battalion, 25th Infantry Brigade, 5th Division.
- **Focus:** Company-level joint training for counter-insurgency/terrorist operations in jungle and semi-urban terrain.
- **UN mandate:** Joint operations will be conducted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, with field exercises, combat discussions, lectures, demonstrations and a validation exercise.
- **Objective & significance:** Instituted in 2006, MAITREE aims to improve interoperability, mutual understanding, operational coordination and camaraderie between the Indian and Thai Armies through sharing of best practices, equipment and operational experience.

2. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):

Context: India launched its first-ever Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs) of India at the 17th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), on

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17.08.2026. The document highlights the rich diversity, ecological significance and socio-economic importance of India's grasslands, savannas, deserts and other open natural ecosystems.

About United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):

- It is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
- The Convention's 197 parties work together to improve the living conditions for people in drylands, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought.
- It was established in 1994.
- India for the first time hosted the 14th session of the Conference of Parties (COP-14) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in September 2019.
- It aims to protect and restore land and ensure a safer, just, and more sustainable future.
- It's committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification.

3. Logistics Data Bank (LDB) project:

Context: Logistics Data Bank recently achieved a major milestone by tracking 10 crore export-import (EXIM) containers since its 2016 launch.

About Logistics Data Bank (LDB) project:

- **Launched:** 2016 at Jawaharlal Nehru Port, Mumbai, to improve efficiency in India's logistics sector through Information Technology.
- **Implementing agency:** DMICDC Logistics Data Services Ltd. (DLDSL), a 50:50 joint venture between DMIC Trust and Japan's NEC Corporation.
- **RFID tracking:** Each container is fitted with an RFID tag and tracked through RFID readers during transit.

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- **Real-time tracking:** Importers and exporters can track containers throughout their movement.
- **Coverage:** Tracks container movement by road/rail up to Inland Container Depots (ICDs) and Container Freight Stations (CFSs).
- **Single-window integration:** Integrates information from different supply-chain agencies to provide real-time information through a single platform.
- **Benefits:** Reduces container lead time, transaction costs and delays, improving logistics efficiency.
- **Significance:** Supports Ease of Doing Business, greater transparency and India's foreign trade competitiveness.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

4. Rotating detonation engines (RDE):

Context: D-Propulse, an India-based defence start-up, successfully demonstrated an RDE at a DRDO facility in Hyderabad.

About Rotating detonation engines (RDE):

- **Definition:** RDE is an advanced propulsion system that uses a continuous rotating detonation wave for combustion, offering potentially higher fuel efficiency than conventional engines.
- **Working Principle:** Fuel and oxidiser are continuously injected into an annular combustion chamber, while one or more detonation waves rotate continuously around the chamber.
- **Detonation vs Deflagration:** Conventional engines use subsonic deflagration, whereas RDEs use supersonic detonation, in which a shock wave compresses and heats the unburned mixture before rapid combustion.
- **Higher Efficiency:** RDEs theoretically offer 10–25% greater thermodynamic efficiency than conventional combustors, potentially reducing fuel requirements.
- **PDE vs RDE:** A Pulsed Detonation Engine (PDE) repeatedly detonates fuel in a long tube, whereas an RDE sustains continuous detonation in a circular/annular chamber.

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- **Applications:** Potential applications include rockets, spacecraft thrusters and hypersonic missiles, where improved propulsion efficiency can increase range or payload capacity.
- **Engineering Challenges:** RDEs require precise fuel injection, chamber geometry and pressure control, while materials must withstand temperatures above 2,000°C, extreme pressures and detonation speeds exceeding 1,500 m/s.
- **Current Status:** Despite rapid global research and testing, RDEs remain primarily at the R&D stage, with no widely established commercial or military-ready systems yet.

5. Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act 2025:

Context: The Supreme Court on Monday asked if statutory thresholds prescribed by the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act of 2025 could possibly forbid constitutional courts from directing payment of suitable compensation to victims in cases of nuclear plant-related accidents. The court made the oral remark while issuing notice to the Union government and the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) in a petition represented by advocates Prashant Bhushan and Neha Rathi, challenging provisions of the SHANTI Act, 2025, which limit the liability of operators of nuclear installations, suppliers, manufacturers, etc.

About SHANTI Act 2025:

- **Introduction & Replacement:** The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill, 2025 was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 15, 2025; it replaces the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.
- **Private Sector Participation:** Unlike the 1962 Act (which limited licences to government entities), the Bill allows licences to Indian private companies, joint ventures, and approved persons

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for building, owning, operating nuclear plants and handling nuclear fuel; safety authorisation required from Atomic Energy Regulatory Board.

- **Liability Framework:** Retains no-fault liability of operators and mandatory insurance; introduces tiered liability from ₹100 crore to ₹3,000 crore based on plant capacity (earlier fixed at ₹1,500 crore); government bears excess liability.
- **Right of Recourse Changed:** Removes operator's right to claim compensation from suppliers for defective equipment (previously allowed under 2010 Act).
- **Expanded Territorial Jurisdiction:** Extends compensation coverage to nuclear damage occurring in foreign states due to incidents in India, subject to conditions.
- **Statutory Status to AERB:** Grants legal recognition to AERB, defines its composition, appointment process, tenure (3 years extendable by 3 years), and role in ensuring radiation and nuclear safety.
- **Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council:** Establishes a Council chaired by the Atomic Energy Commission Chairperson to hear appeals against central government/AERB decisions.

6. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026:

Context: The Union government gave an assurance in the Supreme Court on Monday that transgender identity cards issued prior to the enactment of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026, will continue to remain valid. A transgender identity card provides official recognition of a person's self-identified gender and can be used to support changes to their name and gender across official records.

About The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026:

- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 was introduced in Lok Sabha on March 13, 2026. The Bill seeks to amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. The Act provides for rights of transgender persons and their welfare.

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- **Definition changed:** The Bill removes the broad definition of "transgender person" and instead specifies categories of persons included, while excluding persons based solely on sexual orientation or self-perceived sexual identity.
- **Existing categories retained:** It retains persons with socio-cultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani and jogta, and persons with variations in sex characteristics such as genitalia, chromosomes or hormones.
- **Categories removed:** The Bill removes trans-man, trans-woman and genderqueer from the categories covered under the Act.
- **New categories added:** It includes eunuchs and persons forced to assume a transgender identity through mutilation, emasculation, castration or surgical/chemical/hormonal procedures.
- **Identity certificate:** Under the Act, a transgender person could obtain an identity certificate from the District Magistrate (DM); the Bill requires the DM to issue it after examining the recommendation of a designated medical board.
- **Medical Board:** The board will be headed by a Chief Medical Officer or Deputy Chief Medical Officer, with the DM able to seek assistance from other medical experts.
- **Change of name:** Based on the identity certificate, transgender persons can change their first name in birth certificates and other official documents.
- **Change of gender:** Instead of merely allowing a revised certificate after gender-change surgery, the Bill mandates obtaining a revised certificate.
- **Reporting of surgery:** The concerned medical institution must provide information about gender-change surgery to the District Magistrate.

Quick Bites:

➢ The Qatar-India remittance service based on PosTransfer powered by UPI is now available, enabling customers in Qatar to send funds directly to UPI-enabled bank accounts in India through Qatar Post outlets.

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- The eighth edition of the IN–USN Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Exercise 2026, concluded at the Southern Naval Command, Kochi, on 14 Aug 2026. The bilateral engagement witnessed intensive professional interaction, exchange of Best Practices, and demonstrations by teams from both navies.
- Security agencies have carried a major multi-state crackdown against the ISI-backed Shahzad Bhatti Network (SBN) ahead of Independence Day and busted its terror syndicate. 253 people were detained across 14 states, over 80 FIRs and 200+ arrests recorded against SBN as part of the 'zero tolerance' policy towards cross-border terrorism. Shahzad Bhatti Network (SBN), a Pakistan-based, ISI-backed terror syndicate linked to grenade, IED and petrol bomb attacks and targeted killings across India. SBN has also been paying local conduits to recce police, defence and religious sites, and to install CCTV cameras for espionage.
- India, as BRICS Presidency 2026, follows the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability" with a people-centric approach. To strengthen youth cooperation, India will host the BRICS Youth Council Meeting & Youth Summit (19–20 Aug, Gandhinagar) and BRICS Youth Ministers' Meeting (22 Aug, Visakhapatnam).
- PM highlighted India's transformation from the "Fragile Five" to a leading major economy. The term "Fragile Five", coined by Morgan Stanley in 2013, referred to Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Africa and Turkey—emerging economies considered vulnerable to external financial shocks and sudden capital outflows.
- Twenty blackbucks were released into the Banni Grasslands in Kutch, Gujarat, in August 2026 under a translocation and rewilding exercise. The herd included 15 females and five males moved from the Greens Zoological Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre, also known as Vantara, in Jamnagar.
- SpaceX launched two Falcon 9 rockets from opposite coasts of the United States on 15 August 2026 and set a company record for the shortest interval between two orbital missions. The launches

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took place from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida and Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, both of which are major American launch sites for orbital missions.

- Indore in Madhya Pradesh has India's first virtual zoo at the Kamala Nehru Prani Sangrahalaya, also known as the Indore Zoological Museum. The facility covers 8,000 square feet and was developed under a Public-Private Partnership model at an estimated cost of ₹4.5 crore. A virtual zoo is a technology-based attraction that uses digital projection, sound, motion, and special effects to simulate wildlife and forest environments. The Indore facility includes a 3-D dome theatre, a 14-D cinema, and a digital jungle safari for visitors.
- Indian Army chief General Dhiraj Seth was on Monday conferred the honorary rank of General of the Nepalese Army by Nepal President Ramchandra Paudel at a special investiture ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Kathmandu.
- The Defence Ministry on Monday signed a ₹1,943-crore contract with the U.S.-based General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. to lease two MQ-9B Sea Guardian High-Altitude Long-Endurance remotely piloted aircraft systems for the Navy for 30 months. The two systems are equipped with advanced sensors and payloads and are expected to enhance the Navy's maritime domain awareness, and provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance coverage over large areas of the maritime domain, according to the Ministry.

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19-08-2026

1. Regional Rural Banks (RRBs):

Context: During FY 2025–26, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have continued to strengthen their role in promoting rural economic development and financial inclusion by expanding credit delivery and maintaining a strong focus on Priority Sector Lending (PSL). While gross loans outstanding of RRBs increased by 10.3%, from ₹5,24,163 crore in FY 2024–25 to ₹5,78,349 crore in FY 2025–26, the performance of RRBs under the Reserve Bank of India's Priority Sector Lending framework remained strong during the year. The average achievement against the overall PSL prescribed target of 75% reached 91.7% of Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC).

About Regional Rural Banks (RRBs):

- Regional Rural Banks established to promote financial inclusion in rural areas.
- Formed jointly by Central Government, State Government, and sponsoring commercial banks.
- Aim to provide credit to small farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans, and weaker sections.
- Established under Regional Rural Banks Act 1976 on recommendation of Narasimham Committee on Rural Credit.
- First RRB was Prathama Grameen Bank, set up on 2 October 1975.
- Designed as hybrid institutions combining cooperative and commercial banking features.
- Mobilise deposits from rural/semi-urban areas and provide loans mainly to priority groups.
- Provide banking services in rural and semi-urban regions.
- Perform government functions like MGNREGA wage disbursement and pension payments.
- Offer para-banking services like ATM cards, mobile banking, UPI, lockers, etc.
- Reserve Bank of India mandates 75% PSL target for RRBs (higher than 40% for commercial banks).

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- **Ownership pattern:** Centre (50%), State (15%), Sponsor Bank (35%).
- Operate in limited notified districts within a State.
- Regulated by RBI and supervised by NABARD.
- Sources of funds include own capital, deposits, borrowings from NABARD, sponsor banks, SIDBI and National Housing Bank.

2. Piped Natural Gas (PNG):

Context: The Government of India has today approved the an Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connections, a major initiative aimed at bringing clean, safe and affordable piped cooking gas to households across the country. Effective from 1 September 2026, the Scheme is designed to fast-track the expansion of active PNG connections ensuring that more families can start using piped natural gas in their kitchens at the earliest.

About Piped Natural Gas (PNG):

- PNG is a safe, convenient and relatively environment-friendly fuel used for domestic, commercial and industrial purposes.
- It primarily consists of methane and is supplied directly through pipelines, eliminating cylinder storage and heavy transport.
- Natural gas travels from production fields/import terminals → high-pressure trunk pipelines.
- City Gas Distribution (CGD) receives gas at City Gate Stations, where pressure is reduced for urban distribution.
- Gas is distributed through steel primary pipelines and PE (Polyethylene) secondary pipelines across neighbourhoods.
- Last-mile connectivity supplies gas to homes and industries through small-diameter GI or copper pipes.

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- Safety: PNG is supplied through underground pipelines at low pressure, eliminating risks associated with storing and handling cylinders, and being lighter than air, it disperses quickly and safely in case of any leakage.
- **Convenience:** There is no need to book, store, or replace cylinders — gas is available round the clock directly at home, with billing based on actual metered consumption, similar to electricity or water.
- **Affordability:** Households pay only for the gas they actually consume, and PNG is generally cheaper than LPG on a per-unit energy basis, reducing monthly household fuel expenses over time.
- **Environment-friendly:** Being a cleaner-burning fuel, PNG produces fewer pollutants than conventional cooking fuels, contributing to better indoor air quality and lower carbon emissions.
- **Uninterrupted supply:** Continuous pipeline supply removes dependence on cylinder delivery logistics, particularly benefiting households in high-rise buildings and dense urban colonies.

3. National Sports Awards 2025:

Context: The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports today announced the National Sports Awards 2025. The National Sports Awards are given every year to recognize and reward excellence in sports.

About National Sports Awards:

- The National Sports Awards is the collective name given to the six sports awards of the Republic of India.
- It is awarded annually by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna: Given for the most outstanding sports performance over four years, with a cash prize of ₹25 lakh.
- Dhyan Chand Award: Lifetime contribution to sports development, with a cash prize of ₹10 lakh.

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- Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar: Acknowledges organizations and individuals for promoting sports development over three years.
- Arjuna Award: Recognizes sportspersons for consistent outstanding performance over four years with a cash prize of ₹15 lakh.
- Dronacharya Award: Honors coaches for producing international medal winners, with a cash prize of ₹15 lakh.
- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy: Awarded to universities for top inter-university tournament performance.



National Sports Awards 2025 – All Winners

ARJUNA AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN SPORTS AND GAMES 2025

The 'Arjuna Award for outstanding performance in Sports and Games' is given for good performance over a period of the previous four years and for showing qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and a sense of discipline.

Sl. No.	Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
1.	Shri Tejaswin Shankar	Athletics
2.	Shri Muhammed Ajmal V	Athletics
3.	Ms. Priyanka Goswami	Athletics
4.	Ms Treesa Jolly	Badminton
5.	Ms Pullela Gayatri Gopichand	Badminton
6.	Shri Nareka	Boxing
7.	Shri Vidit Santosh Gujrathi	Chess
8.	Ms. Divya Jitendra Deshmukh	Chess
9.	Shri Dhanush Srikanth	Deaf shooting
10.	Ms. Lalremsiami	Hockey
11.	Shri Rajkumar Pal	Hockey
12.	Shri Sunjeet	Kabaddi
13.	Ms. Pooja	Kabaddi
14.	Shri Rudranksh Khandelwal	Para-shooting
15.	Ms. Ekta Bhyan	Para athletics
16.	Shri Arvind Singh	Rowing
17.	Shri Akhil Sheoran	Shooting

ARJUNA AWARDS (LIFETIME) FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN SPORTS AND GAMES 2025

The 'Arjuna Award (Lifetime)' is given to honour and motivate those sportspersons who have contributed to sports by their performance and continue to contribute to promotion of sports even after their retirement from active sporting careers.

Sl. No.	Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
1.	Shri I Arumainayagam	Football

DRONACHARYA AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING COACHES IN SPORTS AND GAMES 2025

The 'Dronacharya Award for outstanding coaches in Sports and Games' is given to coaches for doing outstanding and meritorious work on a consistent basis and for enabling sportspersons to excel in international events.

Regular Category:

Sl. No.	Name of the Coach	Discipline
1.	Shri Parveer Singh	Athletics
2.	Shri Dhrora Lal Yadav	Boxing
3.	Ms Neha Nandkumar Chavan	Shooting

Lifetime Category:

Sl. No.	Name of the Coach	Discipline
1.	Shri. Dharmendra Singh Yadav	Boxing
2.	Shri. Virender Kumar	Wrestling

RASHTRIYA KHEL PROTSAHAN PURASKAR 2025

The 'Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar' is given to corporate entity (Public/Private), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who have played a visible role in the area of sports promotion and development.

