CURRENT AFFAIRS PULSE

# August 2026

## SSC · BANKING · RAILWAY EDITION

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Curated from official releases, national dailies and ministry sources

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# 1. Sports

23 articles

## India Wins Record Seven Boxing Golds at Commonwealth Games 2026

01 Aug

- Indian boxers won seven gold and three silver medals at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games, with the finals contested on 1 August.
- No country has ever won more boxing gold medals at a single edition of the Commonwealth Games.
- The gold medallists were Sakshi Chaudhary, Preeti Pawar, Jaismine Lamboria, Priya Ghanghas, Arundhati Choudhary, Sachin Siwach and Ankush Panghal.
- Lovlina Borgohain, Jadumani Singh and Narender Berwal took silver; Lovlina lost a split decision to Emma-Sue Greentree in the women's 75kg final.
- The haul surpassed India's previous best boxing performances at Delhi 2010, Gold Coast 2018 and Birmingham 2022.

## Praveen Chithravel and Selva Prabhu Give India a Triple Jump Double Podium

01 Aug

- Praveen Chithravel won silver and Selva Prabhu Thirumaran bronze in the men's triple jump at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games on 1 August.
- Praveen's best effort was 16.58m, achieved on his fourth attempt.
- Selva Prabhu, competing at his first Commonwealth Games, jumped 16.52m in the fifth round.
- Gold went to Jamaica's Jordan Scott with 16.72m.
- The result was part of India's 16-medal haul on the final day of athletics.

## Gulveer Singh Becomes First Indian to Win Two Athletics Medals at One Commonwealth Games

01 Aug

- Gulveer Singh won bronze in the men's 5000m at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games on 1 August.
- He held off Kenya's Cornelius Kemboi by just 0.04 seconds to take the medal.
- He had already won silver in the men's 10000m earlier at the same Games.
- He is the first Indian track and field athlete to win two medals at a single edition of the Commonwealth Games.
- The result formed part of India's 16-medal day on 1 August.

## Soman Rana Wins Para Shot Put Gold as India Takes Top Two Places

01 Aug

- Soman Rana won gold in the men's F57 shot put at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games on 1 August.
- Shubham Juyal took silver in the same event, giving India the top two places.
- The one-two finish contributed to India's 16-medal haul on the day.
- F57 is a para athletics classification for seated throwers with limb impairments affecting the lower body.

## India Finishes Fourth at Commonwealth Games 2026 with 39 Medals

02 Aug

- India finished fourth in the medal standings at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games, which concluded on 2 August 2026.
- The Indian contingent won 39 medals in total: 13 gold, 17 silver and nine bronze.

- The Games ran from 23 July to 2 August 2026 in Glasgow, Scotland.
- Boxing was India's strongest discipline, delivering a record seven gold medals.
- Gulveer Singh became the first Indian track and field athlete to win two medals at a single edition of the Games.

## Glasgow Hands Commonwealth Games Flag to Ahmedabad for 2030 Centenary Edition

02 Aug

- The Commonwealth Flag was handed over to India at the closing ceremony of the Glasgow 2026 Games on 2 August 2026.
- Amdavad, or Ahmedabad, will host the 2030 Commonwealth Games, the centenary edition of the event.
- Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra and Indian Olympic Association president P.T. Usha received the flag on India's behalf.
- Boxing gold medallist Jaismine Lamboria carried the Indian tricolour in the athletes' parade.
- It will be India's second time hosting the Games, after New Delhi in 2010.

## Ankur Bhattacharjee and Yashaswini Ghorpade Win Commonwealth TT Singles Titles

02 Aug

- Ankur Bhattacharjee won the men's singles title at the Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships 2026, held in New Delhi.
- He beat compatriot Payas Jain 4-3 in an all-Indian final.
- Yashaswini Ghorpade won the women's singles title, defeating Paris 2024 Olympian Sreeja Akula 4-1.
- Both singles finals were contested between Indian players, and India took almost every title at the championships.
- India had already swept the men's and women's team titles earlier in the competition.

## Tanvi Sharma Wins Maiden BWF World Tour Title at Taipei Open 2026

02 Aug

- Tanvi Sharma won the women's singles title at the Taipei Open 2026, her maiden BWF World Tour title.
- The 17-year-old beat sixth-seeded Nguyen Thuy Linh of Vietnam, ranked World No. 21, by 21-16, 21-16 in 36 minutes.
- At 17 years and 222 days she became the youngest champion in Taipei Open history.
- She is the first Indian woman since Saina Nehwal in 2008 to win the Taipei Open women's singles title, ending an 18-year wait.
- The Taipei Open is a BWF World Tour Super 300 tournament, held at the Taipei Arena.

## Suraj Kumar Chand Wins India's First FISU World University Squash Gold

06 Aug

- Suraj Kumar Chand became the first Indian to win gold in the men's individual category at the FISU World University Squash Championships on 6 August 2026.
- He beat Hungary's Benedek Takács in a five-game final, 5-11, 11-8, 11-5, 6-11, 11-4.
- The championships were held at Somaiya Vidyavihar University in Mumbai, where Chand studies.
- It was his second medal at the event, having won men's singles bronze at the previous edition in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- He had earlier won gold at the National School Games Squash Championship.

## Ariha Pangambam Wins India's First Senior Gold at Aerobic Gymnastics Asian Championships

07 Aug

- 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 to 7 August 2026 under the sanction of the Asian Gymnastics Union.
- She won the final with a score of 19.100 — 8.650 for artistry, 7.600 for execution and 2.850 for difficulty.
- The event brought together more than 400 athletes and officials from 11 countries.
- Pangambam had finished fourth in both the 2022 and 2024 editions of the Asian Championships.

## Ashish Yadav Wins Silver in Javelin at World Athletics U20 Championships

07 Aug

- Ashish Yadav won silver in the men's javelin throw at the World Athletics U20 Championships in Eugene, Oregon, with the final held on 7 August 2026.
- His best throw measured 74.09 metres, achieved on his third attempt.
- He became India's second medallist in the event and the first Indian silver medallist in the men's U20 javelin throw.
- Neeraj Chopra had won gold in the same event at the 2016 edition.
- Jan-Hendrik Heymans of South Africa took gold with 80.50 metres; Addison James of Dominica won bronze with a national record of 73.89 metres.

## India Wins Maiden Commonwealth Fencing Championships Title with 35 Medals

12 Aug

- India won its maiden overall title at the Commonwealth Fencing Championships 2026 in Lagos, Nigeria.
- The final tally was 35 medals - 13 gold, 8 silver and 14 bronze - across the Under-23 and Senior divisions.
- The performance earned India the Wilkinson Sword Trophy, awarded by the Commonwealth Fencing Federation since 1982 for the best overall showing.
- Taniksha Khatri became the first Indian to win the senior women's epee individual title, beating Khushi Dabhade 15-7 in an all-Indian final.
- India took gold in five of the six senior team events, with a silver in men's foil.

## Vignesh Vermula and Saranya Devi Win Asian Junior Blitz Chess Titles in Mumbai

17 Aug

- India won both blitz gold medals at the Asian Junior Chess Championships 2026 on 17 August 2026.
- Vignesh Vermula, seeded 23rd, won the Open blitz title on tie-break after finishing level on points.
- Saranya Devi, the ninth seed, won the Girls' blitz title, with Prishita Gupta second and Shanmathi Sree third.
- The championships are being held at the ITC Maratha, Mumbai, from 16 to 26 August 2026, hosted by the Maharashtra Chess Association.

## Treesa-Gayatri Win Women's Doubles Bronze at BWF World Championships 2026

22 Aug

- Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand finished with the women's doubles bronze at the BWF World Championships 2026 after losing the semifinal on 22 August 2026 to China's defending champions Liu Shengshu and Tan Ning, 21-18, 13-21, 8-21, in 71 minutes.
- The unseeded Indian pair had sealed the medal a day earlier by beating China's fourth seeds Jia Yifan and Zhang Shuxian in the quarterfinal, in 69 minutes.
- They are only the second Indian women's doubles pair to win a World Championships medal, after Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa's bronze in 2011.
- The result extends India's run of winning at least one medal at every edition of the championships since 2011 to 12 consecutive tournaments.
- The 30th edition was held at the Indira Gandhi Arena in New Delhi from 17 to 23 August 2026 - India's first time hosting the event since 2009.

## GM Pranesh M Wins Kanizsa Open 2026 Title on Tie-Break in Hungary

23 Aug

- Indian Grandmaster Pranesh M won the Group A title at the Kanizsa Open 2026 in Nagykanizsa, Hungary, on 23 August 2026.
- He finished on 7 points from 9 rounds, level with three other players, and took the title on superior tie-break scores.
- In the final round he beat German Grandmaster Vadim Petrovskiy with the white pieces.
- Or Bronstein of Israel, Andrei Volokitin of Ukraine and India's Karthik Venkataraman finished second, third and fourth on the same 7 points.
- Pranesh, 19, from Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu, became India's 79th Grandmaster in January 2023 by winning the Rilton Cup in Stockholm.

## Mitchell Starc Becomes Leading Wicket-Taker in World Test Championship History

23 Aug

- Australia's left-arm fast bowler Mitchell Starc became the leading wicket-taker in ICC World Test Championship history during the second Test against Bangladesh at Mackay, played on 22-23 August 2026.
- He took his WTC tally to 234 wickets, going past team-mates Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon, who have 228 each.
- Starc returned 6/12 and 4/39 for a ten-wicket match haul; Bangladesh were bowled out for 64 in the first innings after slipping to 12 for 5.
- Australia won by an innings and 51 runs with the match finishing inside two days, and Starc was named Player of the Match.
- The six-wicket haul lifted his overall Test tally to 445, moving him past South Africa's Dale Steyn into the all-time top ten.

## Lando Norris Wins Final Dutch Grand Prix as Verstappen Crashes Out

23 Aug

- Lando Norris of McLaren won the 2026 Dutch Grand Prix at Circuit Zandvoort on 23 August 2026, beating Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli by 11.536 seconds.
- George Russell completed the podium in the second Mercedes, 15.906 seconds behind the winner.
- Max Verstappen crashed heavily at the banked final corner at the end of lap one and retired, bringing out a red flag at his home race.
- The race was round 12 of 23 in the 2026 Formula One World Championship and Norris's second successive win, after the Hungarian Grand Prix.

- It was the 36th and final scheduled running of the Dutch Grand Prix before the event leaves the Formula One calendar.

## US Open 2026 Announces Record $108 Million Purse, Highest in Grand Slam History

27 Aug

- The United States Tennis Association has announced total player compensation of $108 million for the 2026 US Open, a 20 per cent rise over the $90 million of 2025 and the largest purse in Grand Slam history.
- Men's and women's singles champions will each receive $5.5 million, about 10 per cent more than in 2025 and the biggest payout ever to a Grand Slam singles champion.
- First-round main-draw losers get $140,000, up about 27 per cent, with the increases concentrated in singles rather than doubles.
- A separate $2 million has been added to the players' pension fund.
- The tournament is played at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, New York, with singles main draws from 30 August and the finals on 12 and 13 September 2026.

## Praggnanandhaa Becomes First Indian to Win the Grand Chess Tour

28 Aug

- Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian to win the Grand Chess Tour, defeating Fabiano Caruana 15-13 in the final.
- The 2026 Grand Chess Tour Finals were played at the Saint Louis Chess Club in the United States from 22 to 27 August 2026.
- He entered the last day six points down at 3-9, won both rapid games to lead 11-9, and held the lead through the blitz phase.
- The winner's share was USD 200,000 out of a total Finals purse of USD 450,000.
- Wesley So took third place, beating Vincent Keymer 18-12.

## India Finish Eighth at FIH Men's Hockey World Cup After Belgium Shootout Loss

28 Aug

- India ended the 2026 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in eighth place after losing the 7th/8th place classification match to co-hosts Belgium 4-3 in a shootout on 28 August 2026 at the Belfius Hockey Arena in Wavre.
- The match finished 3-3 in regulation time, with Abhishek Nain scoring in the sixth minute and captain Harmanpreet Singh scoring twice, including an equaliser in the closing seconds that forced the shootout.
- Belgian goalkeeper Vincent Vanasch denied Harmanpreet Singh and Sukhjeet Singh in the shootout, and Belgium took seventh place.
- Harmanpreet Singh finished his World Cup campaign with eight goals, the highest of any Indian player at the tournament.
- This was the 16th edition of the men's World Cup, held from 15 to 30 August 2026 and co-hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands with 16 teams.

## Hockey India Announces Rs 50 Lakh Reward as Women Finish Fifth at World Cup

28 Aug

- Hockey India announced a cash award of Rs 50 lakh for the Indian women's hockey team on 28 August 2026 after its fifth-place finish at the FIH Hockey Women's World Cup 2026.

- The reward works out to Rs 2 lakh for each player in the squad and Rs 1 lakh for each member of the support staff.
- India sealed fifth place by beating world No. 5 Germany 3-1 in the classification match at Amstelveen, the Netherlands, on 27 August 2026.
- It is India's best result at the Women's World Cup in 52 years, bettered only by the fourth place at the inaugural 1974 edition.
- Navneet Kaur scored twice and Ishika Chaudhary once, all three goals coming in the third quarter after a goalless first half.

### Germany Beat Spain 1-0 to Retain FIH Men's Hockey World Cup Title

30 Aug

- Germany defeated Spain 1-0 in the final of the 2026 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup on 30 August 2026 at the Belfius Hockey Arena in Wavre, Belgium.
- Michel Struthoff scored the only goal of the match in the 44th minute, in the third quarter, and Germany defended the lead to retain the title they won in 2023.
- It is Germany's fourth men's World Cup title, taking them level with Pakistan as the joint most successful side in the tournament's history.
- Spain lost their third World Cup final, having also finished runners-up in 1971 and 1998, and are still without a men's World Cup title.
- Argentina took the bronze medal on the same day, beating the Netherlands 2-1, while India finished eighth after losing a shootout to Belgium on 28 August.

### Vaibhav Sooryavanshi Becomes Youngest Duleep Trophy Half-Centurion at 15

31 Aug

- Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, a 15-year-old East Zone batter, became the youngest player to score a half-century in Duleep Trophy history on 31 August 2026.
- He was 15 years and 157 days old, breaking a 57-year-old record set by Laxman Singh in January 1969 at 16 years and 23 days.
- He reached the fifty in 42 balls in the semi-final against Central Zone at the BCCI Centre of Excellence, Bengaluru, and was dismissed for 92 off 81 balls with seven fours and seven sixes.
- A day earlier he had become the youngest captain in Duleep Trophy history, standing in for the injured Ishan Kishan.
- Sachin Tendulkar remains the youngest Duleep Trophy centurion, at 17 years and 262 days.

## 2. Awards & Honours

13 articles

### NSA Ajit Doval Conferred Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026 in Pune

01 Aug

- National Security Advisor Ajit Doval received the Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026 in Pune on 1 August 2026.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah presented the honour, which recognised Doval's contribution to national security and strategic leadership.
- The award is conferred by the Tilak Smarak Trust and comprises a memento, a citation and a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh.
- It is presented every year on 1 August, the death anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who died on that date in 1920.
- Ajit Doval has been India's National Security Advisor since May 2014, the longest tenure in the post.

## Annapurni Subramaniam Wins COSPAR Vikram Sarabhai Medal 2026, First Indian Woman to Do So

04 Aug

- Astrophysicist Annapurni Subramaniam has been awarded the COSPAR Vikram Sarabhai Medal for 2026.
- She is the first Indian woman scientist to receive the medal, the fourth Indian overall, and only the third woman globally.
- She is Director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru — the first woman to head the institute — and her work covers stellar populations, star clusters and galaxy evolution.
- The medal was instituted in 1990 in honour of Vikram Sarabhai and is awarded jointly by COSPAR and ISRO to scientists from developing countries.
- Earlier Indian recipients were U.R. Rao (1996), Gurbax Singh Lakhina (2014) and Anil Bharadwaj (2024).

## President to Confer Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards on 115 Artists

12 Aug

- The President of India will confer the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Awards for 2024 and 2025 on August 13, 2026.
- A total of 115 artists have been selected across music, dance, theatre, folk and tribal arts, puppetry and instrument making.
- The ceremony will be held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.
- The Akademi's highest honour is the Fellowship, also called Akademi Ratna, carrying Rs 3 lakh.
- An Akademi Award carries Rs 1 lakh along with a Tamrapatra and Angavastram.

## Deepak Dhar Awarded 2026 ICTP Dirac Medal, Second Indian to Receive It

12 Aug

- Indian theoretical physicist Prof. Deepak Dhar was awarded the 2026 Dirac Medal by the International Centre for Theoretical Physics.
- He shares it with Bernard Derrida, Marc Mezard and Haim Sompolinsky for work on statistical mechanics and complex physical systems.
- He is only the second Indian to receive the medal, after string theorist Ashoke Sen in 2012.
- The medal, first awarded in 1985, is given annually on Dirac's birthday, August 8, and carries US $5,000.
- By statutory rule it is not awarded to current Nobel Laureates, Fields Medallists or Wolf Prize winners.

## Gaj Gaurav Awards 2026 Conferred at National World Elephant Day Event in Visakhapatnam

12 Aug

- The Gaj Gaurav Awards 2026 were conferred at the national World Elephant Day celebration in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh presented the awards; it was the first time Andhra Pradesh hosted the national event.
- Seven mahouts from Jaldapara in West Bengal were honoured for rescuing captive elephants and displaced rhinoceroses during severe floods.
- The Ministry released '30 Giant Steps', a document listing achievements and policy initiatives under Project Elephant.
- A Regional Action Plan for managing human-elephant conflict in Southern India was launched for Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

## 1,057 Police and Fire Personnel Get Gallantry, Service Medals for Independence Day 2026

14 Aug

- The Ministry of Home Affairs announced 1,057 Gallantry and Service Medals on 14 August 2026, the eve of the 80th Independence Day.
- The list has 301 Medals for Gallantry, 92 President's Medals for Distinguished Service and 664 Medals for Meritorious Service.
- Of the 301 Gallantry Medals, 197 went to personnel in Left Wing Extremism-affected areas, 51 to Jammu and Kashmir and 12 to the North-East.
- Chhattisgarh Police took the largest share among state forces with 141 Gallantry Medals; three medals were awarded posthumously.
- The 2026 total of 1,057 is higher than the 1,037 medals announced for Independence Day 2024.

## Jitendra Singh confers 9th National Anubhav Awards on 15 retiring officials

17 Aug

- The 9th National Anubhav Awards were conferred on 15 selected awardees at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 17 August 2026 by Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- The ceremony was held alongside the 60th Pre-Retirement Counselling Workshop, organised by the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare.
- A record 2,141 write-ups published on the Anubhav portal between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 were considered for the 2026 awards.
- The Handbook on Pension Mitra and the guidelines for the nationwide Digital Life Certificate Campaign 5 were released at the event.

## National Sports Awards 2025: 17 Arjuna Awards, No Khel Ratna Recipient

18 Aug

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the National Sports Awards 2025 on 18 August 2026.
- Seventeen athletes were selected for the Arjuna Award, including chess players Divya Deshmukh and Vidit Gujarathi and high jumper Tejaswin Shankar.
- No sportsperson was chosen for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, India's highest sporting honour, for 2025.
- Former footballer I. Arumainayagam received the Arjuna Award (Lifetime), and five coaches received the Dronacharya Award across the regular and lifetime categories.
- The Army Paralympic Node, Pune won the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar 2025; the list was finalised by a committee chaired by Justice (Retd.) Arun Kumar Mishra.

## Lakshmanan Meyyappan Is Guinness World Record's Youngest Male Chartered Accountant

19 Aug

- Dubai-based Lakshmanan Meyyappan was recognised by Guinness World Records in February 2026 as the world's youngest male chartered accountant, at 16 years and 141 days.
- His qualification is the ACCA, awarded by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which he began at 15 and completed in about a year.
- He has since earned the CFA charter and is pursuing an MSc in Finance.
- He works as a senior research analyst at Century Financial in Dubai.

- His interest in accounting began during the COVID-19 lockdown after his Class 10 board examinations, guided by his mother, herself an ACCA member.

## National Teachers Awards 2026: 48 School Teachers Selected for 5 September Honour

22 Aug

- The Ministry of Education has named 48 school teachers as recipients of the National Teachers Awards 2026.
- President Droupadi Murmu will confer the awards at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 5 September 2026, which is Teachers' Day.
- The 48 awardees come from 27 States, 7 Union Territories and 6 organisations run by the Central Government, and include 26 men and 22 women.
- Selection ran through three stages - district or regional committee, State or organisation committee, and an independent national jury.
- The award was instituted in 1958 and is administered by the Department of School Education and Literacy.

## Kerala's Kaziah Liz Mejo Crowned Miss Universe India 2026 at Jaipur Finale

23 Aug

- Kaziah Liz Mejo, a 19-year-old law student from Kerala, was crowned Miss Universe India 2026 at the finale held at Zee Studios in Jaipur on 23 August 2026.
- She was chosen from 52 national finalists and was crowned by her predecessor, Miss Universe India 2025 Manika Vishwakarma.
- Vaishnavi Gannesh finished first runner-up and was named Miss International India 2026.
- Mejo will represent India at the 75th Miss Universe pageant in Puerto Rico in November 2026.
- The judging panel included Sushmita Sen, the first Indian to win Miss Universe, along with Urvashi Rautela, Rhea Singha, Celina Jaitly and Pragya Kapoor.

## PM Modi Conferred Uzbekistan's Highest State Honour Oliy Darajali Dostlik

30 Aug

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the Order of Oliy Darajali Dostlik, Uzbekistan's highest state honour, on 30 August 2026.
- It was conferred by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the Kuksaroy Presidential Palace in Tashkent after delegation-level talks.
- The honour recognises his contribution to strengthening India-Uzbekistan relations; Dostlik means friendship in Uzbek.
- The Indian delegation included External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.
- It adds to a series of foreign state honours conferred on the Prime Minister, including Indonesia's Bintang Adipurna in July 2026.

## Ramon Magsaysay Awards 2026 Go to Tommy Koh, Bo Kyi and Runa Khan

31 Aug

- The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation announced the 2026 awardees on 31 August 2026: Tommy Koh of Singapore, Bo Kyi of Myanmar and Runa Khan of Bangladesh.
- Tommy Koh, 88, a diplomat and lawyer, was recognised for his role in the negotiations that produced the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

- Bo Kyi, 61, a former political prisoner from Myanmar's 1988 pro-democracy movement, co-founded the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in 2000.
- Runa Khan, 67, founded the Bangladeshi organisation Friendship, which began with a single hospital boat serving remote char communities.
- No Indian features among the 2026 awardees; the 68th presentation ceremony is scheduled for 15 November 2026 in Manila.

## 3. Appointments

11 articles

### Varsha Ashok Aglawe Becomes First Woman Director General of Geological Survey of India

01 Aug

- Varsha Ashok Aglawe has assumed charge as the 54th Director General of the Geological Survey of India.
- She is the first woman to head the organisation since its founding in 1851.
- She succeeds Asit Saha, who served as Director General from 27 July 2024 to 31 July 2026.
- She joined GSI in 1992 after a stint with the Indian Bureau of Mines and was most recently Additional Director General and Head of Department, Eastern Region, Kolkata.
- A specialist in palaeontology and palynology, her research covers Late Cretaceous-Palaeocene sediments, the K-T boundary and the Satpura-Gondwana basins.

### Willie Walsh Takes Charge as IndiGo CEO, Succeeding Pieter Elbers

03 Aug

- Willie Walsh took charge as Chief Executive Officer of IndiGo on 3 August 2026, succeeding Pieter Elbers.
- He had served as Director General of the International Air Transport Association since April 2021, concluding that tenure on 31 July 2026.
- IndiGo's board appointed him on 31 March 2026, subject to regulatory approvals.
- Walsh previously headed International Airlines Group, the parent of British Airways and Iberia, and earlier led British Airways and Aer Lingus.
- Pieter Elbers resigned following the airline's operational crisis of December 2025.

### Vishwesh Negi Appointed India's Next Ambassador to Iran

03 Aug

- Vishwesh Negi was appointed India's next Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran on 3 August 2026.
- He is an Indian Foreign Service officer of the 2002 batch.
- He has been serving as a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi.
- He is expected to take up the assignment shortly.
- The appointment comes at a period of heightened tension in West Asia.

### Varsha Ashok Aglawe Becomes First Woman Director General of the Geological Survey of India

03 Aug

- Varsha Ashok Aglawe has assumed charge as the 54th Director General of the Geological Survey of India.

- She is the first woman to head the organisation in its 176-year history.
- She succeeds Asit Saha, who served as Director General from 27 July 2024 to 31 July 2026.
- A palaeontology and palynology specialist, she joined GSI in 1992 after service with the Indian Bureau of Mines.
- She was previously Additional Director General and Head of Department, Eastern Region, Kolkata.

## RBI Appoints Monisha Chakraborty as Executive Director with Effect from 3 August

04 Aug

- The Reserve Bank of India appointed Monisha Chakraborty as Executive Director with effect from 3 August 2026.
- She will oversee the Foreign Exchange Department and the Financial Markets Regulation Department.
- She was previously Chief General Manager-in-Charge of the Department of Supervision.
- She has over three decades of service at the RBI, spanning supervision, foreign exchange, government and bank accounts, and a stint as Banking Ombudsman.
- She holds a bachelor's degree in Economics and a master's in Business Economics, both from the University of Delhi.

## Cabinet Secretary Somanathan and Home Secretary Govind Mohan Get One-Year Extensions

05 Aug

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has granted one-year extensions to Cabinet Secretary T.V. Somanathan and Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan.
- Somanathan, a 1987-batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, continues as Cabinet Secretary beyond 30 August 2026; he took charge on 30 August 2024, succeeding Rajiv Gauba.
- Govind Mohan, a 1989-batch IAS officer of the Sikkim cadre, continues as Union Home Secretary beyond 22 August 2026.
- Mohan's extension was granted by relaxing Fundamental Rule 56(d) and Rule 16(1A) of the All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958.
- Before becoming Cabinet Secretary, Somanathan served as Finance Secretary and as Secretary in the Department of Expenditure.

## Oceanographer Dr Srinivasa Kumar Tummala Takes Charge as Earth Sciences Secretary

11 Aug

- Oceanographer Dr Srinivasa Kumar Tummala assumed charge as Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences on August 10, 2026.
- He succeeds Dr N. Kalaiselvi, who held the post in an additional charge capacity; the previous full-time incumbent was Dr M. Ravichandran.
- He served as Director of ESSO-INCOIS, Hyderabad from August 2020 and later headed the UNESCO-IOC Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System Secretariat in Perth.
- He was Project Manager of India's tsunami early warning system built after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.
- He takes charge as India scales up the Deep Ocean Mission, climate modelling and multi-hazard early warning systems.

## Deepti Gaur Mukerjee Appointed Secretary, Department of Higher Education

11 Aug

- Deepti Gaur Mukerjee was appointed Secretary of the Department of Higher Education on August 10, 2026.
- She is a 1993-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre and holds a Master's degree in Economics from JNU.
- She succeeds Vineet Joshi, who moved to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in July 2026.
- She had served as Secretary in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs since August 2024.
- The order was issued by the Department of Personnel and Training as part of a wider senior-level reshuffle.

## Shabnam Sinha to Succeed Sunil Bharti Mittal as Airtel Payments Bank Chairperson

17 Aug

- Airtel Payments Bank announced on 17 August 2026 that Shabnam Sinha will take over as chairperson.
- Sunil Bharti Mittal steps down from the bank's board on 30 September 2026, ending a decade as non-executive chairman since April 2016.
- Sinha's three-year term begins on 1 October 2026, cleared by the board and approved by the Reserve Bank of India.
- She is already an independent director on the bank's board and chairs its Special Committee of the Board for Monitoring Frauds.
- The bank reports over 121 million monthly active users, close to 30 million account holders and more than 5 lakh banking points.

## Government Names Three Non-Official Directors to RBI Central Board

22 Aug

- On 22 August 2026 the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet cleared the appointment of Syed Akbaruddin, Annie George Mathew and Janmejaya Kumar Sinha as part-time, non-official directors on the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India for a four-year term.
- The appointments were made under Section 8(1)(c) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 - the clause covering the ten directors nominated by the Central Government.
- The additions took the active strength of the RBI's Central Board from 11 members to 14.
- Former ISRO Chairman S. Somanath was appointed and Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra re-appointed to the same category of directorship in the same round.
- The RBI, established on 1 April 1935 under the RBI Act 1934 and headquartered in Mumbai, is headed by Governor Sanjay Malhotra.

## Tim Cook Ends 15-Year Run as Apple CEO; John Ternus Takes Over

31 Aug

- 31 August 2026 was Tim Cook's last day as Chief Executive Officer of Apple Inc., ending a tenure that began on 24 August 2011.
- John Ternus, until then Senior Vice President of Hardware Engineering, became Apple's Chief Executive Officer with effect from 1 September 2026 and also joined the company's board of directors.
- Cook has moved to the post of Executive Chairman of Apple's board; Arthur Levinson, the company's non-executive chairman for the previous 15 years, becomes lead independent director from the same date.
- The succession was announced by Apple on 20 April 2026 and approved unanimously by the board after what the company described as a long-term succession planning process.
- Apple's market capitalisation rose from just under 350 billion dollars when Cook took charge in 2011 to about 4 trillion dollars in August 2026, having briefly touched 5 trillion dollars in July 2026.

## 4. Important Days

10 articles

### 12th National Handloom Day Observed; President Presents Sant Kabir Handloom Awards

07 Aug

- India observed the 12th National Handloom Day on 7 August 2026, a date chosen to mark the launch of the Swadeshi Movement on 7 August 1905.
- President Droupadi Murmu presented 22 awards at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre — 3 Sant Kabir Handloom Awards and 19 National Handloom Awards for 2025.
- The handloom sector supports 35.22 lakh weavers and allied workers, of whom over 72% (25.46 lakh) are women.
- Four commemorative postage stamps on India's weaving traditions were released along with two publications.
- The e-Pehchan portal, launched in January 2025 for digital weaver identity cards, had approved about 84,000 additional workers by July 2026.

### International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2026 Honours Indigenous Midwives

09 Aug

- The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, also called World Tribal Day, is observed on 9 August every year.
- The 2026 theme is 'Honouring Indigenous Midwives: Safeguarding Life and Well-being'.
- The date marks the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, held in Geneva in 1982.
- The United Nations General Assembly designated 9 August for the observance in December 1994.
- Indigenous peoples form under 6% of the world's population but at least 15% of the extremely poor, while guarding 28% of the Earth's land surface.

### Partition Horrors Remembrance Day: August 14 Marks the Human Cost of 1947

11 Aug

- Partition Horrors Remembrance Day, or Vibhajan Vibhishika Smriti Diwas, is observed on August 14.
- The Government of India declared the day in 2021 to remember those killed, displaced or subjected to violence during the 1947 Partition.
- Partition produced one of the largest mass migrations in modern history.
- Punjab and Bengal were the worst-affected regions, as the new boundary cut through communities and families.
- The boundary was drawn by the Radcliffe Commission after Viceroy Lord Mountbatten announced the Partition plan on June 3, 1947.

### International Youth Day 2026 Observed with Theme 'Different Contexts, Common Aspirations'

12 Aug

- International Youth Day is observed every year on August 12, a United Nations observance.
- The 2026 theme is 'Different Contexts, Common Aspirations'.
- It was first celebrated on August 12, 2000.
- The theme stresses that young people differ by country, culture and circumstance but share aspirations for education, work, healthcare and inclusion.
- The day frames youth as partners in development, not merely its beneficiaries.

## World Elephant Day 2026: India's DNA-Based Census Puts Wild Elephants at 22,446

12 Aug

- World Elephant Day was observed on 12 August 2026 with the theme 'Bringing the world together to help elephants'.
- The observance was launched in 2012 to draw global attention to threats facing African and Asian elephants.
- India's Synchronous All India Elephant Estimation (SAIEE) 2021-25 puts the wild elephant population at 22,446.
- Karnataka leads with 6,013 elephants, followed by Assam (4,159) and Tamil Nadu (3,136).
- India maintains 33 Elephant Reserves across 14 states and about 150 identified elephant corridors.

## India Observes Partition Horrors Remembrance Day on 14 August 2026

14 Aug

- India observed Partition Horrors Remembrance Day, or Vibhajan Vibhishika Smriti Diwas, on 14 August 2026.
- The observance was announced by the Government of India in 2021 and first marked on 14 August 2021, making 2026 the sixth observance.
- It commemorates those killed, displaced or dispossessed during the Partition of British India in 1947.
- Partition was given legal effect by the Indian Independence Act, 1947, with the boundary drawn by Sir Cyril Radcliffe.
- Punjab and Bengal were the two provinces split by the Radcliffe Line, which was published only on 17 August 1947.

## World Humanitarian Day 2026 Observed With Focus on Protecting Health Care

19 Aug

- World Humanitarian Day is observed every year on 19 August; the 2026 theme is 'Honouring fallen humanitarians and calling for greater protection of health care'.
- The campaign, run by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), centres on the families of fallen humanitarians and uses the call #ActForHumanity.
- The date marks the bombing of the Canal Hotel in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, in which 22 humanitarian workers were killed, including UN Special Representative Sergio Vieira de Mello.
- The UN General Assembly formally designated the day in 2008.
- 2024 remains the deadliest year on record for aid workers with 383 killed; 350 were killed in 2025, the second-highest toll ever.