Sl. No.	Name of the Entity
1.	Army Paralympic Node, Pune

4. International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):

Context: Russia is exploring the possibility of developing a rail link providing access to India and the Indian Ocean. Russia aims to bypass vulnerable maritime chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz and the Bosphorus, complementing existing frameworks like the INSTC corridor.

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About International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):



- It is a multi-modal transportation network designed to facilitate trade between India, Russia, and Iran, along with Central Asia and Europe.
- The INSTC stretches for approximately 7,200 kilometers (4,500 miles) and involves a combination of ship, rail, and road routes.
- Currently, 13 countries are members of the INSTC: India, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Oman and Syria
- The primary objective of the INSTC is to increase trade connectivity and reduce transportation costs between member countries.
- It aims to provide a faster and more efficient alternative to traditional routes, such as the Suez Canal.
- Compared to traditional routes, INSTC offers a potentially shorter route between India, Russia, and Europe, leading to cost and time savings.

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5. Tamirabharani (Porunai) river:

Context: Madras High Court has declared Tamirabharani river a deity, thereby granting it legal personhood. The court made it clear that no person will have a right to pollute the river, even in the name of religion. The court however permitted immersion of ashes in the river.

About Tamirabharani (Porunai) river:

- **Origin:** Agastyarkoodam Peak in the Pothigai Hills of the Western Ghats, near Papanasam, Tamil Nadu.
- **Course:** Flows through Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts before entering the Gulf of Mannar.
- **Special feature:** It is the only perennial river of Tamil Nadu, receiving water from both Southwest and Northeast Monsoons.
- **Direction:** Initially flows northward, then turns eastward towards the Gulf of Mannar.
- **Major tributaries:** Peyar, Ullar, Pambar, Servalar, Manimuthar, Gadananathi, Pachaiyar and Chithar.

6. H1N1 virus:

Context: Several States are recording a spike in H1N1 cases, among other influenza-like illnesses, viral fevers, and respiratory tract infections. Experts say there is no cause for alarm, but advise that children with asthma and other chronic conditions might require special intervention.

About H1N1 virus:

- **Virus:** H1N1 is a subtype of Influenza A, with H1 = Hemagglutinin 1 and N1 = Neuraminidase 1; the 2009 pandemic strain is called A(H1N1)pdm09.
- **Disease:** It causes an acute respiratory infection, commonly known as swine flu; Influenza has types A, B, C and D, with A and B mainly causing seasonal human epidemics.

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- **2009 Pandemic:** The virus was first reported in North America in April 2009, and WHO declared a pandemic in June 2009 after spread to 74 countries and territories.
- **Origin & India:** Genetic studies showed the 2009 strain originated from animal influenza viruses and differed from earlier human seasonal H1N1; India reported its first confirmed case in May 2009.
- **Transmission & Incubation:** It spreads mainly through respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces; symptoms generally appear in about 2 days, with an incubation period of 1–4 days.
- **Diagnosis:** Diagnosis is often clinical, while RT-PCR of respiratory samples can confirm infection and is generally more sensitive than rapid diagnostic tests.

Quick Bites:

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh flagged-off the All India Girls High Altitude Long Trek 'Aparajita - Parang La 2026', a flagship adventure activity of the National Cadet Corps (NCC).
- The fifth edition of SEMICON India will be officially inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi on 17th September 2026 at Yashobhoomi (India International Convention and Expo Centre), New Delhi. SEMICON India 2026: 5th Edition of SEMICON India Conference and Exhibition, themed "Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem" is scheduled to be held from 17th-19th Sep 2026 at Yashobhoomi (IICC), Dwarka, New Delhi, jointly organized by ISM & SEMI.SEMICON India is a semiconductor industry conference and exhibition organised in India with participation from global chipmakers, equipment suppliers, and policy stakeholders.
- Indian chess players Vignesh Vermula and Saranya Devi won the Open and Girls' gold medals, respectively, in the Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship on 17 August 2026. The tournament was held at the ITC Maratha Sheraton in Mumbai, India, under the aegis of the Maharashtra Chess Association.
- The PM CARES Fund is a public charitable trust created in 2020 for emergency relief and disaster-related assistance in India. Its audited financial statements for FY 2023–24 and FY 2024–25 were

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made public, and the closing balance stood at ₹8,452.07 crore as of 31 March 2025. PM CARES stands for Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund. It functions as a public charitable trust and receives voluntary contributions from individuals, institutions, and companies. The fund is distinct from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, which has a separate legal and administrative framework. The PM CARES Fund was set up in March 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- BRICS countries on Tuesday opposed what they described as "unilateral, punitive, discriminatory and protectionist" climate measures, including the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms (CBAMs), while calling for a significant increase in international funding to help developing countries adapt to climate change. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is the European Union's policy tool that places a carbon price on carbon-intensive imports. It ensures imported goods face costs matching the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), preventing carbon leakage and encouraging global green production.

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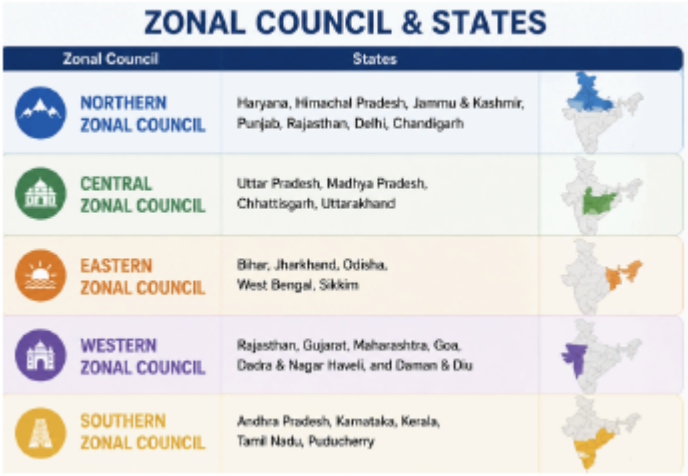
20-08-2026

1. Zonal Councils:

Context: Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah to chair 31st meeting of the Southern Zonal Council on 20th August 2026 in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu.

About Zonal Councils:



- Zonal Councils are statutory bodies established under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, to promote cooperative federalism and inter-State coordination.
- The concept of Zonal Councils was proposed by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1956 during discussions on the Fazal Ali Commission Report.
- Five Zonal Councils were created under Sections 15–22 of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956.
- The North Eastern region has a separate body called the North Eastern Council, established under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972.
- The Union Home Minister serves as the Chairman of all five Zonal Councils and is also the ex-officio Chairman of the North Eastern Council.

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- The Vice-Chairman is the Chief Minister of a member state, selected by annual rotation.
- Members include Chief Ministers, Lieutenant Governors, Administrators, and two ministers nominated by the Governor from each member state.
- Advisors include nominees from NITI Aayog, along with Chief Secretaries and Development Commissioners of member states.
- Each Zonal Council has a Permanent Committee of Chief Secretaries to examine issues before placing unresolved matters before the full Council.
- Zonal Councils provide a platform for dialogue and coordination between states and the Centre on common issues.
- Though advisory in nature, Zonal Councils have become important instruments of cooperative federalism, with 61 meetings held in the last 11 years.

2. New Development Bank (NDB):

Context: Abdolnasser Hemmati, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, announced that Iran is advancing toward official membership in the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB).

About New Development Bank (NDB):

- The NDB, originally called the BRICS Development Bank, is a global development bank founded by BRICS nations.
- It was established at the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, in 2014.
- Its main aim is to finance infrastructure and sustainable development in BRICS and other emerging economies, focusing on innovation and technology.
- The Bank's headquarters is located in Shanghai, China.
- The NDB Agreement came into force in July 2015 after ratification by all five founding members.
- Founding members include Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

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- According to its Articles of Agreement, all UN member states can join, but BRICS must hold at least 55% voting power.
- Bangladesh, UAE, and Uruguay joined the NDB in September 2021, and Egypt joined in December 2021.
- A member's voting power is proportional to its shareholding in the Bank.
- Currently, all members have equal voting rights.
- The President is selected from member countries and supported by four Vice Presidents representing the other members.

3. The PM CARES Fund:

Context: The PM CARES Fund released its delayed FY 2023-24 and 2024-25 audited statements, showing expenditure of just ₹87.85 lakh in FY25, against ₹1,279.9 crore income and an ₹8,452.06 crore closing balance.

About The PM CARES Fund:

- **Creation:** PM CARES Fund was created on 28 March 2020, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in India.
- **Nature:** It is registered as a Public Charitable Trust.
- **Main objective:** To provide assistance and relief during calamities, disasters, public health emergencies and other natural or man-made emergencies.
- **Healthcare support:** It can fund healthcare infrastructure, pharmaceutical facilities, research and other necessary support during emergencies.
- **Chairman:** The Prime Minister of India is the ex-officio Chairman of the Fund.
- **Ex-officio Trustees:** The Ministers of Defence, Home Affairs and Finance are ex-officio Trustees.
- **Nominated Trustees:** The Prime Minister, as Chairman, can nominate three Trustees to the Board of Trustees.

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- **Contributions & tax benefits:** It receives voluntary contributions from individuals and organisations and gets no budgetary support. Donations qualify for 100% deduction under Section 80G and can also count as CSR expenditure.
- **Foreign donations:** The Fund has FCRA exemption, enabling it to receive contributions from foreign individuals and organisations.

4. Zhuque-3:

Context: China has successfully recaptured the first stage of a rocket on land for the first time.

More details:

- **Reusable rocket:** A launch vehicle whose stages are recovered intact and reused instead of being discarded after delivering the payload.
- **Cost reduction:** Reusing the first stage, which contains most of the engines and major structures, significantly reduces the cost of future launches.
- **Recovery mechanism:** After stage separation, the booster reorients, performs engine burns to slow its descent, and lands vertically on land or a sea platform.
- **Zhuque-3 achievement:** China's Zhuque-3 successfully recovered its first stage, marking China's first successful land-based rocket-stage recovery.
- **Second Chinese recovery:** It was China's second successful first-stage recovery overall, following the Long March-10B sea-platform recovery on 10 July.
- **Landing legs milestone:** Zhuque-3 demonstrated China's first use of deployable landing legs for rocket recovery, improving stability during touchdown.
- **Comparison with the US:** SpaceX and Blue Origin have been recovering and vertically landing rocket boosters since 2015, making reusable launch technology a mature capability in the US.

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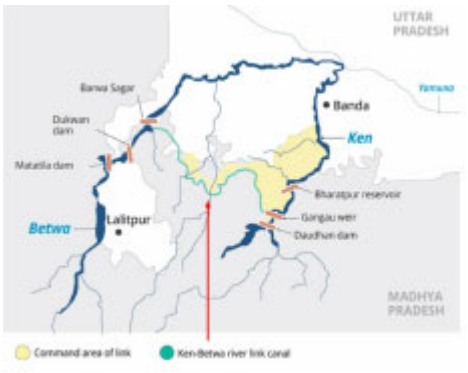
- **Significance:** Zhuque-3 represents a major step in China's reusable-launch technology, helping narrow the technological gap with leading US private launch companies and potentially reducing launch costs and turnaround time.

5. Ken-Betwa project:

Context: Expressing support for the tribals staging a 'satyagraha' against the Ken-Betwa river-linking project, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said he stands with them in this struggle and will visit the site to exert pressure on the government.

About Ken-Betwa project:



- Under the project, the transfer of excess water from the River Ken to the Betwa basin was envisaged. Both are tributaries of Yamuna river
- It aims to provide irrigation to the Bundelkhand region, which is one of the worst drought-affected areas in India.
- The project involves building a 77-metre tall and a 2-km wide Dhaudhan dam (to be built within Panna Tiger Reserve) and a 230-km canal.
- A Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Centre and the governments of U.P and M.P for the project.

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- A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) called Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA) was set up to implement the project.
- The project will ensure irrigation for 10.62 lakh hectares, drinking water for nearly 62 lakh people, and 103 MW of hydropower generation.
- Of the total estimated cost of ₹44,604.99 crore, ₹12,445.85 crore has been spent up to July 2026. The project is being implemented by the Ken–Betwa Link Project Authority.

Quick Bites:

- Coinciding with the Swarnim Jayanti of the Bharatiya Tatrakshak, India will host the fifth Coast Guard Global Summit (CGGS) in New Delhi in February 2027. As part of the preparatory engagements, the Bharatiya Tatrakshak hosted the Working Level Meeting (WLM) of the 5th CGGS in hybrid mode today.
- The 65' edition of Subroto Cup International Football Tournament commenced on18 Aug 26 at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Stadium in New Delhi. Featuring 108 teams in three categories, Junior Girls (U-17), Junior Boys (U-17), and Sub-Junior Boys (U-15), the tournament is divided into eight groups per category. Group winners will advance to the knockout stages, to culminating in the tournament finals.
- Continuing its sustained crackdown on transnational trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has foiled a major attempt to illegally export a significant quantity of Methamphetamine from India to Saudi Arabia. Methamphetamine is a highly potent synthetic psychostimulant with a high potential for abuse and dependence. Illicit use can cause severe physical and psychological effects, including increased heart rate and blood pressure.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, hosted the 2nd BRICS 2026 Tourism Working Group (TWG) Meeting in Jaipur, Rajasthan today under India's BRICS Chairship.

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- India's BRICS Chairship 2026 marked the successful conduct of the BRICS Youth Council Meeting and BRICS Youth Summit held on 19th August 2026 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, organised by the Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.
- Fog harvesting is a water-collection method that uses mesh nets to capture tiny water droplets from fog and channel them into storage or piping systems. In southwestern Morocco, a fog-harvesting network on Mount Boutmezguida supplies piped water to local homes in the Aït Baamrane region.
- Maharashtra declared snakebite a notifiable disease on 18 August 2026 under the state public health framework. The order makes reporting mandatory for government hospitals, private hospitals, medical colleges, and healthcare practitioners for every suspected, probable, or confirmed case and death.
- Tamil Nadu announced 365 days of maternity leave for women state government employees for a third child. The policy applies to women government employees in the Tamil Nadu state service and gives the same leave period as the first two deliveries.
- A Turkish delegation had visited an airbase in northern Syria the day before it was hit by Israeli air strikes, Syrian officials said. The Israeli strikes hit the Abu Duhur base early Tuesday, hours after the delegation had left, causing damage but no casualties. It was the first confirmation of a Turkish presence at the Abu Duhur base.
- China has successfully recaptured India has reiterated its developmental and health-related commitments to the state of Palestine and emphasised the need for a 'two-state solution' to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. India's message was conveyed during the ongoing visit of Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, Sripriya Ranganathan, to Ramallah, the administrative headquarter of the Palestinian Authority (PA).he first stage of a rocket on land for the first time

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21-08-2026

1. National Commission for Minorities:

Context: The first meeting of the newly re-constituted Commission held today under the chairmanship of Shri Harjit Singh Grewal, Chairman, NCM.

About National Commission for Minorities:

- NCM is a statutory body established under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, to safeguard and protect the interests of minority communities.
- The first statutory NCM was constituted on 17 May 1993.
- **Genesis:** The Minorities Commission was initially established in 1978 through a Ministry of Home Affairs Resolution and shifted to the Ministry of Welfare in 1984.
- In 1988, linguistic minorities were excluded from the Commission's jurisdiction.
- **Composition:** NCM consists of 1 Chairperson + 1 Vice-Chairperson + 5 Members, all nominated by the Central Government; members must belong to one of the notified minority communities.
- The six notified religious minorities are Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis and Jains.
- NCM has quasi-judicial powers, and the term of office is 3 years from the date of assuming office.
- The Central Government can remove members for reasons such as insolvency, paid employment outside duties, incapacity, unsound mind, abuse of office, or conviction for an offence involving moral turpitude.
- **Constitutional position:** The Constitution does not define “minority”, but recognises religious and linguistic minorities. Under the NCM Act, 1992, a minority is a community notified as such by the Central Government.

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2. Global Digital Capacity Building Alliance (GDCBA):

Context: The Global Digital Capacity Building Alliance (GDCBA), an initiative of the Capacity Building Commission (CBC), Government of India, completes six months today — a milestone in India's effort to contribute to the global conversation on building capable, adaptive public institutions.