## Sadbhavana Diwas 2026 Marks Rajiv Gandhi's 82nd Birth Anniversary

20 Aug

- Sadbhavana Diwas, or Harmony Day, is observed on 20 August, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, born on 20 August 1944.
- Citizens take the Sadbhavana pledge to work for the emotional oneness of all Indians regardless of caste, religion, region or language.
- Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister on 31 October 1984 at the age of 40, the youngest person to hold the office in India.
- In the December 1984 general election the Congress won 404 of 514 seats, the largest tally any party has won in a Lok Sabha election.
- His tenure produced the 52nd Amendment Act, 1985 on anti-defection, the 61st Amendment Act, 1988 lowering the voting age to 18, and the National Policy on Education, 1986.

### National Space Day 2026: India Marks Third Edition of Chandrayaan-3 Landing

23 Aug

- India observed the third National Space Day on 23 August 2026, three years after the Vikram lander of Chandrayaan-3 soft-landed near the Moon's south pole on 23 August 2023.
- The theme for 2026 is 'Towards Viksit Bharat: Innovating, Collaborating and Aspiring to Global Space Leadership'.
- The 2023 landing made India the fourth country to soft-land on the Moon and the first to touch down near the lunar south polar region; the landing site was named Shiv Shakti Point.
- The first National Space Day was observed on 23 August 2024 under the theme 'Touching Lives while Touching the Moon: India's Space Saga'; the 2025 theme was 'Aryabhatta to Gaganyaan: Ancient Wisdom to Infinite Possibilities'.
- ISRO is headed by Chairman V. Narayanan, who is also Secretary, Department of Space; he took charge in January 2025.

### National Sports Day 2026 Observed on 29 August With Theme Tribute, Play and Move

29 Aug

- India observed National Sports Day on 29 August 2026, the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand.
- The 2026 observance carries the theme 'Tribute, Play and Move' and runs as a three-day campaign from 28 to 30 August.
- The day has widened from a sporting commemoration into a fitness drive since the Fit India Movement was launched on this date in 2019.
- India has never officially declared a national game; the Government told Parliament in 2012 that no discipline holds that status.
- The country's highest sporting honour was renamed the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in August 2021.

## 5. Ranks & Reports

7 articles

### India Records 20,138 Organ Transplants in 2025, Tamil Nadu Leads Deceased Donation

04 Aug

- India performed 20,138 organ transplants in 2025, the first time the annual total crossed 20,000, according to NOTTO.
- The figure compares with 18,911 in 2024 and 4,990 in 2013, a fourfold rise over twelve years.
- India now ranks third in the world in total organ transplants after the United States and China, and first in living donor transplants.
- Delhi-NCR recorded the highest number of transplants at 4,564, followed by Tamil Nadu at 2,796.
- Tamil Nadu led in deceased organ donation with 266 deceased donors and has the country's largest transplant network with 172 centres.

### Punjab Tops NITI Aayog School Education Quality Index 2026

06 Aug

- Punjab secured the first rank in the NITI Aayog School Education Quality Index 2026, ahead of states such as Kerala.
- The state government presented the ranking in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha in Chandigarh on 6 August 2026.

- Punjab rose from 27th place in 2020 to 1st place in 2026 on the published ranking metrics.
- The state recorded 82% proficiency in Class III language skills and 78% in mathematics.
- Punjab became the first state in India to introduce Artificial Intelligence as a core subject from Classes I to XII.

## Ambani Family Tops 2026 Hurun India Most Valuable Family Businesses List

11 Aug

- The 2026 Barclays Private Clients Hurun India Most Valuable Family Businesses List was released on 11 August 2026, with all valuations frozen as of 30 June 2026.
- The Ambani family (Reliance Industries) retained the top rank at Rs 25,82,800 crore, ahead of the Birla family (Rs 8,13,700 crore) and the Jindal family (Rs 8,01,800 crore).
- India's 300 most valuable family businesses are together worth Rs 138 lakh crore (USD 1.46 trillion) - up 27.5% and nearly Rs 30 lakh crore since the 2024 edition, an average of Rs 4,076 crore added every day.
- A newly introduced list of 100 first-generation family businesses, worth Rs 77.8 lakh crore, is led by the Adani family at Rs 19.6 lakh crore.
- The 300 families employ over 54 lakh people, earn Rs 56 lakh crore in revenue and pay Rs 1.9 lakh crore in taxes - about 17% of India's corporate tax collections.

## NITI Aayog Report Finds 8.7 Crore Young Indians Outside Work, Study or Training

20 Aug

- NITI Aayog's report 'Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047' estimates that 8.7 crore Indians aged 15 to 29 are neither in education, employment nor training - the NEET group.
- That is about 11 per cent of the 15-29 age group; roughly 88 per cent of NEET youth are engaged in domestic work and caregiving.
- The report finds that only 8.25 per cent of graduates work in roles that match their qualifications, pointing to a weak link between formal education and employability.
- It recommends universal General Employability and Entrepreneurship Skills from Class 6 to Class 12 and structured vocational 'Kaushal Tracks' from Class 9, noting that fewer than one in 12 secondary schools currently offer vocational subjects.
- Other recommendations include making apprenticeships a primary route to employment, a unified digital tracking system for learner records, industry-aligned specialisations in higher education, and skills-first hiring in place of degree filters.

## Mumbai Ranks 50th, Only Indian City in IWG Work From Anywhere Index

24 Aug

- Mumbai entered the fourth annual Work From Anywhere Index published by the International Workplace Group (IWG) in 2026 as the only Indian city in the ranking.
- Mumbai scored 77 and finished 50th globally, ahead of cities including London and Miami.
- Bangkok led the 2026 index with 106.5, followed by Tokyo (96.5) and Barcelona (95.5), with Porto and Vancouver completing the top five.
- Mumbai scored well on transport costs, flexible workspace availability, climate and accommodation, and poorly on broadband speed and quality, local events and the happiness index.
- Cushman & Wakefield data placed India at 100 on a global flexible workspace maturity measure, ahead of the United Kingdom (98), France (97) and the United States (81).

### NITI Aayog Finds 8.7 Crore Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training

25 Aug

- NITI Aayog's report 'Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047' estimates that 8.7 crore Indians aged 15-29 are NEET - not in education, employment or training.
- The figure comes from the 78th round of the National Sample Survey, conducted in 2021.
- The report's sharpest finding is on the education-employment gap: only 8.25% of graduates hold jobs that match their qualifications.
- It recommends moving skilling into the school system - universal General Employability and Entrepreneurship Skills from Class 6 to 12 and vocational Kaushal Tracks from Class 9.
- Fewer than one in twelve secondary schools currently offer vocational subjects, despite NEP 2020 providing for their integration from Class 6.

### Ladakh Snow Leopard Trek Ranks 4th on the Wildlife Experience Index

31 Aug

- Snow leopard tracking in Ladakh has been ranked fourth in the world on the Wildlife Experience Index released by the travel company Bailey Robinson, scoring 85.5 out of 100.
- The index assessed 30 wildlife experiences on six criteria: rarity, remoteness, conservation importance, exclusivity, accessibility and encounter potential.
- Mountain gorilla trekking in Rwanda and Uganda topped the list with 90 points, followed by emperor penguin expeditions in Antarctica and saiga antelope trips in Kazakhstan.
- Eight of the top ten experiences involve threatened species, which the compilers read as evidence of rising interest in conservation-linked travel.
- India's snow leopard tracking is centred on the Rumbak, Uley and Shang valleys around Hemis National Park in Ladakh, which holds 477 of India's estimated 718 snow leopards.

## 6. Books & Authors

1 article

### PM Modi Releases Ram Nath Kovind's Autobiography 'Triumph of the Indian Republic'

12 Aug

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released former President Ram Nath Kovind's autobiography at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on August 12, 2026.
- The book is titled 'Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My Struggles'.
- Kovind served as the 14th President of India and was earlier Governor of Bihar.
- He chaired the High-Level Committee on One Nation, One Election after his presidency.
- PM Modi described the book as a cherished legacy for Indian democracy and society.

## 7. Summits & Conferences

13 articles

### Hyderabad to Host BRICS Anti-Corruption Working Group Meetings

03 Aug

- Hyderabad will host the second meeting of the BRICS Anti-Corruption Working Group on 4 and 5 August 2026.
- The second meeting of the BRICS Expert Network on Asset Recovery will be held alongside it.
- The meetings are organised by the Department of Personnel and Training.
- They form part of India's BRICS Presidency programme.

### India Hosts 13th BRICS Education Ministers' Meeting in Bhubaneswar

05 Aug

- India is hosting the 13th BRICS Education Ministers' Meeting along with the 3rd BRICS Senior Officials' Meeting in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, from 5 to 7 August 2026.
- The meetings are being convened by the Ministry of Education as part of India's BRICS chairship for 2026.
- Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi is leading the Indian side, with more than 200 delegates and around 40 senior officials expected.
- The agenda covers Early Childhood Care and Education, collaborative research, innovation and start-ups, mutual recognition of qualifications and academic leadership.
- India's BRICS chairship carries the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.

### 16th BRICS Trade Ministers' Meeting Concludes in Jaipur, Adopts Jaipur Consensus

07 Aug

- The 16th BRICS Trade Ministers' Meeting concluded on 7 August 2026 at Sawai Man Mahal in Jaipur, Rajasthan, under India's BRICS Chairship 2026.
- It was chaired by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal.
- Ministers adopted the Jaipur Consensus and Guiding Principles for MSME credit to address the estimated $2.5 trillion global trade finance gap.
- Officials finalised the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2030 for submission to BRICS leaders at the upcoming summit in New Delhi.
- A Global Value Chains action plan for 2026-2030 was endorsed, including a BRICS Technical Council and the BRICS Connect initiative.

### BRICS Education Ministers Adopt Bhubaneswar Declaration Under India's Chairship

11 Aug

- The 13th BRICS Education Ministers' Meeting concluded in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, with the adoption of the Bhubaneswar Declaration.
- It was held under India's BRICS Chairship 2026 and chaired by Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi.
- India's Chairship theme is 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- The Declaration sets a roadmap across five priority areas including ECCE, skills, research and mutual recognition of qualifications.
- It advances discussions on an MoU for Mutual Recognition of Qualifications to improve academic mobility.

## 8th BRICS Ocean and Polar Science Working Group Meeting Opens in Goa

12 Aug

- The 8th Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Ocean and Polar Science and Technology (OPST) opened in Goa on 12 August 2026 and runs to 14 August 2026.
- It is hosted by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, as part of India's BRICS Presidency in 2026.
- NCPOR Director Dr Thamban Meloth chaired the meeting as Working Group Chair; Dr M. Rajeevan, Vice Chancellor of Atria University and former Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, delivered a keynote on India's Blue Economy initiatives.
- Delegations from Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Russia, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and India are taking part.
- The agenda is the shift from bilateral arrangements to integrated multilateral research programmes, covering joint research, capacity building, scientific exchanges and shared use of polar research infrastructure.

## BRICS environment talks open at Bharat Mandapam ahead of ministers' meeting

17 Aug

- The BRICS Senior Officials' Meeting of the Environment Working Group and the Contact Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development began at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 17 August 2026.
- They set the stage for the 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting at the same venue on 18 August 2026, chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.
- The meetings are being held under India's BRICS Chairship 2026 theme, 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- India's priority areas for the session are sustainable lifestyles, afforestation and forest fire management, disaster resilience, circular economy and climate adaptation.

## India Opens 7th BRICS ICT Working Group Meeting at Pune Under Its 2026 Chairship

17 Aug

- The 7th Meeting of the BRICS Working Group for Cooperation in ICTs opened at Pune on 17 August 2026.
- Pune is hosting the five-day BRICS ICT Track from 17 to 21 August 2026, organised by the Department of Telecommunications.
- DoT Secretary Amit Agrawal inaugurated the meeting under India's 2026 chairship theme, 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- The agenda covered inclusive digital environments, ICT start-ups, digital skills and trusted Digital Public Infrastructure.
- The Council of the BRICS Institute of Future Networks met alongside, reviewing study groups on AI, next-generation communications, Industry 4.0 and electromagnetic field exposure.

## UNCCD COP17 Opens in Ulaanbaatar Under the Theme Restoring Land, Restoring Hope

17 Aug

- The 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification opened in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 17 August 2026 and runs to 28 August.
- The theme is 'Restoring Land, Restoring Hope'; Mongolia is the first country in East and Central Asia to host a UNCCD COP.
- Nearly 77 per cent of Mongolia's land is degraded, making the host itself a case study in the convention's subject.

- The UNCCD has 197 Parties - 196 countries and the European Union - and is the only legally binding international agreement on sustainable land management.
- Its central goal is Land Degradation Neutrality by 2030; India hosted COP14 in New Delhi in 2019.

## India Hosts Eighth BRICS Youth Energy Summit Under Its 2026 Chairship

17 Aug

- India hosted the Eighth BRICS Youth Energy Summit virtually on 17 August 2026 under its BRICS Chairship.
- More than 100 participants took part, drawn from academia, government institutions and the energy ministries of BRICS member countries.
- The Energy Track theme was 'Sarveshaam Urjam' - Energy for All - set within India's Chairship theme, 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- More than 20 youth panellists spoke across three priority areas: Energy Security and Sustainability, Energy Access and Equity, and Technology and Innovation.
- The BRICS Youth Energy Agency, Sustainable Energy for All, the International Solar Alliance and IRENA were represented.

## BRICS Tourism Ministers Adopt Jaipur Declaration Under India's Chairship

21 Aug

- BRICS Tourism Ministers adopted the BRICS Tourism Ministers' Communique 2026, known as the Jaipur Declaration, by consensus at Jaipur, Rajasthan, on 21 August 2026.
- The meeting was held under India's 2026 BRICS Chairship and chaired by Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Culture and Tourism; representatives of nine BRICS member states took part.
- The declaration sets out four priority areas - AI and Tourism; Sustainability and Responsible Tourism; Tourism Skilling and Capacity Building; and Tourism Exchanges and Seamless Travel Facilitation.
- On artificial intelligence the communique backs safe, responsible and human-centred use for destination management, travel facilitation, visitor services and multilingual communication.
- It followed preparatory talks of the BRICS Tourism Working Group at Jaipur on 19 and 20 August 2026; India's 2026 chairship theme is 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.

## BRICS Adopts Chennai Declaration on Science and Innovation Cooperation

22 Aug

- The 14th BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Ministerial Meeting, held in Chennai under India's BRICS chairship, unanimously adopted the Chennai Declaration, also called the Chennai Consensus.
- The adoption was announced at the closing session by Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, who chaired the meeting.
- The Declaration puts a 'people-centred and humanity-first' approach at the core of BRICS science cooperation, linking it to sustainable development, social inclusiveness and quality of life.
- It advances the BRICS Global Research Advanced Infrastructure Network (BRICS GRAIN) for shared access to large research facilities, and welcomes a BRICS Science and Research Repository as a digital public good.
- It backs the Young Scientist Forum, the Young Innovator Prize and the BRICS Youth Startup Platform, and flags a possible BRICS Startup Innovation Fund for early- and growth-stage ventures.

## SCO to Hold 25th-Anniversary Summit in Bishkek on 31 August-1 September

26 Aug

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation will hold its Heads of State summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 31 August and 1 September 2026.

- Kyrgyzstan holds the SCO's rotating chairmanship for 2026 and has set the theme '25 Years of the SCO: Together Towards Sustainable Peace, Development and Prosperity'.
- The summit marks 25 years since the SCO was founded at Shanghai in June 2001.
- Proposals on the table include an International Centre for Combating Organised Crime and an SCO Development Bank, alongside cyber security and transport connectivity.
- The SCO has 10 full members; India and Pakistan joined in 2017, Iran in 2023 and Belarus in 2024.

### India to Host 18th BRICS Summit at Bharat Mandapam on 12-13 September

27 Aug

- India will host the 18th BRICS Summit at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on 12 and 13 September 2026, the Ministry of External Affairs has announced.
- India's chairship theme is 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- India assumed the BRICS chairship on 1 January 2026 - its fourth, after 2012, 2016 and 2021.
- More than 350 meetings and high-level engagements have been held across 25 Indian cities during the chairship year.
- The summit falls in the twentieth year of the grouping, which began as BRIC in 2006 and became BRICS when South Africa joined in 2010.

## 8. Schemes & Committees

10 articles

### Centre Launches e-Pratyaropan Platform to Digitise Organ Donation and Transplantation

04 Aug

- The e-Pratyaropan digital platform was unveiled at the 16th Indian Organ Donation Day event in New Delhi by Union Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel.
- It is a unified national platform connecting hospitals, transplant surgeons, donors, waiting-list recipients and regulatory bodies.
- The platform builds a unified national waiting list, enables transparent allocation and supports nationwide donor matching and post-transplant outcome tracking.
- NOTTO is the apex implementing agency, working under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- A year-long awareness campaign, Jug Jug Jiyo Abhiyaan, was launched alongside it.

### PM Announces Rs 85,000 Crore for Samudra Manthan Offshore Exploration Scheme

15 Aug

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an allocation of Rs 85,000 crore for Samudra Manthan in the 80th Independence Day address from the Red Fort on 15 August 2026.
- Samudra Manthan is the National Offshore Exploration Scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, approved by the Union Cabinet on 31 July 2026 as a Central Sector Scheme running up to FY 2030-31 with an outlay of Rs 84,084 crore.
- The Union Government will bear up to 50% of the cost of drilling deepwater exploration wells, sharing the exploration risk that has kept private capital away.

- Offshore areas restricted as 'no-go' have been cut from 13.67 lakh sq km to 24,832 sq km, opening roughly 99% of India's coastal waters to exploration.
- The scheme is expected to catalyse reserve accretion of over 600 Million Metric Tons of Oil Equivalent (MMTOE).

## NABARD and PSA Office Launch RSVC-AMRIT Rural Technology Platform

15 Aug

- The RSVC-AMRIT digital platform was launched on 15 August 2026, the 80th Independence Day, by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood.
- It was developed by NABARD in collaboration with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (OPSA) and serves as the digital backbone of the RuTAGe Smart Village Centre (RSVC) ecosystem.
- The platform is designed to support the full RSVC lifecycle — technology discovery, validation, deployment tracking, collaboration, monitoring and knowledge management.
- It is meant to bring innovators, technology providers, startups, validators, accelerators, implementation partners, funding agencies, academic institutions and rural communities onto one shared platform.
- NABARD currently supports eight RSVCs and expects AMRIT to grow into a national repository of rural innovations, technologies and best practices.

## West Bengal Rolls Out Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY, the Last State to Join

16 Aug

- West Bengal rolled out the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana from 16 August 2026, the day being observed in the State as Ayushman Diwas.
- It is the 36th and last State or Union Territory to implement AB-PM-JAY, having stayed outside the scheme since its launch in 2018.
- The State estimates around 1.5 crore families, nearly 6 crore people, will be covered, with about 1,930 hospitals empanelled.
- A parallel State scheme, the Mukhyamantri Swasthya Bima Yojana, covers eligible residents who do not qualify under AB-PM-JAY.
- The existing Swasthya Sathi scheme will run alongside for two to three months, with phased withdrawal after a review of operations and hospital empanelment.

## Centre Approves APM Gas Incentive Scheme to Expand Domestic PNG Connections

18 Aug

- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on 18 August 2026 approved the APM/NAPM Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connections, which takes effect from 1 September 2026.
- City Gas Distribution entities will receive an additional 200 Standard Cubic Metres of lower-priced, domestically produced APM gas for every incremental billed domestic PNG connection achieved above a Threshold Level fixed for each Geographical Area.
- India has about 1.74 crore domestic PNG connections, but many carry meters without gas actually flowing or being billed; the scheme pays for conversion into active, billed connections rather than for connections merely installed.
- The cheaper domestic gas can substitute costlier imported LNG used in the CNG transport segment, cutting the payback period on household PNG investment from around 10 years to about 3 years.
- The scheme runs in two tranches over six months and is backed by an Accelerated Approval Framework, standardised right-of-way charges, a push for States to cut VAT on natural gas to 5 per cent, and National PNG Drive 2.0.

## Friends of MY Bharat Launched at BRICS Youth Summit in Gandhinagar

19 Aug

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has launched 'Friends of MY Bharat', a digital module that lets youth of Indian origin living abroad register on the Mera Yuva Bharat platform.
- It was unveiled by Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Raksha Nikhil Khadse at the inaugural ceremony of the BRICS Youth Summit 2026 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- A 'Digital Compendium of Volunteering Practices' was released at the same ceremony.
- Registered members get volunteering opportunities in education, environmental protection, health awareness, disaster relief and cultural preservation, and a curated 'Know Your India' section.
- MY Bharat, launched by the Prime Minister on 31 October 2023, had crossed 2.22 crore registrations by July 2026.

## Rural Development Ministry Launches Entrepreneurship Campaign Phase II for SHG Women

21 Aug

- The Ministry of Rural Development launched the second phase of the National Campaign on Entrepreneurship on 21 August 2026, under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission.
- The three-month campaign runs from 21 August to 21 November 2026 and was timed to World Entrepreneurs Day, observed on 21 August.
- It targets training 5 lakh Self-Help Group women, formalising 50,000 rural enterprises, orienting 50,000 community cadres, adding 2 lakh members to producer groups and enterprises, and promoting agro-ecological practices among 20 lakh women.
- It also aims to onboard 25,000 SHG members onto digital commerce platforms such as ONDC and the Government e-Marketplace, and feeds the government's target of 6 crore Lakhpati Didis.
- Rohit Kansal, Secretary in the Department of Rural Development, launched the campaign and released the first issue of Sankalp Shakti, a monthly technical bulletin on rural enterprise promotion.

## Centre Launches Mission Samriddh Gaon with Pilots in Two Madhya Pradesh Blocks

26 Aug

- Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched Mission Samriddh Gaon at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.
- The mission is an integrated rural transformation and livelihood-saturation framework that converges Central and State schemes at the level of the individual family and the Gram Panchayat.
- Pilot models will be developed in Budni block of Sehore district and Khategaon block of Dewas district in Madhya Pradesh, for replication elsewhere if successful.
- Its stated aim is poverty-free, employment-rich villages with assured basic amenities, so that distress migration from village to city is no longer necessary.
- Key elements include family-level eligibility mapping, integrated farming systems, women farmers' enterprise building on the Lakhpati Didi model, and village-level storage and processing infrastructure.

## Government Notifies Rs 1.27 Lakh Crore Semicon 2.0 Scheme Across Six Pillars

31 Aug

- The Government of India notified the Semicon 2.0 scheme on 31 August 2026, the second phase of the Semicon India Programme, with a fiscal outlay of Rs 1,27,500 crore.
- The scheme is built around six pillars - design, machines and materials, fabrication units, ATMP and OSAT facilities, research and development, and talent development - spread across ten categories.

- Silicon wafer fabs with a minimum investment of Rs 20,000 crore get central fiscal support of 40 per cent of eligible capital expenditure; compound, display and other specialised fabs get 35 per cent.
- On the design side, the Deployment-Linked Incentive reimburses 9 per cent of net sales for up to five years, capped at Rs 30 crore per application and Rs 120 crore per company, and startups and Indian- or OCI-owned companies can apply.
- A high-level expert panel co-chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser and the National Security Adviser will identify strategic chips of national interest; the government expects about Rs 4 lakh crore of investment and Rs 2 lakh crore of production, and targets the training of 1,00,000 more semiconductor engineers.

### Mission Rangeen Machhli 2031 for Ornamental Fisheries Released in Lakshadweep

31 Aug

- Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan released the Mission Rangeen Machhli 2031 Strategic Action Plan for Ornamental Fisheries Development at Agatti, Lakshadweep, on 31 August 2026.
- The plan sets nationwide standards for broodstock management, captive breeding, hatchery operations, quarantine, traceability and export of decorative fish.
- It is anchored in the Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and aligned with the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana.
- Lakshadweep was chosen for the launch: it has about 4,200 sq km of lagoons and an EEZ of nearly 4 lakh sq km, roughly 17% of India's total.
- Fisheries projects worth more than Rs 62 crore have been approved for the Union Territory under PMMSY.

## 9. Agreements & MoUs

1 article

### Bihar and Jharkhand Sign Sone River Water-Sharing Pact, Ending 25-Year Dispute

31 Aug

- Bihar and Jharkhand signed a memorandum of understanding on sharing the waters of the Sone river on 31 August 2026 at Kartavya Bhavan, New Delhi, settling a dispute that had run since Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar in November 2000.
- The pact divides 7.75 million acre-feet (MAF) of Sone water between the two states, giving Bihar 5.75 MAF and Jharkhand 2.0 MAF.
- That 7.75 MAF is exactly the quantum undivided Bihar had been allotted under the Bansagar Agreement of 1973, so the new pact splits an old share rather than creating a new one.
- The MoU was signed by Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil, Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary and Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, in the presence of Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah.
- The settlement was mediated by the Ministry of Jal Shakti through a committee chaired by the Central Water Commission, with the decisive breakthrough coming at the Eastern Zonal Council meeting held in Ranchi on 10 July 2025.

## 10. Defence

16 articles

### Indian Navy Launches DSC A24, Fifth and Final Diving Support Craft

01 Aug

- The Indian Navy launched DSC A24 on 1 August 2026, the fifth and final vessel of its Diving Support Craft project.
- The launch took place at the Titagarh Rail Systems Limited shipyard in Kolkata.
- The five-ship programme was contracted by the Ministry of Defence on 12 February 2021.
- The craft support diving operations, including underwater search, salvage and rescue tasks.

### IAF Concludes Exercise ROTOR CLAP III on Counter-Drone Operations at Pokhran

02 Aug

- 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 exercise was themed on Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems.
- It was a rotary-wing exercise involving multiple helicopter units of the Indian Air Force.
- Pokhran is India's principal field firing range and the site of its 1974 and 1998 nuclear tests.

### Indian Army Introduces Indigenous XWG Diesel Usable at Minus 42 Degrees Celsius

03 Aug

- The Indian Army has introduced Xtreme Weather Grade (XWG) diesel, developed with Indian technology in partnership with domestic oil companies.
- The fuel remains usable at temperatures as low as minus 42 degrees Celsius.
- Conventional diesel thickens in extreme cold, clogging filters and making engines difficult to start.
- The fuel conforms to BS-VI standards and IS 1460:2025 specifications.
- It is intended for tanks, infantry combat vehicles and logistics vehicles deployed in high-altitude areas such as Eastern Ladakh.

### Vice Admiral Manish Chadha Takes Over as Director General Naval Operations

04 Aug

- Vice Admiral Manish Chadha, AVSM, VSM, assumed charge as Director General Naval Operations on 3 August 2026.
- The DGNO handles operational planning, maritime security missions and deployment of naval assets.
- A Communication and Electronic Warfare specialist, he was commissioned on 1 July 1991 from the 78th course of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla.
- His command appointments include CGS-05, INS Veer, INS Kirpan and the guided missile destroyer INS Mysore.
- Before this appointment he was Commandant of the Indian Naval Academy at Ezhimala, Kerala.

### IAF Concludes Exercise Pitch Black 2026 in Australia with Rafale Debut

07 Aug

- Exercise Pitch Black 2026 concluded on 7 August 2026, with the Indian Air Force stating its contingent had 'accomplished the mission'.

- The exercise ran from 20 July to 7 August 2026 at Royal Australian Air Force bases at Darwin, Tindal and Amberley in northern Australia.
- It brought together roughly 100 aircraft and more than 2,500 personnel from 21 participating nations and partners.
- The Indian contingent comprised four Rafale fighter aircraft, two C-17 transport aircraft and over 120 Air Warriors.
- Pitch Black is a biennial multinational exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force.

## India, Malaysia Begin Air Exercise Udara Shakti 2026 at Subang Air Base

10 Aug

- The Indian Air Force and the Royal Malaysian Air Force began the bilateral air exercise Udara Shakti 2026 on 10 August 2026 at Subang Air Base, Malaysia, running to 14 August 2026.
- The exercise was inaugurated at the Air Warfare Centre by RMAF Exercise Director Colonel Shamsul Shahreen bin Isa and IAF Exercise Director Group Captain Parijat Jha, with Indian Defence Adviser Colonel Praveen Sukumaran present.
- It involves 83 personnel and 11 aircraft: four IAF Rafales of No. 101 Squadron and two C-17 Globemaster III transports of No. 81 Squadron, against two RMAF Su-30MKMs, two F/A-18Ds and one A400M.
- This is the Rafale's first participation in Udara Shakti since its induction into the IAF in 2020.
- Training covered dissimilar air combat manoeuvring, air-to-air refuelling and strategic airlift, with Subject Matter Expert Exchanges continuing through the flying phase.

## Indian Navy's Second NGOPV 'Shruti' Launched at GRSE Kolkata

12 Aug

- GRSE launched 'Shruti', the second Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel, at its Kolkata shipyard on August 11, 2026.
- The vessel is designated Yard 3037 and was launched by Mrs Manika Sadhu.
- It follows Sanghmitra, launched on May 20, 2026 — under three months apart.
- The NGOPV programme covers 11 vessels, of which GRSE is building four and Goa Shipyard Limited the rest.
- The vessels will strengthen maritime surveillance across India's exclusive economic zone.

## Nepal confers honorary General rank on Indian Army Chief Dhiraj Seth

17 Aug

- Nepal President Ram Chandra Paudel conferred the honorary rank of General of the Nepali Army on Indian Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth at Sheetal Niwas, Kathmandu, on 17 August 2026.
- The two armies have exchanged this honour since 1950; Nepal's Army Chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel received the honorary rank of General of the Indian Army from President Droupadi Murmu on 12 December 2024.
- General Seth, the 31st Chief of the Army Staff, took charge on 30 June 2026 and is on a 17-19 August official visit to Nepal.
- He was given a Guard of Honour at Nepali Army Headquarters, laid a wreath at the Army Pavilion in Tundikhel and handed over military and medical equipment to the Nepal Army.

## Indian Army contingent leaves for MAITREE-XV exercise with Thailand

17 Aug

- The Indian Army contingent departed on 17 August 2026 for MAITREE-XV, the 15th edition of the India-Thailand bilateral military exercise.
- The exercise runs from 18 to 31 August 2026 at Vibhavadi Rangsit Camp in Surat Thani, Thailand, with 85 personnel from each side.

- India is represented by the 9 Gorkha Rifles and Thailand by the 3rd Battalion of the 25th Infantry Brigade, 5th Division.
- The company-level drill focuses on joint counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations in jungle and semi-urban terrain under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

## Defence Ministry Notifies Sixth Positive Indigenisation List of 405 Items

18 Aug

- The Department of Defence Production notified the sixth Positive Indigenisation List on 18 August 2026, covering 405 defence items.
- The list carries an estimated domestic business potential of Rs 3,070 crore.
- Of the 405 items, 389 are linked to Defence Public Sector Undertakings and 16 to the Indian Coast Guard.
- Items cover spares and sub-assemblies for the ALH, LUH, Su-30MKI, Tejas, T-72, T-90 and BMP-II, and for Konkurs-M, Invar and MRSAM missiles.
- Item-wise details and indicative indigenisation timelines are hosted on the SRIJAN Defence Portal.

## Mangrol, Third Mahe-Class ASW Shallow Water Craft, Delivered to Indian Navy

21 Aug

- Cochin Shipyard Limited delivered Mangrol, the third Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft, to the Indian Navy at Kochi on 21 August 2026.
- It is the third of eight Mahe-class ASW SWCs being built by CSL, with more than 80 per cent indigenous content.
- The 78-metre craft uses diesel engine-waterjet propulsion, reaches 25 knots and carries lightweight torpedoes, indigenous ASW rockets and shallow-water sonars.
- It is named after Mangrol, a coastal town and minor port in the Junagadh district of Gujarat.
- The first two ships of the class, Mahe and Malwan, were delivered in October 2025 and March 2026.

## India Test-Fires First Fully Indigenised AK-203 'Sher' Rifle at Amethi

23 Aug

- Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited has test-fired India's first fully indigenised AK-203 assault rifle, named 'Sher', at its Korwa facility in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh.
- Every component and raw material in the prototype was sourced from Indian industry, marking a shift from licensed assembly to end-to-end domestic production.
- Indian Army user trials of the fully indigenised rifle are to begin in September 2026, and the plant is being upgraded to turn out one rifle every 100 seconds.
- The AK-203 is chambered in 7.62x39 mm, has an effective range of up to 800 metres and a rate of fire of about 700 rounds per minute; it replaces the INSAS rifle.
- The programme rests on a contract signed on 6 December 2021 for 6,01,427 rifles worth about Rs 5,200 crore, with supply mandated by October 2032.

## Goa Shipyard Hands Over Indigenous Fast Patrol Vessel ICGS Ajit to Coast Guard

25 Aug

- Goa Shipyard Limited, a defence public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Defence, handed over the indigenously designed and built Fast Patrol Vessel ICGS Ajit to the Indian Coast Guard on 25 August 2026.
- ICGS Ajit is an Adamya-class Fast Patrol Vessel, 51.43 metres long and 8 metres wide, with a displacement of 330 tonnes.