About Global Digital Capacity Building Alliance (GDCBA):

- GDCBA is an India-led global initiative for strengthening the digital and institutional capacities of public officials and governments in the age of AI and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).
- **Launched by:** The Capacity Building Commission (CBC), Government of India, launched its blueprint at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 on 20 February 2026.
- **Core idea: I**t seeks to build "AI-native" or "full-stack" public officials who are technologically proficient, ethically grounded and capable of delivering citizen-centric governance.
- **Based on Mission Karmayogi:** GDCBA seeks to take India's Mission Karmayogi experience and its digital learning ecosystem to partner countries as a scalable model for public-sector capacity building.
- **Petalled Partnerships: It follows** a "Petalled Partnerships" approach, bringing together governments, multilateral/development organisations, industry, startups, academia, civil society and Digital Public Goods (DPG) partners.
- **Major focus:** It aims to bridge the global AI and digital-skills gap among public officials and promote the responsible adoption of AI, DPI and DPGs in governance.
- **Proposed mechanisms**: The blueprint envisages a Capacity Building Charter, a global toolkit based on Mission Karmayogi, and virtual learning foundations for continuous capacity building.
- **Global South focus:** GDCBA promotes cross-country learning and cooperation, particularly among developing countries. Its practical engagement has already included capacity-building

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exchanges with Sri Lankan civil servants and international rollout of iGOT Karmayogi in Mauritius.

3. GISAT-1A Mission:

Context: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing to launch the GISAT-1A (EOS-05) Earth observation satellite aboard the GSLV-F17 rocket in September 2026.

About GISAT-1A Mission:

- GISAT-1A (EOS-05) is an advanced Geo-Imaging Satellite designed to operate from Geostationary Orbit (~36,000 km), providing continuous observation of India.
- **Nodal agency & launch:** Developed by ISRO and planned for launch using GSLV Mk-II (F17) with an indigenous cryogenic upper stage (CE-7.5).
- **Main objective:** To provide near real-time, high-frequency imaging of the Indian subcontinent and surrounding oceans for disaster management, agriculture, environment and security.
- **High temporal resolution:** It can image the Indian mainland approximately every 30 minutes, while high-priority areas can be targeted at much shorter intervals.
- **Advanced payloads:** Uses multispectral and hyperspectral sensors covering VNIR and SWIR bands, useful for vegetation monitoring, crop stress and surface/mineral studies.
- **Major applications:** Continuous monitoring of cyclones, floods, forest fires and other disasters, along with agricultural assessment and environmental monitoring.
- **Significance:** Represents India's effort to achieve persistent Earth observation from geostationary orbit, while also contributing to the development and operational reliability of GSLV Mk-II and cryogenic technology.

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4. Derivatives:

Context: The number of individual traders participating in the derivatives market fell 19% to 78.6 lakh in fiscal 2026 from 98.1 lakh a year earlier, according to data released by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Thursday.

About Derivatives:

- **Definition:** Derivatives are financial contracts whose value is derived from an underlying asset, index or rate.
- **Underlying assets:** They may be based on stocks, bonds, commodities, currencies, interest rates or market indices.
- **Main uses:** Derivatives are used for hedging risk, speculation and portfolio diversification.
- **Futures:** Standardised contracts to buy or sell an asset at a predetermined price on a future date.
- **Options:** Give the buyer the right, but not the obligation, to buy (Call) or sell (Put) an asset at a predetermined price.
- **Forwards:** Privately negotiated (OTC) contracts to buy or sell an asset at a future date; commonly used for currency risk management.
- **Swaps:** Agreements to exchange future cash flows based on financial variables, such as interest rates or currencies.
- **ETCDs:** Exchange-Traded Currency Derivatives are standardised currency contracts traded on stock exchanges, unlike OTC derivatives, which are privately negotiated.

5. Ganga treaty:

Context: Janata Dal (United) national working president Sanjay Jha, who was Bihar's Minister for Water Resources between 2021 and 2024, has advocated against the renewal of the 1996 India-Bangladesh Ganga Water Treaty, saying it would hurt the interests of Bihar.

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About Ganga treaty:

- The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty was signed between India and Bangladesh on 12 December 1996.
- The treaty governs the sharing of Ganga (Ganges) River waters during the dry season at the Farakka Barrage.
- Its main objective is to regulate water diversion to the Hooghly River for maintaining the navigability of Kolkata Port while ensuring Bangladesh receives its share.
- The treaty is valid for 30 years and can be reviewed every 5 years, or earlier if either country requests.
- Water sharing applies during the lean season (1 January–31 May) and is calculated for every 10-day period.
- If flow at Farakka is below 70,000 cusecs, water is shared equally (50:50) between India and Bangladesh.
- If flow is 70,000–75,000 cusecs, Bangladesh receives 35,000 cusecs, and India gets the remainder.
- If flow exceeds 75,000 cusecs, India receives 75,000 cusecs, while Bangladesh gets the balance.
- If flow falls below 50,000 cusecs, both countries must hold immediate consultations for emergency adjustments.
- A Joint Committee with equal representation from both countries monitors flows at Farakka and Hardinge Bridge, submits annual reports, and ensures implementation of the treaty, including the fail-safe provision guaranteeing at least 90% of Bangladesh's share.

Quick Bites:

➢ The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with PhonePe and Shell India Pvt. Ltd. on 19 August 2026 to strengthen support for DPIIT-recognised startups and promote innovation across key sectors of the economy. The partnerships are aimed at enhancing access to technology, digital

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infrastructure, mentorship, market opportunities and industry networks, while fostering a robust, inclusive and self-reliant startup ecosystem in the country.

- Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) organized the 8th Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Ocean Polar Science and Technology (OPST) at Goa, hosted by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) from 12–14 August 2026 during India's BRICS Presidency.
- A workshop on AIKosh, the national datasets and models platform under the IndiaAI Mission, was organised today at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The workshop brought together representatives from Government, industry, academia and the startup ecosystem to deliberate on measures to unlock the potential of India's data for Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Christmas Island is an external territory of Australia located in the eastern Indian Ocean, known for its geographical isolation, high biodiversity and endemic species, monsoonal rainforest, and significant phosphate deposits. Recently, it gained attention after SpaceX's Starship spacecraft was towed there following a controlled splashdown and 24 days of floating in the Indian Ocean for assessment of seawater and thermal-tile damage.
- A new shore-based Launch and Recovery System (LARS) Test Plinth was inaugurated on 19 August 2026 at the Submarine Rescue Unit (East) in Visakhapatnam. The Launch and Recovery System is a technical arrangement used to deploy and recover a Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV). A DSRV is a specialised underwater rescue platform used for submarine crew evacuation in emergency conditions.
- S301 is a star in the Milky Way galaxy that has been identified as the fastest-moving star recorded on a secure orbit.
- Indian researchers announced RK-251 on 19 August 2026 as a smart cancer drug that remains inactive in healthy tissue and activates inside tumour cells. The drug was developed through a collaboration led by Dr Asis Bala of the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology and Dr K.P. Bhabak of the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati.

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- Reliance Industries Limited has proposed an investment of about ₹2.73 lakh crore over 30 years for India's first integrated Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) complex in Eluru district, Andhra Pradesh. The project will use deep coal reserves in the Chintalapudi and Recherla coal blocks, which together contain an estimated 3,130.61 million tonnes of coal at depths of more than 600 metres. Underground Coal Gasification is an in-situ process that converts coal into synthesis gas, or syngas, without conventional mining. The method uses controlled injection of oxidants into deep coal seams to produce a combustible gas mixture that can be used as an industrial feedstock.
- India launched its first two genome-edited rice varieties, DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa DST Rice 1, on 4 May 2025 in New Delhi. The varieties were developed under Indian agricultural research institutions and use genome-editing methods linked to CRISPR-Cas9.
- Drosicha turkistanica, an invasive sap-sucking insect, has been identified in poplar and willow plantations in Hanjipora in Pulwama district and in parts of South Kashmir, including Kulgam and Anantnag. Drosicha turkistanica belongs to the order Hemiptera and the family Monophlebidae. Hemiptera includes true bugs, aphids, cicadas, leafhoppers, and scale insects, and many members of this order feed on plant sap through piercing and sucking mouthparts.
- India and Japan on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Arrangement (MoA) on Maritime Security Cooperation and agreed to deepen operational cooperation — including information sharing, naval exercises, ship repair and logistics support.

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22-08-2026

1. Terrier Cyber Quest 2026:

Context: The Territorial Army, in collaboration with CyberPeace, has launched Terrier Cyber Quest 2026 (TCQ 3.0), a national-level hackathon aimed at developing innovative solutions to contemporary defence, cybersecurity and information-domain challenges.

About Terrier Cyber Quest 2026:

- **TCQ 3.0:** Indian Army's third Technology Contest (TCQ 3.0) brings together talent from academia, industry, research institutions, government and Armed Forces for indigenous national-security solutions.
- **Focus Areas:** Emphasises AI, cybersecurity, threat mitigation and digital awareness.
- **Bug Hunting:** A cybersecurity CTF-based challenge where participants identify and document vulnerabilities in simulated critical infrastructure.
- **AI Kavach:** AI/ML challenge focused on predictive threat intelligence, automated defence and anomaly detection.
- **Creators Challenge:** Digital media competition to create awareness campaigns against deepfakes, phishing, online scams and misinformation.
- **Overall Aim:** Promote innovation, collaboration and indigenous technological capabilities for India's national security.

2. 'National Campaign on Entrepreneurship - II':

Context: Ministry of Rural Development launched the 'National Campaign on Entrepreneurship-II' under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)

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for another three months, from 21 August to 21 November 2026, with an expanded focus on both Farm, Non-Farm enterprises and marketing of SHG products.

About 'National Campaign on Entrepreneurship - II':

- **Launch & Duration:** Ministry of Rural Development launched the campaign under DAY-NRLM for 21 August–21 November 2026.
- **Core Focus:** Promotes rural women entrepreneurship across both Farm and Non-Farm sectors, with emphasis on converting livelihoods into sustainable enterprises.
- **Enterprise Support:** Focuses on enterprise handholding, formalisation, business planning, financial literacy, product development, branding and digital marketing.
- **Community Cadre**: CRP-EPs and BDSPs will be recognised as "Udyam Sakhis" to strengthen community-based enterprise promotion.
- **Digital & Market Access:** Promotes ONDC, GeM and other e-commerce platforms, along with buyer–seller meets and market linkages.
- **Producer Institutions:** Strengthens Producer Groups and Producer Enterprises and aims to increase their membership by 2 lakh.
- **Major Targets:** Training for 5 lakh SHG women, orientation of 50,000 community cadres, and formalisation support for 50,000 enterprises.
- **Other Targets:** Onboarding 25,000 SHG members on e-commerce, promoting agro-ecological practices among 20 lakh women, and creating a database of 5 lakh adolescent girls from SHG households.
- **Overall Goal:** Build sustainable women-led rural enterprises and contribute to the goal of creating 6 crore Lakhpati Didis; 'Sankalp Shakti' was also launched as a monthly Rural Enterprise Technical Bulletin.

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3. National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK):

Context: The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) is celebrating its 32nd Foundation Day at the Mavalankar Auditorium Constitution Club of India on August 23rd Sunday in the National Capital here.

About National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK):

- **Purpose:** NCSK works for the welfare and protection of Safai Karamcharis and investigates their conditions and grievances.
- **Present Status:** It is currently a non-statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- **Origin:** Established in 1993 under the NCSK Act, 1993, initially as a statutory body up to 31 March 1997.
- **Change in Status:** The NCSK Act ceased to have effect on 29 February 2004; since then, the Commission has been extended periodically through government resolutions as a non-statutory body.
- **Welfare Role:** Recommends specific welfare programmes and studies/evaluates existing welfare schemes for Safai Karamcharis.
- **Grievance Redressal:** Investigates specific complaints and grievances of Safai Karamcharis and makes recommendations to the Government.
- **Manual Scavenging Act:** Monitors implementation of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.
- **Sewer Deaths:** NCSK is the only body tracking sewer deaths across India; according to 2020 data, 631 people died while cleaning sewers and septic tanks over the preceding decade.
- **Need:** Despite government measures, socio-economic and educational deprivation persists, while sporadic manual scavenging and hazardous sewer cleaning continue.

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4. Balochistan:

Context: Pakistan Army chief Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on Friday described militants active in Balochistan as "foreign-sponsored proxies" working to destabilise the restive province. Mr. Munir made the remarks while interacting with prominent figures and political leaders from Balochistan, according to a statement issued by the Army. Balochistan has been facing a long-running separatist insurgency led by groups, including the outlawed Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), which seeks independence for the mineral-rich province.

About Balochistan:

- Balochistan, the largest Pakistani province, is sparsely populated and impoverished when compared to the rest of the country.
- At the same time, its location as well as abundance of natural resources, especially oil, make it strategically vital for Pakistan.
- It strategically bridges the Middle East and Southwest Asia to Central Asia and South Asia.
- It is the closest ocean frontage for the landlocked countries of Central Asia.
- The province has been the site of a series of bloody insurgencies, brutal state repression, and an enduring Baloch nationalist movement since 1948.
- People of Balochistan have a shared history, language and other cultural similarities very different from Punjabis or Sindhis.
- Baloch nationalists argue that the Baloch people themselves do not enjoy the fruits of Balochistan's abundant natural resources.
- The Pakistani government has itself blamed foreign actors, including India and Iran, as fomenting trouble in the region to destabilise the country.

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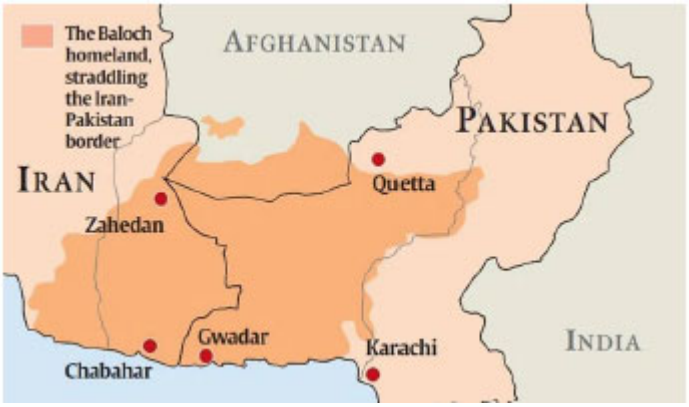

5. Gulf of Aden:

Context: Somali piracy has resurged in the Gulf of Aden and off Somalia, marked by recent vessel hijackings amid reduced regional maritime enforcement.

About Gulf of Aden:



- **Location:** An extension of the Indian Ocean situated between the Arabian Peninsula (north) and the Horn of Africa (south).
- **Connections:** Connects the Red Sea to the Arabian Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb.
- **Name:** Named after Aden, the historic port city on Yemen's southern coast.
- **Dimensions:** Approximately 900 km long and 500 km wide.

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- **Boundaries:** Bounded by Yemen (north), Somalia and the Socotra Islands (south), Arabian Sea (east), and Djibouti (west).
- **Other Connections:** Linked to the Somali Sea through the Guardafui Channel and narrows westward into the Gulf of Tadjoura near Djibouti.
- **Relief Feature:** The Sheba Ridge, an extension of the Indian Ocean Ridge System, runs through the middle of the gulf.
- **Oceanography:** Influenced by southwest and northeast monsoon-driven upwelling, bringing cool, nutrient-rich waters.
- **Salinity:** Has lower salinity than the neighbouring Red Sea.
- **Islands:** Contains numerous islands belonging mainly to Yemen and Somalia, including the Socotra Islands.
- **Major Ports:** Important ports include Aden (Yemen), Berbera (Somalia), and Bosaso (Somalia).
- **Major Coastal Cities:** Key cities include Aden, Mukalla, Balhaf, Berbera, Bosaso, and Djibouti City.
- **Strategic Importance:** A vital global shipping route, forming part of the Suez Canal–Red Sea–Indian Ocean maritime corridor connecting Europe and Asia.

Quick Bites:

- A total of 29 FDI investments have been reported under the revised framework up to 20 August 2026, involving proposed FDI of ₹4,895.65 crore. These investments span a range of sectors, including Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Information & Communication, Manufacturing, Pharmaceuticals, Data Centres and Transport Services, among others.
- India and Brazil reaffirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation in telecommunications and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the sidelines of BRICS ICT Track Meeting in Pune.