- It is powered by twin marine diesel engines driving controllable pitch propellers - a first for this class of Fast Patrol Vessel - and reaches a top speed of more than 27 knots with an endurance of 1,500 nautical miles.
- The vessel was built with more than 65 per cent indigenous content and will be operated by a crew of six officers and 35 sailors.
- It is designed for multi-mission roles: Exclusive Economic Zone surveillance, coastal patrol, fisheries protection, anti-smuggling, anti-piracy and search and rescue, particularly around India's island territories.

## DRDO Tests Military Combat Parachute System at 22,000 Feet in Ladakh

26 Aug

- DRDO carried out a high-altitude trial of the indigenous Military Combat Parachute System (MCPS) at the Nyoma-Mudh drop zone in Ladakh's Leh district, with the jump made from 22,000 feet above mean sea level at about minus 15 degrees Celsius.
- The parachute was deployed at 20,000 feet and the three ADRDE test jumpers landed safely at 13,700 feet.
- The jump was executed by Wing Commander Rahul Jha (Chief Test Jumper), MWO R J Singh and MWO Vivek Tiwari.
- The MCPS was developed by DRDO's Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra, with the Defence Bioengineering and Electromedical Laboratory (DEBEL), Bengaluru.
- The system had earlier completed a combat freefall jump from 32,000 feet and is the only parachute system in Indian Armed Forces service capable of deployment above 25,000 feet.

## Indian Navy Receives Samarthak, First Indigenous Multi-Purpose Vessel, from L&T

27 Aug

- Samarthak, the first indigenously designed and built Multi-Purpose Vessel (MPV) of the Indian Navy, was delivered by Larsen & Toubro at its Kattupalli shipyard near Chennai on 27 August 2026.
- The ship is 107 m long, 18.6 m wide, displaces over 3,750 tonnes, does 15 knots and carries more than 75% indigenous content.
- It was contracted on 25 March 2022 under the 'Buy (Indian)' category for about Rs 887 crore, covering two vessels.
- Samarthak is a sea-going testbed for developmental weapons and sensors, a target-towing platform for gunnery and anti-submarine warfare drills, and a mothership for unmanned aerial, surface and underwater vehicles.
- The second ship of the class, Utkarsh, was launched on 14 January 2025 and is under trials.

## Defence Ministry Eases Export SOP and Widens OGEL to Cover Almost All Countries

28 Aug

- The Department of Defence Production announced on 28 August 2026 a package of reforms simplifying the Defence Export Standard Operating Procedure and the Open General Export Licence framework.
- Three separate OGEL SOPs, covering major platforms, parts and components, and intra-company technology transfer, have been merged into a single framework.
- OGEL validity rises from two years to three, and its coverage expands from 41 countries to all countries except sensitive or negative ones and those under UN Security Council sanctions or arms embargoes.
- A new provision lets Indian firms with long-term contracts with Foreign OEMs obtain an OGEL tied to that contract, and civil-end-use exports of specified small-calibre arms parts and protective equipment are now permitted.
- The reforms follow record numbers for FY 2025-26: defence production of Rs 1.78 lakh crore and defence exports of Rs 38,424 crore.

## 11. Science & Tech

14 articles

### TRAI Launches Revamped MyCall App for Real-Time Call Quality Reporting

03 Aug

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India launched a revamped version of its MyCall mobile application on 3 August 2026.
- The app allows telecom consumers to rate voice-call quality in real time.
- Users can also report technical issues linked to call performance.
- TRAI is the statutory regulator of the telecom sector, established under the TRAI Act, 1997.

### India Releases First Indigenous African Swine Fever Vaccine Developed by ICAR

04 Aug

- India's first indigenous vaccine against African Swine Fever, developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, was released on 4 August 2026.
- It was dedicated to the nation by Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
- The vaccine is a live attenuated product built on the MA-104 cell line, developed by ICAR-NIHSAD from an Indian field isolate of the ASF virus with specific gene deletions.
- Using the widely available MA-104 line rather than a patented proprietary cell line removes dependence on restricted manufacturing platforms and can lower production costs.
- It is administered to healthy pigs above eight weeks of age as a 1 ml intramuscular injection, with a booster after 14 days.

### Indian-Origin NASA Astronaut Anil Menon Completes His First Spacewalk

06 Aug

- Indian-origin NASA astronaut Anil Menon completed his first extravehicular activity on 6 August 2026 outside the International Space Station.
- The operation, designated US Spacewalk 96, lasted 6 hours and 27 minutes.
- Menon worked alongside Jessica Meir, who was performing her sixth spacewalk, on the Starboard 6 truss segment.
- They installed mounting hardware on the 3B power channel and routed cabling for a future Roll-Out Solar Array.
- It was the 281st spacewalk dedicated to ISS assembly and maintenance.

### Astrobase Unveils EVEREST, India's First Private 800 kN Rocket Engine

07 Aug

- Bengaluru-based Astrobase Space Technologies unveiled EVEREST on 7 August 2026 as India's first privately built 80-tonne-class Full-Flow Staged Combustion rocket engine.
- The engine burns liquid oxygen and liquid methane and produces 800 kilonewtons of thrust.
- It has a specific impulse of about 340 seconds and can be throttled between 50% and 110%.
- Astrobase was selected under IN-SPACe's Technology Adoption Fund on 10 June 2026 for indigenous development of the engine.
- The company was founded in 2024 by former ISRO propulsion engineer Devakumar Thammisetty and CoinDCX co-founder Neeraj Khandelwal.

## HAL Airport Becomes India's First to Operationalise Satellite-Guided Helicopter Approach

07 Aug

- HAL Airport in Bengaluru became the first airport in India to operationalise the RNP CAT H satellite-guided helicopter approach procedure on 7 August 2026.
- The precision navigation procedure was designed and developed by the Airports Authority of India.
- It was validated through flight trials by HAL test pilots and approved by the DGCA.
- The procedure cuts helicopter landing approach time from about 12 minutes to approximately four minutes.
- It supports the nearly 50 helicopter movements recorded daily at Bengaluru airport.

## New Bacterium Microbacterium pollutisoli Found in Toxic Pesticide Dumpsite Soil

09 Aug

- Researchers have described a new bacterial species, Microbacterium pollutisoli, from soil at a hexachlorocyclohexane dumpsite in Uttar Pradesh.
- The name combines the Latin words 'pollutus' (contaminated) and 'solum' (soil), meaning the Microbacterium of polluted soil.
- It forms shiny, yellow circular colonies, is short rod-shaped, and grows between 12°C and 46°C in highly alkaline conditions.
- Its genome carries biosynthetic gene clusters capable of producing carotenoids, ectoine and beta-lactones.
- Hexachlorocyclohexane is a banned organochlorine pesticide whose dumpsites remain a long-term soil contamination problem.

## IISc Releases SraVaani, Open-Source Speech AI for 65 Indian Languages

13 Aug

- The Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru released SraVaani-1.0, an open-source automatic speech recognition model covering 65 Indian languages and dialects.
- It was built by the SPIRE Lab and ARTPARK at IISc with support from Google, and is hosted on Hugging Face under the permissive MIT licence.
- The 65 languages include the 22 tongues listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution plus 43 regional and tribal varieties such as Garo, Kokborok, Tulu and Bundeli.
- Training used Project Vaani, a speech corpus of 31,255 hours recorded from 156,534 speakers across 165 districts in 28 states and 3 union territories.
- For Garo, a language with almost no existing speech technology, SraVaani reported a 9.5% word error rate against 69.4% for the next-best system tested.

## VIHAAN: India's Indigenous Broadband Networking Chip Clears First-Pass Silicon

15 Aug

- Chennai-based fabless startup Aheesa Digital Innovations achieved first-pass silicon success for VIHAAN, an indigenous broadband networking System-on-Chip, announced by MeitY on 15 August 2026.
- VIHAAN is built on the open RISC-V architecture and runs on C-DAC's indigenous 64-bit VEGA processor core, and is designed for fibre-to-the-home routers and optical network terminals.
- The chip was developed with support from the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme under the Semicon India Programme; production tape-out is targeted for 2027.

## ICAR-NBAGR Registers 16 New Indigenous Breeds; India's Registered Total Reaches 262

21 Aug

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research registered 16 new indigenous livestock and dog breeds, taking India's total of registered animal breeds to 262 - 258 indigenous and 4 synthetic.
- The registrations were recommended at the 14th meeting of the Breed Registration Committee, held in New Delhi on 7 August 2026 under Dr Raghavendra Bhatta, Deputy Director General (Animal Science), ICAR.
- The 16 breeds span cattle, buffalo, goat, sheep, donkey, horse, pig, yak and dog, and come from 13 states and Jammu and Kashmir.
- Kerala's Periyar cattle - a dwarf hill breed long feared to be heading for extinction - and Tamil Nadu's Kombai guard dog are among the newly registered breeds.
- Registration is carried out by ICAR-NBAGR at Karnal, Haryana, which allots each accepted breed an accession number before gazette notification.

## ISRO Targets Bharatiya Antariksha Station by 2035; First Module Approved

23 Aug

- ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan said on 23 August 2026, at the third National Space Day celebrations in Ahmedabad, that India will establish the Bharatiya Antariksha Station (BAS) by 2035.
- He confirmed that the first module of the station has already been approved; the module is targeted for launch in 2028.
- BAS is planned as a five-module, roughly 52-tonne station in low Earth orbit at 400-450 km altitude and an inclination of about 51.5 degrees, launched on LVM3 and LVM3-SC vehicles.
- The station is an extension of the Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme, whose first crewed flight is targeted for 2027; the Union Cabinet approved BAS development on 18 September 2024.
- Narayanan said India's space-based applications now serve citizens across more than 50 fields, from remote sensing and telecommunications to disaster warning and navigation.

## India Launches First Non-GMO High-Expansion Popcorn Maize Hybrid at Eluru

24 Aug

- Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan launched India's first non-genetically-modified, high-expansion popcorn maize hybrid seed on 24 August 2026 at Musunuru in Eluru district, Andhra Pradesh.
- The hybrid was bred through a collaboration between the ICAR-Indian Institute of Maize Research and the processing firm Gourmet Popcornica that began in February 2021.
- The stated purpose is to end India's dependence on imported popcorn-maize hybrid technology, since no domestic high-expansion line previously existed.

## Vice President Launches Gnani Artha, an Indian Sovereign AI Stack With Evon 3.3

28 Aug

- Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan launched 'Gnani Artha', an indigenous sovereign artificial intelligence stack, in New Delhi on 28 August 2026.
- The stack has two parts: Evon 3.3, a 30-billion-parameter language model, and Plexus, an agentic platform for building and running AI agents.
- Evon 3.3 uses a mixture-of-experts design that activates only about 3.5 billion parameters for any given token, and was trained on about 2 trillion tokens.
- It supports more than 11 Indian languages and its weights are released under the Apache 2.0 open licence, with 70-billion and 100-billion parameter models planned.

- The stack is built by Gnani.ai, a Bengaluru voice-AI company founded in 2017 and selected under the IndiaAI Mission in 2025 to build a multilingual real-time voice model.

### NASA Launches Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope on a Falcon Heavy

30 Aug

- NASA's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope lifted off at 7:26 a.m. EDT on 30 August 2026 aboard a SpaceX Falcon Heavy from Launch Complex 39A at the Kennedy Space Center, Florida.
- The USD 4.3 billion observatory separated from the upper stage 31 minutes after liftoff and began a three-month journey to the Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 2.
- It carries a 300-megapixel Wide Field Instrument with a field of view about 100 times larger than that of the Hubble Space Telescope.
- The mission is designed to study dark energy, dark matter and exoplanets over a planned five-year science phase.
- The telescope is named after Nancy Grace Roman, NASA's first Chief Astronomer.

### Turkiye Signs Artemis Accords, Becoming the 71st Signatory Nation

31 Aug

- The Republic of Turkiye signed the Artemis Accords on 31 August 2026 at NASA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., becoming the 71st signatory nation.
- Turkiye's Minister of Industry and Technology Mehmet Fatih Kacir signed on behalf of the republic, with NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman hosting and Turkish Space Agency President Yusuf Kirac present.
- Turkiye is the seventh country from the Middle East to join, after the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Jordan and Israel.
- The Accords, launched in 2020, are a non-binding set of principles for civil space activity covering transparency, interoperability, emergency assistance, registration of space objects and protection of heritage sites in outer space.
- Turkiye is preparing AYAP-1, its first lunar mission, targeted for early 2027, and will host the International Astronautical Congress at Antalya in October 2026.

## 12. Environment

26 articles

### Glaw Lake Becomes India's 101st Ramsar Site and Arunachal Pradesh's First

04 Aug

- Glaw Lake, also spelt Glow Lake, in Arunachal Pradesh has been designated India's 101st Ramsar Site.
- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced the designation on 3 August 2026; it is the state's first Ramsar Site.
- The lake lies in Lohit district near Wakro, inside the Kamlang Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary, at about 1,168 metres elevation and covering roughly 8 sq km.
- It is the headwater source of the perennial Kamlang River and supports over 150 tree species and 49 orchid species.
- The basin is one of the rare zones where all four big cats of India occur — tiger, leopard, clouded leopard and snow leopard.

## India Launches Clouded Leopard Conservation Action Plan on International Clouded Leopard Day

04 Aug

- India launched a Clouded Leopard Conservation Action Plan, marked on International Clouded Leopard Day, observed on 4 August 2026.
- The plan was released during the 91st meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wild Life at Coimbatore in July 2026.
- It was prepared under a Government of India-GEF-UNDP initiative, with the Wildlife Institute of India producing the technical report covering the caracal, fishing cat and clouded leopard.
- The plan identifies 14 priority conservation landscapes across Northeast India for habitat restoration and corridor connectivity.
- The clouded leopard has been included under the Species Recovery Programme of the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats scheme.

## Centre Adds Heatwave and Lightning to Notified Disaster List, Taking Total to 14

05 Aug

- The Centre has added heatwave and lightning to the official list of notified disasters eligible for relief funding, taking the total from 12 to 14.
- The move follows a recommendation of the 16th Finance Commission, which held that both hazards are large enough in scale to exceed the coping capacity of affected communities.
- Notified status lets states draw on the main 80% relief component of the State Disaster Response Fund instead of being confined to the 10% window reserved for locally notified disasters.
- It also unlocks the 20% State Disaster Mitigation Fund, which can be spent on longer-term climate-resilience infrastructure such as cooling shelters and lightning arresters.
- India recorded 4,853 heatwave cases between March 2026 and the announcement, underlining the scale of the problem.

## Ladakh Approves India's First Guided High-Altitude Wildlife Safari

06 Aug

- 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.
- The decision was taken at the first governing body meeting of the Snow Leopard and High-Altitude Nature Conservation Society (SHAN), chaired by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena.
- Ladakh hosts 477 of India's estimated 718 snow leopards.
- Only trained local drivers and guides will operate the tours, using specially designed open-back jeeps.

## World's First Release of GPS-Tagged Captive-Bred Slender-billed Vultures in Assam

07 Aug

- Five captive-bred Slender-billed Vultures and five White-rumped Vultures were released into the wild on 7 August 2026 in the Biswanath Wildlife Division of Kaziranga National Park, Assam.
- It is the world's first release of captive-bred Slender-billed Vultures fitted with GSM-GPS satellite transmitters for post-release monitoring.
- The birds were released from the Jatayu Soft Release Centre at Tewaripal in Biswanath district.

- They were brought from the Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre at Rani, Assam, and underwent a three-month acclimatisation period.
- Both species are listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

## New Mint-Family Plant Leucas droupadiae Described From Coromandel Coast Dunes

07 Aug

- Botanists have described Leucas droupadiae, a previously unknown plant of the mint family (Lamiaceae), from coastal sand dunes in the Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu on the Coromandel Coast.
- The description was published on 7 August 2026 in the plant-taxonomy journal Phytotaxa, volume 769, by Sugaseelan Akash, Kathavarayan Manikandan, Selvam Srikanth and Authinarayanan Rajesh.
- The species is an erect, unbranched herb about 15 cm tall that anchors itself in loose sand with a shallow web of fibrous roots instead of a deep taproot.
- Its most distinctive feature is its fruit: oblong nutlets that are golden yellow with irregular dark brown spots, unlike those of its closest relatives.
- Because of its very limited known range it has been provisionally assessed as Data Deficient, and it is named in honour of President Droupadi Murmu.

## New Begonia Species Discovered in Arunachal Named After Nyishi Clan

09 Aug

- Researchers described a new flowering plant species, Begonia neelamorum, from Arunachal Pradesh.
- It was named after the Neelam clan of the Nyishi tribe, whose members guided the researchers through rugged terrain to locate the plant.
- The species was found in Keyi Panyor district, growing on steep, moist rock walls along the Keyi River at about 1,000 metres elevation.
- It bears a single light-green serrated leaf and white flowers, and belongs to the family Begoniaceae.
- The Nyishi are the largest ethnic group in Arunachal Pradesh, concentrated across eight districts of the state.

## V.O.C. Port Becomes India's First Scope-2 Emission-Free Major Port

11 Aug

- V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority, Thoothukudi, became India's first major port to achieve Scope-2 Emission-Free status on August 10, 2026.
- It is also the first Indian port to secure ISO 50001:2018 certification for its Energy Management System.
- Renewable energy met 93.89% of the port's total electricity consumption across FY 2025-26.
- Scope-2 emissions are indirect emissions from purchased electricity, steam, heating or cooling.
- The port operates 7.04 MW of solar and 2 MW of wind capacity, with a Green Hydrogen Hub planned.

## New Fern Species Pteris madhusoodananii Discovered in Eastern Ghats, Assessed Critically Endangered

11 Aug

- Pteris madhusoodananii is a newly described fern species published on July 30, 2026 in the Nordic Journal of Botany.
- It is endemic to the Kolli Hills in the Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu.
- It has been preliminarily assessed as Critically Endangered under IUCN Red List guidelines.
- The known population is confined to two small sites across about 8 square kilometres, in an unprotected area.

- The genus Pteris belongs to the fern family Pteridaceae.

## Gangaichthys indonepalicus: First Subterranean Fish Described from Gangetic Basin Aquifers in Bihar

11 Aug

- A new genus and species of miniature earthworm eel, Gangaichthys indonepalicus, was formally described in the journal ZooKeys on 11 August 2026.
- It is the first subterranean, or stygobitic, fish recorded from the alluvial aquifers of the Gangetic Basin and the Indo-Gangetic Plain.
- All three known specimens came from borewells in Bihar; the animal is about four centimetres long.
- It has eyes reduced and covered by skin, a translucent unpigmented body and an apparent absence of ribs — classic adaptations to permanent darkness.
- A short video posted on social media in 2024 first alerted scientists to the fish.

## Rare Himalayan Bee Colletes bhutanicus Recorded in India for the First Time

12 Aug

- Colletes bhutanicus, a rare solitary Himalayan bee, was recorded in India for the first time in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The species was documented by scientists of the Zoological Survey of India during surveys in the Eastern Himalayas.
- It was first described from Bhutan in 2003 and later recorded from high-altitude areas of China.
- In Tawang it was found between 1,500 and 3,800 metres, visiting 25 flowering plant species across 10 botanical families.
- The finding was published in the International Journal of Tropical Insect Science on August 5, 2026.

## Centre Redefines Ganga Floodplain Norms with Three-Zone Regulatory Regime

12 Aug

- The Union Jal Shakti Ministry issued the River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities (Second Amendment) Order, 2026 on August 7, 2026, gazetted on August 10.
- It defines the 'Active Floodplain' for the first time as land inundated by a flood with a one-in-five-year return period.
- A 'Regulatory Zone' covers areas flooded once every 5 to 25 years, where construction needs clearances.
- A 'Warning Zone' covers outer areas flooded once every 25 to 100 years, also subject to clearances.
- The blanket no-construction clause of the original 2016 order is replaced by a stratified, approval-based regime.

## Three New Cascade Frog Species Described from Northeast India and West Bengal

12 Aug

- Three new cascade frog species were described from Northeast India and West Bengal, published on August 12, 2026 in the Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology.
- The study was led by Prof. S. D. Biju of the Department of Environmental Studies, Delhi University.
- The species are Amolops ammachi (Tripura), Amolops sendenyu (Nagaland) and Amolops bella (West Bengal).
- The work combined DNA analysis, morphological comparison and field surveys across more than 300 geographic populations.
- Five further cascade frog species were recorded in India for the first time.

## CAG Audit Finds Green India Mission Missed Forest-Cover Target by 97.57%

13 Aug

- A CAG performance audit of the National Mission for a Green India (GIM), tabled in Parliament on 13 August 2026, found the mission achieved only 0.03409 million hectares of forest-cover increase against a target of 1.4 million hectares — a shortfall of 97.57%.
- On improving the quality of existing forest and tree cover the mission reached 0.114 million hectares against the same 1.4 million hectare target, a shortfall of 91.87%.
- Budgetary support over the decade 2015-16 to 2024-25 was Rs 1,149.14 crore, only 47.88% of the approved outlay of Rs 2,000 crore under the 12th Plan plus Rs 400 crore from the 13th Finance Commission.
- GIS-based checks of sampled plantation sites showed no discernible change attributable to the mission at about 70% of them; eight states and UTs did not maintain annual accounts.
- The audit covered 16 states and Union Territories and matters because GIM is the forestry arm of India's NDC pledge to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent by 2030.

## India Releases Its First Guide to Grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems at COP17

17 Aug

- India launched its first-ever Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs) of India on 17 August 2026.
- The launch took place at a side event of UNCCD COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, held under the guidance of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The publication was brought out by ATREE with IUCN, the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management, ICFRE and ISRO's Space Applications Centre.
- It maps India's grasslands, savannas, deserts, scrublands, rocky plateaus, ravines and coastal open ecosystems, with chapters on pastoralism, fire ecology and carbon sequestration.
- The guide argues that conservation policy built around forests alone leaves open ecosystems — and the pastoral livelihoods that depend on them — unprotected.

## E20 Petrol Goes Nationwide: The Legacy-Fleet and Fuel-Quality Debate

18 Aug

- E20 - petrol blended with 20 per cent anhydrous ethanol at a minimum Research Octane Number of 95 - became mandatory nationwide from 1 April 2026, notified on 17 February 2026.
- Unblended petrol (E0) has been withdrawn from retail pumps, leaving no lower-blend option for older vehicles.
- About 240 million of India's roughly 310 million petrol vehicles - close to 77 per cent, mostly two-wheelers - predate the April 2023 cut-off for E20-ready hardware.
- India reached 20 per cent average ethanol blending by March 2025, five years ahead of its original 2030 target.
- SIAM sent the government a communication on fuel contamination on 28 July 2026 and withdrew it in early August, saying the figures needed authentication, while reaffirming support for the programme.

## BRICS Environment Ministers Reject EU Carbon Border Tax as Protectionist

18 Aug

- The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi adopted a Joint Ministerial Statement on 18 August 2026 opposing the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).
- The statement called carbon border adjustment mechanisms 'unilateral, punitive, discriminatory and protectionist' and said they undermine developing countries' climate efforts.
- The meeting was held under India's BRICS Chairship 2026 and was led by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav; four knowledge compendiums were also launched.

- The ministers sought greater climate finance, including a tripling of adaptation finance by 2035 and more grants and concessional funding.
- CBAM entered its definitive phase on 1 January 2026 and covers iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers, hydrogen and electricity.

## Invasive Mealybug Drosicha turkistanica Hits Kashmir Poplar and Willow Plantations

20 Aug

- Drosicha turkistanica, an invasive sap-sucking insect, has been identified in poplar and willow plantations at Hanjipora in Pulwama district and in parts of South Kashmir including Kulgam and Anantnag.
- The specimen was scientifically identified by the ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, Bengaluru, from field samples collected at the Mountain Research Centre for Field Crops, Khudwani.
- The insect belongs to the order Hemiptera and the family Monophlebidae, whose members feed on plant sap through piercing and sucking mouthparts.
- Farmers first noticed snow-white, cotton-like masses on tree trunks nearly two years ago and mistook the infestation for a fungal infection.
- Horticultural authorities have linked its entry to imported planting material, and experts have warned against indiscriminate pesticide spraying.

## India's Non-Fossil Fuel Power Capacity Crosses 300 GW, Over 54% of Total

25 Aug

- India's installed non-fossil fuel power capacity reached 300.50 GW as on 31 July 2026, crossing the 300 GW mark for the first time.
- This is more than 54% of India's total installed generation capacity of about 552 GW, and over 60% of the 500 GW non-fossil target set for 2030.
- Solar leads the non-fossil basket at 164.59 GW, followed by wind at 58.14 GW, hydro at 57.24 GW, bio-power at 11.75 GW and nuclear at 8.78 GW.
- India added a record 55.29 GW of non-fossil capacity in 2025-26, including 44.6 GW of solar and 6 GW of wind.
- Renewable electricity generation rose to 477.79 billion units in 2025-26, from 190.96 billion units in 2014-15.

## CSIR-IHBT Describes Doronicum sanctum, First Leopard's Bane From Northeast India

25 Aug

- Researchers at the CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Palampur, have described a new plant species of the sunflower family and named it Doronicum sanctum.
- The species was collected in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh at an elevation of about 4,086 metres above sea level.
- It is the first member of the genus Doronicum, commonly called Leopard's bane, ever documented from Northeast India; all previous Indian records of the genus were confined to the western Himalaya.
- The specific epithet sanctum, from the Latin for holy or sacred, was chosen because the type locality lies near the Chumi Gyatse holy waterfalls, a site of spiritual importance to local communities.
- The plant carries vibrant yellow flower heads and heart-shaped leaves, and appears to be extremely rare in the wild.

## New Sunflower-Family Species Doronicum sanctum Discovered in Tawang

26 Aug

- Researchers from CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology have described a new plant species, Doronicum sanctum.
- It belongs to the genus Doronicum, commonly called Leopard's Bane, in the sunflower family Asteraceae.
- The plant was recorded in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh at about 4,086 metres above sea level.
- It is the first member of the genus Doronicum documented from Northeast India; earlier Indian records were confined to the Western Himalayas.
- The species epithet 'sanctum' means 'holy' in Latin, after the sacred landscape near the type locality.

## Spoon-Tailed Duskhawker Dragonfly Recorded in India for the First Time at Namdapha

26 Aug

- The spoon-tailed duskhawker (Gynacantha basiguttata) has been confirmed from India for the first time, in a paper published in the Journal of Threatened Taxa on 26 August 2026.
- The dragonfly was photographed on 16 October 2024 in roadside vegetation along the Miao-Vijaynagar road inside Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh.
- The record is a self-rectification: an image published by the same team in an earlier 2026 paper on Gynacantha khasiaca was re-examined and reassigned to G. basiguttata.
- The species, described by Selys in 1882 and known from the Philippines and parts of Southeast Asia, was not previously listed in India's Odonata fauna, so the find is a range extension.
- Namdapha, India's 15th tiger reserve, is the state forest department's showcase for Eastern Himalayan biodiversity and the only protected area it describes as holding four big cat species.

## UNCCD COP17 Launches Drought Resilience Investment Facility and Global Drought Resilience Index

27 Aug

- UNCCD COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, has put in place a new global architecture for drought resilience built around two instruments - a measurement tool and a financing platform.
- The Drought Resilience Investment Facility (DRIF), described as the first global catalytic financing platform dedicated to drought resilience, was launched by the UNCCD and the Government of Luxembourg with support from the International Drought Resilience Alliance.
- Luxembourg committed 5 million euros of catalytic first-loss capital to DRIF, which aims to mobilise up to $400 million in public and private capital for water security, sustainable agriculture, nature-based solutions and land restoration.
- The Drought Resilience Index (DRI), showcased on 19 August 2026, is the assessment tool of the International Drought Resilience Observatory's second phase, letting countries measure their capacity to anticipate, prepare for and adapt to drought.
- COP17 as a whole advanced $1.3 billion in new and pipeline financing for land restoration and drought resilience across 23 countries on five continents.

## UNCCD COP17 Closes in Ulaanbaatar With Rangelands and Grasslands at the Centre

28 Aug

- The 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification concluded in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 28 August 2026 after a two-week session that opened on 17 August.

- The theme was 'Restoring Land. Restoring Hope.', and rangelands and pastoralists were the defining subject because 2026 is the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.
- India released its first-ever Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems at the session on 17 August 2026, arguing that conservation policy must look beyond forests.
- COP17 mobilised about USD 1.3 billion in new and pipeline financing for land restoration and drought resilience across 23 countries on five continents.
- Parties shifted the drought agenda from crisis response to resilience but did not agree on a new legally binding financial mechanism for drought.

### GCRMN Report Finds Global Coral Cover Down 9.5%, Recovery Window Shrinking

31 Aug

- The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network released Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2025, its seventh and most comprehensive edition, on 31 August 2026.
- Average global hard coral cover has fallen from about 30.2% in the 1980-2009 reference period to about 27.3% in 2020-2024, a relative decline of roughly 9.5%.
- The report's central warning is about timing rather than totals: the gap between mass bleaching events has narrowed to about five to six years, from decades earlier, leaving reefs too little time to recover.
- Of the ten GCRMN regions, four are in long-term decline, four show no net change and two are increasing against the reference period.
- The assessment rests on 21.1 million observations from 87,299 surveys at 36,886 reef sites across 124 countries and territories, spanning more than four decades of data.

### Dwarf Lilyturf Ophiopogon japonicus Recorded in India for the First Time, in Arunachal's West Kameng

31 Aug

- Ophiopogon japonicus (dwarf lilyturf or mondo grass) has been recorded in India for the first time, from West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh at 2,185 m, in a paper published in Discover Plants on 31 August 2026.
- The record came from researchers of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, and the Uluberia Botanical Institute Herbarium, Howrah.
- It raises India's count in the genus from seven to eight; the genus Ophiopogon (family Asparagaceae) has about 85 species worldwide.
- The herb is native to East Asia; its tuberous roots, called Maidong, are used in traditional Chinese medicine. Its roadside population is threatened by road building and landslides.

## 13. Banking & Finance

7 articles

### SEBI's Closing Auction Session Replaces VWAP Closing Price for F&O Stocks

03 Aug

- India's equity markets moved to a Closing Auction Session from 3 August 2026, changing how the official closing price of eligible stocks is determined.
- For Category I stocks — those with futures and options contracts — continuous trading now stops at 3:15 PM and the auction runs until 3:35 PM.

- The closing price is now the single equilibrium price at which the maximum quantity of shares can be executed, replacing the volume-weighted average price of the last 30 minutes.
- Category II stocks, which have no F&O contracts, continue to trade until 3:30 PM and retain the old VWAP-based closing method.
- SEBI's stated rationale is that large orders placed in the final minutes of trading could disproportionately move the closing price; pooling orders into an auction improves price discovery and limits manipulation.

## RBI Holds Repo Rate at 5.25% in August Policy, Raises FY27 Growth Forecast to 6.7%

05 Aug

- The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee kept the policy repo rate unchanged at 5.25% at its August 2026 review, with the decision taken unanimously.
- The MPC also retained the 'neutral' policy stance, leaving it free to move in either direction as data evolves.
- Real GDP growth for 2026-27 was revised upward to 6.7% from the earlier 6.6%, while CPI inflation for the year was trimmed to 5.0% from 5.1%.
- Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the committee wanted greater clarity on the inflation outlook before acting, noting that the rise in headline inflation was driven by food and fuel rather than generalised price pressure.
- This is the fourth consecutive hold of 2026 — the repo rate has stayed at 5.25% through the February, April, June and August policies.

## RBI Issues Unified Loan Recovery Framework Effective January 2027

06 Aug

- The Reserve Bank of India issued nine circulars on 6 August 2026 creating a unified framework, the Amendment Directions, for loan recovery practices.
- The directions apply from 1 January 2027, deferred from the originally proposed 1 October 2026 to give lenders transition time.
- Recovery calls and physical visits are permitted only between 8:00 AM and 7:00 PM, with at least one day's notice before the first visit.
- Lenders must record all recovery calls and preserve the recordings for at least six months.
- Recovery agents must be certified by the Indian Institute of Banking and Finance before being hired.

## RBI Expands Upper Layer NBFC List to 17; REC, PFC, IRFC and HUDCO Added

06 Aug

- The Reserve Bank of India released the updated list of Upper Layer Non-Banking Financial Companies for 2026-27 on 6 August 2026.
- The list contains 17 entities, up from 15 in the previous exercise.
- REC Limited, Power Finance Corporation, Indian Railway Finance Corporation and Housing and Urban Development Corporation entered the Upper Layer for the first time.
- PNB Housing Finance and Sammaan Capital were excluded after failing to meet the revised asset size criterion.
- The RBI revised the identification rule in June 2026, introducing an asset size threshold of Rs 1 lakh crore or more.

## Food Subsidy to Move on Programmable Digital Rupee in Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli

12 Aug

- India is set to launch a Central Bank Digital Currency-based Direct Benefit Transfer system for food subsidies under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana on 14 August 2026.
- Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli will be the first Union Territories to fully operationalise food subsidy transfers through programmable Digital Rupee tokens credited straight to beneficiaries' CBDC wallets.
- The tokens carry built-in conditions restricting their use to designated foodgrains bought from empanelled merchants through QR code scans, creating an end-to-end digital record of the subsidy.
- The model bypasses conventional bank transfers entirely, since the subsidy moves as central bank money into a wallet rather than as a credit into a commercial bank account.
- Earlier CBDC pilot initiatives ran in Gujarat, Puducherry and Chandigarh; the launch event involves Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Minister of State Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya, with the Dadra & Nagar Haveli phase to be launched remotely from Chandigarh.