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- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) today signed a $230 million loan to modernise and expand Chennai's water supply and sanitation infrastructure.
- Former Indian Space Research Organisation Chairman S. Somanath was appointed as a part-time, non-official director on the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India on 20 August 2026. His appointment took effect for a four-year term, and Anand Gopal Mahindra was reappointed to the same board for another four-year term on the same date.
- MC²+ Ignite is a sector-specific accelerator programme for deep-tech startups in India's energy sector. MC²+, a brand of MC² Foundation, launched the programme on 19 August 2026 at IIT Madras, with participation from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, oil and gas public sector undertakings, and bp India.
- Odia poet, essayist and former CSIR-IMMT scientist Dr. Ashutosh Parida has been selected for the 47th Sarala Puraskar for his poetry collection Bishwas De Pruthwi. The award ceremony is scheduled in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, on 25 October 2026, and the honour carries a citation, a copper plaque and a cash prize of Rs 7 lakh.
- India's first large-scale biopolymer plant is under construction in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh and is scheduled for commissioning in October 2026. The facility is being developed at the Kumbhi sugar unit of Balrampur Chini Mills in Gola Gokarannath and is planned as a fully integrated industrial campus.
- The Lucknow Division of the North Eastern Railway (NER) operated the "Awadh Mahashakti" freight train on 20 August 2026. The train was formed by combining three cargo trains and ran as the longest train in the history of the zonal railway.
- The U.S. and South Korean militaries wrapped up their annual drill six days earlier than initially scheduled on Friday in a conciliatory gesture toward North Korea, though the North said the step is not enough to persuade it to return to talks. South Korea's military said the Ulchi Freedom Shield ended on Friday.

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- Japan said on Friday it had protested against Russia's notification that Moscow would conduct missile tests off disputed Kuril islands visited by President Vladimir Putin earlier this month. Russia's Pacific Fleet said on Thursday it had already conducted the missile test, although it was unclear when it took place.

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23-08-2026

1. Mangrol:

Context: 'Mangrol', the third Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi, was delivered to Indian Navy on 21 Aug 2026.

About Mangrol:

- The ship comprises over 80 percent indigenous content and is equipped for underwater surveillance, Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) operations in coastal waters, Low-Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO), along with mine warfare capabilities.
- The ship is propelled by waterjets and equipped with state-of-the-art Torpedoes, Anti-Submarine rockets, along with advanced radars and sonars.
- Mangrol derives its name from the coastal town and minor port of 'Mangrol', located in Junagadh district of Gujarat, which is a prominent harbour for the marine fishing industry.
- The ship also encapsulates the legacy of erstwhile INS Mangrol, an Indian Naval Minesweeper which remained in service till 2004, thereby continuing the naval tradition of preserving distinguished warship names.

2. Siliguri Corridor:

Context: Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah undertook a review of the security of Siliguri corridor, which was attended by senior officials of central and state Ministries, including MHA, MoRTH, Army, BSF, SSB and RPF, apart from Chief Secretary and DGP West Bengal.

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About Siliguri Corridor:

- **Location:** A narrow land corridor in West Bengal, connecting mainland India with the Northeastern States.
- **Shape & Size:** About 60 km long and 17–22 km wide, giving it the name "Chicken Neck."
- **Strategic Lifeline:** It is the only major land link between mainland India and the Northeast; disruption could isolate the region.
- **National Security:** Its sensitive location, close to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and China, makes it crucial for India's security.
- **Military Importance:** It enables the movement of troops, weapons and logistics towards Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh and other northeastern areas.
- **China Factor:** Its proximity to the Chumbi Valley, where India, Bhutan and China are close to each other, increases its strategic vulnerability.
- **Economic & Connectivity Role:** It is an important transit route for trade with Nepal and Bhutan and supports regional commerce and tourism.
- **Act East Policy:** The corridor is vital for improving connectivity with Northeast India and Southeast Asia, supporting trade, infrastructure and regional integration.

3. The Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA):

Context: Maritime security experts emphasized the urgent need to accelerate the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) to ensure unimpeded global trade and freedom of navigation amidst rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

About The Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA):

- **Launched:** IPMDA is a Quad-led initiative, launched at the Quad Leaders' Summit in Tokyo in May 2022.

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- **Main Objective:** To improve Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and increase transparency across important sea lanes of the Indo-Pacific.
- **Dark Shipping:** It helps detect "dark shipping"—vessels that deliberately switch off or manipulate tracking systems to avoid detection.
- **Three Regions:** Focuses on Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- **Technology:** Uses technologies such as commercial satellite Radio Frequency (RF) data to monitor maritime activities in near real-time.
- **Capacity Building:** Provides partner countries with technology, training and maritime intelligence to strengthen their surveillance capabilities.
- **Importance:** Helps countries protect their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), secure critical sea lanes, combat illicit maritime activities and promote a free, open and secure Indo-Pacific.

4. Asian Development Bank (ADB):

Context: The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a $230 million loan agreement for the Chennai Climate-Resilient Water Security and Sewerage Project to modernize Chennai's water supply and wastewater infrastructure.

About Asian Development Bank (ADB):

- **About:** ADB is a regional multilateral development bank promoting economic and social development, poverty reduction and sustainable growth in Asia and the Pacific.
- **Established:** 19 December 1966; headquartered in Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines.
- Membership: Has 69 members — 49 regional and 20 non-regional members.
- **Voting System:** Follows a weighted voting system, with voting power broadly linked to members' capital subscriptions.
- **Infrastructure Financing:** Provides long-term loans, equity and guarantees for infrastructure such as clean energy, transport, water and sanitation, and telecommunications.

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- **Asian Development Fund (ADF):** Provides concessional loans and grants to the region's poorest and most debt-vulnerable developing countries.

5. Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme:

Context: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology notified the ₹62,500 crore Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme on 21 August 2026. The scheme will run for five years from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31 and will replace the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing.

About Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme:

- About: A Central Sector Scheme to boost mobile phone manufacturing and domestic production in India.
- Approval & Outlay: Approved by the Union Cabinet on 15 July 2026, with an outlay of ₹62,500 crore.
- Target Segment 1: Covers global and large-scale manufacturers, offering 2.25%–5% incentives subject to a minimum FY 2025–26 turnover of ₹10,000 crore.
- Target Segment 2: Covers domestic brands, providing a 5% incentive, plus 3% additional incentive for domestic design and R&D; turnover threshold is ₹1,000 crore.
- Domestic Value Addition: Provides an additional incentive of up to 1.5% for companies sourcing key components domestically for at least 25% of mobile units produced in a financial year.
- Brand Eligibility: Indian brands will undergo IP and design-right verification to ensure genuine domestic ownership and prevent misuse of incentives.

6. UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO):

Context: On 18 August 2026, the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier Minoan Dignity was struck by an unknown projectile while exiting the Strait of Hormuz, killing its chief engineer. UKMTO issued

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an early alert reporting the incident, damage to the engine room and crew casualty, while noting that the Omani Coast Guard was assisting the remaining crew.

About UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO):

- UKMTO issued an early alert reporting the incident, damage to the engine room and crew casualty, while noting that the Omani Coast Guard was assisting the remaining crew.
- What is UKMTO? The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) is a Royal Navy-sponsored maritime security organisation that provides verified security information to seafarers, shipping companies and authorities.
- **Established:** UKMTO was established in 2001, initially in Dubai, mainly to handle distress calls related to piracy threats, particularly around Somalia.
- **Relocation:** Its headquarters were moved to Portsmouth, UK, in 2014, becoming part of Britain's broader maritime security framework.
- **Strategic Importance:** The UK considers maritime security vital because a large part of global trade and national economic activity depends on sea-based connectivity and trade routes.
- **Lean Organisation:** Despite its large operational area, UKMTO has a small team of around 15 civilian watch-keepers and three managers, working round the clock in shifts.
- **Core Functions:** It receives distress calls from ship masters, coordinates rescue responses, and issues security warnings and advisories to commercial vessels.
- **Area of Operation:** UKMTO operates through a Voluntary Reporting Scheme (VRS) covering a Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) of nearly 2.5 million sq. miles.
- **Geographical Coverage:** The VRA includes the Red Sea, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf and much of the northwestern Indian Ocean.

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7. Great Transhipment Scam:

Context: Last week, the U.S. accused India of violating what it considers fair trade practices. The White House published a report titled 'The Great Transhipment Scam' in which it accused about 40 countries, including India, of helping China evade U.S. tariffs.

About Great Transhipment Scam:

- Transshipment refers to routing goods from one country through a third country before reaching the final destination.
- The "Great Transshipment Scam" refers to the alleged practice of routing Chinese goods through third countries, including India, with limited processing or changes in origin documentation, to bypass higher U.S. tariffs.
- In this case, the U.S. alleges that Chinese goods are being routed through third countries to evade higher U.S. tariffs on Chinese products.
- Chinese goods are sent to countries such as India, Mexico or Vietnam.
- They may undergo limited assembly, finishing, repackaging, relabelling or documentation changes.
- They are then exported to the U.S. as products appearing to originate from the third country.
- This allows them to face lower tariffs than direct Chinese exports.
- The U.S. alleges that some Indian industries import Chinese goods/components, undertake limited processing or modification, and export them to the U.S.
- This allegedly enables Chinese-origin goods to avoid the higher tariffs applicable to direct Chinese exports.

Quick Bites:

➢ The Indian Air Force (IAF) has successfully concluded its participation in two pivotal international flight engagements: Exercise Pitch Black 2026 in Australia and Exercise Udara Shakti 2026 in Malaysia. The dual-nation deployment underscored the IAF's operational reach, advanced tactical

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coordination, and commitment to strengthening strategic defence partnerships across the Indo-Pacific region.

- The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has disbursed ₹2.82 crores under the Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) mechanism arising from the utilisation of India's biological resources. Of this, ₹2.80 crores has been released to 27 State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) and 3 Union Territory Biodiversity Councils (UTBCs), while ₹2.01 lakh is being released to the ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (ICAR-IIHR), Karnataka.
- In a significant step to safeguard the health and safety of young children, the Government has imposed restrictions on the manufacture, sale and distribution of all Fixed Dose Combinations (FDCs) containing Chlorpheniramine Maleate and Phenylephrine Hydrochloride, mandating a clear warning that these medicines shall not be used in children below four years of age.
- CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR) today organised a Platinum Jubilee Ceremony to mark 75 years of its popular Hindi science magazine, 'Vigyan Pragati'. Launched in 1952, 'Vigyan Pragati' has played a significant role over the past 75 years in disseminating scientific information among the public in simple and accessible language, promoting scientific temper and awareness, and communicating scientific achievements to society.
- In the closing session of the 14th BRICS Science Ministerial Meet chaired by India, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh announced the unanimous adoption of 'Chennai Declaration', reaffirming BRICS commitment to build effective, resilient and future- ready framework in science, technology and innovation.
- Google's Back to School 2026 campaign is an AI-enabled education initiative aimed at making learning more personalised, interactive and accessible while helping teachers and students with study planning, exam preparation and conceptual understanding. A key feature is 12 months of free Google AI Plus for eligible college students outside the US, offering higher Gemini usage limits and 400 GB of storage.

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- Thiksey Monastery, also known as Thiksey Gompa, is a prominent Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Ladakh, founded in 1433 AD. Located about 19 km east of Leh on a hill overlooking the Indus River Valley, it is famous for its Potala Palace-like hierarchical architecture, earning it the name "Mini Potala of Ladakh." It was established by Spon Palden Sherab under the guidance of Jangsem Sherab Zangpo, a disciple of Je Tsongkhapa.
- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has transferred the processing of pending citizenship applications under the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, to District Collectors in eight States and Union Territories. The change applies to applications under Section 6B of the Citizenship Act, 1955, and replaces the earlier central committee-based mechanism.
- The National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning (NBSS&LUP), headquartered in Nagpur and functioning under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), has developed India's first soil texture map. The map provides digitised soil classification data at the hectare level across the country and was released on 16 July 2026.

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24-08-2026

1. National Space Day 2026:

Context: National Space Day 2026 in India is observed every year on 23 August.

About National Space Day:

- National Space Day is observed annually on 23 August in India.
- It commemorates the successful Chandrayaan-3 lunar landing on 23 August 2023.
- The Vikram Lander successfully soft-landed on the Moon, followed by deployment of the Pragyan Rover.
- India became the 4th country to successfully land on the Moon and the 1st to land near the lunar south-polar region.
- 2026 marks the 3rd anniversary of the Chandrayaan-3 landing milestone.
- India observed the 1st National Space Day on 23 August 2024.
- The day celebrates India's space exploration achievements and growing space capabilities, while inspiring young people towards science and space careers.
- The official theme for India's National Space Day 2026 is "Towards Viksit Bharat - Innovating, Collaborating and Aspiring to Global Space Leadership"

2. Elephant corridors:

Context: On August 17, 2026, a three-judge Supreme Court bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant, Justice Joymalya Bagchi, and Justice V. Mohana, hearing Prerna Singh Bindra & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors., directed the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to conduct a fresh nationwide survey of elephant corridors. The Court ruled that no

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State or Union Territory can obstruct traditional pathways, and crop damage or local fear cannot justify blockades.

About Elephant corridors:

- Elephant corridors are narrow natural habitat linkages connecting larger forest patches and enabling safe movement of elephants.
- The Asian elephant (Elephas maximus) is a Schedule I species under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, and India's National Heritage Animal.
- Corridors allow elephants to access seasonal food, water and dispersal areas and maintain their natural movements.
- They promote genetic exchange, reduce inbreeding, and maintain healthy elephant populations.
- Blocking corridors forces elephants into longer and stressful routes, increasing entry into agricultural fields and settlements and thereby human-elephant conflict.
- India holds about 60% of the world's wild Asian elephant population, making it crucial for global elephant conservation.
- SAIEE 2021–25 estimates India's wild elephant population at about 22,446.
- Four major elephant landscapes are: Western Ghats (~11,934), North-Eastern Hills & Brahmaputra Floodplains (~6,559), Shivalik Hills & Gangetic Plains (~2,062), and Central India & Eastern Ghats (~1,891).
- Karnataka has the highest state-wise elephant population (6,013), followed by Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Odisha.
- The Elephant Corridors of India 2023 report identified 150 ground-validated corridors across 15 states, with West Bengal having the highest number (26).
- India also has 33 elephant reserves.

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About Elephants:

- Asian elephants are classified into three subspecies: Indian, Sri Lankan and Sumatran elephants.
- They are the largest terrestrial mammals in Asia, inhabiting diverse grasslands and forests across South and Southeast Asia.
- Elephant herds are generally smaller than African savanna elephant herds and are led by the oldest, largest female called the matriarch.
- Asian elephants have a very long gestation period of about 22 months (up to 680 days), with females generally giving birth at intervals of 4–6 years.
- Conservation status: IUCN – Endangered; Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 – Schedule I; CITES – Appendix I.

3. Chandrayaan-3:

Context: Chandrayaan-3 was successfully launched in 2023 on July 14 and landed on the Moon on August 23.

About Chandrayaan-3:

- Chandrayaan-3 is India's third lunar mission and second attempt to achieve a soft landing on the Moon.
- It was launched on 14 July 2023 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre and successfully landed near the Moon's south pole on 23 August 2023.
- The spacecraft entered lunar orbit on 5 August 2023 before the successful soft landing of the Vikram lander.
- Main objectives: safe and soft lunar landing, rover movement on the Moon, and in-situ scientific experiments.
- Chandrayaan-3 consists of three modules: Propulsion Module, Lander Module (Vikram), and Rover Module (Pragyan).

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- The Propulsion Module carried the lander-rover system to lunar orbit and hosted the SHAPE payload to study Earth from lunar orbit.
- The Vikram Lander carried payloads like ChaSTE, ILSA, Langmuir Probe, and NASA's Laser Retroreflector Array to study lunar surface, temperature, plasma, and seismic activity.
- The Pragyan Rover carried APXS and LIBS instruments to analyze the elemental composition of the lunar surface near the landing site.
- The landing site of Chandrayaan-3 is named Statio Shiv Shakti (commonly called Shiv Shakti Point), and the crash site of Chandrayaan-2 is named Tiranga Point.

4. AK-203 assault rifle:

Context: Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) has manufactured and test-fired India's first 100% indigenised AK-203 assault rifle, named Sher, at the Korwa ordnance facility in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh.

About AK-203 assault rifle:

- AK-203 is a Kalashnikov-platform assault rifle chambered in 7.62×39 mm, with a 30-round magazine and a firing rate of about 700 rounds/minute.
- Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) is the joint venture involved in producing the rifle in India with Russian collaboration.
- The Sher prototype has reportedly been developed using fully Indian industry inputs, including components and raw materials.
- Production is centred at the Korwa facility in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh.
- User trials with the Indian Army are scheduled to begin in September 2026 using fully indigenised prototypes.
- The Indian Army's requirement is around 6 lakh AK-203 rifles, with the factory being upgraded to produce one rifle every 100 seconds.

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- The programme began with India-Russia cooperation in 2018, and increased local production has reportedly brought the delivery schedule forward to late 2030.