## BRICS Finance Ministers Meet in Jaipur, Push Cheaper Cross-Border Payments

12 Aug

- The first BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meeting under India's 2026 chairship was held at Jaipur on 12 August 2026, continuing into 13 August.
- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra co-chaired it, under the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- Members discussed making cross-border payments faster and cheaper, including linking national fast payment systems and central bank digital currencies, and settling more trade in local currencies.
- Today a payment between two BRICS economies is usually routed through correspondent banks abroad and converted twice, with the US dollar acting as a vehicle currency.
- The talks fed into the 18th BRICS Summit, hosted by India at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 12-13 September 2026.

## NCDEX Launches RAINCHNNAI Weather Futures for Chennai's Northeast Monsoon

31 Aug

- NCDEX launched RAINCHNNAI, a weather futures contract on Chennai's Northeast monsoon rainfall, reported on 31 August 2026 after SEBI approval.
- The contract is cash-settled and references official India Meteorological Department rainfall data from the Meenambakkam and Nungambakkam stations.
- Settlement uses a Cumulative Deviation Rainfall model that measures deviation of actual rainfall from the Long Period Average.
- Tick size is 1 millimetre, the maximum order lot size is 50 lots, and the open interest threshold is 116,400 millimetres.
- Expiries in September, October, November and December are available initially; it follows RAINMUMBAI, India's first rainfall futures contract, launched in May 2026.

## 14. Economy

9 articles

### India Discovers Record-Low Rs 5.25 Per Unit Round-the-Clock Renewable Tariff

07 Aug

- India discovered a record-low tariff of Rs 5.25 per unit in round-the-clock (RTC) renewable energy bidding on 7 August 2026.
- The result was announced in New Delhi at the 7th CII International Energy Conference and Exhibition.
- The Solar Energy Corporation of India conducted a 1,000 MW Firm and Dispatchable Renewable Energy auction under the SECI-FDRE-RTC-V tender.
- Five developers won capacity at Rs 5.25 per kilowatt-hour, while two others secured additional capacity at Rs 5.26 per unit.
- Tender conditions required a minimum of 90% assured power delivery in every time block during peak hours.

### Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Becomes India's First Corporate-Branded Train

13 Aug

- IRCTC has awarded full train-branding rights on the Lucknow-New Delhi-Lucknow Tejas Express (82501/82502) to the beverage brand Sprite through a Letter of Acceptance.
- For the branding window the service will be announced as the 'Sprite' Tejas Express at originating, terminating and en-route stations - the first time an Indian train carries a corporate brand in its official name and station announcements.
- The rights run from 19 August to 11 November 2026 and cover station public-address announcements, station signage and exterior vinyl wraps.
- The train stays an IRCTC service: Sprite neither owns nor operates it, and IRCTC continues to pay haulage charges to Indian Railways for tracks and stations.
- The deal is part of Indian Railways' push to grow non-fare revenue, so far limited mainly to advertising wraps rather than naming rights.

### NITI Aayog Names 12 Sectors to Make India a Global Manufacturing Hub by 2047

13 Aug

- NITI Aayog has released the first volume of a study titled 'Key Sectors to Position India as a Global Manufacturing Hub'.
- It shortlists 12 sectors in which India can aspire to global leadership by 2047.
- The opening volume examines four of them in depth: chemicals, textiles, telecom and network equipment, and solar photovoltaic.
- The core recommendation is cluster-based manufacturing and integrated industrial parks to gain scale and cut costs.
- In chemicals, the report identifies phenol, methanol and acetic acid as priority products for import substitution.

### White House Report Places India in Tier 1 of China Transhipment Network

15 Aug

- The White House Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy released a report titled 'The Great Transshipment Scam' on 13 August 2026, naming more than 40 countries as part of a 'shadow transhipment network' for Chinese goods.
- India was placed in Tier 1, labelled 'Diversified Scale Leaders', alongside Canada, the European Union, Israel, Japan, Mexico, South Korea and Taiwan.

- The report singled out India's Pune-Gujarat-Chennai industrial belt as a route for China-linked pumps and compressors entering the US market.
- US Commerce Department analysis cited in the report estimated about $67 billion of US-bound goods were transhipped from China via Mexico, India and Vietnam in 2025, costing an estimated $28 billion in tariff revenue.
- The Global Trade Research Initiative rebutted the India charge with trade data showing large independent Indian exports in the same product categories.

## CBDT Notifies Foreign Asset Disclosure Window for Small Taxpayers

15 Aug

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes notified the Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers-Disclosure Scheme, 2026 on 15 August 2026, framed under Chapter IV of the Finance Act, 2026.
- The online voluntary disclosure window runs from 16 August 2026 to 31 December 2026.
- Category 1 covers undisclosed foreign assets or income up to Rs 1 crore, taxed at 30% with a 30% penalty — an effective levy of 60%.
- Category 2 covers assets up to Rs 5 crore acquired from already-taxed income or during non-residence but left out of returns; these can be regularised for a flat fee of Rs 1 lakh.
- A valid declaration confers immunity from further tax demand, penalty and prosecution under the Black Money Act, 2015.

## Centre Notifies Rs 62,500 Crore Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme for Five Years

21 Aug

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology notified the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) with an outlay of Rs 62,500 crore.
- The scheme runs for five years, from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31, and pays incentives on eligible sales at differentiated rates of 2.25 to 5 per cent.
- An additional incentive of up to 1.5 per cent is available for sourcing key components and sub-assemblies domestically.
- It has two target segments - TS1 for mobile phone manufacturing and TS2 for Indian mobile phone brands, with Indian brands exempt from any threshold sales volume.
- The Government expects about Rs 39 lakh crore of cumulative production and around 60,000 direct jobs over the five years.

## Centre Runs Kanda Express Onion Rakes From Nashik as Retail Prices Jump 59%

24 Aug

- The Centre began running dedicated Kanda Express railway rakes of buffer-stock onions from Nashik on 24 August 2026 to cool a sharp price rise.
- The national average retail onion price stood at Rs 43.53 per kg on 24 August 2026, about 59% above the Rs 27.37 per kg of a year earlier.
- Buffer onions are being sold to consumers at Rs 35 per kg through NCCF and NAFED in the destination cities.
- The first rakes were routed to Delhi, Chennai, Madurai, Ernakulam and Guwahati.
- Kanda Express began in 2024-25 with 14 rakes carrying about 12,000 tonnes to five cities and scaled to 86 rakes and about 88,000 tonnes across 16 cities in 2025-26.

### India Lifts Wheat and Wheat Flour Export Ban Imposed in 2022

24 Aug

- On 24 August 2026 the Directorate General of Foreign Trade moved wheat, durum wheat and a range of wheat flour products from the 'Prohibited' to the 'Free' export category with immediate effect.
- Two notifications were issued: one covering wheat and durum wheat, and one covering atta, maida, semolina (rava), wholemeal atta and resultant atta.
- The decision ends restrictions in force since 13 May 2022 for wheat and since August 2022 for wheat flour products, and follows a record foodgrain output reported for the 2025-26 crop year.

### India's Forex Reserves Hit Record $729.3 Billion in Week Ended 21 August

28 Aug

- India's foreign exchange reserves rose by $12.4 billion to an all-time high of $729.3 billion in the week ended 21 August 2026, according to RBI data released on 28 August.
- The reserves surpassed the previous peak of $728.5 billion recorded in the week ended 27 February 2026.
- Reserves had fallen to $666.9 billion in late June 2026 after the RBI sold dollars to steady the rupee, and have since recovered by about $62.4 billion in eight weeks.
- A concessional swap window opened by the RBI in June had drawn about $72.8 billion by 21 August, with inflows projected at $90-100 billion before it closes on 31 August.
- The reserves now cover more than 11 months of goods imports; India holds the world's fourth-largest reserves after China, Japan and Switzerland.

## 15. National

6 articles

### Har Ghar Tiranga 2026 Runs August 9-17 with Theme 'Spirit of Vande Mataram'

11 Aug

- The fifth edition of the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign runs from August 9 to August 17, 2026.
- Its theme is 'Spirit of Vande Mataram', marking 150 years of the national song.
- The campaign was launched in 2022 under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, marking 75 years of independence.
- The Ministry of Culture is the nodal ministry coordinating the campaign.
- It forms part of the celebrations of India's 80th Independence Day on August 15, 2026.

### Centre Notifies 40 Census 2027 Questions; Caste Enumerated After 1931

14 Aug

- The Union Government notified 40 questions on 14 August 2026 for the Population Enumeration phase of Census 2027.
- Question 10 is an open-ended entry for 'Scheduled Caste (SC)/Scheduled Tribe (ST)/Caste' - the first comprehensive enumeration of all castes in independent India.
- The schedule seeks identification details including Aadhaar, voter ID, driving licence and passport numbers, along with digital literacy, bank accounts and place of Covid-19 vaccination.
- Population Enumeration begins on 17 August 2026 in Ladakh and the snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand; the rest of India follows in February 2027.
- Census 2027 is India's 16th census and its first digital census, conducted under the Census Act, 1948.

## PM Unveils 'Saptadhara' Seven-Stream Roadmap in 80th Independence Day Address

15 Aug

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation from the Red Fort on 15 August 2026, India's 80th Independence Day.
- The centrepiece of the roughly 75-minute address was 'Saptadhara' — seven streams of national strength meant to drive India to Viksit Bharat by 2047.
- The seven streams are manufacturing, agriculture and food processing, technology and innovation, Gati Shakti, defence, the green and blue economy, and soft power.
- It was his 13th consecutive Independence Day address, the second-longest such run after Jawaharlal Nehru's 17.
- The celebrations carried the theme 'Yuva Shakti for Viksit Bharat@2047' and included the first-ever Red Fort rendition of Vande Mataram.

## Centre Bars Chlorpheniramine-Phenylephrine Cough Combinations for Children Under Four

18 Aug

- The Union Health Ministry, by a gazette notification dated 18 August 2026, barred the use in children below four years of all fixed dose combinations containing Chlorpheniramine Maleate and Phenylephrine Hydrochloride, including syrups and drops.
- The order was issued under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and follows an Expert Committee assessment considered by the Drugs Technical Advisory Board.
- Every such pack must now carry the warning: 'Fixed Dose Combination shall not be used in children below four years of age', on the label, package insert and promotional literature.
- It is an age-specific restriction, not a blanket ban on cough and cold medicines; it widens an order of 15 April 2025 that covered only specified formulations.
- It follows the ban on 16 irrational fixed dose combinations notified on 11 June 2026.

## India Post Rolls Out Upgraded Dak MITRA and Dak Sewa Apps for Branch Post Offices

24 Aug

- The Union Minister of Communications, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, released upgraded versions of two India Post mobile applications - Dak MITRA for postal staff and Dak Sewa for citizens - at a function in New Delhi.
- Dak MITRA stands for Mobile Interface for Transactions and Rural Assistance, and is the single operational app for more than 1.4 lakh Branch Post Offices, the lowest and most rural tier of the postal network.
- It was built in-house by the Centre for Excellence in Postal Technology on the Department of Posts' Advanced Postal Technology platform, as part of the DoP IT 2.0 modernisation programme.
- The citizen-facing Dak Sewa app gives 24x7 access to tracking, booking, complaints, post office and PIN code locators and financial calculators, and works in 23 Indian languages through the BHASHINI translation platform.
- The same event saw 14 renovated post office buildings inaugurated across the country, including at Vasant Kunj in Delhi, Patliputra in Bihar, Kakurgachi in Kolkata, Sanchi and Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh, Shillong in Meghalaya and Kandivali West in Mumbai.

## India Sets First National Minimum Standards for Hospital Mortuaries

30 Aug

- India has finalised its first uniform minimum standards for mortuary and post-mortem infrastructure, issued as the Clinical Establishment Act Standards for Mortuary.

- The standards were framed under the National Council for Clinical Establishments, which functions under the Directorate General of Health Services.
- Mortuaries must be on the ground floor, not in basements, and away from hospital waste disposal areas, with a separate entry for body movement.
- Cold storage must be maintained at 4 to 8 degrees Celsius with a minimum capacity of four bodies, each cabin carrying a unique serial number.
- The standards apply to both government and private hospitals, with enforcement resting on State and Union Territory authorities.

## 16. International

8 articles

### India-China Border Trade Resumes Through Nathu La and Shipki La After Six Years

01 Aug

- India and China resumed border trade through the Nathu La pass in Sikkim and Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh on 1 August 2026.
- The reopening ends a suspension of nearly six years that began in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and border tensions.
- Seasonal trade through Nathu La will run Monday to Thursday until November, with the gate opening at 7:30 am.
- Registered traders may transact up to Rs 2 lakh a day, and 38 traders have been issued trade passes this year.
- Nathu La sits at about 4,545 metres and was first reopened for border trade in 2006, after being closed since the 1962 war.

### India-China Border Trade Resumes Through Lipulekh Pass After Six Years

05 Aug

- Indian traders crossed the Lipulekh Pass into Tibet on 5 August 2026 and reached the market town of Taklakot, the first crossing on this route in close to seven years.
- The crossing followed the formal resumption of India-China border trade on 1 August 2026 through three Himalayan passes - Nathu La in Sikkim, Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh and Lipulekh in Uttarakhand - after a six-year suspension.
- Lipulekh sits at about 5,334 metres (roughly 17,500 feet) in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand's Kumaon region, at the tri-junction of India, Nepal and China's Tibet Autonomous Region.
- It was the first Indian border post opened for trade with China, in 1992, followed by Shipki La in 1994 and Nathu La in 2006.
- Nepal lodged a formal protest on 3 May 2026 restating its claim to Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura, a dispute that turns on where the Kali river rises under the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli.

### Abelardo de la Espriella Sworn In as Colombia's 36th President

07 Aug

- Abelardo de la Espriella was sworn in on 7 August 2026 as the 36th President of Colombia for the 2026-2030 term.
- He succeeded Gustavo Petro, whose presidency was Colombia's first left-wing administration at the national level.
- De la Espriella won the runoff held on 21 June 2026 with 12,960,166 votes, or 49.66% against Iván Cepeda's 48.70%.

- The inauguration was held at the USC Arena at Santiago de Cali University in Cali rather than in Bogotá.
- He announced a hardline approach against drug trafficking and proposed reducing the size of the state by up to 40%.

## Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan Sign Mecca Joint Defence Agreement

07 Aug

- Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan signed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, known as the Mecca Defence Pact, on 7 August 2026 in Mecca.
- The agreement provides that an armed attack against any one of the three would be regarded as an attack against all three.
- It builds on the Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement of September 2025.
- The detailed text has not been made public, leaving the exact nature of mutual obligations unclear.
- Each partner brings a distinct contribution — Saudi finance and Gulf influence, Pakistani manpower and nuclear capability, Turkish NATO experience and defence industry.

## ASEAN Day 2026 Observed as Grouping Marks 59 Years Since Bangkok Declaration

08 Aug

- ASEAN Day is observed on 8 August each year, marking the signing of the Bangkok Declaration in 1967 that founded the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- The Philippines holds the ASEAN Chairmanship for 2026 under the theme 'Navigating Our Future, Together'.
- ASEAN now has 11 member states after Timor-Leste joined on 26 October 2025.
- The year 2026 also marks the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.
- The ASEAN Charter of 2008 gave the grouping a formal legal personality and a structured governance framework.

## Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir Elected 23rd President of Bangladesh

20 Aug

- Veteran Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was elected the 23rd President of Bangladesh on 20 August 2026 in a vote of Members of Parliament held inside the Jatiya Sangsad.
- He polled 255 votes against 88 for Colonel (retd) Oli Ahmad of the Liberal Democratic Party; 343 of the 349 eligible MPs cast valid votes and the result was announced by Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin.
- It was Bangladesh's first contested presidential election in 35 years - since 1991 the head of state had generally been chosen by consensus.
- The office fell vacant when the 22nd President, Mohammed Shahabuddin, resigned on 24 July 2026 citing ill health; Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed acted as President until the election.
- Alamgir, 78, was the BNP's longest-serving Secretary General and took the oath on 21 August 2026 at the Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban in Dhaka.

## India and Uzbekistan Elevate Ties to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

30 Aug

- India and Uzbekistan elevated their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Tashkent on 30 August 2026.
- The two sides set a target of USD 5 billion in annual bilateral trade by 2030, up from the present level of over USD 1 billion.
- They agreed on a framework for the long-term supply of uranium from Uzbekistan for India's civil nuclear energy programme.

- A Coordination Council at Foreign Minister level was agreed, and the existing Joint Commission is being raised from Secretary level to Ministerial level.
- A Letter of Intent was signed for restoring the Buddhist heritage sites of Fayaz Tepa and Kara Tepa in Uzbekistan.