5. Barren-land fallacy:

Context: Trees provide many benefits, including helping cool the neighbourhood, keeping soil from getting eroded, drawing carbon from the environment and storing it, and supporting many birds, small animals, and insects. However, these effects are beneficial only when trees are in the right ecosystem; otherwise, they can be harmful.

About Barren-land fallacy:

- **Meaning:** The barren-land fallacy assumes that land without trees is barren, degraded and ecologically deficient.
- **Faulty Approach:** It assumes such land should naturally "evolve" into a forest or should be converted into forest through tree planting.
- **Wrong Tree Planting:** Afforestation drives may plant trees in ecosystems where forests do not naturally occur.
- **Unsuitable Species:** They may also use inappropriate species such as eucalyptus in water-stressed regions, where high water consumption can worsen water scarcity.
- **Ecosystem Diversity:** Forests are only one type of ecosystem; grasslands, savannahs, scrublands, wetlands, deserts and other naturally open ecosystems are equally important.
- **Ecological Damage:** Treating drylands as degraded forests can lead to policies and interventions that damage naturally functioning ecosystems.
- **Correct Restoration:** Ecological restoration should aim to protect or restore the ecosystem naturally suited to that location, rather than simply increasing tree cover.
- **Key Principle:** Tree planting is beneficial only where forests are the native ecosystem and have been degraded or cleared.

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6. H1N1 Virus:

Context: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Sunday said that the Influenza A (H1N1) viruses currently circulating in the country belong to the A/Missouri/11/2025 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus strain. It clarified that no new strain of H1N1 has been identified and there is no cause for panic.

About H1N1 Virus:

- Virus: H1N1 is a subtype of Influenza A, with H1 = Hemagglutinin 1 and N1 = Neuraminidase 1; the 2009 pandemic strain is called A(H1N1)pdm09.
- **Dise**ase: It causes an acute respiratory infection, commonly known as swine flu; Influenza has types A, B, C and D, with A and B mainly causing seasonal human epidemics.
- **2009 Pandemic:** The virus was first reported in North America in April 2009, and WHO declared a pandemic in June 2009 after spreading to 74 countries and territories.
- **Origin & India:** Genetic studies showed the 2009 strain originated from animal influenza viruses and differed from earlier human seasonal H1N1; India reported its first confirmed case in May 2009.
- **Transmission & Incubation:** It spreads mainly through respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces; symptoms generally appear in about 2 days, with an incubation period of 1–4 days.
- **Diagnosis:** Diagnosis is often clinical, while RT-PCR of respiratory samples can confirm infection and is generally more sensitive than rapid diagnostic tests.

Quick Bites:

➢ The Indian Navy's sail training ship, INS Sudarshini, arrived at Lisbon, Portugal on 22 Aug 2026, as part of her ongoing Lokayan 26 transoceanic expedition. The three-masted barque made a grand entry through the Tagus River, showcasing traditional sailing and seamanship skills.

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- The National Zoological Park, New Delhi successfully organised the 2nd edition of 'Tree Walk @ NZP' along with its 11th Sunday Bird Walk on 23rd August 2026. The programme was organised as part of the Zoo's ongoing Citizen Science Initiative, which aims to encourage public participation in biodiversity documentation, monitoring and conservation awareness.
- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), under the guidance of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India, and Cultus Education announced the launch of a nationwide cloud and AI skilling initiative in collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS). The initiative provides 150,000 learners with foundational AI and cloud literacy through AWS digital training content and delivers intensive, job-ready training to 10,000 participants through the AWS re/Start program — a free, cohort-based workforce development training program that helps individuals build cloud computing skills and connects participants with employment opportunities at local employers. Graduates gain access to qualified interview opportunities.
- The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) celebrated its 33rd Foundation Day at the Constitution Club of India in the National Capital here today. The event was first of its kind ever celebrated to honour the Safai Karamcharis since setting up of the Commission in 1994.
- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya and Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Smt. Raksha Khadse today led a BRICS Friendship Cycling Event in Visakhapatnam as part of the 87th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle, organised on the sidelines of the BRICS Youth & Sports Ministers' Meeting hosted by India.
- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) stated on 23 August 2026 that no new strain of Influenza A (H1N1) has been identified in India. The circulating Influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 strain was described as similar to the A/Missouri/11/2025 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus, which belongs to clade 6B.1A.5a2a and subclade D.3.1.1.
- Iran announced the discovery of a major natural gas field in Fars Province on 23 August 2026. The field contains over 7.5 trillion cubic feet of gas, equal to about 212.4 billion cubic metres, and

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about 5.7 trillion cubic feet is estimated to be commercially extractable. Russia has the world's largest proven natural gas reserves (~1,320.5 Tcf), followed by Iran (~1,133.6 Tcf), Qatar (~871.1 Tcf) and Turkmenistan (~480.3 Tcf). The world's largest gas field is the shared offshore South Pars/North Dome between Iran and Qatar, while Urengoy in Siberia is the largest onshore gas field, followed by Yamburg in Russia.

- The fates of 22 crew members aboard a Panama-flagged bulk carrier that sank in the Bay of Bengal off Odisha remained unknown on Sunday even after 24 hours of intensive search and rescue operations by the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). According to the latest reports from the Navy and the ICG, two Chinese crew members of the ill-fated M.V. Ocean Winner, which was carrying iron ore from Odisha, were rescued, even as Navy ships and aircraft continued to search for the remaining crew.
- The Indian flag rose at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium on Sunday as Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand received their World championships bronze, bringing a ceremonial close to a week in which they gave India's first women's doubles medal since 2011. Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand won a bronze medal at the BWF World Championships in August 2026.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo and the Rwanda-backed M23 armed group have agreed on a road map for peace talks, according to a joint statement published on Sunday by Switzerland. The eastern DRC has been riven by decades of conflict, with multiple armed groups fighting over its mineral-rich territory, including the M23.

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25-08-2026

1. Garbhini Mitra:

Context: The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi, an autonomous premier institution under the Ministry of Ayush, has introduced the Garbhini Mitra Course for the 2026–2027 academic session.

About Garbhini Mitra:

- The initiative is a structured healthcare skill-development programme aimed at creating trained personnel to provide appropriate health education, lifestyle guidance, and community-level support to women during pregnancy and the postnatal period.
- The course is rooted in the traditional Ayurvedic concepts of Garbhini Paricharya (antenatal care), Sutika Paricharya (postnatal care), and Garbhadhana Vidhi (pre-conceptional care).
- Designed as a six-month offline training programme running from Monday to Friday between 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM, it equips participants with practical skills in trimester-specific dietetics, lifestyle modifications, pregnancy-safe yoga, emotional support during labour, newborn massage, and basic life support protocols.
- The curriculum also emphasizes infection control, sanitization, biomedical waste management, and workplace safety.
- Offered at the AIIA campus in Sarita Vihar, New Delhi, the course admits 20 students per batch. Candidates who have passed the Senior Secondary (10+2) examination from any recognized board in India and are at least 18 years of age are eligible to apply. Candidates currently awaiting their 12th-grade results may also submit provisional applications.
- After completing the course, candidates can pursue roles as Garbhini Mitra Assistants, Prenatal/Postnatal Care Assistants, Antenatal Wellness Guides and Maternal Health Support

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Workers, with opportunities in Ayush centres, maternity clinics, NGOs, community health projects and wellness institutions.

2. Dak MITRA and Dak Sewa:

Context: The Department of Posts has taken significant steps towards modernising postal service delivery with the rollout of upgraded Dak MITRA and Dak Sewa mobile applications and the inauguration of 14 renovated Post Office buildings across the country.

About Dak MITRA and Dak Sewa:

- Dak MITRA stands for Mobile Interface for Transactions & Rural Assistance and is developed by CEPT under the Advanced Postal Technology (APT) platform of DoP IT 2.0.
- Dak MITRA serves as a unified digital platform for 1.4 lakh+ Branch Post Offices, using Android-based handheld devices.
- It enables paperless, real-time postal and financial services, including mail booking, OTP-based doorstep delivery, banking, insurance, Aadhaar biometric e-KYC, cash transactions and PLI/RPLI premium collection.
- Its primary aim is to empower Branch Postmasters/postal workforce and strengthen doorstep and last-mile service delivery.
- Dak Sewa App is a citizen-centric 24×7 digital platform integrating multiple India Post services such as tracking, booking, complaints, Post Office/PIN-code locators and financial calculators.
- Dak Sewa supports 23 Indian languages through BHASHINI, making postal services more accessible and inclusive.
- **In essence:** Dak MITRA → empowers postal workforce, while Dak Sewa → empowers citizens, together advancing the digital transformation of India Post.

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3. GENESIS EIR 3.0:

Context: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), through MeitY Startup Hub (MSH), has launched GENESIS Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) Cohort 3, a national-level programme to support aspiring entrepreneurs, innovators, researchers, students and early-stage startup founders in transforming innovative ideas into technology-driven ventures.

About GENESIS EIR 3.0:

- GENESIS EIR 3.0 was launched at the GENESIS NextGen Startup Summit, Coimbatore Edition, held on 4 August 2026 at Rathinam Global University, Coimbatore.
- GENESIS EIR 3.0 is a component of the GENESIS (Gen-Next Support for Innovative Startups) scheme, aimed at discovering, supporting and accelerating startups, particularly in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Through its Entrepreneur-in-Residence component, the programme provides focused funding and incubation support to help innovators, students and entrepreneurs convert early-stage ideas into pilot-ready solutions.
- With a total budget outlay of ₹490 crore, the scheme seeks to unlock the entrepreneurial potential of emerging regions and connect them more deeply with India's growing innovation ecosystem.
- MeitY Startup Hub, established under MeitY, serves as a national platform connecting startups, incubators, accelerators, industry, investors, mentors, academia and government stakeholders.
- Implemented by MeitY Startup Hub, GENESIS EIR Cohort-3 supports early-stage innovators developing technology-based solutions in Electronics, Information Technology (IT), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and DeepTech.
- Selected applicants will receive incubation, mentorship, ecosystem access, networking opportunities and financial assistance of up to ₹10 lakh through participating GENESIS incubators.

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4. Unified Payments Interface (UPI):

Context: The Unified Payments Interface (UPI), launched on 25th August 2016 by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) under the regulatory oversight of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) completes 10 years of transforming digital payments in India.

About Unified Payments Interface (UPI):

- UPI is a real-time digital payment system developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and launched in 2016.
- It enables instant, 24×7 fund transfers between bank accounts through mobile applications.
- **Single platform:** Multiple bank accounts can be linked and accessed through a single UPI-enabled app.
- **Multiple payment methods:** Payments can be made using mobile number, Virtual Payment Address (VPA), bank account details or QR codes.
- **Recurring payments:** UPI AutoPay enables automatic payments for utility bills, subscriptions and other recurring expenses.
- **Peer-to-peer payments:** Users can send money or respond to payment/collect requests from other users.
- **Security:** UPI transactions use two-factor authentication, while the VPA reduces the need to share sensitive bank account details.

5. Polysilicon:

Context: The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) announced that it is formulating a dedicated subsidy scheme to establish 30 GW of domestic polysilicon manufacturing capacity by 2030.

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About Polysilicon:

- Polysilicon is a high-purity polycrystalline form of silicon and the key upstream raw material for solar PV and semiconductor industries.
- **Production:** Quartz/Silica (SiO_2) → Metallurgical-grade silicon (MG-Si) → Chlorosilanes → Purification by fractional distillation → High-purity polysilicon.
- **Major processes:** The Siemens Process deposits ultra-pure silicon on heated rods, while Fluidized Bed Reactor (FBR) technology produces granular polysilicon with lower energy consumption.
- **Key characteristics:** It is capital- and energy-intensive to produce and has a polycrystalline structure with grain boundaries; it can be converted into single-crystal ingots through processes such as Czochralski (Cz) growth.
- **Solar application:** Polysilicon is converted into PV ingots and wafers, which are used to manufacture solar cells such as PERC, TOPCon and HJT.
- **Other applications:** It is also an important feedstock for semiconductor chips, power electronics, MOSFETs, diodes, thyristors and thin-film transistors (TFTs) used in displays.

6. Jojari River:

Context: The Supreme Court of India ordered an interim ban on construction and development within 100 metres of the edge of Rajasthan's Jojari River. The bench also barred hazardous industries and pollution-causing activities within 500 metres on either side of the river's existing flood line or present flow path.

About Jojari River:

- **Location:** The Jojari River is a seasonal river in Rajasthan, with a length of about 83 km.
- **Origin:** It originates from the hills near Poondloo village in Nagaur district and mainly carries surplus rainwater.
- **Course:** It flows broadly in a northeast → southwest direction through Rajasthan.

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- **River System:** Jojari is a tributary of the Luni River and joins the Luni near Khejalda Khurd in Jodhpur district.
- **Pollution:** It is severely polluted by untreated industrial effluents and domestic sewage, particularly from the Boranada industrial area near Jodhpur.
- **Major pollutants:** Industrial discharge contains toxic substances including lead, cadmium, sulphur and other chemicals.
- **Environmental impact:** Pollution has caused ecosystem degradation, wildlife deaths, groundwater contamination and loss of agricultural productivity.

7. Information Technology Resilience Index framework:

Context: The Securities and Exchange Board of India introduced the Information Technology Resilience Index framework for Market Infrastructure Institutions on 24 August 2026.

About Information Technology Resilience Index framework:

- **Introduced by:** SEBI for Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) to assess the resilience and security of critical IT systems.
- **MIIs include:** Stock exchanges, clearing corporations and depositories, which form the backbone of India's securities-market infrastructure.
- **Assessment scale:** The IT Resilience Index evaluates IT resilience on a 100-point scale.
- **Parameters:** The framework assesses 9 parameters covering security, reliability, governance and operational resilience.
- **Highest weightage:** Availability – 20 points and Security – 20 points.
- **10-point parameters:** Integrity, Governance, Reliability & Monitoring, Business Continuity, and Modularity & Flexibility carry 10 points each.
- **5-point parameters:** Scalability and Incident Handling carry 5 points each.

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- **Early Warning System (EWS):** SEBI has directed MIIs to establish an EWS to detect early signs of deterioration in IT resilience.
- **Assessment & reporting:** MIIs must calculate the index half-yearly within 60 days of each assessment period and submit comparative analysis to the Standing Committee on Technology and governing boards.
- **Rollout deadline:** 28 February 2027 is the deadline for full implementation, including real-time service-delivery monitoring and the Early Warning System.

Quick Bites:

- Vice-President Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan today launched India's first non-GMO, high-expansion popcorn maize hybrid seed at Musunuru in Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh, describing it as a significant step towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat in agriculture. The non-GMO, high-expansion popcorn maize hybrid seeds developed in Andhra Pradesh are: Krishna 459 (Krisna459) Godavari 234 (Godari234)
- India restored 21.76 mn ha Land during 2011–2020, generating 1.22 bn person-days of Employment: Shri Bhupender Yadav at UNCCD COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- The Reserve Bank of India's special USD-INR forex swap facility for FCNR(B) deposits, Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCB) and External Commercial Borrowings (ECB), launched on June 8, 2026, has driven an unprecedented surge in foreign exchange inflows into the country by mobilizing total foreign exchange inflows of US $73 billion as on August 21, 2026. FCNR(B) deposits alone accounted for US $65.40 billion, underlining the overwhelming response of Non-Resident Indians to the scheme.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs today began the three-day National Conclave on Tribal Languages & Museums in Mysuru, Karnataka. The Conclave brings together policymakers, linguists, researchers, technologists, and tribal community representatives to deliberate on the documentation

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and revitalisation of tribal languages and on strengthening tribal and Tribal Freedom Fighter Museums (TFFM) across the country.

- To celebrate the National Sports Day 2026, the nation is set to witness a large-scale youth engagement initiative, "Khelo India Dialogue – Khel Ki Baat, Pradhan Mantri Modi Ke Saath", on 27 August 2026, bringing together young people, athletes and educational institutions at more than 1,500 locations across the country.
- Australia confirmed its first mainland case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in a mammal after the virus was detected in a dead long-nosed fur seal at Beachport, South Australia
- The Union government launched the Kanda Express on 24 August 2026 to transport onions from Nashik in Maharashtra to major consuming centres such as Delhi, Chennai, Kochi and Guwahati. The measure came after the national average retail price of onions rose to ₹42 per kg on 22 August 2026, which was 45% higher than the previous year and 19% higher than the previous month.
- India has approved the first module of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS), a proposed Indian space station planned for completion by 2035. The station is designed as a low-Earth orbit platform and is linked to India's human spaceflight programme under the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- The "Eagles of Civilisation 2026" joint air exercise began between the Egyptian Air Force and the People's Liberation Army Air Force in August 2026. The drill involved Chinese J-16 fighter jets, aerial refuelling aircraft, special-mission aircraft, and helicopters arriving at an Egyptian airbase after a 6,000-kilometre flight from China.
- NITI Aayog's Skill Development, Labour and Employment Division released the report Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047 in August 2026. The report examined India's vocational training system, youth employability, labour market alignment, and skilling finance.
- Mumbai became the only Indian city in the fourth annual Work From Anywhere Index published by the International Workplace Group in 2026. The city scored 77 out of 100 and ranked 50th globally, ahead of London and Miami in the same index. The Work From Anywhere Index is an

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annual city ranking that assesses locations for remote work and flexible working conditions. The 2026 edition used criteria such as climate, broadband speed, accommodation, transport, food, culture, and flexible workspace availability.