### Hague Court Says Indus Waters Treaty Fully in Force; India Rejects Award

31 Aug

- On 31 August 2026 the Court of Arbitration hearing the Indus Waters dispute at The Hague issued two decisions holding that the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty remains fully in force and that India continues to be bound by it.
- The Court held that the Treaty contains no provision for unilateral suspension or termination, and that India's April 2025 decision to hold it in abeyance cannot suspend its operation.
- It also imposed interim measures on the Ratle Hydroelectric Plant on the Chenab, directing India to refrain for now from concreting the dam wall and power-intake structure above specified levels.
- India rejected the award outright, saying the Court was constituted by the World Bank in breach of the Treaty, has no jurisdiction over India's sovereign decisions, and that its pronouncements are null and void.
- The restrictions are to run until 90 days after the Neutral Expert's final decision on the Kishenganga and Ratle projects, expected around July 2027.

## 17. Polity & Governance

12 articles

### Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Act, 2026 Comes into Force After Presidential Assent

03 Aug

- The Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Act, 2026 has come into force after receiving the assent of President Droupadi Murmu and being notified in the state gazette.
- The law regulates religious conversion and penalises conversions carried out through force, fraud, coercion, misrepresentation, allurement or undue influence.
- A person intending to convert must inform the district magistrate at least 60 days in advance.
- The Bill was passed by the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly on 16 March 2026 and by the Legislative Council on 17 March 2026.
- Maharashtra becomes the thirteenth state in India to enact a law of this kind.

### India Adds 11 Entry Points for e-Visa Holders, Taking the Total to 88

10 Aug

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has notified 11 additional international ports - two airports and nine land ports - for the entry of foreign nationals holding valid Indian e-Visas.
- The total number of designated e-Visa entry points rises to 88: 37 airports, 38 seaports and 13 land ports.
- The new airports are Bhopal and Tirupati; the new land ports are Agartala, Darranga, Gede, Ghojadanga, Haridaspur, Jaigaon, Dawki, Moreh and Attari (Road).
- Nine of the eleven additions are land ports, aimed mainly at travellers arriving overland from neighbouring countries.
- India introduced the e-Visa along with Electronic Travel Authorisation in 2014 for nationals of 43 countries; it is now open to citizens of 172 countries across 17 sub-categories.

## Revamped India Code Portal Launched With AI Search and 22-Language Access

13 Aug

- The revamped India Code Portal was launched on 13 August 2026 at Kartavya Bhavan 2, New Delhi.
- It was launched by Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice.
- India Code is the official digital repository of Indian legislation, maintained by the Legislative Department.
- The upgraded portal adds AI-assisted search, semantic search and speech-based search, with access in all 22 Eighth Schedule languages.
- It is integrated with the e-Gazette ecosystem and allows users to trace legislative history and track amendments.

## Government Scraps 12-Minute Hourly Advertisement Cap for Television Channels

14 Aug

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on 14 August 2026 removed the cap limiting television channels to 12 minutes of advertising per hour.
- The ceiling sat in the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994, and had been enforced since 2006; it allowed 10 minutes of commercial advertising and 2 minutes of self-promotion.
- The government cited the growth of television from 62 channels in 2006 to more than 900 in 2026, and the absence of any equivalent limit on digital platforms.
- The change takes legal effect only once the amendment to the 1994 Rules is notified in the Gazette of India.
- Stated objectives are a level playing field with digital media, fair competition and ease of doing business.

## CEA Notifies Cyber Security in Power Sector Regulations, Effective April 2027

16 Aug

- The Central Electricity Authority has notified the Central Electricity Authority (Cyber Security in Power Sector) Regulations, 2026 under the Electricity Act, 2003, replacing voluntary advisories with binding statutory obligations.
- The regulations come into force from 1 April 2027 and cover generating companies, captive generating plants and energy storage entities of 50 MW and above, as well as power exchanges and over-the-counter electricity trading platforms.
- CSIRT-Power is designated the nodal agency for cyber security coordination in the power sector, working alongside CERT-In, the national incident response agency.
- General cyber incidents must be reported within six hours of detection; incidents amounting to cyber sabotage of critical systems must be reported within 24 hours.
- Operational Technology systems must be segregated from IT networks and the internet, and sensitive operational and historical data must be stored encrypted within India, including by third-party cloud providers.

## CIC Launches AppCoMS 2.0 for RTI Second Appeals and Complaints

17 Aug

- The Central Information Commission launched the upgraded Appeal and Complaint Management System (AppCoMS 2.0) in New Delhi on 17 August 2026.
- The portal handles Second Appeals and Complaints under the Right to Information Act, 2005 — registration, scheduling, notices and decision uploads.
- The original AppCoMS was introduced in September 2016.
- The upgrade gives Central Public Information Officers their own accounts to access case details and file documents, and integrates Digital Signature Certificates for signing notices and orders.
- Online filing of second appeals and complaints had resumed on 4 August 2026; submissions made between 4 and 16 August will be processed on the new system.

## District Collectors Empowered to Grant Citizenship Under CAA in 8 States and UTs

19 Aug

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has notified the Citizenship (Third Amendment) Rules, 2026, empowering District Collectors to receive, scrutinise and decide citizenship applications under Section 6B of the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- The change applies in eight States and Union Territories - Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and the non-tribal areas of Assam and Tripura.
- A separate MHA order of 19 August 2026 transfers pending Section 6B applications from the Empowered Committees and District Level Committees to the Collectors concerned.
- Collectors may now verify documents, hold any inquiry they consider necessary, administer the Oath of Allegiance and grant citizenship to applicants found fit and proper - replacing the committee mechanism set up on 11 March 2024.
- The notification also rescinded two administrative orders dated 20 February 2026 and 2 March 2026, while saving everything already done under them.

## Union Cabinet Approves High Court Bench for Ladakh

20 Aug

- The Union Cabinet on 20 August 2026 approved the establishment of a bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- The decision was announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who said it would spare litigants in Ladakh long journeys to reach the High Court.
- The High Court presently functions from Srinagar and Jammu; the Ladakh bench will be its third location.
- Parliament data dated 30 July 2026 recorded 44,557 cases pending before the High Court, of which more than 6,100 had been pending for over ten years.
- Ladakh has been a separate Union Territory since 31 October 2019 under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, but has continued to share a High Court with Jammu and Kashmir.

## Kerala Officially Becomes Keralam as Alteration of Name Act Comes Into Force

26 Aug

- Kerala has been officially renamed Keralam under The Kerala (Alteration of Name) Act, 2026, which alters the State's entry in the First Schedule of the Constitution.
- The Union Home Ministry issued a gazette notification on 25 August 2026 appointing that same day as the date of commencement.
- The Lok Sabha passed the Bill on 11 August 2026 and the Rajya Sabha on 12 August 2026; the President gave assent on 14 August 2026.
- The change was made under Article 3, which lets Parliament alter a State's name by ordinary law after the President refers the Bill to the State legislature.
- Keralam is the Malayalam name of the State, and the change takes effect in the run-up to Onam.

## President Promulgates Regulation for High Court Bench Sittings in Ladakh

27 Aug

- President Droupadi Murmu promulgated the Union Territory of Ladakh (Sitting of Bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in Ladakh) Regulation, 2026, on 27 August 2026.
- The regulation was issued under Article 240 of the Constitution read with Section 58(2) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.
- Judges and Division Courts of the common High Court may now sit at a place in Ladakh chosen by the Chief Justice, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor.

- The principal seat of the High Court is unchanged, and the Chief Justice may still direct that cases arising in Ladakh be heard at Srinagar or Jammu.
- The Union Cabinet had approved the proposal on 20 August 2026; the regulation takes effect on a date to be notified by the Administrator of Ladakh.

## Centre Notifies Rules Making Indian Standard Time the Sole Legal Time Reference

30 Aug

- The Department of Consumer Affairs notified the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026 on 27 August 2026 under Section 52 of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009.
- The rules make Indian Standard Time the sole mandatory time reference for legal, administrative, commercial and official purposes across India.
- CSIR-National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi will continue to maintain UTC(NPLI), the primary time scale from which official IST is derived.
- Official time will also be disseminated through Regional Reference Standards Laboratories and ISRO's NavIC satellite navigation system.
- The rules come into force 180 days after publication in the Official Gazette, placing mandatory compliance around March 2027.

## NCAHP Notifies Registration Regulations 2026 for Allied and Healthcare Professionals

31 Aug

- The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions notified the Registration of Allied and Healthcare Professionals Regulations, 2026 in the Gazette on 31 August 2026, in force from that day.
- Registration on the Central or State Register is valid for five years; renewal must be sought six months before expiry, or the entry turns 'inactive'.
- Renewal needs continuing professional development of at least 15 hours a year (75 hours over five years); Central Register fees are Rs 2,000 to register and Rs 1,000 to renew.
- NCAHP is a statutory body under the NCAHP Act, 2021 (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare), covering professions in 10 recognised categories.

THE 10 RECOGNISED CATEGORIES

| No. | Category |
|---|---|
| 1 | Medical Laboratory and Life Sciences |
| 2 | Trauma, Burn Care and Surgical/Anaesthesia Technology |
| 3 | Physiotherapy |
| 4 | Nutrition Science |
| 5 | Ophthalmic Sciences |
| 6 | Occupational Therapy |
| 7 | Community Care, Behavioural Health and Other Professionals |
| 8 | Medical Radiology, Imaging and Therapeutic Technology |
| 9 | Medical Technology and Physician Associates |
| 10 | Health Information Management and Health Informatics |

*Source: NCAHP Act, 2021 Schedule (as listed by the Commission)*

## 18. State News

5 articles

### Andhra Pradesh Notifies India's First Statewide Pedestrian Safety Policy

07 Aug

- Andhra Pradesh notified the Pedestrian Safety and Universal Accessibility Policy, 2026 on 7 August 2026, after Cabinet approval the previous day.
- It became the first state in India to notify an integrated statewide framework for pedestrian safety.
- The policy implements directions linked to the Supreme Court's ruling in S. Rajaseekaran vs Union of India dated 7 October 2025.
- That ruling recognised safe and obstruction-free footpaths as part of the Right to Life under Article 21.
- Pedestrian infrastructure must include a minimum two-metre clear walking zone, slip-resistant surfaces, tactile indicators, wheelchair ramps, Braille and audible signals.

### Himachal Pradesh Levies Widow and Orphan Cess of Rs 0.60 per Litre on Fuel

12 Aug

- Himachal Pradesh notified a Widow and Orphan Cess on petrol and high-speed diesel on August 11, 2026.
- The initial rate is Rs 0.60 per litre, against a statutory ceiling of Rs 5 per litre.
- It is levied under Section 6-A of the Himachal Pradesh Value Added Tax Act, 2005.
- Revenue goes to a dedicated Orphan and Widow Welfare Fund.
- The cess is collected from oil dealers at the first point of sale; consumers began paying from August 12, 2026.

### India's first virtual zoo opens to the public at Indore's Kamla Nehru zoo

17 Aug

- India's first virtual zoo opened to the public on 17 August 2026 at the Kamla Nehru Prani Sangrahalaya in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, a day after Chief Minister Mohan Yadav inaugurated it.
- The 8,000 square feet facility was built under a public-private partnership model at an estimated cost of Rs 4.5 crore.
- It houses a 3-D dome theatre, a 14-D cinema and a digital jungle safari, with entry priced at Rs 70 per person.
- The venue runs 16 shows a day of 20 minutes each, Tuesday to Sunday, from 10 am to 6 pm.

### Karnataka Bans Analogue Paneer Sold as Paneer for One Year

17 Aug

- Karnataka's Food Safety Division notified an order dated 17 August 2026 prohibiting the manufacture, storage, transport, distribution and sale of analogue or non-dairy paneer marketed as 'paneer' anywhere in the state.
- The prohibition runs for one year, from 17 August 2026 to 17 August 2027, and was issued under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
- Analogue paneer is a product in which milk fat or milk solids are wholly or partly replaced by vegetable oil, vegetable fat or other non-dairy ingredients.
- Standardised products such as processed cheese, frozen desserts and mixed fat spreads, which have their own prescribed standards, are outside the ban.
- Karnataka joins Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh in restricting analogue paneer; Himachal Pradesh acted on 20 August 2026.

### Maharashtra Declares Snakebite a Notifiable Disease

18 Aug

- Maharashtra's notification making snakebite a notifiable disease came into effect on 18 August 2026.
- Every hospital, medical college and healthcare provider must now report suspected and confirmed snakebite cases and deaths to the district health officer or district surgeon.
- Reporting will run through the Health Management Information System (HMIS) and the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).
- The move followed the deaths of three tribal schoolgirls bitten by a venomous snake at a residential school in Japtalai village, Gadchiroli district, on 9 August 2026.
- The Union Health Ministry had made snakebite envenomation a notifiable disease at the national level on 27 November 2024.

## 19. History & Culture

5 articles

### Over 13,000 Tribal Performers Set Guinness Record for Largest Dhimsa Dance

01 Aug

- More than 13,000 tribal women and girl students performed the Dhimsa dance at the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram on 1 August 2026.
- Guinness World Records recognised the performance as the largest Dhimsa dance.
- The performance welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the inauguration of the airport.
- Performers came from Araku Valley, Paderu, Rampachodavaram, Sitampeta and Parvathipuram Manyam.
- The record attempt was organised under the leadership of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Paderu.

### Karivalamvanthanallur Excavation Reveals Sangam-Era Settlement in Tenkasi District

04 Aug

- Excavation at Karivalamvanthanallur in Tamil Nadu's Tenkasi district has uncovered evidence of ancient settlement, craft production, iron technology and trade.
- The site lies at Malayadipatti on the banks of the Vaippar river and is being excavated by the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology.
- Finds include microlithic tools, hematite and iron implements, and a large Sangam-era brick structure measuring about 8.7 by 4.2 metres with descending steps.
- Glass beads, shell bangles and terracotta spindle whorls point to organised bead-making, ornament production and weaving.
- Roman coins, glass beads and burial urns reported from the area nearly a century ago had already indicated ancient trade contact.

### Quit India Movement Day 2026 Marks 84 Years of the August Kranti

08 Aug

- Quit India Movement Day, also called August Kranti Diwas, was observed on 8 August 2026, marking 84 years since the movement was launched in 1942.
- The Quit India Resolution was passed by the All India Congress Committee at Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay, on 8 August 1942, where Mahatma Gandhi gave the 'Do or Die' call.

- The phrase 'Quit India' is attributed to Congress leader Yusuf Meherally, while Gandhi's own call to the nation was 'Do or Die'.
- British authorities arrested Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Azad in the early hours of 9 August 1942, triggering a leaderless mass uprising.
- The day has no officially announced national theme; it is observed to honour the sacrifices of freedom fighters.

### ASI Finds Sangam-Era Irrigation Structure in Kollidam Riverbed

13 Aug

- Archaeological Survey of India archaeologists have found brick structures in the bed of the Kollidam river at Koogur, near Lalgudi in Tiruchirappalli district, Tamil Nadu.
- They have been provisionally identified as the remains of an Early Historic or Sangam-age irrigation structure, dated to around the 3rd-4th century CE.
- Two structures were recorded - a semi-circular brick wall, and a pair of parallel walls that may have formed an entrance or water channel, possibly a sluice, inlet or outlet.
- Large rectangular and wedge-shaped bricks point to Early Historic construction; the remains resemble water-management features found at Vanagiri near Kaveripattinam (Poompuhar).
- Firm dating awaits systematic excavation and scientific analysis.

### Vande Mataram Sung From Red Fort for First Time as National Song Turns 150

15 Aug

- Vande Mataram was rendered from the ramparts of the Red Fort for the first time during India's 80th Independence Day celebrations on 15 August 2026.
- The rendition marked the 150th year of the national song, which Bankim Chandra Chatterjee first published in his journal Bangadarshan in 1875.
- A year-long nationwide commemoration approved by the Union Cabinet runs from 7 November 2025 to 7 November 2026.
- Rabindranath Tagore set the song to music and sang it at the 1896 Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress.
- The Constituent Assembly in 1950 gave Vande Mataram equal honour and status with the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana.

## 20. Business

1 article

### Hindalco Commissions India's First Superfine PPT ATH Plant at Belagavi

27 Aug

- Hindalco Industries commissioned India's first greenfield Superfine Precipitated Aluminium Trihydrate (PPT ATH) plant at Belagavi, Karnataka, on 27 August 2026.
- Phase 1 capacity is 30,000 tonnes a year, designed for phased expansion to 60,000 tonnes.
- PPT ATH is a halogen-free flame-retardant filler used in cables, polymer insulators, thermal insulation, composites and paints, suppressing flame spread without releasing halogen acid gases.
- The company describes it as the world's only specialty alumina plant running entirely on renewable energy, drawing on solar, wind and biomass.
- The plant substitutes imports for the wire and cable industry at a time of tightening fire-safety standards and growing electric vehicle and infrastructure demand.