- Indian Railways has set up the country's first maintenance depot for Vande Bharat Sleeper trains at Bhagat Ki Kothi in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, paving the way for the large-scale induction of the new sleeper variant. The facility, being developed in collaboration with Rail Vikas Nigam Limited and Kinet Railway Solutions, a Russia-India joint venture, is nearing completion of its first phase at a cost of ₹167 crore. The total project cost is estimated at ₹362 crore after completion of the second phase.

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26-08-2026

1. Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT):

Context: Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Union Minister of Communications graced the 43rd Foundation Day of Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) with other senior officials, industry representatives and distinguished guests.

About Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT):

- C-DOT (Centre for Development of Telematics) is India's premier telecom R&D organisation.
- It was established in August 1984 and functions as an autonomous telecom technology centre under DoT.
- Registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and recognized as a Public Funded Research Institution by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR).
- It develops indigenous telecom technologies to strengthen India's technological self-reliance.
- Major areas include optical communication, switching, wireless networks, cybersecurity and digital infrastructure.
- It has contributed to rural connectivity, including the development of rural telecom exchanges.
- C-DOT transfers its technologies to domestic manufacturers, supporting India's telecom manufacturing ecosystem.
- It works on 5G, AI-based network management, IoT/M2M and supports programmes such as Digital India, BharatNet, Smart Cities and Make in India.

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2. ICGS Ajit (Yard 1277):

Context: Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), a leading Defence Public Sector Undertaking, achieved another milestone in indigenous shipbuilding with the formal handing over of ICGS Ajit (Yard 1277), a state-of-the-art Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV), to the Indian Coast Guard today.

About ICGS Ajit (Yard 1277):

- Built with more than 65 per cent indigenous content, ICGS Ajit reflects the growing capabilities of India's domestic defence shipbuilding industry and the Government's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- The 51.43-metre-long and 8-metre-wide vessel has a displacement of 330 tonnes at a draught of 2.5 metres.
- It is powered by twin marine diesel engines driving controllable pitch propellers (CPP), a first-of-its-kind feature in this class of Fast Patrol Vessels, providing improved propulsion efficiency and operational performance.
- With a top speed of more than 27 knots and an endurance of 1,500 nautical miles, the vessel is equipped with an advanced integrated machinery control system to enhance operational readiness, efficiency and sustainability.

3. Nipun vessel:

Context: The Indian Navy is set to commission Nipun, the second Diving Support Vessel (DSV) of the Nistar-class, on 31 Aug 2026 at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. INS Nistar is India's first indigenously designed and constructed diving support vessel commissioned on July 18, 2025, in Visakhapatnam.

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About Nipun vessel:

- Indigenously designed and constructed by Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL), Visakhapatnam, Nipun represents a significant milestone in India's pursuit of self-reliance in defence shipbuilding.
- Nipun is a purpose-built platform designed to support a wide spectrum of diving and underwater operations.
- The ship is equipped with modern diving systems and underwater intervention capabilities, enabling sustained support to divers operating in demanding conditions at sea.
- It will also augment the Indian Navy's capability to support submarine rescue operations.
- The ship incorporates modern systems for navigation, platform management and precise station keeping, complemented by specialised facilities for diving, underwater intervention and medical support.
- These capabilities enable Nipun to function as an integrated platform for complex operations beneath the surface.

4. e-Shram Portal:

Context: The e-Shram Portal completes five years on 26 August 2026, marking a significant milestone in strengthening social security for India's unorganised workforce.

About e-Shram Portal:

- **Launched:** On 26 August 2021 by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- **Purpose:** To support and empower unorganised workers and improve their access to welfare benefits.
- **NDUW:** Creates the National Database of Unorganised Workers, covering migrant, construction, gig and platform workers.
- **Objectives:** Helps in effective policy implementation, social-security coverage and integration of workers into the formal economy.

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- **Eligibility:** Unorganised workers aged 16–59 years, generally not members of EPFO/ESIC or government-funded NPS.
- **UAN:** Registered workers receive a Universal Account Number (UAN) linked with Aadhaar for accessing benefits.
- **Employment & Skills:** Connects workers with jobs, skill development, apprenticeships, pensions and state-specific schemes.
- **Migrant Workers:** Captures family details of migrant workers to facilitate access to education and women-centric welfare schemes.
- **Digital & Inclusive Platform:** Provides multilingual support, grievance redressal, self-registration and secure data sharing with States/UTs.

5. Guggal Plant:

Context: A Kutch-based non-profit is planting Khara and Mitha Guggal across five villages to restore native medicinal heritage and biodiversity on community grazing lands

About Guggal Plant:

- Guggal is a spiny shrub/small tree belonging to the Burseraceae family.
- **Distribution:** Native to India, Arabia and Pakistan; in India, mainly found in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.
- **Habitat:** Prefers arid and semi-arid climates and can tolerate poor, sandy to silt-loam soils.
- **Adaptation:** It is drought- and salinity-resistant and remains largely leafless for most of the year.
- **Bark:** Has ash-coloured bark that peels off in large, rough flakes.
- **Propagation:** Seeds have poor germination, and plants take around 10 years to mature.
- **Guggul gum:** The resin obtained from the tree is used in incense, perfumes, lacquers, varnishes, ointments and traditional medicine.

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- **Medicinal importance:** Guggul is valued in Ayurvedic medicine; its extract interacts with the Farnesoid X Receptor (FXR) involved in cholesterol and bile-acid regulation.

6. Waterspout:

Context: Recently, a rare weather phenomenon resembling a waterspout was observed over the Brahmaputra in Assam's Barpeta district.

About Waterspout:

- Waterspout is a rotating column of air and mist extending over a water body.
- It is generally less intense than a tornado and usually lasts around 5 minutes, occasionally up to 10 minutes.
- An average waterspout may be about 165 feet in diameter, with wind speeds of around 100 km/h.
- **Formation:** Favoured by high humidity and relatively warm water beneath cooler air.
- **Tornadic waterspout:** A tornado over water or one that moves from land to water; associated with severe thunderstorms, strong winds, hail and lightning.
- **Fair-weather waterspout:** Develops under relatively calm conditions, usually beneath developing cumulus clouds, without severe thunderstorms.
- **Direction of development:** Fair-weather waterspouts develop from the water surface upward, while tornadic waterspouts develop downward from a thunderstorm.
- **Movement:** Fair-weather waterspouts generally move very little because of light winds.

7. Rohingya refugees:

Context: Tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar living in dozens of camps in Bangladesh held a rally Tuesday to demand their safe return to their home state, nine years after they fled a government crackdown. The demonstrators urged the international community to ensure

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security in Rakhine state as they marked what they call the "Ninth Anniversary of Rohingya Genocide Day".

About Rohingya refugees:

- The Rohingya are a stateless Indo-Aryan, predominantly Muslim ethnic group from Rakhine State, Myanmar.
- They are among the world's most persecuted minorities and were stripped of citizenship under Myanmar's 1982 nationality law.
- Systematic discrimination includes restrictions on movement, education, employment and political rights.
- International bodies have described the persecution as ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and possible genocide.
- The Rohingya claim indigenous roots in western Myanmar dating back over a thousand years.
- Minister seeks fundamental shift in fight against drought: (GS paper 3)
- **Fundamental Shift:** Global drought management should shift from reactive relief to proactive, technology-enabled resilience.
- **Rising Drought Risk:** Drought is becoming a major development challenge, affecting water security, agriculture, biodiversity and economic stability.
- **India's Approach:** India follows a multi-institutional approach combining early warning, mitigation, relief and community resilience.
- **Early Warning:** Rainfall monitoring and satellite-based drought assessment help authorities prepare for droughts in advance.
- **Forest–Water Link:** India emphasised "restore the forest, before the flow", highlighting forests' role in water conservation.
- **Catchment Forestry:** Catchment and riverscape forestry help reduce erosion, improve water retention and recharge groundwater.

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- **Technology:** India advocated predictive technologies and localised early-warning systems for better drought preparedness.
- **Community Resilience:** Vulnerable communities should be enabled to anticipate and absorb environmental shocks rather than depend mainly on post-disaster relief.
- **UNCCD COP17:** The 17th UNCCD COP is being hosted by Mongolia under the theme "Restoring Land. Restoring Hope."
- **UNCCD:** Established in 1994, UNCCD is one of the three Rio Conventions, alongside UNFCCC and CBD.
- **Land Degradation:** Land degradation affects up to 40% of the world's land surface, threatening billions of people.
- **COP17 Goal:** The conference aims to develop measurable and investable solutions for land, water and food security over the next decade.

Quick Bites:

- The Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, organised the 10th edition of the multilingual 'Sujal Gram Samvad' today, providing a platform for direct interaction with Gram Panchayat (GP) representatives and local communities on operation and maintenance (O&M) of rural drinking water systems.
- Union Minister of Coal and Mines Shri G. Kishan Reddy today launched the Critical Minerals Innovation Hackathon 2026 (CMiH 2026), aimed at strengthening the objectives of the National Critical Mineral Mission by encouraging students, researchers, academic and R&D institutions, start-ups, and innovators to develop innovative technical solutions to identified challenges in the critical minerals. The hackathon will be organized and host by JNARDDC, Nagpur, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Mines, which will serve as the Organising body and Host Institute for CMiH 2026.

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- The Ministry of Rural Development, participated in the World Water Week 2026 being held in Stockholm, Sweden, reaffirming India's commitment to strengthening water security through community-led rural development, technology-enabled governance and sustainable management of natural resources. Established in 1991, this event is organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and provides a critical platform for the exchange of knowledge, solutions, and commitments related to water management. World Water Week 2026 takes place from August 23 to 27 under the theme "Water for People and Progress"
- In a significant step towards self-reliance in advanced aerospace propulsion, CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL) today unveiled three indigenous Micro and Small Gas Turbine Engines — NJ-05 with 5 kg thrust, NJ-50 with 50 kg thrust and NJ-100 with 100 kg thrust — at the SSB Auditorium, CSIR Headquarters, New Delhi.
- The ICAR-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) officially registered the Periyar cow (popularly known as Periyar Kullan) as an indigenous cattle breed. This makes it only the second indigenous cattle breed from Kerala to receive national recognition, following the famous Vechur cow.
- On 24 August 2026, the United States announced "Operation Economic Outcast", a sanctions campaign led by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent against Iran. The measures expanded U.S. sanctions coverage to five sectors of the Iranian economy and targeted 60 individuals, entities, and vessels linked to cyber operations, oil sales, and procurement networks.
- Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary in Jamnagar, Gujarat, has been identified as a major breeding site for the Black-necked Stork, scientifically known as Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus. The sanctuary is a Ramsar site and forms part of the wetland network of western India.
- The first World Yogasana Championship was held from 4 June to 8 June 2026 at EKA Arena, also known as TransStadia, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The championship was organised by Yogasana Bharat in association with World Yogasana and the Indian Olympic Association, with support from the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports and the Ministry of Ayush.

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- Former Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan (retd) has said a loitering munition deployed during Operation Sindoor may have struck the Kirana Hills area near Pakistan's Sargodha, where nuclear-related facilities are located.

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27-08-2026

1. Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI):

Context: The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) organized a conclave of the Heads of Regional Rural Banks on expanding the SIDBI-RRB MSME Co-Lending arrangement on 25th August 2026 in New Delhi. The Co-Lending Origination Platform developed by SIDBI is an end-to-end digital platform providing a faster and paperless credit journey, resulting in the quick sanction and disbursement of loans.

About Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI):

- Small Industries Development Bank of India is the apex financial institution for promotion, financing, and development of the MSME sector in India.
- It operates under the Ministry of Finance and is headquartered in Lucknow with offices across the country.
- SIDBI was established on 2 April 1990 under an Act of Parliament as a wholly owned subsidiary of Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) Bank.
- It was delinked from IDBI Bank on 27 March 2000 to function as an independent institution.
- SIDBI provides refinance support to banks and financial institutions to boost MSME lending.
- It offers term loans and working capital finance directly to industries.
- It promotes rural enterprises and entrepreneurship development.
- It provides financial assistance to banks, Small Finance Banks, and NBFCs.
- SIDBI also directly lends to MSMEs in addition to its refinance operations.

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2. PRAGATI platform:

Context: Recently, the Prime Minister of India chaired the 53rd meeting of the PRAGATI platform

About PRAGATI platform:

- **Launched in 2015:** PRAGATI stands for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation and is a flagship governance platform of the Government of India.
- **Main Objective:** It aims to fast-track projects and schemes and address public grievances through direct review by the Prime Minister.
- **Technology:** Developed by the PMO with NIC, it combines digital data management, video conferencing and geospatial technology.
- **Three-Tier System:** It connects the PMO, Union Government Secretaries and State Chief Secretaries for coordinated decision-making.
- **PM-led Review:** The Prime Minister chairs review meetings with Central and State officials and examines project progress, grievances and implementation bottlenecks using real-time data and visuals.
- **Monitoring & Follow-up:** The Cabinet Secretariat monitors projects, while concerned Ministries handle schemes and grievances under continuous PMO oversight.
- **Database-driven Governance:** Issues brought before the PM are selected from databases containing public grievances, ongoing programmes and pending projects, enabling timely corrective action.

3. Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary:

Context: Recently, the monsoon bird survey conducted by the Thiruvananthapuram Wildlife Division recorded as many as 124 bird species at Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary

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About Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary:

- **Location & Establishment:** Located in Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala, and declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1983.
- **Boundaries:** Bordered by Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) in the northeast, Palode Reserve Forest in the north and Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary in the south.
- **River & Catchment:** It forms the catchment of Peppara Dam, constructed across the Karamana River.
- **Vegetation:** Contains tropical evergreen, moist mixed deciduous, semi-evergreen and Myristica swamp forests; major peaks include Chemmunjimottai (1,717 m) and Athirumalai (1,594 m).
- **Flora & Fauna:** Important flora includes Pterocarpus marsupium, Mesua ferrea and Hopea parviflora; fauna includes tiger, leopard, sloth bear, Asian elephant, sambar, lion-tailed macaque, Nilgiri langur and Nilgiri tahr.

4. Bab-el-Mandeb strait:

Context: The Indian Navy monitored the transit of merchant vessels through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait in August 2026 amid security risks to commercial shipping in the Red Sea corridor. The operation involved escort and surveillance duties for Indian-flagged and foreign-flagged vessels in the Gulf of Aden and adjacent waters.

About Bab-el-Mandeb strait:

- Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is the gateway to the Red Sea through which around 12% of the world's trade passes.
- **Meaning:** Bab-el-Mandeb is an Arabic term meaning "Gate of Tears" or "Gate of Grief", reflecting the historical dangers of navigation.
- **Location:** It is a narrow maritime chokepoint between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, connecting the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea/Indian Ocean.

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- **Bordering Countries:** It separates Yemen (Asia) from Djibouti and Eritrea (Africa).



- **Key Island:** The Perim Island (Yemen) divides the strait into two navigation channels.
- **Gateway to Suez Canal:** It is the only sea entrance to the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean and forms a vital Asia–Europe trade route via the Suez Canal.
- **Energy Chokepoint:** It is a crucial transit route for crude oil, petroleum products, and LNG from the Persian Gulf to Europe and global markets.
- **Global Trade Importance:** Around 10–12% of global trade and nearly 30% of global container traffic passes through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.
- **Strategic Impact:** Any disruption forces ships to reroute via the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa), adding 10–14 days to voyages and increasing freight costs, insurance premiums, and global inflation.

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- The Houthis are an Iran-backed, heavily armed political and military organization that emerged from Yemen's Zaydi Shia Muslim minority. Officially known as Ansar Allah, they control northern Yemen and are a key member of Iran's "Axis of Resistance"

5. Western disturbance:

Context: A western disturbance that brought rain to parts of northern India, and subsequently moved eastwards towards the Himalayas, may have contributed to the weather conditions preceding the devastating flash flood in Nepal on Wednesday, according to a senior India Meteorological Department official.

About Western disturbance:

- Western Disturbances are extra-tropical low-pressure storm systems
- They originate in the Mediterranean Sea due to interaction of warm and cold air masses
- They move eastward under the influence of the subtropical westerly jet stream
- They gain moisture from regions like Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea
- They bring winter rainfall to northwestern parts of India
- Majorly affect regions like Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, western Uttar Pradesh and western Himalayas.
- Precipitation occurs as rain in plains and snow in higher altitudes
- Moisture is mainly carried in the upper atmosphere unlike tropical systems
- They are most active during December to February but can occur in other seasons
- They play a crucial role in replenishing soil moisture for rabi crops
- They cause temperature fluctuations, often sudden drops or temporary rise before arrival
- They lead to cloud cover, fog, and changes in atmospheric pressure.
- They weaken after crossing the Himalayas and may affect Nepal and Bangladesh before dissipating.

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Quick Bites:

- In a significant development for India's passenger transport sector, the International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) has issued its first compliance certificate for a 15-metre multi-axle sleeper bus under AIS-119 and AIS-153, in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR). The certificate has been awarded to Synaty Automotive Pvt. Ltd. for its 15-metre multi-axle sleeper bus. The achievement represents an important milestone in the testing and certification of one of the longest permissible bus body configurations in the passenger transport category.
- China completed the first phase of dredging and land reclamation at Antelope Reef in the Paracel Islands of the South China Sea on 21 August 2026. Antelope Reef is part of the Paracel Islands, an archipelago in the northern South China Sea. China has exercised de facto control over the Paracel Islands since 1974, after expelling South Vietnamese forces from the area.
- Researchers from the CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), based in Himachal Pradesh, identified a new plant species of the sunflower family in Arunachal Pradesh. The species was named Doronicum sanctum and was formally described in a study published on 11 August 2026 in a Springer Nature journal.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a high-altitude trial of the indigenous Military Combat Parachute System (MCPS) at the Nyoma-Mudh Drop Zone in Ladakh's Leh district on 26 August 2026. The trial jump took place from 22,000 feet above mean sea level in temperatures of minus 15 degrees Celsius.
- The National Shipping Board (NSB) is a permanent statutory body established in 1959 under Section 4 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. It advises the Government of India on matters related to shipping and maritime development and has contributed to shaping India's National Maritime Policy. Recently, at its first 'Sagar Samvad', the NSB proposed a five-point roadmap to add 100 vessels to India's merchant fleet over the next five years.

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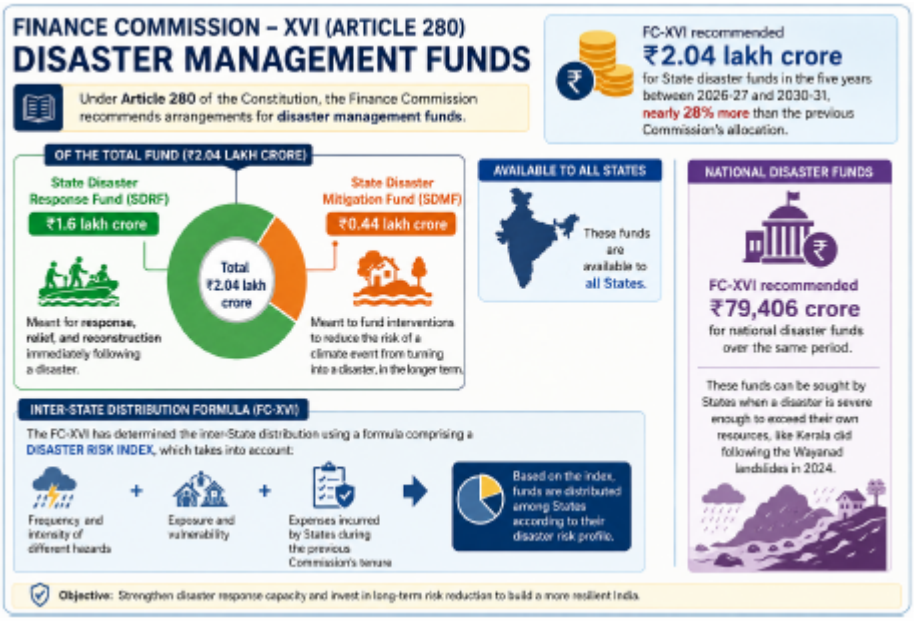

- Morocco is a country in the Maghreb region of North Africa, bordered by Algeria to the east and Western Sahara to the south, with coastlines along both the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. Its capital is Rabat. Most of northern Morocco has a Mediterranean climate with wet winters and dry summers. The Moulouya River, originating in the Atlas Mountains and flowing into the Mediterranean Sea, is an important river of the country.
- At least 157 people were killed and more than 400 people, 133 Indians among them, were missing or out of contact after a massive flash flood in Nepal's Bhotekoshi River swept through villages in Rasuwa, a district bordering China's Tibet region. The Bhotekoshi River, which originates in Tibet, flows into Nepal's Trishuli River and eventually enters India as the Gandak River.
- The Centre has sanctioned ₹22 crore for the 8th Khelo India Youth Games, to be held in Hyderabad, Warangal, Karimnagar and Mahabubnagar, in December this year, in coordination with the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

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28-08-2026

1. Samarthak:

Context: Samarthak, the first Multi-Purpose Vessel (MPV), built by Larsen & Toubro Ltd. (L&T), Kattupalli, was delivered to the Indian Navy on 27 Aug 2026.

About Samarthak:

- The ship comprises over 75 percent indigenous content and has been conceived as a versatile trial and evaluation platform.
- Further, the ship is engineered to perform maritime surveillance and reconnaissance, Offshore patrolling and support Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations, when required.
- The ship has been aptly named 'Samarthak', meaning 'The Proponent'. The name signifies the ship's intended role as a dependable enabler of multiple missions.
- True to its designation, Samarthak is not limited to one specific task but is engineered to support a wide spectrum of activities, thereby embodying the concept of a multi-purpose vessel.
- The delivery of Samarthak is yet another milestone in the Indian Navy's indigenous shipbuilding journey and a reaffirmation of the Government's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.
- The ship stands as a testament in India's pursuit towards self-sustaining domestic defence industrial ecosystem.

2. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):

Context: PM Jan Dhan Yojana Completes 12 Years of Transforming India's Financial Inclusion Landscape.

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About Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):

- Launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi as one of his very first programmes on 28th August 2014, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has completed 12 years.
- PMJDY ensures that every unbanked adult has access to a basic bank account—with no minimum balance requirement and no maintenance charges.
- Each account comes with a free RuPay debit card, offering an accident insurance cover of ₹2 lakh, encouraging digital transactions and financial security.
- Account holders are also eligible for an overdraft facility of up to ₹10,000, providing a safety net during emergencies.
- A minimum monthly remuneration of Rs 5,000 to business correspondents who will provide the last link between the account holders and the bank
- The Jan-Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile (JAM) trinity, with PMJDY at its core, has proven to be a diversion-proof mechanism for the direct delivery of financial assistance. Through JAM, the government has successfully transferred welfare benefits directly into the bank accounts of the underprivileged, eliminating intermediaries and delays.

3. Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme:

Context: PM SVANidhi Completes One Year of Restructuring: Expanding Credit, Digital Inclusion and Livelihoods Opportunities.

About PM SVANidhi Scheme:

- It was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on June 01, 2020.
- It aims to provide affordable Working Capital loans to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to the Covid-19 lockdown.
- It is a micro-credit facility that provides street vendors with a collateral-free loan of Rs 10,000 with low rates of interest.

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- The duration of the scheme initially was until March 2022.
- It has been extended till December 2030, with a focus on increased adoption of digital transactions and holistic socio- economic development of the Street Vendors.
- All vendors who have been vending from or before (March 24, 2020) and with a certificate of vending can avail the loan.
- As per the Street Vendors Act 2014, the Town Vending Committees issue a certificate of vending after a survey has been conducted of all the vendors.
- Vendors can avail of a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly installments in the tenure of one year.
- On timely/ early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy @ 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries on a quarterly basis.
- The scheme promotes digital transactions through cash back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 100 per month.
- The vendors can avail the facility of escalation of the credit limit on timely/ early repayment of loan.
- Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) is the Implementation agency.
- Since its launch in June 2020, PM SVANidhi has emerged as a transformative initiative for street vendors which has facilitated access to formal credit and enabling beneficiaries to strengthen and expand their livelihoods.

4. Carbosulfan:

Context: Recently, the Central government has proposed a complete ban on Carbosulfan

About Carbosulfan:

- Carbosulfan is a synthetic carbamate insecticide used to control various agricultural insect pests.
- It is widely used in crops such as paddy, cotton and horticultural crops.

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- Chemically, it is a 1-benzofuran compound and a carbamate acetylcholinesterase inhibitor.
- It is an orange-yellow/brown viscous liquid, with low water solubility and low volatility.
- It is generally non-persistent in soil and water and is not normally expected to leach into groundwater.
- It can rapidly metabolise into carbofuran, a highly toxic metabolite causing severe cholinesterase inhibition and acute systemic toxicity.
- It is extremely toxic to fish and can affect the nervous system by inhibiting acetylcholinesterase; it is also a skin sensitiser and causes mild eye/skin irritation.

5. Mission Samriddh Gaon scheme:

Context: Recently, the Union Rural Development Minister launched the Mission Samriddh Gaon scheme.

About Mission Samriddh Gaon scheme:

- Mission Samriddh Gaon aims to develop poverty-free and employment-rich villages with assured basic amenities.
- Pilot implementation will be undertaken in Budni block of Sehore district and Khategaon block of Dewas district, Madhya Pradesh.
- Objective: Ensure every family has a livelihood/employment opportunity, access to basic amenities, and reduce distress migration.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Rural Development.
- Integrated development framework will be prepared at the family, Gram Panchayat and block levels.
- It will promote convergence of government schemes covering agriculture, rural development, health, education, employment, livelihoods and basic amenities.

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- Families will be connected to Central and State schemes according to their needs and eligibility, with special focus on women farmers and rural women's livelihood opportunities.

6. Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR):

Context: The forest department has resolved the drinking water crisis that had persisted for decades in a tribal hamlet within the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR) in Erode district, under the 'Project Elephant' scheme.

About Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR):

- Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.
- **Connectivity:** Contiguous with Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) and Bandipur Tiger Reserve and BRT Tiger Reserve & Wildlife Sanctuary (Karnataka).
- **Terrain & Climate:** Hilly and undulating terrain with elevations of 750–1,649 m; climate is mainly subtropical and dry.
- **Rivers & Tribes:** Major rivers include Bhavani, Moyar and Noyyal; home to tribal communities such as Irula and Kurumba.
- **Vegetation:** Includes dry thorn, mixed deciduous, semi-evergreen and riparian forests, with teak, sandalwood and bamboo.
- **Fauna:** Important species include tiger, elephant, leopard, sloth bear, gaur, blackbuck, spotted deer, wild boar, Nilgiri langur and bonnet macaque.

7. Lake Ontario:

Context: President Donald Trump said on Thursday he is renaming Lake Ontario to be known as “Lake America” in the U.S. The Republican President signed an executive order that updated the lake’s name for the U.S. geographic naming service.

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About Lake Ontario:

- **Location:** Lake Ontario is one of the Great Lakes of North America, located between Ontario (Canada) and New York State (USA).
- **Great Lakes:** It is the easternmost and smallest by surface area of the five Great Lakes.
- **Hydrological Link:** Water flows into Lake Ontario mainly from Lake Erie through the Niagara River.
- **Outlet:** It drains into the St. Lawrence River, which ultimately flows into the Atlantic Ocean.
- **Great Lakes Sequence:** Lake Superior → Michigan → Huron → Erie → Ontario → St. Lawrence River → Atlantic Ocean.
- **Borders:** It is the only Great Lake shared by Canada and the USA that lies entirely east of the other Great Lakes; Toronto and Rochester are major cities on its shores.
- **Niagara Connection:** Niagara Falls lies on the Niagara River between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.
- **Climate:** Despite being relatively small, the lake has a strong lake-effect influence, affecting snowfall and temperatures around its shores.
- **Strategic Importance:** It supports navigation, freshwater supply, fisheries, tourism and the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence Seaway, connecting the Great Lakes region with the Atlantic Ocean.

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About Great lakes:



- Great Lakes of North America are a series of large interconnected freshwater lakes in North America that connect to the Atlantic Ocean via the Saint Lawrence River.
- The five lakes are Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, and they are generally on or near the Canada–United States border.
- Hydrologically, Michigan and Huron are a single body of water joined at the Straits of Mackinac.
- The Great Lakes are the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth by total area and are second-largest by total volume, containing 21% of the world's surface freshwater by volume.
- Because of their sea-like characteristics, such as rolling waves, sustained winds, strong currents, great depths, and distant horizons, the five Great Lakes have long been called inland seas.
- Lake Michigan is the largest lake in the entire country.

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Quick Bites:

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj invites public participation to become 'DAANVEERs' and contribute towards strengthening digital infrastructure at the grassroots. DAANVEER, a people-led Computer Crowdsourcing Initiative, enables individuals and organizations to donate desktop computers directly to verified Gram Panchayats through a simple, transparent and technology-enabled mechanism. Complementing infrastructure support provided under Government programs, including the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), the initiative seeks to harness voluntary public participation to strengthen digital governance and service delivery at the grassroots.
- Ammannia telanganensis is a newly discovered freshwater flowering plant species found in the Amrabad Tiger Reserve, Nagarkurnool district, Telangana. It belongs to the Lythraceae family, and its genus Ammannia comprises herbaceous plants commonly associated with wet and aquatic habitats. The species is characterised by flower clusters borne on stalks and seeds with a distinctive cerebriform (brain-like) surface pattern.
- Neelakurinji (Strobilanthes kunthiana) is a purplish flowering shrub of the Acanthaceae family that blooms synchronously once every 12 years at the end of its life cycle. It is semelparous and is found only in the high-altitude shola–grassland ecosystems of southwest India, mainly across the Western Ghats and one landscape of the Eastern Ghats, at 1,340–2,600 m elevation. It has 34 subpopulations across 14 ecoregions and is listed as Vulnerable under the IUCN Red List (A2c) due to about 40% habitat loss.
- The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Rasonque (daraxonrasib) on 26 August 2026 for adult patients with metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma (PDAC).
- A total of 216 rescued Indian Star Tortoises, scientifically named Geochelone elegans, were released into the wild at Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Chandrapur district, Maharashtra.
- A new Banas Bio-CNG Model Plant was inaugurated at Vinchhiwadi in Dhanera taluka of Banaskantha district, Gujarat, on 26 August 2026. The facility is a joint initiative of Banas Dairy, Suzuki Motor Corporation, and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).

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- Uganda was declared officially Ebola-free by the World Health Organisation on Thursday after 42 days without a new case. The country has been praised for its efforts in preventing the spread of the outbreak that has overwhelmed health facilities in parts of the east of neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday laid the foundation stone for a ₹472-crore project to establish facilities for overhauling T-72 and T-90 tanks at the Vehicle Factory Jabalpur, located in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district. The project is aimed at augmenting the Army's capacity to keep its armoured fleet operationally ready.

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29-08-2026

1. Security Action for Europe (SAFE):

Context: Recently, the Italian government has requested €8 billion ($9.3 billion) from the European Union's SAFE defence funding programme.

About Security Action for Europe (SAFE):

- SAFE (Security Action for Europe) is an EU joint borrowing scheme aimed at strengthening Europe's defence capabilities.
- The regulation establishing SAFE entered into force on 29 May 2025.
- It provides loans up to €150 billion to EU Member States for rapid and large-scale defence investments.
- The main focus is common procurement of defence equipment and strengthening the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB).
- Funding is demand-driven, with competitively priced, long-maturity loans that beneficiary Member States must repay.
- Only EU Member States can receive SAFE loans, but several non-EU countries can participate in common procurement.
- Eligible partners include EU candidate/potential candidate countries and countries with EU Security and Defence Partnerships; India signed such a partnership with the EU in 2026.

2. Buckingham Canal: 0

Context: The Tamil Nadu state government is looking at a Rs 876.35-crore plan to make a 7.2-km stretch of the Central Buckingham Canal — from Napier Bridge to the Adyar river — navigable again with passenger boats, floating restaurants and cargo movement.

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About Buckingham Canal:

- **Location:** Runs along India's east coast for about 450 km — around 250 km in Andhra Pradesh and 200 km in Tamil Nadu.
- **Connectivity:** Along with the Krishna and Godavari irrigation canal systems, it once formed a ~650 km continuous navigable waterway.
- **Economic importance:** Historically served as a major route for transporting bulky goods like fuel, salt and dried fish to Madras (Chennai).
- **Origin:** Constructed in 1806 by Basil Cochrane as a privately owned waterway called Cochrane Canal.
- **Renaming:** Taken over by the government in 1837, renamed East Coast Canal, and later extended to Dugarajapatnam in 1857; it acquired the name Buckingham Canal in 1878.
- **Current issues:** Suffering from encroachment, untreated sewage and solid-waste pollution, which have degraded its navigability and ecological condition.

3. Mecca Pact:

Context: Bangladesh will give positive consideration to joining the Mecca Pact, the trilateral defence agreement signed by Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan, if its members propose bringing Dhaka into the framework, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr. Khalilur Rahman told Parliament.

About Mecca Pact:

- Mecca Joint Defence Agreement was signed by Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan on 7 August 2026 in Mecca.
- It aims to strengthen collective deterrence, defence cooperation and military coordination among the three countries.
- **Collective defence:** An armed attack on one member will be treated as an attack on all three.

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- **Strategic strengths:** Saudi Arabia provides financial resources and Gulf influence, Pakistan contributes military capability and operational experience, while Türkiye offers NATO experience and defence technology.
- The pact builds upon the Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) of September 2025.
- It may promote defence-industrial cooperation, including military technology, defence production and capability development.
- It is primarily focused on the changing West Asian security environment and does not explicitly identify India as an adversary.

4. Javelin anti-tank guided missile systems:

Context: India signed a Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) with the U.S. on Friday to procure Javelin anti-tank guided missile systems through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales route, marking a significant step in the defence partnership between the two countries.

About Javelin anti-tank guided missile systems:

- Javelin (FGM-148) is a man-portable anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) developed by Raytheon and Lockheed Martin; it entered US service in 1996.
- It has an effective range of about 2.5 km and can be shoulder-fired by a single soldier or launched from an unmanned ground vehicle.
- It is designed to destroy main battle tanks, armoured vehicles, bunkers, fortifications and helicopters.
- It is a fire-and-forget missile using infrared guidance, allowing the operator to move immediately after firing.
- It uses a soft-launch mechanism, which reduces recoil, prevents exhaust from hitting the operator and enables firing from confined spaces.

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- It has two attack modes: Direct Attack against targets such as bunkers/helicopters and Top Attack, where the missile dives onto the vulnerable roof of tanks.
- The missile weighs about 8.4 kg, while the complete Javelin system weighs around 22 kg.
- It is battle-tested, particularly in Iraq, Afghanistan and Ukraine, where Ukrainian forces used it extensively against Russian armoured vehicles.

5. Grand Chess Tour (GCT):

Context: R. Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian to win the Grand Chess Tour title in 2026, defeating Fabiano Caruana in the final.

About Grand Chess Tour (GCT):

- Grand Chess Tour (GCT) is a prestigious annual international chess circuit featuring many of the world's strongest grandmasters.
- It was founded in 2015 by chess legend Garry Kasparov and businessman Rex Sinquefield.
- The tour combines classical chess, rapid and blitz tournaments across different cities/countries.
- The 2026 edition consists of five regular tournaments, followed by a Grand Chess Tour Final involving the top four players.
- Major 2026 events include tournaments in Poland, Romania, Croatia and St. Louis (USA).

6. Glacial lakes:

Context: Two more glacial lakes have formed in Nepal, near the apparent source of the ice-rock avalanche that triggered flooding in Nepal's Bhote Koshi-Trishuli river system on Wednesday.

About Glacial lakes:

- Glacial lakes, are large bodies of water that sit in front of, on top of, or beneath a melting glacier.

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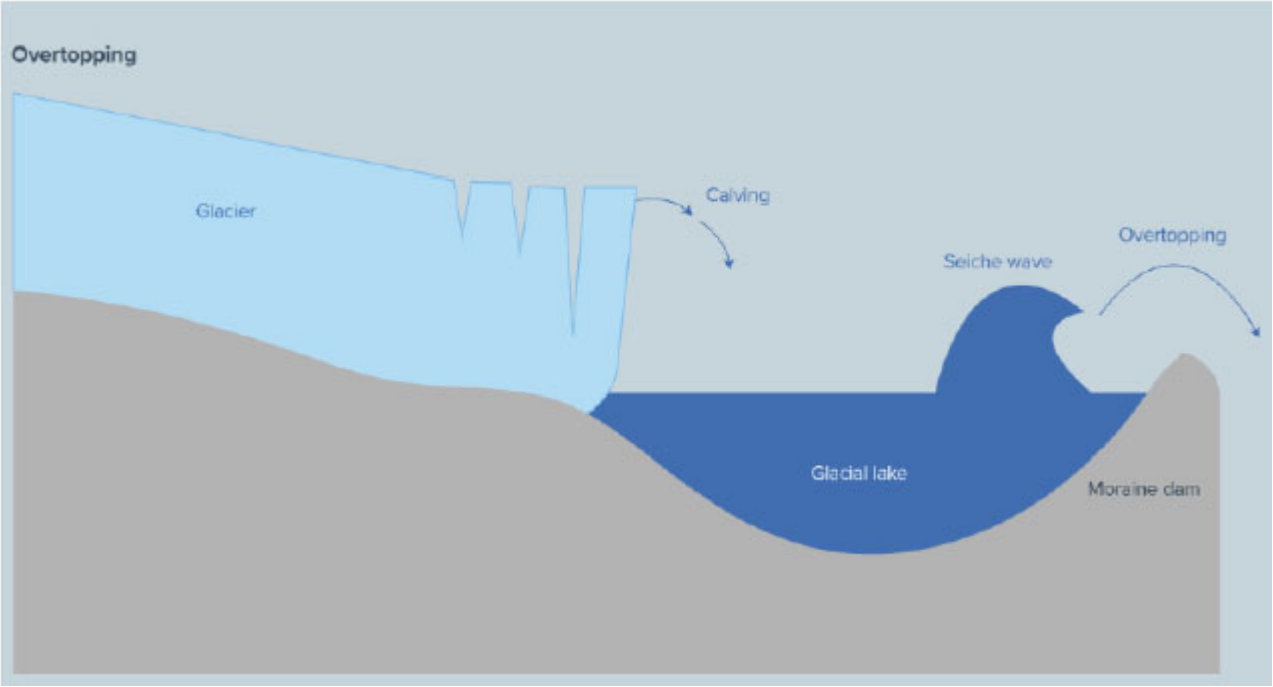
- As they grow larger, they become more dangerous because glacial lakes are mostly dammed by unstable ice or sediment composed of loose rock and debris.
- Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) are disaster events caused by the abrupt discharge of water from glacial lakes.



- Large bodies of water that sit in front of, on top of, or beneath a melting glacier.
- As a glacier withdraws, it leaves behind a depression that gets filled with meltwater, thereby forming a lake.
- Such lakes are mostly dammed by unstable ice or sediment composed of loose rock and debris.
- In case the boundary around them breaks, huge amounts of water rush down the side of the mountains, which could cause flooding in the downstream areas — this is referred to as a GLOF event.

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Quick Bites:

- Jago AI Assistant is an AI-powered conversational chatbot launched by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs to improve access to tribal welfare schemes and programmes. It simplifies information on government policies, schemes, guidelines and official documents, allowing users to ask questions in simple language and receive quick, relevant responses. Currently, it is available in English and Hindi.
- Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) is located in the foothills of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand and was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park, making it India's first national park and the first to come under Project Tiger. It covers the Bhabar and lower Shivalik regions, with rivers such as Ramganga, Pallaen and Sonanadi flowing through its valleys. Its vegetation mainly includes sal and mixed tropical moist/dry deciduous forests, along with grasslands called 'Chaur' and riparian vegetation.
- Telangana launched a gold and copper mining exploration programme at Lingadahalli village in Devadurga taluk of Raichur district, Karnataka, on 27 August 2026. The project covers 199.13 square kilometres and marks the first entry of Singareni Collieries Company Limited into critical and strategic mineral exploration.
- Vice President Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan today launched 'Gnani Artha', a sovereign AI stack comprising Evon 3.3 and Plexus, developed by GNANI AI, at Uprashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. Evon 3.3 is a large language model, while Plexus is a platform that connects AI intelligence with real-world work and institutions.
- World Sanskrit Day 2026 was observed on 28 August 2026, coinciding with Shravana Purnima. Also known as Sanskrit Diwas, Vishva Sanskrit Diwas or Vishva Samskrita Dinam, it aims to promote the preservation, learning and global appreciation of the Sanskrit language and its cultural heritage. The guiding theme for 2026 was "Sanskrit: Rooted in Tradition, Global in Vision."
- Penguin Random House India announced on Friday that it is not publishing Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's much-awaited autobiography, Belonging: A Journey of Love, with industry sources

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saying that the publisher and author had differences regarding content related to her impressions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from official meetings, his handling of India-China ties, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its activities.

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30-08-2026

1. National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID):

Context: Recently, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development and the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) have signed an MoU for financing infrastructure projects with significant rural impact.

About National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID):

- NaBFID (National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development) is a specialized Development Finance Institution (DFI) in India.
- It was established in 2021 under the NaBFID Act, 2021, passed by Parliament.
- Its primary purpose is to provide long-term finance for infrastructure development.
- It aims to address gaps in long-term non-recourse financing for infrastructure projects.
- It seeks to promote the development of bond and derivatives markets in India.
- NaBFID is regulated and supervised by the RBI as an All-India Financial Institution (AIFI).
- Overall, it provides dedicated financing and investment support to the infrastructure sector, helping sustain long-term economic growth.

2. DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa Rice DST1:

Context: India developed two genome-edited rice varieties — DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa Rice DST1 and is set to release Pusa Rice DST1 for commercial production in the upcoming rabi season.

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About DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa Rice DST1:

- DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) is a genome-edited rice variety developed by ICAR–Indian Institute of Rice Research (IIRR), Hyderabad from Samba Mahsuri (BPT 5204).
- It involves editing a gene related to cytokinin metabolism to increase the number of grains per panicle.
- DRR Dhan 100 matures in about 130 days, around 20 days earlier than Samba Mahsuri.
- It has a stronger stalk, making it less susceptible to lodging (falling over).
- Another genome-edited variety is derived from MTU1010, a rice variety suitable for the rabi season in southern India, developed by ICAR–IARI, New Delhi.
- Its genome editing targets the Drought and Salt Tolerance (DST) gene, improving tolerance to drought and salt-affected soils.
- The MTU1010-derived variety is expected to be cultivated across several states, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

3. PARIVARTAN Scheme:

Context: Recently, the government has said that around one thousand five hundred beneficiaries have been registered on the PARIVARTAN scheme after its launch.

- PARIVARTAN stands for Programme for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivization of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air Pollution and Network Emissions.
- It aims to replace old, highly polluting trucks and buses in the National Capital Region (NCR) with BS-VI compliant or electric vehicles.
- **Implementing Ministry:** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).
- **Funding:** Provided by the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB).
- **States/UT covered:** Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

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- Key incentives include Motor Vehicle Tax concessions, registration-fee waivers, 5% interest subvention, minimum 8% OEM discount, fuel vouchers, and financial assistance for electric vehicles and Certificate of Deposit (CoD) trading.
- The scheme will operate through an integrated digital platform linked with VAHAN, V-Scrap, DigiELV, PFMS and participating lenders.

4. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana:

Context: Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) offers comprehensive coverage against droughts, floods, cyclones, hailstorms, pests, diseases, prevented sowing, localized calamities, damage by inundation, unseasonal rainfall, hailstorms and specified post-harvest losses nationwide. With ₹12,200 crore allocated for 2026–27, PMFBY continues strengthening farmer resilience, protecting livelihoods, stabilizing incomes, and supporting climate-resilient agriculture nationwide.

About Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana:

- **Launch:** PMFBY was launched on 18 February 2016 to bring maximum farmers under crop insurance coverage.
- **Objective:** It provides financial protection against crop losses and helps stabilise farmers' incomes and reduce production risks.
- **Comprehensive Coverage:** It covers risks from pre-sowing to post-harvest, including prevented sowing, standing-crop losses, localized calamities and specified post-harvest losses.
- **Major Risks Covered:** Drought, dry spells, floods, inundation, cyclones, hailstorms, lightning, pests and diseases are covered under specified conditions.
- **Prevented Sowing:** Farmers prevented from sowing due to adverse weather can receive claims of up to 25% of the sum insured.
- **Post-Harvest Protection:** Crops kept in cut-and-spread condition for drying are covered for up to 14 days after harvesting against specified cyclones and unseasonal rains.

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- **Localized Calamities:** Individual farm-level losses due to hailstorms, landslides, inundation, cloudbursts and natural fire are covered under specified conditions.
- **Affordable Premium:** Farmers pay a maximum of 2% for Kharif and 1.5% for Rabi foodgrain/oilseed crops, while commercial and horticultural crops have a maximum premium of 5%.
- **Premium Subsidy:** The remaining premium is subsidised by the Central and State Governments, generally in a 50:50 ratio; for North-Eastern and Himalayan States/UTs, the ratio is 90:10.
- **Inclusive Coverage:** Both loanee and non-loanee farmers can be covered, including eligible tenant farmers and sharecroppers.

5. Venezuela:

Context: U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday his administration has reached an oil deal with Venezuela that gives the North American country a majority control of 65 billion barrels of proven petroleum reserves. The deal — which Mr. Trump proclaimed as "the biggest oil deal in world history" — will bring nearly $100 billion in private investment to Venezuela

About Venezuela:

- **Political Features:** Venezuela is located in northern South America, bordered by Guyana (east), Brazil (south), and Colombia (west and southwest), with the tri-junction at Mount Roraima, and is bounded by the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean to the north.
- **Physical Features:** Major landforms include the Andes Mountains, Maracaibo Lowlands, and Guiana Highlands.
- **Rivers & Water Bodies:** The Orinoco River is the major river flowing into the Atlantic Ocean, along with Rio Negro and Lake Maracaibo.
- **Waterfall:** Angel Falls on the Churún River is the highest waterfall in the world.
- **Grasslands:** The Llanos are vast tropical grassland plains in the Orinoco basin.

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- **Resources:** Venezuela possesses the world's largest proven oil reserves, mainly concentrated in the Faja Petrolífera del Orinoco (Orinoco Oil Belt).

6. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

Context: Prime Minister will travel to Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, to participate in the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, at the invitation of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

- It is an intergovernmental political, economic, and security alliance founded in 2001.
- It was initially launched by Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.
- The first summit was held in Shanghai, China, in 2001.
- It is headquartered at Beijing.
- In 2015, at Ufa, Russia, the SCO decided to admit India and Pakistan as full members and in 2017 they officially became part.
- Later Iran became part of SCO in 2021.
- The SCO aims to promote cooperation and mutual support in areas such as trade, investment, energy, transportation, and security.
- The Shanghai Spirit is the core value of the SCO.
- It is about mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect to pursuit of common development among the SCO members.
- As of April 2026, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) consists of 10 permanent member states: Belarus, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

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Quick Bites:

- National Sports Day 2026 was observed on August 29, 2026, under the theme "Khelega Bharat, Jeetega Bharat" with a three-day nationwide campaign centered around the pillars of Tribute, Play, and Move. August 29 (commemorating the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand).
- The National Test House (NTH) is a premier scientific organisation of the Government of India, established in 1912 under the then Railway Board. It is India's largest multi-location, multidisciplinary industrial testing laboratory, providing testing, calibration, technical consultancy and quality evaluation across various sectors according to national and international standards. NTH also supports NABL in accreditation activities and BIS in standard formulation through technical assistance.
- Sesame (Sesamum indicum L.) is considered the oldest indigenous oilseed crop of India, with ancient remains found at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. It grows best at 25–35°C and prefers well-drained, light to medium-textured soils, especially sandy loams. It is cultivated mainly in semi-arid regions of western, central, eastern and southern India and the lower Himalayas. Sesame is grown during Kharif in arid/semi-arid areas and during rabi/summer in cooler regions; temperatures above 40°C with hot winds reduce oil content.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday arrived in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, where he will hold delegation-level talks with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, aiming to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries.
- The Spoon-tailed Duskhawker (Gynacantha basiguttata) is a rare, large predatory dragonfly belonging to the Aeshnidae family of the order Odonata. Originally described from the Philippines, it is native to parts of Southeast Asia and is mainly active during dawn and dusk. It inhabits dense evergreen and semi-evergreen tropical rainforests, particularly humid, l+ow-light areas near forest streams, temporary pools and marshy wetlands. A first verifiable photographic record in India was

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documented along the Miao–Vijaynagar Road in Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh.

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